Supporting World War II by Film

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

By

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This writer would like to thank Dr. Raymond White, who has not only been an inspiration on this project, and my college preparation, but my professional teaching career as well.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on a collection of government produced World War II informational films in the Educational Resources Division of Bracken Library, Ball State University. The collection contains 131 films, ranging in length from three minutes to eighty minutes. For this study fifty-seven films were viewed.
In early December, 1941 the United States awoke abruptly from its international isolation. Twenty years before after thinking it had made the world safe for democracy in a war to end all wars, the United States turned its back on Europe and its problems and concentrated its attention on its high life in the 1920's. Then came the fall --the great depression of the 1930's, and the nation turned even more inward as it struggled to regain its economic balance. Desiring to remove itself even more from international problems the nation's eyes seemed to be held tightly closed by the hypnotic power of American isolationism. From this deep sleep of domestic isolation the United States was abruptly awakened by the island nation of the Rising Sun--Japan with its suprise attack on Pearl Harbor. After December 7, 1941, America was never again to enjoy the restfulness of isolationist hibernation.

America was at war. "Unless Americans could come to a true understanding of what the shooting was all about, there was little hope that they could wage an all-out war and win all-out peace." The United States government sought to provide that understanding of the war to Americans through the use of short war informational films. The government hoped to marshall support for the war effort by these short propaganda films produced by the Office of
War Information (OWI), Office of Price Administration (OPA), the Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Treasury Department; Hollywood studios worked with the federal government to produce many of these films.

The OWI turned out most of the short propaganda films. The Office of War Information was created by an executive order, number 9182, on June 13, 1942. President Roosevelt named Elmer Davis as the director of the OWI. The OWI was divided into the Overseas branch, which put out films to be shown to the Allies, and the Domestic branch which produced materials to marshall support of the war on the home front. The Hollywood films were of two types, the feature length film, and the short war informational film. On short films produced by the Hollywood for the benefit of the war effort, the government had to pay only for the reprinting of the films. Hollywood through individual companies paid for the production cost of the series of short war informational films. One example of a series of short war informational films was the American Speaks series. This series of twenty-six short war theme films was produced by Hollywood and released by the OWI. Other such examples of Hollywood produced films was the Air-Raid Warden (Walt Disney, 1942) put out by Walt Disney studios, which told of the duties and responsibilities of the Air-Raid warden. A Letter from Bataan (1942), produced by Paramount and It's Everybody War (1942)a Twentieth Century-Fox film, are two more examples of Hollywood
produced films promoting the war effort.\textsuperscript{5}

The Office of Price Administration (OPA) produced films designed to motivate the American public to obey price and rationing regulations. The Department of Agriculture produced films to motivate farmers to grow more grain and livestock on the same amount of land, but with less manpower. The Department of Agriculture also encouraged the youth to work on the farms and townspeople to plant victory gardens. The Treasury Department produced films to motivate Americans to buy war bonds.

Although the short war information films were produced by these offices and departments of the federal government, the films were distributed by the War Activities Committee. This committee "directly empowered by the President served as a sort of a clearinghouse through which all films produced by government agencies for civilian purposes were distributed."\textsuperscript{6}

In addition to distributing the government produced films; the War Activities Committee produced and distributed its own films to inform the public about the war. Moreover the War Activities Committee served as a mediator between the federal government and Hollywood. The committee acted as a consultant and an advisor for motion-picture producers on the "best ways in which they could serve the war effort."\textsuperscript{7}

The War Activities Committee was set up by Hollywood and composed of producers, distributors, exhibitors, and
theater owners. It arranged the schedules for both Hollywood produced short informational films as well as OWI films. For example in the spring of 1943 one film a week was shown in local theaters.

These short war informational films were shown every other week to approximately 90,000,000 persons. The average cost of these films were about $4,000 a reel. The War Production Board (WPB) would tell the OWI's Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP) what message it wanted to convey to the American public. The BMP used information the WPB gave to them in the short films. The general outlook of the press on the release of the OWI films and other agencies' films were uniformly favorable.

These "propaganda, short" films put out by the OWI through the War Activities Committee were written by either the OWI or by a Hollywood studio. "Shooting was done either in Hollywood or OWI's New York unit."

The OWI wanted a general theme to run throughout the short films. The OWI did not want to use Woodrow Wilson's theme, "make the world safe for democracy" because the OWI felt it was over-used in World War I and would not stimulate the American people. Instead the OWI promoted the idea of making the world safe from fascism. President Roosevelt objected to the OWI theme which in turn prompted the agency to use a self-defense theme in its early movies. This approach, however failed to work and did not seem to stimulate the American public to make sacrifices
that the war demanded.

Because the United States was not in direct line of attack by the enemy, Americans did not see the necessity for sacrifices. In view of this problem, the Office War Information decided to marshal support for the war through films depicting the duty of Americans on the home front, self-defense, arousing American spirit, and post war issues.

Because the U.S. did not actually witness the hostilities, mobilization on the home front was more difficult. However, the federal government and Hollywood produced several films designed to stir Americans to do their part on the home front.

