

**BLACK PROPAGANDA:  
THE MORALE OPERATIONS BRANCH OF  
THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES**

**THESIS**

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## **DEDICATION**

This paper is dedicated to my mother, Emily Evelyn Helm, and my grandparents, Dr. Warren W. Binion and Quincy Rayline Hart Binion.

To my mother: Thank you for supporting my education and always encouraging me to go further.

Sadly, my grandfather passed away as I wrote this thesis, almost a year ago to publication, but I know he would be most proud of this accomplishment. He always wanted me to pursue a graduate degree, and my only regret is that he could not be here to celebrate with me.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Propaganda permeates every portion of our society, leaking into our conversations, entertainment, political agendas and psyches. It is a machine, fine-tuned and honed to deliver its messages to the masses. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines propaganda as "any systematic, widespread dissemination or promotion of particular ideas, doctrines, practices, etc. to further one's own cause or to damage another one."

World War II, and the ensuing consequences of a combat pitting the nations of the earth against each other, altered ideals, lifestyles, politics, loyalties and behaviors. As World War II erupted the United States initially took a position of neutrality, however, it became increasingly apparent that their position would convert to an alliance with the Allied Powers against the Axis Powers of Japan, Italy and Germany. As a result of the shift in status, the imminent need for information gathering arose and the United States created the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Prior to World War II, the U.S. did not have a cohesive or sanctioned institution for the sole purpose of covert activities, espionage, and information gathering. Subsequent to its inception, the OSS divided its operations into six different sectors:

Research and Analysis, Special Operations, Operational Group, The Maritime Unit, Counterintelligence Branch, and Morale Operations.

The Morale Operations branch generated misinformation or 'black propaganda'. Black propaganda operations are operations in which the source of the propaganda is disguised or misrepresented in one way or another so as not to be attributable to the offending party, ostensibly, the enemy. It is often manifested in posters, news stories, radio broadcasts, and leaflets and is designed to denigrate morale, misdirect the enemy with regard to covert operations and missions and encourage defectors.

### **Objectives**

This study examines black propaganda generated by the Morale Operations branch of the OSS. By analyzing declassified information of the Morale Operations Branch this thesis will:

- 1) Identify the main media used for black propaganda and misinformation by Morale Operations
- 2) Examine the tactics employed in the different media,
- 3) Identify targets of the propaganda (focusing mainly on German and Eastern European Theatres)
- 4) Determine the methods of dispersion and struggles therein.

The central questions are these: What role did Black Propaganda generated by the Morale Operations Branch of the OSS play in World War II as directed toward Eastern Europe and Germany? Did news, radio and leaflets act in concert or separately? What were some specific campaigns? Is there a concrete definition of success when measuring the effectiveness of these types of campaigns? The answer to these questions lie in understanding the history of the OSS and the Morale Operations Branch, having primary resources about black propaganda operations, comprehending psychological warfare, and having access to the results of campaigns launched against the Germans and Eastern Europeans.

### **Significance**

There has been very little investigation of the use of black propaganda by the Morale Operations branch in the OSS. In addition, a systematic quantitative and qualitative study of the tactics of black propaganda has not been performed to the author's knowledge. A study such as this creates limitless possibilities for further research in psychological warfare tactics, as well as creating a bridge between past propaganda effectiveness and future usage of those tactics.

Too, as the declassification of the OSS documents occurred in the last decade, very little time has been devoted to studying the

hundreds of thousands of documents dedicated to the country's first officially sanctioned intelligence gathering agency. This study will hopefully engender further exploration of Morale Operations Branch as well as the Office of Strategic Services and black propaganda.

**CHAPTER II**

**TRACING THE HISTORY OF PROPAGANDA  
AND PROPAGANDA DURING WORLD WAR II:  
A LITERATURE REVIEW**

“The OSS Morale Operations Branch, unlike the U.S. Army or Office of War Information [OWI], practiced covert strategic and tactical moral operations [of propaganda] based on deception and subversion.” (Laurie, 1996, p. 192)

According to Erwin W. Fellows (1959), the word propaganda has been found as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century referring to the reproduction of plants and animals. Subsequent to that, it evolved into the vocabulary of the Catholic Church as a means to disseminate Christianity to non – Christian lands. Fellows states:

The first use of the word propaganda in English apparently occurred in 1718. It was then used in a religious frame of reference which has been described. Perhaps it is significant, as at least one writer has suggested, that the English word was associated from the first with doctrines based on faith rather than on reason. (p. 182)

Fellows goes on to note that the religious definition of the word continued until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century where it embraced a more

political definition as well as a slightly more negative connotation. He states, "Part of the unfavorable connotation which the word acquired in this period may have been due to Protestant hostility to Catholicism in Northern Europe and the United States. " (p. 183). Prior to World War I, according to Will Irwin (1936), propaganda simply meant, "the adherent of a political or religious faith employed to convince the unconverted...[In 1916] the word had come into the vocabulary of peasants and ditchdiggers and had begun to acquire its miasmatic aura. In loose, popular usage it meant the next thing to a...lie." (p. 3)

Following World War I, a doctoral dissertation by Harold Lasswell subsequently published into a book gave impetus to define propaganda and to determine its role in psychological warfare. Lasswell's book, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927), (as cited in Severin and Tankard, 1988), defined propaganda as such, "It refers solely to the control of opinion by significant symbols, or, to speak more concretely and less accurately, by stories, rumors, reports, pictures, and other forms of social communication" (p. 103)

Laswell posited in his work four major goals of wartime propaganda

1. To mobilize hatred against the enemy
2. To preserve the friendship of the allies

3. To preserve the friendship and, if possible, to procure the cooperation of the neutrals.
4. To demoralize the enemy (Lasswell, 1927 as cited in Severin and Tankard, 1988, p. 104)

During the Second World War, propaganda became an organized tool that experts utilized to develop and disseminate a message with almost scientific precision. It evolved into psychological warfare and took on the militaristic definition rather than the former political and theological terminology. (Fellows, 1959)

### **Propaganda Tools**

#### 1) *Name Calling*

According to Severin and Tankard (1988), Name Calling is labeling an idea but neglecting to have concrete evidence behind the label. Often the label becomes a truism and is frequently embedded with the idea for years sometimes decades in the future.

