Joseph Goebbels: The Man Behind Hitler

Senior Group Website

Word Count: 498

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After watching the German-based film *Der Untergang* about the last few months of Nazi Germany's existence before capitulation, we both became extremely interested in a particularly short man that reeked of death. He stood behind Adolf Hitler in the *Fuhrer-bunker* at all times listening to his rants, decisions, and carrying out tasks assigned to him. By the end of the film, this strange-looking man poisoned his children, shot his wife, soaked them all including himself in gasoline, shot himself, and had an SS soldier burn them all. This man, upon further research, was Joseph Goebbels head of the Reich Ministry of Propaganda. Learning about NHD's new annual theme based on communications, we realized propaganda is a form of communication and so were the mediums used to distribute it.

Starting off, we researched the broader themes of our topic to gain a general understanding of Nazi Propaganda and its mediums of distribution. As we researched deeper, we began gathering information from websites, virtual museum exhibits, books, newspapers, and more. We divided the information we collected into smaller, more specific chunks so that we could independently research specific aspects of our topic and zoom in on particular events that were relevant. We shared information on shared documents and communicated during weekly meetings. Dividing and conquering proved to be incredibly efficient because we were able to maximize how much we could research, develop our own individual standpoints, and easily combine and build off each other's findings.

Building our website was by far the most fun and interactive part of the process; however, it required a lot of communication between the two of us. We started off by scrolling through website examples posted on the NHD website from the previous year and noted what elements or designs we wanted to incorporate into our own project. After agreeing on a consistent overall design, we created a list of general ideas we wanted to mention in our project.

These ideas turned into our main pages, which we picked out images for and researched about. After finishing our research, we began to build our website from scratch. We had pre-written passages linked with images so we were easily able to transfer these elements onto our website.

Our historical argument centers around Goebbels' Reich Ministry of Enlightenment and Propaganda and their responsibility for the gain and retention of both public and military support. Without the formation and effectiveness of Goebbels' work, Nazism in Germany would probably have failed to persuade the German people on a mass scale.

The Second World War is arguably the most devastating event in the history of humanity. Never have humans seen or dealt with loss on such a widespread scale. Our website demonstrates how a man, an ideology, and new communication systems empowered a previously economically broken country into a military and economic powerhouse that conquered nearly all of Europe. How Goebbels spread Adolf Hitler's ideology is crucial to understanding communication's meaning and use in the early to mid 20th century.