One such film was *It's Everybody's War* (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1942), a Hollywood fictional story narrated by Henry Fonda. The film depicts the small town of Jefferson, America whose citizens wasted essentials for the war and were not energetic in their support. Then their boys overseas, ninety-two of them, were taken prisoner-of-war in the Philippines. This action prompted the townspeople to change and become dedicated citizens supporting the war effort through conservation and hardwork. "We had learned our lesson the hard way" said the narrator.

The same touching story is told in *The Trimbles of Maple Street* (Office of Civilian Defense, 1942). This moving film proved effective even prompting audiences to cry when they viewed it in Columbus, Ohio.
The OWI objective here of conservation was well illustrated as it played on the audience's emotion. The film showed how the people learned to conserve tin, grease, and rubber. They did not drive their automobiles any more than they had to. Some people kept their cars in the garage and walked or formed car pools. When they did drive they did not wear out their tires by stopping quickly. In order to have more people working in the war production plants, teachers and businessmen would do repair work for the community on their free time. This freed plumbers, electricians, and mechanics whose skills were needed in the war production industries.

*When the Work Is Done* (OWI, 1944) challenged a small town with its growing war-time population to do its part. To increase production factories operated twenty-four hours a day. Women's clubs organized nutritious menus for local restaurants. The Y.M.C.A. organized athletic activities and events to get the most use of athletic equipment. More community sports programs like baseball and softball were organized to help keep citizens physically fit. Local people rented rooms in their homes to new workers in the community. The final appeal in the film indicated that the public might be inconvenienced but it "can beat the Devil with ears." Then a picture flashed on the screen of Hitler sporting donkey ears.

OWI movies tried to get support for the war through
motivating Americans to plant victory gardens. In Gardens for Victory (U.S. Office of Civilian Defense, 1943) put out for the government by Better Homes and Gardens, the individual American was encouraged to feel pride in doing something to help the war effort. The film emphasized the need for food to feed the Allies and the American G.I. The gardener not only helped the war effort but helped himself by providing his own food and getting exercise.

The OWI movies also dealt in great detail with agriculture. The government wanted to get across the idea that agriculture was more important than ever because of the great demands the war put on it. The United States had to feed its armed forces, its allies whose crops had been completely destroyed, and its home population. This abnormal demand put a strain on American agriculture to over produce, at a time when the farm labor force was shrinking in size because the young men of the country were being drafted into the armed forces. For example, the total agricultural workers declined from 11,671,000 in 1940 to 10,873,000 in 1945. On the other hand the agricultural productivity index increased from 112 in 1940 to 136 in 1945. This rise in agricultural production occurred with a decrease in labor and only a small increase in farm size. This may seem contradictory, but actually the increase use of tractors, trucks and other agricultural machinery plus the use of fertilizer and hybrid corn
explain the phenomenon.

The OWI wanted to get across the struggle of the farmer, the shortage of labor on the farm and how these problems could be solved or relieved by a group of farmers working together and the youth in the towns working on farms to help fill the labor gap. For example in the film Farmer at War (OWI, 1943) the problems of labor shortage, with the need of producing more grain on the same amount of land was emphasized. Though the farmer's helper went to the service, the farmer was able to raise twenty-eight percent more eggs and ten percent more meat, and more grain than he had produced before. He was able to do this by getting up earlier, having the local high school students help after school, using fertilizer for his crops, and using more machinery. The high school students took care of the livestock after school so the farmer could raise more beef and chickens than he could before. The local farmers pulled all their equipment into a common lot and shared their equipment and labor with their neighbors. One-fourth of the American farmers' produce was sent overseas to the troop and allies. The person in the city was reminded that he too could help the American farmer and plant his victory garden.

Another film with a similar theme was Youth Farm Volunteers (OWI, date unknown) which told the American youth which steps it could take to work on farms and do
their patriotic duty. According to the film, five hundred thousand high school students were needed. Again this film was influential because it indicated a war-time problem, and told how it could be solved. It also gave the American youth a sense of pride and accomplishment that they could do something for the war effort.

Henry Brown Farmer (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1942) brought the struggles of the American farmer alive. Although Mr. Browne possessed only forty acres, he did everything possible to increase production. By using lime as fertilizer and planting in curves, the farmer would be able to get the most from his land. Mrs. Browne did her part by planting a garden. The film also showed the struggle of the farmer in plowing with only his two mules. As the farmer was black the film also portrayed a unified home front on the part of the war effort. This film produced by the U.S. Agriculture Department not only informed the viewer of agriculture, but aroused his patriotism also as he saw farmer Browne's son fly an Air Force plane into the sunset.

In the film Home on the Range (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1942) the rancher asked the consumer to give up a little meat on their tables for the "men in the tanks". The rancher felt that the meat saved for the armed forces was food for freedom to keep America strong. In the film the rancher worked hard to support his son in the armed forces.
Even the old conflict between cowboy and Indian seemed to resolve itself. The Indian came down from the hills to help the rancher keep "meat on our tables". Both the Indian and the rancher wanted the American men in uniform to eat the best meat. This film also produced a sense of warmth and security in the viewer as the cowboy stated, "We are backing our GIs. We aren't going to get use to Hitler who says one man is not as good as the other."