#### 2) *Glittering Generality*

The Glittering Generality, is essentially the antithesis of Name Calling. It is a virtue associated with a thing or an idea with little or no factual basis behind it. It is frequently used as an advertising tactic to make a product or political idea seem more appealing than the competition. (Severin and Tankard, 1988)

### 3) *Transfer*

According to Lee and Lee (1939) (as cited in Severin and Tankard, 1988, p.109) “Transfer carries the authority, sanction, and prestige of something respected and revered over to something else in order to make the latter more acceptable.” The goal is to have the target audience accept an idea or object simply because it has an association with a more favorable idea or object.

### 4) *Testimonial*

The Testimonial is precisely that – having a spokesperson give a speech or a testimonial as to why a certain product, person, or an idea, for example, is good or bad and subsequently have the general population buy into that idea based on the belief that the spokesperson is a believable entity. (Severin and Tankard, 1988)

### 5) *Plain Folks*

Plain Folks invokes the idea that something is good because it is associated with the ‘people’. It sends the message that this idea or person emerged from the ‘salt of earth’ therefore it or they are incapable of possessing negative qualities. (Severin and Tankard, 1988)

## 6) *Card Stacking*

“[Card stacking] is a selecting of the arguments or evidence that support a position and ignoring the arguments or evidence that do not support the position. The arguments that are selected can be true or false. The device probably operates most effectively when the arguments are true, but the other equally true arguments are ignored, because then it is hardest to detect.” (p.112)

## 7) *Bandwagon*

The Bandwagon is the equivalent to peer pressure. Everyone is participating therefore ‘we’ should also participate otherwise our lives will be unfulfilled. Severin and Tankard note, “The bandwagon is often used in wartime to convince people that everybody is making sacrifices for the war effort, even to the extent of sacrificing their lives.” (p. 114)

According to historian Lawrence H. McDonald (1991), the Office of Strategic Services developed its own devices. “MO subtly manipulated news stories with such stratagems as minimization, exaggeration, slanting, editorializing, diversion, and other tactics. An MO sample book categorized systemic rumors according to types such as wedge-driving, bogeyman, pipedream, confusion, deception, gossip and humorous.” (p. 10) A psychological warfare website, <http://www.defencejournal.com/2000/jan/p-warfare.htm>, helps define several of the MO tactics:

“ a. Hostility Wedge Driving Rumours (sic). During Gulf War a series of Rumours (sic) took birth against USA.”  
(www.defencejournal.com)

These types of rumors aim to create a chasm between two people, two organizations or between classes or party and patriot.

“b. Fear (Bogey Rumours) (sic). For example creating a false impression against Islam and calling [all] Muslims...Islamic radicals.” (www.defencejournal.com)

c. Wish (Pipe - Dream) - These rumors endeavor to create a sense of false hope and positive feelings toward the intended goal. (i.e. when the war is over, life will be grand again).

### **Nazi Propaganda**

In order to understand the U.S. promulgated propaganda, one must briefly examine the propaganda disseminated by their enemy, Nazi Germany, as well. Clayton Laurie, (1996), a historian in the Conventional War Studies Branch, Histories Division, at the U.S. Army Center of Military History and author of *The Propaganda Warrior: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany*, delineates the basic canon behind Nazi propaganda.

Primarily, Nazi propaganda operated on the assumption that people have short memories and limited intellect. Appeals need not force thought but rather force acceptance of simple ideas, concentrating on unsophisticated emotional appeals that were decisively objective, avoided abstractions, and allowed no

equivocation. Themes were repeated endlessly and emphasized only a few crucial points cast in black and white terms. Nazi propaganda, therefore, was a negative, subversive, and an offensive weapon for destroying popular support for a world – view in preparation for its replacement by fascism. (p. 9)

It is purported that the Nazi propaganda network was operating worldwide as early as 1934. This assumption was based on the vast number of German cultural centers directed at educating and informing outsiders about Germany. In addition, the formation of the Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (RMVP) directed by Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels gave cause for concern within the United States. The RMVP in 1939 employed approximately a thousand people and managed Foreign Press and Broadcasting divisions. All information circulated abroad or information from abroad directed at Germany filtered through the Foreign Press division. (Laurie, 1996)

Goebbels, “favored the creation of a well-camouflaged propaganda network to give impetus to pro-Nazi groups to come together voluntarily, thereby avoiding any incriminating Nazi connection abroad.” (Laurie, 1996, p. 22) In this manner, Goebbels knew that at some point, these groups could be utilized by Hitler when it was necessary. In addition, the Nazis hoped to develop isolationist groups in order to covertly and indirectly reinforce the Nazi movement. During the war the Nazi’s employed many of the

same tactics as the United States in the realm of propaganda and psychological warfare.

### **Propaganda: Definitions, Methods, and Dissemination**

In order to understand psychological warfare as it relates to propaganda one article "*The Nature and Consequences of Black Propaganda*" by Howard Becker (1949), written just after the close of the war provides an excellent introduction to the topic. The article begins by defining the two subsets of propaganda as follows,

‘White’ propaganda is that variety which is definitely announced by the propagandizer as coming from a source outside the propagandized;...‘Black’ propaganda is that variety which is presented by the propagandizer as coming from a source inside the propagandized. (p. 221)

Becker notes the differences in the institutions that disseminated propaganda, the Office of War Information and the Office of Strategic Services which spread white and black propaganda respectively. The formation of the latter institution will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

The article goes into great tactical detail, evidencing ‘word of mouth’ methods such as rumor-planting and ‘wit’, creating jokes about the enemy to denigrate morale. Becker notes that all propaganda methods must remain such that they can be disavowed

at any point, thus necessitating extreme caution in the circulation of such propaganda.

