



"You too belong to the Fuehrer"

What was this poster intended to achieve? Do you think it could be effective?

The Nazi ethic was based on what Eric Fromm called an irrational external authority. People were indoctrinated with moral certitude and not expected to think for themselves. In fact Nazi assumptions about human nature required that the masses be led by unwavering authority and that this in fact was what people generally wanted and expected. Nazi education was focused on conditioning children to think of themselves as being a part of an organic group entity that was greater than them and that their duty was to serve this greater group good. In Hitler's words "...children need to learn nothing more than to think German and to act German...." This is fundamentally antithetical to an ethics education that seeks the development of an internal ethical authority underpinning individual ethical responsibility. What resulted was a brutal racist group ethic that ran rampant among a people poorly prepared to stand up against it. This is also why propaganda based conditioning methods for ethics such as character or virtues education techniques, common today, are fundamentally flawed.

Why would this girl believe that she "belonged" to Adolph Hitler?

What's wrong with believing this?

What would it take to make you believe that you belonged to the leader of your country?



"If you save 5 Marks a week you can own your own car!"

This enticing offer was made to the German people in 1938 when the famous Volkswagen was first introduced. Over 300,000 Germans signed up and paid weekly into a savings account that they thought would get them a VW after 3 years. But the Volkswagen factory had, already since 1936, been a part of the "4-year (rearmament) Plan" and was building only military vehicles; no cars were ever delivered. What conclusions can you draw from this?

This is more than a lie; it is a betrayal of trust and as such represents a direct assault on the innate human ethical sense that expects loyalty within the group. For this to have been perpetrated by a government that preached extreme communal values is also hypocritical and particularly egregious.



Write a short essay about the two children in the pictures above. How are they the same?

Both children are victims of an authoritarian ethic that denies their individual freedom. One is forced physically to conform to the group ethical standard while the other is psychologically conditioned to become a mindless oppressor. Nazi culture was a massive machine of child abuse at all levels and represented the antithesis of ethical education.



"Millions are standing behind me." The meaning of the Hitler greeting

How would you interpret this?

Hitler received clandestine support from many prominent Germans who otherwise preferred to remain anonymous; many were even openly scornful of Hitler publicly while cheering his policies in private. This is an example of hypocrisy which is a direct assault on the innate human ethical sense. Hypocrisy violates the innate sense of equality based on reciprocity by which it is wrong to judge another by a standard that you do not apply to yourself.

Students should be encouraged to consider what hypocrisy is and why hypocrisy is so universally condemned by human beings.



The Jewish plot against Europe

Who are these characters? What does the poster suggest is happening? Can you tell about when the poster was produced?

It is clear that the poster represents a point in time after the Nazi invasion and conquest of most of Europe. The poster however tries to place Germany in the role of the victim of a Jewish plot to surround and destroy her carried out by British bankers and Soviet Communist militarists. This is recognition of the innate human ethical sense of freedom that is dependent on the maintenance of equality through reciprocity. It is right to defend yourself but not to encroach unprovoked on another's freedom. This poster was aimed at helping to quiet the dissonance caused in the innate ethical sense of the German people by the inherently unethical behavior of their government.

Why was it important for the German leaders to pretend that they were acting in self defense?



Aus der Broschüre „Entartete Musik“, 1938

“Degenerate music”

Analyze the symbolism in this poster and summarize its political message.

This image shows a blatant racism that is always the ultimate end product of a group ethic that defines itself at the expense of other groups and cannot tolerate the challenge of individual freedom. Music and other forms of contemporary art represent rebellion against the aggressive moralism that binds the group and have since Plato been targeted for destruction. The Nazi regime worked to reverse the individualism and pluralism that had marked the Weimar years and attacked contemporary music, especially that of Jewish composers and American jazz musicians, as degenerate and a threat to German culture. Students should be clear that the voice of the group is aggressive moralism and that this is not ethics.

Why was modern music such as American jazz thought to be bad by the Nazis?

How free should people be to express themselves through art and music?