Here the great American ideal of all men being created equal seemed to be ironic with the knowledge of the history of how white men treated the Indian in the past. But this irony reveals an underlying theme in the film. the past was forgotten when the nation faced an all out war. *Home on the Range* and *Henry Browne, Farmer* may have been used as offensive weapons against Nazi propaganda techniques of exploiting race hatred in the United States. To this end the OWI was somewhat successful.

Although the federal government tried to encourage the farmer in his task by providing him with the answers to labor shortage and making his land productive, it did not neglect the industrial war worker. The government, through films, appealed to the workers' sense of patriotism, their emotions for their loved ones, and their conscience. Between 1941 and 1945 hundreds of thousands of new American workers entered the labor market with a large share of them being women. The OWI and other government agencies told
the workers through films what was expected from them. One of such film was Conquer By the Clock (RKO-Pathe, 1943). A woman defense worker left the assembly line to "sneak a smoke in the ladies' room". Because she left her job some cartridges without primers came off the assembly line. Later we see a soldier who lost his life because his gun would not fire the defective cartridges.

In the film Suggestion Box (OWI, 1944) the government told the worker that any type of person can invent a time saving or money saving device. The worker was also informed as to how his idea would be shared with other factories and industries around the country. Most of the suggestions shown were rather simple adjustments, but the result in affecting industrial production was important. The film encouraged the average industrial worker to use his creativity.

In Price of Victory (Paramount Pictures, 1942), the industrial worker was reminded not only of his duty to loved ones to work hard for the defeat of Hitler, but also reminded him that it was his duty to God to put the Devil down. The worker was given a choice of a free or a slave world. The Devil, Hitler, "is trying to bind man." "Nazism is the Devil's own religion to make the common man a slave." The Vice-President of the United States in the film emphasized, "No Hitler will be tolerated in a free state." If the above did not get the audience
frightening mad to put on their crusader's uniform then the statement, "Hitler thinks the American youth is soft," certainly would have. In order to be "spiritually prepared", the American must "produce goods to the limit, transport goods to the limit, and fight to the limit," because "no compromise with Satan is possible...for the people's revolution has God behind them." Isaiah 40:31 was read at the end of the film to assure Americans of their God given strength. This was the type of film that would appeal to the over emotional individual. The Price of Victory emphasized emotion over reason. The film took the point of view that Hitler was the Devil, and reacted to that position from both man's and God's viewpoint and concluded World War II was not a fight against the flesh, but a spiritual encounter between the forces of good and evil.

The industrial workers and the public not only had their emotions appealed to in war information films but also had their conscience pricked to prompt them to work harder and not do things like taking too many restroom breaks as in Conquer By the Clock.

All Out for Victory (OWI, 1944) was designed to appeal to the conscience of the workers. The film showed handicapped workers, (blind, deaf, amputees) doing their best for the war effort. The film made the point that in America no one was discriminated against and everybody worked. If the handicapped worker could do a good job then certainly the average healthy American worker could
do the same or more. If this message was not obvious enough then one was sure to get the idea when the film showed the soldier's life being saved by a life raft that his mother packed, or a shell that his sweetheart inspected. All Out for Victory painted a pretty clear message for industrial workers to do their best. Because the message was not spoken in words but expressed subtly through the pictures it was effective.

In The Arm Behind the Army (U.S. War Dept., 1942), the workers patriotic spirit was appealed to, and the American industrial machine was contrasted to that of the Nazi Germany. In Nazi controlled industry, free enterprise did not exist and neither did labor contracts and such things as insurance. It was the inconquerable spirit of the arm behind the army that made it possible for American industry to produce one plane in nine minutes, and one tank in twelve. The Axis army found their justification in the German concentration camps. The Allies found their justification in the strong muscle of the arm of American industry which fought along beside the Allied army. The French industrial workers produced for the Nazis because they were not unified like American industry was—the management with the workers. The Arm Behind the Army was a well done movie and undoubtedly moved its audiences.

Not only were industrial workers encouraged to do their part, but also college students were told of their
opportunities to support the war effort. In *Campus on the March* (OWI, 1942), the R.O.T.C. was presented, as was the fact that many students signed up for active duty before graduation. Engineering students actually developed parts for the army's equipment. University day care schools provided free care for young children of working parents. Other students worked on the farms to support the war effort.

While the federal government and the OWI thought it was important to produce war information films dealing with agriculture, industry, and colleges, it did not neglect the individual American citizen and his/her part in the war effort. One of the necessities of the citizens was to keep physically fit and healthy. With this in mind the government produced films, that were distributed by the War Activities Committee, on keeping fit and eating right. In the film *Keeping Fit* (Universal Pictures, 1942), Americans were given a full agenda on what to eat and not to eat. Nutrition and cooking schools were set up by the government. A plea came from the film to eat three meals a day, and get the right amount of rest. For recreation the film emphasized all types of sports, but the sport that was illustrated was archery, where the targets were caricatures of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo.

*Wartime Nutrition* (OWI, 1943) used the familiar contrasting scenes of Europe in total ruins to the untouched lands of America. In Europe people were starving because
of lack of food. In America the people were starving because they did not eat the right foods. A variety of foods was emphasized. "Food can build a better tomorrow," said the film narrator. In addition to encouraging Americans to eat properly, the film Food and Magic (Warner Brothers, 1943) implored Americans to avoid wasting the food they ate. A magician using illusions and tricks pointed out to the audience that two million loaves of bread were wasted per week in America. He said, "What was wasted last year would have fed our armed forces."