Another such method, according to the article, is the creation of slogans which were utilized on stickers or as graffiti. This method proved to be particularly cumbersome during the war as slogans had to take into account a great deal of cultural patterns in order to be accepted as viable. Oftentimes these slogans such as “Every sacrifice for victory. For this we have the Fuhrer to thank” (p. 223) would be spray-painted on shelled-out buildings in hopes of denigrating the morale of the people in addition to undermining Hitler’s regime. (Becker, 1949)

Black propaganda newspapers such as the OSS promulgated paper *Das Neue Deutschland* and the British covert paper *Nachrichten fur die Trippe* served as a means to transmit misleading information, rumors, as well as encourage defectors. Becker (1949) notes:

Black newspapers in general are very hard to produce. The greater the length of a document, the greater the chances of detection. Type faces, makeup, style of journalese, and a thousand and one details increase the difficulties *a la* an exponential curve. Even the way in which news stories are constructed may reveal the source. For instance, American journalists are trained to get the gist of the news story into the first paragraph, and preferably into the first sentence. The second paragraph repeats the first in other words and with greater detail...and so on...German journalists, however, exactly reverse this procedure; oftentimes the nub of the story only

comes in the last sentence. From this it is easy to see how insufficient ability to define the situation as the subject defines it may utterly ruin an otherwise good black newspaper. (p. 22)

Becker (1949) moves on to define black radio as having two primary forms: 'free ride' propaganda and 'own steam' sending. 'Free ride' propaganda functions by inserting opinionated commentary and heckling into broadcasts from enemy radio stations. These insertions are known as a "ghost voice". In one particular operation directed at Germany, the "ghost voices" were thought to be from a German national but they originated instead from Allied bases in England. "The drawback of free ride is that a connected broadcast cannot be presented; its role is limited to sarcastic comment, denunciation, and other brief interludes." (p. 225) Conversely, the 'own steam' propaganda essentially jams a signal and transmits in place of the original signal a black story or broadcast with similar background noise and content.

Becker (1949) subsequently proceeds to note that black propaganda requires a substantial amount of care with minute details in order for the propaganda to be accepted and not attributable to the enemy. Intelligence – gathering within this venue is of the utmost importance; one slip and all credibility is lost. A significant portion of the article delineates the methodology behind the creation of the propaganda, from hiring Hollywood actors to portray voices (which required extensive training in order to present plausible accents and

dialects) to the crucial details of dissemination. Becker goes on to point out that the best disseminator of propaganda, is the propagandized, particularly with slogans, jokes, and even leaflets and newspapers. He consistently notes, however, that the dissemination is extremely time-consuming with researchers pouring through the enemy's catalogs, books, histories, and newspaper files in order to present credibility. (Becker, 1949)

Washington and London were full of OSS researchers of this type during the war; they were never near the front lines, but they were indispensable. Enemy overt communications are also useful, and are readily obtainable in or through most neutral countries. Evaluation of even overt enemy information must of course be carried out with great skill...Further it is usually necessary to scrutinize one's own overt intelligence with great care. All too often the black propagandist encounters a researcher's report containing a rumor which the selfsame propagandist planted three months earlier, which now turns up in a neutral newspaper as a "hard fact" to be duly registered by the faithful research branch (Becker, 1949, p. 226)

Becker goes into further detail about the struggles of the propagandist. It is apparent that attention to detail remained crucial to every operation and the success of the operation was largely because the smallest element had not been overlooked.

A book that extensively explores black propaganda via radio broadcasting is *Radio Warfare: OSS and CIA subversive Propaganda* by Lawrence C. Soley (1989). This book notes in its preface that it is

the first study of the United States' radio warfare methods. The book presents the information in a setting tinged with intrigue and espionage; the writer's voice draws the reader through the work with a somewhat James Bond-esque rhetoric. Soley (1989), more so than the others, goes into detail about specific operations such as Operation Torch, Operation Annie, Operation Joker, and Operation Overload among others. It presents a clearer picture of what the operations entailed, their dynamics, and the results.

Soley also gives credence to Britain's hand in psychological warfare as well as to the OWI/OSS conflict although he uses these subjects as the foundation for the predominant theme of black propaganda. He tends to stay away from any psychological and sociological discussion and focuses mainly on the details and inner workings of radio warfare both in Europe, Asia, and subsequently the Cold War. He chronicles one example as follows:

MO operated a...clandestine station that broadcast to Greece. The station originated from an OSS base north of Izmir in Turkey. The base was code-named 'Boston' as were broadcasts that originated from it. The [broadcaster] claimed to be a former collaborator [with the enemy]. Having realized his mistakes, the station's speaker tried to convince other collaborators that they, too, should stop acting as traitors. This was done by providing news about German defeats, and by issuing warnings about what was in store for collaborators after an Allied victory. (Soley, 1989, p.114)

This work fills in what others neglect with regard to the actual machinations of the black propaganda day to day in the medium of radio. It lends itself to operation analysis with regard to effectiveness as Soley often concludes his description with a summary of the results of many of the operations, based on interviews with defectors, prisoner of war debriefings, and information from other branches of the OSS.

Martin F. Herz (1949) articulates leaflet propaganda in great detail in his article "*Some Psychological Lessons From Leaflet Propaganda in World War II.*" Herz made his career as the Chief Leaflet Writer for the Psychological Warfare Division for Leaflet Propaganda and became an integral cog in the misinformation machine. His article presents a more scientific and psychological foundation as to the effects of black leaflet propaganda. The abstract of this article states, "All those who attempt to influence opinion through the media of information are faced with the problem of evaluating the effects of their communications. The wartime propagandist is in a particularly difficult position, since his audience is usually inaccessible to him." (Herz, 1949, p. 474) The article goes on to explain how this type of propaganda is accomplished and the effectiveness of such an undertaking using the black propaganda leaflets in World War II.

Herz commences the article by discussing the propaganda target: the 'Marginal man'. This person essentially sits on a fence; he fights for his country with cause but keeps an open ear to the lines of the enemy. The soldiers that are pugilistic about their patriotism will not succumb to the propaganda, and there is no need to propagandize those that have already been swayed. Hence, the defined 'marginal target'. (Herz, 1949)

Herz (1949) characterizes the role, objective, and fundamental idealism behind the concept of propaganda, but notes that practical execution is not always feasible.

To 'widen the gulf' between two enemy nations, to 'drive a wedge' between officers and enlisted men, or to 'exploit' the cleavage between the elite troops and combat infantry, or 'between the party and the people' are ever-cherished objectives of the propaganda directive writer. As objectives of course they are entirely sound. Implementation may, however, involve so many psychological difficulties that more harm than good is done. For sometimes it will suffice for a latent dissatisfaction to be brought out into the open by the enemy for it to disappear. (p. 482)

One of the most notable aspects of this article is his use of leaflet exhibits throughout the article to illustrate his points. Very few sources incorporate the physical propaganda examples and then analyze them for impact and sociological implications with regard to the enemy.

