

Ideology, Values and Culture Video Transcript

World War 2 began in Europe with Germany invading Poland.

Germany was one of the Axis countries and the leader was the dictator Adolf Hitler. Nazi Germany instilled ethnic pride in their people with such slogans as “Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Fuhrer!”, which means “one people, one empire, one leader”. Nazi Germany was ambitious and aspired to its future greatness and looked towards its destiny as a powerful empire.

Britain and France were the first to declare war on Germany for invading Poland.

Britain was one of the Allied countries. It was a democracy led by Prime Minister Winston Churchill during most of the war, although Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was the leader during the start of the war. Though Britain was at the forefront of the war, it remained relatively calm, and strongly believed in working together to move forward. There was a strong sense of togetherness, calling on subjects in the entire British Empire to work together for the war efforts.

France was also one of the Allied countries. Originally led by President Albert François Lebrun, France fell to Nazi Germany shortly and the main leader of Free France, basically the French government in exile, was Charles de Gaulle. Since France fell to Nazi Germany very early, much of their efforts were to fight back with other allied nations and free themselves from Germany, thus resistance and liberation was a huge part of France during World War 2.

Italy was also one of the Axis countries. It had a fascist government led by the dictator Benito Mussolini. Italy’s fascist regime aspired to restore the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean. Italy allied itself with Nazi Germany during much of the war, including using propaganda with such slogans as, “La Germania e veramente vostra amica”, which means “Germany is truly your friend.”

During World War 2, Russia was known as the Soviet Union and was a communist country controlled by the dictator Joseph Stalin. Initially, it made a pact with Germany in order to avoid a Nazi invasion. Later on however, Germany attacked and invaded Russia resulting in heavy losses, both military and civilian. The Russians have a strong duty to seek revenge for the German brutality, especially against its civilian women. Quite often images of women, which represented their mothers, wives, grandmothers, and sisters, would stir the emotions of young Russian men to enlist, appealing to their intense love of their country and their desire to seek revenge. Eventually, the ideology of communism was played down and nationalism became stronger. People felt exonerated to defend the country in the name of “Mother Russia” or “Father Soviet Union”.

Japan was the third Axis country. Although Japan was a Constitutional Monarchy and ruled by Emperor Hirohito, the military led by Prime Ministers Hideki Tojo and Minister of War Fumimaro Konoe played a major role. Japan justified their invasion of other Asian countries the liberators of Asia, defending Asians against Western colonial powers. Their ideology was uniting all the Asian countries together as one big happy family. They felt that since they were the strongest and most advanced country in East Asia, only they were strong enough to save the other Asians nations from Western imperialism. But in reality, Japan had a strong quest for power.

The United States did not officially enter World War 2 until the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941. The next day, the United States and Britain both declared war on Japan on December 8th, 1941. On December 11th, 1941, the United States also declared war on Nazi Germany.

The United States was one of the allied countries during the war led by president Franklin D. Roosevelt. During World War 2, he died from a stroke and Harry Truman replaced him as president towards the end of the war. At the time, Americans felt an enormous need to avenge the attack on Pearl Harbor. At the same time, they valued liberty and freedom a lot, therefore they often felt that they are fighting for freedom or fighting to liberate another country. Americans also felt a sense of honor and duty, so when they feel they are called to serve their country, whether to serve as a military soldier or to help as a civilian by buying victory bombs or working in a factory to make weapons, many would heed the call. Culturally, the fictitious fatherly figure "Uncle Sam" was able to call on many Americans to serve their country. Finally, another factor that influenced American thinking was the culture of fear. The sense of fighting to defend themselves from potential invasion and foreign oppression was very prevalent.

Although Germany, Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States were the major countries involved in World War 2, many other countries also fought alongside or were invaded. As a result, propaganda was not only created by these seven major countries. Propaganda was also created by all the other countries that were involved as well.