Although there was enough food in America, Americans could not afford to waste it, because the Allies and Armed Forces needed it. Four guidelines were set down for the Americans to follow. Produce victory gardens, do not waste food, share food with the armed forces and allies by rationing, and make sacrifices. The magician demonstrated in a creative and entertaining way how food was being wasted.

Food and Magic emphasized the need for Americans to make sacrifices. Next to losing a loved one in the war, most Americans said the biggest sacrifice they made was rationing.

The most difficult problem on the home front was preventing inflation. After 1941, inflation threatened because income went up, but the amount of goods and services available for civilian consumption was scarce. Between 1941 and 1945, personal incomes in the United States rose from 92 billion dollars to 151 billion dollars while
the value of available goods increased from 77.6 billion dollars to 95.4 billion dollars. To avoid a rapid rise in prices like that which happened during World War I, the federal government established the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply. This agency controlled prices, and supplies by rationing goods and setting ceiling prices. Leon Henderson working under James Byrnes the head of the Office of Price Administration coordinated the OPA with the Office of Production Management (OPM) to control prices. Henderson did not have any real power and prices rose at an average of two percent a month. Congress passed the Emergency Price Control Act of January, 1942. This Act gave the OPA "power to fix maximum prices and rents in special areas, and to pay subsidies to producers if that were necessary to prevent price increases." On the other hand the Act prevented the OPA from controlling agriculture prices until they reached a 110 percent increase equivalence. This situation resulted in the price of food sky rocketing and industrial workers in turn demanding higher wages. Congress finally acted again with the Anti-Inflation Act of October 2, 1942. This Act gave the executive branch of the government the power to stabilize wages, salaries, and prices at Sept. 15, 1942 level. Ration boards were established and more than thirty thousand volunteers were recruited. The OPA controlled prices on ninety percent of the goods sold
in over 600,000 retail stores. The OPA issued ration books to all citizens.\textsuperscript{25}

Although no real shortage of goods existed in America, the OPA found itself rationing more goods because demand out ran supply as the people got more money.\textsuperscript{26} As the war drew nearer to its conclusion "nearly every item Americans ate, wore, used, or lived in was rationed or otherwise regulated."\textsuperscript{27} The federal government's action constituted the most concentrated attack on wartime inflation and scarcity in the nation's history, and by larged it worked.

The OPA produced some good dramatic and entertaining films on price control and rationing. One of these films was \textit{Prices Unlimited} (OPA, 1944) which featured Milburn Stone ("Doc" of \textit{Gunsmoke}) playing the head of a local ration board costumed appropriately with two pointed horns on either side of his head, a long, dragging tail with an arrow at the end of it, and a long three-pronged pitch fork in his hand. The OPA's theme of "a fair share at a fair price," ran through the conscience of the two women who went over the ceiling price to buy steaks without ration coupons and were visited by the spirit of the honest butcher (Leon Errol) in their sleep. The spirit of the butcher took the spirits of the women to visit their local ration board. The ration board members who volunteered their services quit, and prices went sky high. Everyone lost. In the end the young women demanded the return of
rationing so as to prevent high prices, chaos, and confusion. This film brought its message to America, but not in a demanding, or insulting way but through popular entertainment.

In Which Way This Time (OPA, 1946), OPA dealt in a serious way with the need for price control. The film compared the economy of World War I to that of World War II and told how important it was for citizens to obey price control so the nation would not suffer another depression.

Some rationing continued after the war because of continued shortages. Sugar was one example. In What's Happened to Sugar (OPA, 1945), the OPA explained to Americans the reasons for continued shortages. First, the Japanese had destroyed many of sugar plantations in the Philippines, and secondly because sugar was used for so many things during the war its demand was greater than the supply.

Americans were highly mobile during this period as they are today. Thus the OWI came out with a plead to the American people to sacrifice the independence they had received from their automobiles. In Right of Way (OWI, 1943), the American public was told that the war created many transportation problems. For instance, citizens were asked not to take any more Sunday drives. The movie instructed the citizens to work more and to use their cars only when they needed to. Train passengers were asked to be patient when the services were slow, and they were told
to remember that America "was delivering the goods."

Probably of all the films the War Activities Committee distributed for the OWI that motivated the American people to conserve, the most touching was Letter from Bataan (Paramount, 1942). This film urges Americans to support the fighting men abroad by conserving at home. Starring Richard Aalen and Susan Hayward, the film combined drama and facts to get its point across. A wounded soldier who suffered from night blindness wrote a letter home to his folks.

For one thing tell the folks not to hoard food. We haven't had anything but a little horse meat and rice for days....Tell that friend of yours, Mrs. Jackson, to stop bragging about all the coffee and sugar she's got stored up in her cellar. And kitchen fats, Mom. Don't waste any. Kitchen fats make glycerine and glycerine makes explosives. Two pounds of fat can fire five anti-tank shells. And pass this along to that brother-in-law of mine, Ray who won't use a razor blade twice. It takes 12,000 razor blades for one 2000-lb bomb.28

As the family reads the letter on their front porch, the soldier appeared in a spirit form. After the letter was read the soldier kissed his sweetheart good-by and left. A telegram arrived shortly afterwards from the War Department telling the family of the soldier's death on the operating table. The film concluded with a quote from the soldier's letter. "No other American boy was going to die on foreign soil, because someone at home didn't do without.