## **Measuring Effectiveness**

Effectiveness is potentially the single-most important reason for the existence of propaganda, for if it were ineffective, then why use it? Therefore, one of the greatest struggles within psychological warfare is creating or defining a barometer by which to determine effectiveness. Herz offers a measurement in order to define the success or failure of propaganda. He states:

Evidence of effectiveness, or lack of effectiveness, was obtained chiefly from the following sources: 1) quantity of leaflets found on the persons of prisoners 2) recollection of leaflets by prisoners and comments about them 3) favorable mention and detailed discussion by soldiers behind the German lines as reported by cooperative prisoners 4) detailed description of their surrender by prisoners 5) pre-occupation of German counterpropaganda with specific Allied leaflets including plagiarism by German combat propagandists 6) comments by the enemy command as learned from captured documents on troop morale. (p. 472)

Because the propagandizer rarely sees the result of his propaganda, it makes effectiveness nearly impossible to measure and is largely speculative.

The Morale Operations Branch utilized 'Comeback Studies' in order to analyze the effectiveness of disseminated propaganda. Success was measured by the mention of the rumor in foreign, neutral or Allied press or by a 'comeback' from Allied or enemy

intelligence operations. The OSS tallies of comebacks report that rumors planted were extremely successful.

### **How to Win the Propaganda War**

Charles Roetter (1974), author of *The Art of Psychological Warfare 1914-1945*, further establishes propaganda theory. “No one who wishes to make propaganda effectively and conduct psychological warfare, no one, in other words, who wishes to influence other people’s attitudes and possibly actions, can hope to succeed unless he is absolutely clear of what he wants those people to think and do.” (Roetter, 1974, p.13)

Propaganda is used on both sides of any war and constitutes a two-pronged attack on both the enemy and the homeland. It is used to inspire the citizens to join in the war effort and describe the atrocities perpetrated by the enemy. In addition, it is used to sow mistrust among the enemy soldiers, breed poor morale, and cause derisiveness in enemy ranks. Roetter (1974) delineates the ground rules and defines propaganda as such:

Aim and purpose, target, credibility and means of communication or dissemination – these, broadly speaking, are the four ground rules to which any propagandist, anyone engaged in psychological warfare operation big or small, must pay the closest attention...these ground rules operate in such a

way that one acts and reacts upon the others. They are interlocked, and the relative importance that each plays in every case and at any moment of time varies from operation to operation. (p. 24)

Roetter (1974) contends that the Germans in fact did attempt several black radio propaganda operations run within the Reich but purportedly sent from within France with little success. However, Roetter (1974) maintains that their operations were 'small and insignificant' compared to the operations that the Allies launched in the latter half of the war. He goes on to detail 'black stations' that allegedly operated out of Germany but in fact broadcasted from inside the French borders. 'Soldatensender Calais' was one such program which will be analyzed in further detail in Chapter 3 and 5. Roetter (1974) discusses Sefton Delmer, the organizer of black radio operations such as the aforementioned. Delmer was integral into the efficacious execution of the operations, speaking fluent French and German with perfect intonation and phraseology, often even confusing his native British compatriots as to his nationality. Delmer set specific goals for the radio operations.

In the first place, to split the Nazi party...from [Hitler], second to shake the confidence of the German high command and public in their own security...thirdly, to portray the Nazi Party as self-seeking obscenities, determined to feather their own nests, regardless of the higher interests of the Fatherland. (Roetter, 1974, p. 174)

In addition, the programs also sought to portray the German soldiers as courageous and patriotic but the officers as being infected with Communism.

Roetter (1974) observes that as the propaganda operations were studied and analyzed on both sides that it was clearly evident that neither side could be persuaded either way with mere statements of fact or demands. Rather, humans behave how they want to behave and thus ultimately the propaganda disseminated had to 'strike a chord'.

### **The Allies and Propaganda**

Another treatment of propaganda is demonstrated in the book *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942-1945* by Allen M. Winkler, (1978). This book gives a basic chronology of the dispensation of propaganda during World War II, focusing primarily on the Office of War Information (OWI) but also giving some detail into the struggle with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). It concentrates on recounting several operations and tactical measures as well as describing some strategies employed by the military and OWI combining their efforts. It also details the Allied efforts to complement each other strategically and the ensuing difficulties as a result of a burgeoning niche, psychological warfare. Winkler (1978) states:

Only when they looked toward Britain could American propagandists find support for their own line of attack. The British political system rested on the same bases as that of the United States and British propaganda hence suffered from many of the same constraints. There was a minister of information in the War Cabinet, and in 1941 a new Political Warfare Executive took responsibility for foreign propaganda work. Yet Britain endured the same bureaucratic struggles, the same compromises entailed by a rigid dedication to a truthful line of attack, and the same troubles caused by the indifference of a chief executive...(p.152)

The need for information exchange between the Allied nations was vital to the effectiveness of the Allied cause. If the two primary forces could not break through the political barrier with regard to propaganda dissemination within their own ranks what measure of success could they hope to achieve together? This facet looms like a specter over black propaganda research and muddies the water with regard to finding resources that have examined these difficulties in any great detail.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES**

Examining the events that swirled throughout America during the pre-war involvement provides a vital understanding to the creation of the propaganda machine and how it became defined in later years. A common misconception about the diffusion of propaganda is that it operated strictly under government control and was initially sanctioned by the government. In reality, propaganda moved through the intellectual and academic classes as well as private institutions before becoming federally sanctioned.