The housing shortage was another war-time problem.
For example in Washington D.C., most families usually had one small room. Even in 1945 when President Roosevelt died many people went after the new President's two-bedroom apartment, and the switchboard was overloaded. To meet the problem of sky rocketing rent, the OPA by the middle of 1942 froze rent prices at the March, 1942 level.

In Ceiling on Your Home (OPA, 1946), the OPA gave the reasons why it froze rents. The shortage of both building material and workers for constructing domestic homes and apartments created a shortage in dwellings. Even when the war was over, people still had to double up because the "war with inflation was not over."

Black marketing was another problem that the American home front faced. The OEI used its films to inform Americans of the danger and long range effects of the black market activity. An OPA administrator Chester Bowles defined the black market as a "transaction where a sale is made over a ceiling price, or where there is a transaction of a ration product without passing of rationing currency." People who participated in the black market were not criminals, or Mafia members, but rather average Americans—citizens and businessmen who tried to get around rationing regulations. For example between twenty-five and fifty percent of all American businessmen were involved in the black market.

In 1944 the OPA investigated several hundred thousand businessmen and found fifty-seven percent of them guilty of violating price controls. Black marketeers were
involved in every product from bubble gum to cattle rustling. Cattle rustling came out of the movies onto the plains of the west. One rancher awakened one morning to find the only the hoofs and a few tails spread of his herd. The animals had been stolen, slaughtered and butchered on the spot where they grazed. Most of the black marketing involved meat distribution. The beef sold was usually of low quality, which did not meet government standards. The court system in general failed to deter black marketing because it gave light sentences to offenders who were caught. Most of the sentences amounted to fines. The OWI hoped to cut down on the black market enterprise by educating prospective customers in the film Black Marketing (OWI, 1943). In this film, the government told citizens that they should not take more products than were actually their fair share. Moreover, the customer should not pay over the ceiling price for products. The government expressed it was the duty of the American citizen to report violators.

If the Gallup Poll was any indication of how successful the OWI was in educating Americans about the black market, the OWI was successful. The poll indicated that more than ninety percent of Americans favored some kind of price control. Gallup also reported that seventy-four percent of Americans polled felt that the black market was unjustifiable.
The OWI also used film to promote the civilian defense program. Along with Air Raid Warden mentioned earlier, Indiana Bell put out Ready on the Home Front (Indiana Bell, 1942) which dealt with the general aims of the civilian defense program.

In addition to the civilian defense programs, the government through the OWI hoped to marshal support for the war through its films by arousing American patriotic spirit. The OWI approached this task by creating an image of the enemy, telling reasons why the United States was fighting the war, and urging Americans to buy and save war bonds. The Bombing of Pearl Harbor (Castle Films, 1942) reassured Americans of what they already knew that the Japanese were not above any sense of decency to be trusted on any matter. The Bombing of Pearl Harbor supported this point of view because as the Japanese diplomats were talking peace in Washington, Japanese planes planned to attack Pearl Harbor.

In the film Our Enemy--The Japanese (U.S. Dept. of Navy, 1943), the message of explaining a complex people was under taken. The Japanese "weapons are modern, but their thinking is one thousand years old." The Japanese believed in world conquest and that the war was following a divine plan. "they are a self-denial, well disciplined race", said the film narrator. The Japanese were not creative people but borrowed everything from the West. At the age of seventeen, the boys went into the army.
"The greater the odds against the Japanese soldier the greater, and more glorious his death would be." The Japanese were "primitive murderers and full of madness.... We must have a total effort to beat their madness... It will take all our effort to defeat them."

My Japan (U.S. Dept. of Navy), 1945) was perhaps a more influential film because it included captured Japanese film footage. It gave the American people a chance to hear the Japanese viewpoint of the war, and some first-hand Japanese doctrine.

You (Americans) can't starve us. We think you are stupid....We work two times harder than you to win the war. We hold our bonds to win the war. You will not be willing to pay the price of victory, you, are bargain hunters. Human lives are cheap. You put up the best of your army against the second best of our army. We are prepared to spend ten million lives to destroy you. Seven million people will stop at nothing to destroy you.

Some Americans felt that the Japanese in America, and their descendents who were American citizens were also enemies. In Challenge to Democracy (War Relocation Authority, 1944), the federal government tried to justify its imprisonment of more than one hundred thousand Japanese Americans. The narrator said two-thirds of these people put in relocation centers were American citizens. As the film stated they were not really prisoners, nor were they untrustworthy; they were just "unwounded dangers of war." The Japanese-Americans in the relocation center received some compensation for the inconvenience of the camp.
The camp was a self-governing community. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts troops, and the Red Cross were established in the camp. According to the film, the evacuees could leave the camp after there was no doubt of their loyalty to the United States.

A similar film justifying the Japanese being relocated during the war was *Japanese Relocation* (OWI, 1943). According to this film the Japanese-Americans cooperated with the government in being relocated. The government guarded the evacuees' fishing fleet while they were at the relocation camp. The government provided healthful food for the camp. The narrator of the film, Milton Eisenhower, stated that he hoped the Axis would treat American prisoners of war as well as the Japanese-Americans were treated. "We are protecting ourselves without violating our Christian principles."

Most of the films about the enemy dealt with sabotage and espionage activities. The result of this emphasis was bad because it aroused distrust of aliens by Americans, as spies were usually just noted as "foreigners". These films drew the attention of Americans from the dangers of the Japanese and Nazi military, to clean out the Nazi, and Japanese traitors in the United States. These films produced a fear on the home front of "unseen enemies at work" and made it a more difficult task to unify the home front.

For example, the film titled *Divide and Conquer*
(Warner Brothers, 1942) told of the people that Hitler first sent in to a nation to spread rumors that would lead to the mistrust of their government by the people, and to "breed fear into the people of that nation about the powerful Germany military machine. France was given as an example of a nation that had fallen victim to this word warfare in only nine months. This film portrayed Hitler as a liar who is afraid of the truth. Hitler is killed by the truth. "Germany sent her wolves who lied to breed fear to the French people." However Hitler's wolves cannot be successful in America because America has the truth.

Another film produced to to instill fear in people was These Are the Men (British Ministry of Information, 1944). Nazi leaders, Hitler, Goebbels, Goering, and Hess were showed giving speeches. The British Ministry of Information blotted out the Germen and replaced it with English. The English translation for Hitler's speech said, "I don't like meat, drink, and women. And I hate Jews." This film emphasized and exaggerated the sorted and weird aspects of these men's lives and characters as a way of promoting public hatred of the enemy. The film is rather crude in its approach, but was probably effective during the war-time period.

Films were also used to tell Americans why the United States was fighting. Few people knew that fascism was a threat to democracy.
Probably the most successful group of films to do this was Frank Capra's *Why We Fight* series. These seven films "... set a successful pattern for the hardhitting newsreel type of political education film explaining the causes of the war, the issues at stake, and helping the GI to know and appreciate allies." These films were also shown by the OWI to the liberated people of Europe. Frank Capra produced these films as a Major and later a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army; he received a Distinguished Service Medal for his work. These films were shown to GIs to give them an identification with the past and hope for the future. But they also became quickly available to civilian theaters.

During the Second World War battles not only raged in Europe with guns, but they raged on the home front with words. But the prize was not more ground at the enemies expense, but rather the "possession of people's minds and the destruction of their wills to resist." This worried American military and civil leaders who felt that "Americans were particularly vulnerable because of their emotional loyalties and normal rivalries resulting from their differing social, economics, racial, national, and religious origins."

So Chief of Staff George C. Marshall selected Capra, who had before won fame in his comedies, to explain on film why the United States was in the war.
Capra was shown the Nazi propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* and asked to launch a defensive against it. The idea "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free" ran as a theme through Capra's *Why We Fight* series. The series was composed of seven films, *Prelude to War*, *The Nazis Strike*, *Divide and Conquer*, *The Battle of Britain*, and *Battle of China*. The series gave Americans accurate knowledge of why they were fighting.

In the first *Why We Fight* film, *Prelude to War* (U.S. Dept., 1942), Dimitri Tiomkin scored the music and John Huston narrated it. In *Prelude to War* as in all the *Why We Fight* series the "skillful blending of words, music, and images" made it a masterpiece. Through animation done by Walt Disney, *Prelude to War* set up two worlds, one slave and one free. Through contrasting the two worlds it was declared that "one world would have to die, and the other live." *Prelude to War* won an Academy Award as best documentary.

The purpose of *Prelude to War* was to give the military trainees a background of why the United States had entered the war. The film started the U.S. had entered the war because the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The feelings of the Germans for Hitler, the Italians for Mussolini, and the Japanese for their emperor was discussed. All were similar because the follower gave up his identity in each nation as an individual to become a part of a mob. The three belligerents were similar because they told their
followers to "stop thinking and follow them." Legislatures gave up their power and free speech, free press, and trial by jury were also gone. "Patriotism became forced labor."

In The Nazis Strike (U.S. War Dept., 1943), the rally at Nuremberg was shown and the Nazi goal of dominating the "world island" was explained. England and France declare war on Germany. With Walter Huston and Anthony Veiller as narrators, The Nazis Strike ended up with Churchill's encouraging speech. "Lift up your hearts. All will come right. Out of the depths of sorrow and sacrifice will be born again the glory of mankind."50 The Divide and Conquer film (U.S. War Dept., 1943) portrayed the fall of Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Holland, and France.

The Battle of Britain (U.S. War Dept., 1943) was remarkable in depicting the unforgettable sufferings that a human race endured for the sake of freedom. Through captured German film Capra gave Americans some idea of how much the word "freedom" really means. The irony of Hitler looking across the English Channel to the nation that stood between him and world domination was breathtaking because it made one feel he was there when Hitler was looking across the Channel. This film illustrated what the "inconquerable spirit" of England was. England would not quit fighting for her freedom no matter what the cost was. Hitler did not know how much freedom meant to the British. Hitler did not understand that "in a democracy it is not the government that makes war-- it is
the people." Walter Huston narrated this film.