The culmination of thousands of events over almost six years engendered the armistice that ended World War II. From submerged U-Boats moving along the inky depths of the oceans in search of Allied battleships to Navajo Indians crafting the un-breakable code, each incident contributed to the final outcome of the war. While the Morale Operations Branch, a section of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), certainly did not turn the tide of World War II in and of itself, its successes in the underworld of espionage paved a path of lesser resistance that allowed the Allied military to prevail. In addition, the accomplishments of this branch would engender a great deal of study

During World War II the United States conducted a propaganda campaign against Nazi Germany of a magnitude never before seen in American history. At least seven different federal organizations were involved in operations that were called either propaganda, psychological warfare or information activities from 1939 to 1945, but three of them - the Overseas Office of War Information, the Office of Strategic Services Morale Operations Branch and the U.S. Army - carried the brunt of the strategic and tactical propaganda offensive in Europe after 1941. (Laurie, 1996, p. 1)

### **Before the OSS**

As stated in Chapter 2, Nazi propaganda hysteria began to spread about the country. Whether real or alleged, anti-fascist Americans were determined to prohibit further infiltration of Nazi propaganda into American society. Historian Clayton Laurie (1996), states that it ultimately was the elite class of the private sector that began marshalling their efforts to counteract the threat of Nazi propaganda. They defined the role of propaganda and subsequently became the integral players when the Federal Government assumed the reigns. It was their goal to bring this threat to the forefront and persuade the bourgeois that their homeland was no longer secure and that a counterattack was essential.

Laurie (1996) posits that while German and Nazi propaganda was prevalent, it was not omnipresent as many of the Allies began to believe. The Orwellian hysteria that ensued as a result of the

supposedly ubiquitous Nazi propaganda became the impetus for the propaganda counter-attack by the United States, which propelled the mobilization of the private sector.

The efforts of elite groups of interventionists and internationalists to focus the public's attention on the Nazi threat succeeded because of their contacts with influential individuals, with organizations that studied propaganda and morale issues and with important members of the Roosevelt administration. (Laurie, 1996, p. 30)

One such organization, formed to analyze propaganda, was the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA) created in 1937 in New York City. The members of the IPA maintained that by analyzing it they would become impervious to the effects of it. The IPA published studies, articles, newsletters and sponsored seminars throughout the country on the effects and nuances of propaganda. The Princeton University Listening Center was founded by a Rockefeller grant to study, dissect, and analyze shortwave propaganda programs all over the world and subsequently to publish their findings. Many other committees emerged as well including the Committee on Morale of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social issues, the American Defense Morale Committee, Committee on National Morale, and the Council for Democracy. (Laurie, 1996)

...The administration, under considerable pressure from internationalist and interventionist groups, began to study the problem of Nazi propaganda attacks on the United States...The first steps were undertaken as well to examine the efficacy of

creating a federal agency to counter the attacks and to use propaganda as an offensive weapon. (p. 45)

### **The Office of Strategic Services**

The Office of Strategic Services was created during World War II as the eminent need for information gathering arose. Even though the United States had not yet entered the war it became apparent that their neutral status would more than likely be converted to siding with the Allied Powers against Germany, Japan and Italy. The United States prior to World War II did not have a cohesive or sanctioned institution for the sole purpose of covert activities, espionage, and information gathering

On June 18, 1941, six months before Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt summoned Donovan to the White House to discuss the formation of America's first national intelligence-gathering agency. Both men felt that the United States would soon be drawn into World War II, and a unified wartime intelligence gathering system serving both military and government representative was imperative.

The outcome of this discussion a month later was the establishment of the Coordinator of Information (COI), the first U.S. organized venture into the combined fields of espionage, subversion, propaganda, and related activities under a single, centralized intelligence agency. After a year-long tumultuous trial period of intergovernmental turf struggles, mainly in the field of overt propaganda, the COI operations were transferred to the Office of War Information [OWI], and the OSS functions

were set up under the Joint Chiefs of Staff in June 1942.  
(McIntosh, 1998, p.7)

Donovan, an erstwhile graduate of Yale and prominent New York attorney, drew on his social circle of Ivy League educated friends as recruits for the newly formed OSS. As a result, the OSS developed a reputation for being an elite organization and often employed highly educated and socially prominent individuals.

The OWI was formed out of the Foreign Information Service, and was responsible for 'white' propaganda. Holly Cowan Schulman author of *The Voice of America* (1990) approaches the birth of the federal regulation of propaganda by beginning with the Foreign Information Service (FIS). Her work considers the topic from the standpoint of one of the most notable venues for propaganda: the Voice of America broadcasts. She examines propaganda in a case-study manner examining the Voice of America as a microcosm in the macrocosm of American propaganda abroad. Schulman gives a brief biography of the founders of the Voice of America, one of the most notable being Robert Sherwood. She explains the reasoning behind the decision to utilize radio as the primary resource with which to construct an initial propaganda organization.

Although [Sherwood and Gen. Bill Donovan] did not exclude the more traditional techniques of propaganda – leaflets, newspapers, stories, films, posters – they assumed that these would have to come later as in 1941 radio offered by far the greatest hope of reaching Europeans. Leaflets could be

dropped by the Royal Air Force, but the British were loath to risk their planes on such non-military operations. It was hard to plant newspaper stories in Nazi-occupied Europe and impossible to show films or put up posters. Radio, however, could go behind enemy lines and reach directly into people's homes. (Schulman, 1990, p. 23)

In an examination of the early years of fomenting a propaganda campaign, expediency was certainly the primary objective. Because the United States operated at such a deficit in the intelligence division, as a result of birthing a federal agency under war-time conditions, the goal was to reach the enemy with precision and magnitude in a minimal amount of time.

Schulman details the ubiquitous struggle between the OWI and the OSS as to who should control propaganda dissemination. The conflict began shortly after the creation of the OSS with General Bill Donovan at the helm. He vehemently asserted that propaganda dissemination should originate with the fledgling intelligence agency as a part of covert operations and should not be under the hand of the OWI, a very idealistic agency that did not want to utilize black propaganda. (Schulman, 1990)

Schulman delves into a great deal of the political machinations that resulted from the ongoing disagreement between the two offices and articulates the raucous debates in private and in public with personality explosions eroding the situation. This aspect of the history of the OSS is vital to understanding black propaganda. The

subject often became a hot bed of controversy between Republicans and Democrats, idealists and realists, and even affected relations between the members of the Allied forces.