War Comes to America (U.S. War Dept., 1945) discussed the United States struggle to overcome its isolationist attitudes. Also narrated by Walter Huston this film "tries to identify the values that made one an American." It was these values that fascism threatened. War Comes to America uses music from different periods of U.S. history, as it discusses that period of the American past. Examples of this were the songs "The Caissons Go Rolling Along" and "Go Tell Aunt Rhody." Fast, peppy music was used to ridicule the fascist leaders in their decked out uniforms. War Comes to America also uses fast and slow tempos to "fit the mood of the action." All of the Why We Fight series dealt with "clashing political and military forces." The theme of good versus evil can be seen throughout the series with the western democracies representing good and the fascist's evil.

In addition to explaining war aims the federal government through film urged Americans to buy war bonds. Such action would help their boys overseas.

In Mr. and Mrs. America (Treasury, 1945), F.D.R. told the people that buying and selling war bonds was their duty. "It is one of the biggest things we can do for our fighting men." said the President. "Bonds relieve pain, shelters them from harm, and give back life." F.D.R. continued, "One side fights the war, and the other side gets the peace."
In *Report from Britain* (Treasury, 1943), General Eisenhower agreed with the President, "All Americans should be one hundred percent behind the war effort. The film showed the marine with a look of war on his face. Also the film showed the German workers who were picking up scapes of an Allied plane. This plane destroyed a factory and saved one hundred soldiers' lives on D-Day.

In *Peace Comes to America* (Navy, 1945), the Americans were urged to buy "Victory Loans to finish up the job." These "Victory Loans" were to bring American soldiers back home. It cost two hundred dollars to bring a man back home from the Far East, and one hundred dollars to bring a man back home from Europe. This film also used the contrast of European bombed out towns with American towns to move Americans and remind them how lucky they were.

The patriotic films which inspire Americans to buy bonds were stories usually about a serviceman or a symbol of American patriotism. In *Ring of Steel* (OWI, 1942), the statue of a minuteman came to life to talk about his proud history, the history of the American soldier. "Whenever I was needed or called I delivered. I am one in one hundred. I am the American shield." In *It's Your America* (Navy, 1948), another American soldier gave his story. "I was the all-American jerk." America to him before he went into the army was only a map. However, when he started meeting other men from different states it became more to him--"a real country with real people."
A man never knows what he has until a man tries to take it away from him."

The OWI used films to marshall support for the war effort through appeals to the conscience of Americans. For example the film Just for Remembrance (Treasury, 1944) showed a collection of millions of articles of dead American soldiers that were being sent to the next of kin. A chaplin made an appeal to the people to buy more war bonds "so we bring back the men, instead of their keep sakes." Another depressing film was Hands (Signal Corps, 1944). Hands showed the way some hands were hurt, bandaged, replaced with hooks, or died on the battlefield. Then the film contrasted that picture to healthy working hands in the industry. The American felt he wanted to do more with his healthy hands to help the wounded or dead hands.

Silence (Treasury, 1944) used the same idea but contrasted the loudness of the battlefield to the silence of the battlefield when the battle was over and the dead were carried away. These films although depressing, undoubtedly influenced home front audiences by emphasizing the realities and horrors of war. Although these films appealed to the citizen's conscience, they were realistic. Other films produced for the same effect were not as intense.

In Freedom Comes High (U.S. Dept. of Navy, 1944), a story was told about a young captain and his fight for
freedom in the Pacific while his wife and young baby were enjoying life in the states. Also in the film *It Can't Last for Long* (Navy, 1944), the American people were reminded that even though victory seemed near, the war was not over yet. Hometown people can put themselves in the place of the old man who said, "The sun is out, it is too nice a day to think about war, besides it can't last for long." This film expressed the idea that just because a victory was in sight, Americans could not quit fighting or they will loose the war. The boys that went over to fight at the end of the war were just as important as the boys who went to fight at the beginning of the war. A soldier could die as easy at the end of the war as he could at the beginning of the war. Americans could not afford to give up the fight yet.

When the war was over the OWI knew its job was unfinished, and it produced films that dealt with American responsibility to wounded veterans. *To Win the Peace* (Treasury, 1945) was one film that contrasted American civilians good life with that of the depressed and wounded veterans. *Voyage to Recovery* (Treasury, 1945) reminded citizens that they should buy war bonds to give the wounded veterans the best possible medical care. In *Calls That Curse* (Bell, 1945), the OWI told the American families how to cheer up the wounded veterans of their families. And in *Diary of a Sergeant* (U.S. War Dept., 1945), the War Department produced an excellent film about
the wounded veteran telling how he could rejoin the American society.

This writer was moved by the sense of patriotism these films produced. Whether or not the atmosphere of the World War II era would have been the same without these short war informational films remains uncertain. However, considering the number and the general quality of the films, and the number of American citizens who viewed them, the impact must have been considerable.
NOTES


4. Ibid., p. 438.

5. Ibid., p. 439.


7. Lingeman, Don't You Know There's A War On?, p. 171.


10. Ibid., p. 441.

11. Ibid., p. 440.

12. Lingeman, Don't You Know There's A War Going On ?, p. 188.


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., p. 80.


17. Lingeman, Don't You Know There's A War On?, p. 190.


19. Lingeman, Don't You Know There's A War On ?, p. 190.

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21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., p. 519.
23. Ibid., p. 520.
25. Ibid.
27. Lingeman, Don't You Know There's A War On?, p. 235.
28. Ibid., p. 190.
29. Ibid., p. 99.
30. Link, American Epoch, p. 519.
32. Ibid.
33. Perrett, Days Of Sadness, Years Of Triumph, p. 303.
34. Lingeman, Don't You know There's A War On?, p. 254.
35. Ibid., p. 267.
36. Ibid., p. 268.
37. Ibid., p. 269.
39. Ibid.
42. Ibid., p.195.

45. Ibid.


49. Ibid., p. 190.


51. Ibid., p. 205.

52. Murphy, "The Method of Why We Fight," p. 186.

53. Ibid., p. 190.

54. Ibid., p. 189.

55. Ibid.
FILMOGRAPHY

The following films were viewed and studied for the preparation of this paper. They are part of a larger collection in the Educational Reserve film collection at Ball State University.

**All Out for Victory**, 1944, Firestone Tire and Rubber, U.S. Office of War Information, 22 min.

**Air-Raid Warden**, Walt Disney, 1942, U.S. Army Signal Corps


**Battle of Britain**, 1943, U.S. War Dept., 10 min.

**Black Marketing**, 1943, U.S. Office of War Information Department, 11 min.

**Bombing of Pearl Harbor**, 1942, Castle Films, 10 min.

**Calls that Cure**, 1945, Bell Telephone System, 10 min.

**Campus on the March**, 1942, U.S. Office of War Information Department, 19 min.

**Ceiling on Your Home**, 1946, U.S. Office of Price Administration, 10 min.

**Challenge to Democracy**, 1944, U.S. War Relocation Authority, 20 min.

**Conference at Yellow Springs**, 1945, U.S. Office of War Information, 10 min.

**Conquer by the Clock**, 1943, RKO-Pathe, 11 min.

**Control Center**, 1945, U.S. Office of Civilian Defense, 10 min.

**Diary of a Sergeant**, 1945, U.S. War Dept., 22 min.

**Divide and Conquer**, 1943, U.S. War Dept., 60 min.

**Divide and Conquer**, 1942, Warner Bros., 1942, released by OWI.
Farmer At War, 1943, U.S. Office of War Information, 11 min.

Food and Magic, 1943, Warner Bros., produced by U.S. Office of War Information, 10 min.

Food for Fighters, 1943, U.S. Office of War Information, 10 min.

Freedom Comes High, 1944, U.S. Department of the Navy, 19 min.

Gardens of Victory, 1943, U.S. Office of Civilian Defense, 8 min.

Hands, 1944, U.S. Army Pictorial Service, Signal Corps, 5 min.

Henry Browne, Farmer, 1942, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 10 min.

Hungry Minds, 1948, National Film Board of Canada, 11 min.

Home on the Range, 1946, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 9 min.

It Can't Last for Long, 1944, U.S. Navy Dept., 20 min.


Japan's Surrender, 1945, Castle Films, 9 min.

Nazis Strife, 1943, U.S. War Dept., 11 min.

Our Enemy--the Japanese, 1943, U.S. Dept. of the Navy, 20 min.

Peace Comes to America, 1945, U.S. Dept. of the Navy and U.S. Coast Guard for U.S. Treasury Dept., Division of War Finance, 10 min.

Photography Fights, 1944, U.S. Dept. of Navy, 13 min.

Poland Forever, 1943, Polish Information Center, New York, 20 min.

Prelude to War, 1942, U.S. War Dept., 50 min.

Prices Unlimited, 1944, U.S. Office of Price Administration and U.S. Office of War Information, 10 min.

Ready on the Home Front, 1942, Indiana Bell Telephone Co. in collaboration with the Indiana State Defense Council. Produced by Wilding Picture Productions, 20 min.


Right of Way, 1943, U.S. Office of War Information, 7 min.

Ring of Steel, 1942, U.S. Office of War Information, 9 min.

Road to Berlin, 1943, U.S. War Dept., 18 min.

Silence, 1944, U.S. Treasury Dept., produced by U.S. Army Signal Corps, 2.5

Suggestion Box, 1944, U.S. Office of War Information, 9 min.

These are the Men, 1944, British Ministry of Information, 11 min.


Trimbles of Maple Street, 1942, Office of Civilian Defense, 15 min.

Two-Way Street, 1945, U.S. Office of War Information, produced by Monogram Pictures Corp. and PRC Pictures, Inc., 8 min.


War Comes to America, 1945, U.S. War Dept.


What's Happened to Sugar, 1945, U.S. Office of Price Administration, 10 min.

What to do in a Gas Attack, 1943, Clorox Chemical, made by Filmedia Corp., 15 min.
When *Work is Done*, 1944, Office of War Information.

*Which Way this Time*, 1946, U.S. Office of Price Administration, 10 min.

*Youth Farm Volunteers*, date unknown, Office of War Information, 5 min.
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