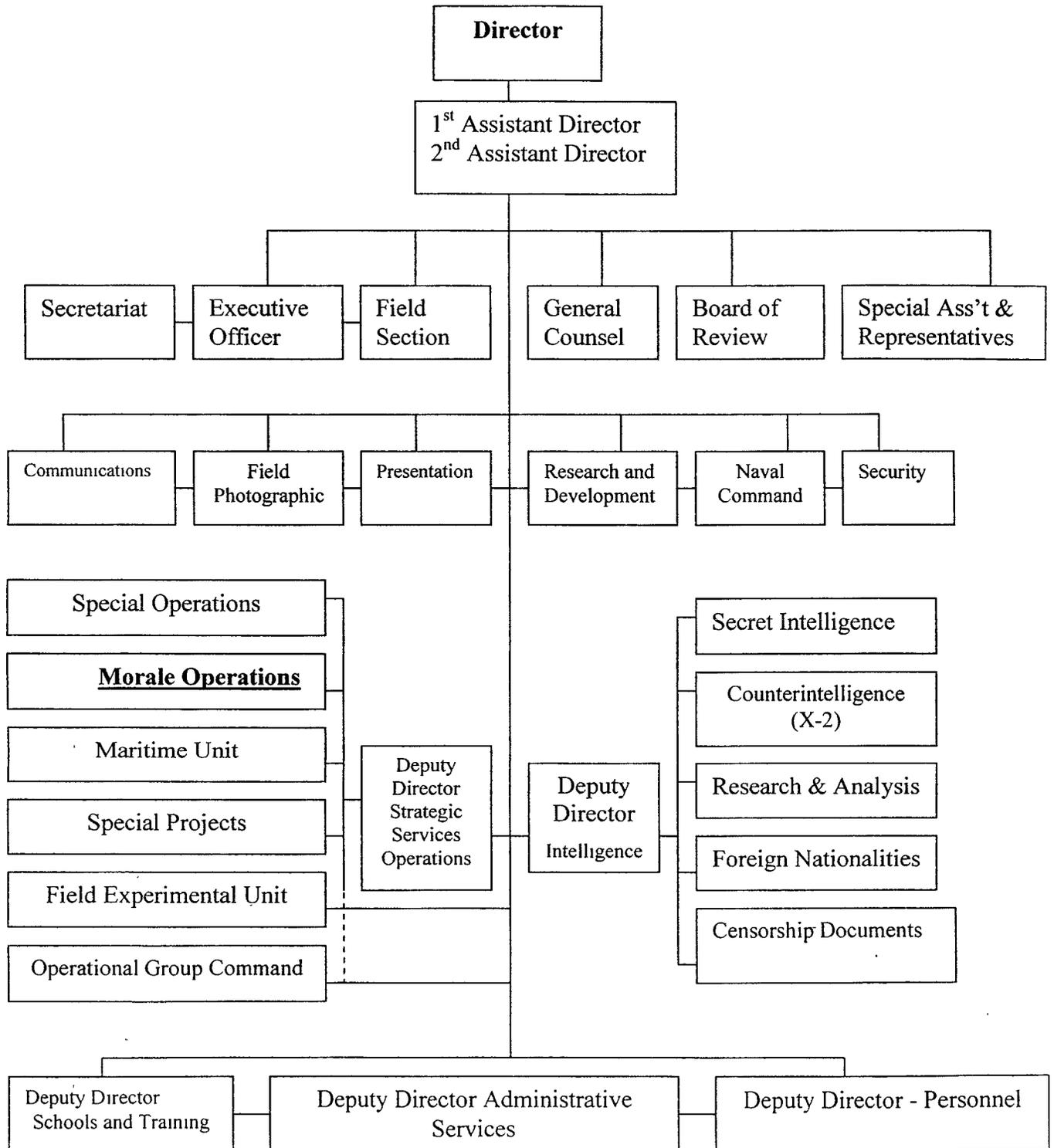
Subsequent to its inception the OSS divided its operations into six different sectors: Research and Analysis, Special Operations, Operational Group, The Maritime Unit, Counterintelligence Branch, and Morale Operations. Research and Analysis (R&A) gathered and analyzed most information needed for overt and covert operations. The Special Operations group (SO) "...was a clandestine branch that organized and executed physical subversion including sabotage, fifth-column activities, and guerilla warfare." (McIntosh, 1998, p.14) The Operational Group (OG) was comprised of multi-lingual soldiers, generally paratroopers, trained in sabotage activities. The Maritime Unit (MU), as the name evidences, trained small groups to engage in destruction of maritime associated war-machines and weaponry. X-2, the Counterintelligence branch, served to protect American espionage interests by working closely with British intelligence and utilizing intelligence gathered from Enigma, the German machine cipher system. And the final arm of the OSS, the Morale Operations, which generated black propaganda and misinformation. (McIntosh, 1998)

(See Figure 1)

Figure 1

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FROM THE OSS  
NOVEMBER 1944

Adapted from the CIA publication "America's first Intelligence Agency" 2000.



“The OSS expanded in 1942 into full-fledged operations abroad. Donovan sent units to every theater of war that would have them....Utilizing military cover for the most part, but with some officers under diplomatic and non-official cover, OSS began to build world-wide clandestine capability.” (Warner, 2000, p. 8)

### **The Morale Operations Branch**

The Morale Operations Branch came into the OSS with a history of frustration, ambiguity, and ideological struggles. Prolific quarrels churned around the OWI and the OSS. As a result of these struggles, the Morale Operations branch emerged. Historian Clayton Laurie (1996) notes:

William Donovan did not agree with President Roosevelt’s decision to separate propaganda from the new Office of Strategic Services, and he continued to advance the concept of a comprehensive military-controlled psychological warfare agency. Within seven months of its inception, the OSS reentered the propaganda field by filling a self-defined gap in the U.S. psychological warfare campaign calling its new activities “morale operations”. By Donovan’s definition morale operations consisted of subversive or ‘black’ propaganda, which he had always thought more effective than the OWI’s strict dissemination of overt and truthful information (Laurie, 1996, p. 128)

The creation of the OSS was dubiously accepted and vaguely defined, presenting its opponents with more than enough fodder to voice disapproval. However, the objectives of the Morale Operations branch (subversive and misleading information as opposed to a truthful platform) invited even further rancorous debate that fell into fundamental ideological principles.

“Truth is an early casualty in war, and nations that are attempting to annihilate large cities will not scruple at the use of systemic disinformation, an instrument of war that disseminates carefully contrived deception in order to confuse and demoralize the enemy.” (McDonald, 1991, p. 9)

The constant struggle over propaganda tactics did not, however, prevent the officers in the Morale Operations branch from utilizing creative measures to distract, dissuade and discourage the enemy. News stories were manipulated, slogans were planted, cartoons were created, leaflets were dropped, and radio shows were thrust into the atmosphere in order to encourage chaos within the ranks of Nazi Germany.

Director William Donovan and Edmund Taylor created the OSS concept of morale operations by emulating Nazi tactics and intended for black propaganda to spread dissent, disorder and confusion.

“Donovan believed that MO ‘coaxes the minds of those it wishes to

manipulate with the confidential voice of an accepted friend.”(Laurie, 1996, p. 136)

In order for black propaganda to be effective, it had to look as though it was sanctioned by a believable source. Therefore a significant portion of morale operations was devoted to the creation of supposedly ‘original documents’. MO borrowed heavily from its British counterpart, the Political Warfare Executive (PWE).

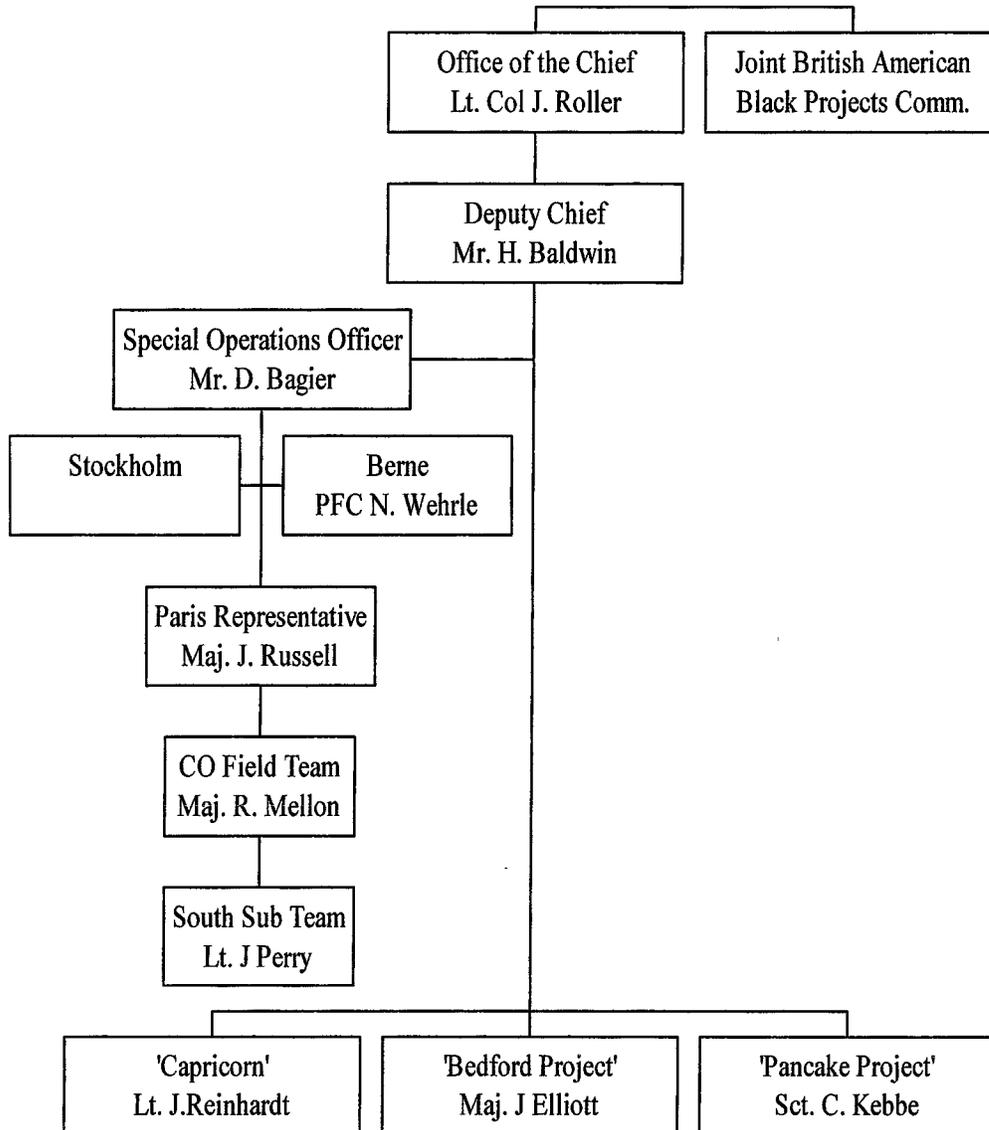
[MO] eventually refined PWE techniques, which included the production of leaflets, posters, stickers, stencils, newspapers, and magazine articles disguised as enemy publications or as materials of fake enemy dissident or resistance groups in enemy-occupied countries. Distributed by air, by partisan, or by agent, the printed materials were printed in ever-increasing quantities. MO developed forgeries of commercial, civilian, and military documents, Nazi party and business stationery, ration cards, and postage stamps, all of which were used to intimidate collaborators, to implicate enemy officials, soldiers, or civilians, in subversive plots against the state, and to harass the Gestapo. (Laurie, 1996, p. 136)

One example of Morale Operations propaganda was the gossip that was spread with the theme ‘Where is Hitler?’.

MO spread rumors that Hitler was to speak at certain anniversaries while his rumored death, disappearance, illness, psychotic condition, or flight from Germany were all part of the orchestration of misinformation on his whereabouts and silence. (McDonald, 1991, p.10)

MO, like the other divisions within the OSS was divided into several different subsections. (See Figure 2) It included a Special Communications Detachment, which worked in concert with the United States Army in combat propaganda. The Special Communications Detachment included the following subsets: the Radio division which, like its name, was responsible for the black radio operations; the Special Contacts division that targeted partisan groups for MO distribution and the manufacturing division of all the leaflets and pamphlets, the Publications and Campaigns Division. (Laurie, 1996, p. 140)

Figure 2  
 MORALE OPERATIONS BRANCH CHART  
 EUROPEAN THEATRE OF OPERATIONS FEB. 1945  
 Source: Adapted from chart found in the National Archives and  
 republished in the book The Propaganda Warriors by Clayton Laurie p. 141



The implementation strategy that Morale Operations employed was to create small bases throughout Europe and North Africa in proximity to a U.S. military operation, at times being integrated into that particular military outfit. By 1945, MO had base operations in almost 20 cities with agents spread even further.

From these bases MO personnel conducted subversive propaganda campaigns against the Axis throughout Eastern and Western Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The branch targeted enemy civil and military audiences, seeking to create distrust, suspicion, resentment, civil strife, and friction by playing up social, national, and ethnic rivalries and differences as well as by turning people against their governments, leaders against leaders, social and economic class against class, soldiers against officers, unit against unit, service against service, ally against ally, and civilians against the military. (Laurie, 1996, p. 140)

MO was considered the step-child of the OSS, as it was a latecomer to the project, it was fraught with ideological difficulties, and it did not seem as glamorous as its counter-intelligence and special operations counterparts. However, it played a vital role in slowly infiltrating the enemy and causing twinges of doubt within the minds of the targeted.

### **Missions of the Morale Operations Branch**

MO diversified its missions, knowing that the enemy would respond on several different levels psychologically as well as emotionally. In addition, because of so many different targets, MO found it necessary to create separate campaigns for each objective. By using a variety of different media, MO was guaranteeing exposure on some level, either by a rumor campaign, a radio program, or a dropped leaflet. MO left no stone unturned in its attempt to blanket the enemy with black propaganda. "The MO Branch commenced operations relatively late in the war. Yet between 1943 and V-E day, it implemented campaigns of a scope and level of sophistication beyond any propaganda ever practiced by the Nazis." (Laurie, 1996, p. 192)

The first black propaganda tactic utilized was the rumor. MO, not subjugated by official U.S. policy, was uninhibited in its rumors and created fictitious occurrences to disseminate among the troops and the populous. Rumors included the capturing of high ranking German officers, Nazi troops shooting officers, factories that had been commandeered by foreign workers, officers that had defected to the Allies, and food rations that had supposedly been poisoned. (Laurie, 1996)

Rumors became the cornerstone of the MO mission. While there were many different avenues by which the rumors were

disseminated, and as the Morale Operations Branch developed more creative and advanced methods of dissemination, the rumor still stood as one of the most effective and precise means of fomenting discord among the Nazis.

One conduit by which rumors and other methods of propaganda was disseminated was the leaflet. The leaflet was relatively easy to create and adapt to a specific area and situation. Leaflets could be designed to be attributable to an officer of the Nazi army that had defected, or a German underground group with a pacifist doctrine, or a vehement anti-Nazi resistance group.

Leaflets distributed to the Wehrmacht in Italy, for example, contained lists of bombed streets in German cities, instructions on how to desert to Switzerland or fake an illness, and false proclamations and orders from Wehrmacht officers as well as counterfeit leave passes or leaflets claiming that the wives, sisters, and sweethearts of soldiers were at the sexual mercies of foreign workers and Nazi party members at home. (Laurie, 1996, p. 196-197)

In addition to leaflets, MO created newssheets or newspapers that carried black stories to be carried out to the Axis powers. The OSS produced papers for all of the Axis coalition, however, for the purposes of this paper, the only newspapers upon which the author will focus are the ones pertaining to the Germans and Austrians. The newspapers, *Das Neue Deutschland* and *Der Oesterreicher* were supposedly attributed to German and Austrian peace factions within

the respective countries, but were in fact manufactured by the MO for black propaganda purposes.

“Der Oesterreicher purported to represent a resistance group and sought to split Austria from Germany by portraying the former country as a Nazi-occupied nation. The paper was produced in Washington, printed in Rome, and delivered after 1944 by agents and air-drops.” (Laurie, 1996, p. 199)

The black paper *Das Neue Deutschland* was ascribed to an underground peace party developed in April of 1944 and its purpose was to bring democracy back to Germany and overthrow the Nazi regime.

MO created [*Das Neue Deutschland*] to offer the widest appeal, promising everything to everybody in its political platform, and membership applications were dropped to enemy soldiers and civilians throughout Europe...*Das Neue Deutschland* had an initial run of about 75,000 copies and later increased to 1 million per issue. It was printed in Algiers and later in Rome and Casserta, Italy. (Laurie, 1996, p. 199)

The Morale Operations branch also commandeered the airwaves in an attempt to reach soldiers, who were either impervious to the leaflets, could not read, or were not in a position to gain access to printed material. In addition, radio was used to reinforce the message of other propaganda campaigns and conversely they were used to reinforce radio.

The MO and PWE collaborated to initiate a program known as the Soldatensender Calais program in 1943. Ostensibly the program broadcast from Calais, France but in fact originated from Woburn, England. The OSS provided writers and musicians for the endeavor and the broadcasts were comprised of news, stories, music, coupled with anti-Nazi propaganda to enemy troops and civilians. (Laurie, 1996, p. 205)

The program proved to be particularly vital after July 20, 1944 when an assassination attempt on Hitler shook the core of the Nazi regime. Soldatensender West “broadcast the names of hundreds of Germans supposedly involved in the plot, seeking to implicate both the guilty and innocent in order to eliminate Germany’s leadership and intelligentsia.” (Laurie, 1996, p. 205)

Another campaign that proved deleterious to the Germans and causing consternation among high ranking officials was the Joker campaign. After the aforementioned assassination plot, General Ludwig Beck, former German Army Chief of Staff was killed and his death remained unacknowledged by the Nazi command. Thus, MO used that information to ‘resurrect’ General Beck in a program known as Joker. In order to facilitate a believable broadcast rumors were planted that Beck was indeed alive and had moved toward the Allied cause. (Laurie, 1996)

In October 1944 the first Joker program broadcast and was picked up in Sweden as well as by other neutral radio stations. The voice of General Beck proclaimed that "...Nazi amateurism had lost the war and demanded that Germans rise up, kill Hitler, overthrow the Nazis, and sue for peace, thus saving Germany from total annihilation." (Laurie, 1996, p. 205)

MO missions were frequent and ubiquitous in order to envelop entire nations with black propaganda. The strategy involved in creating campaigns of this magnitude in an organization that was just beginning to find its roots proved to be phenomenal. Coordinating these missions across the globe was a behemoth task, but one taken with alacrity, grace, sophistication and a great deal of acuity. The OSS was able to create a global information gathering organization, coordinate with other intelligence organizations, hire and train thousands of employees, develop strategic operations, as well as many other accomplishments all within a matter of months. However, occasionally struggles emerged and glitches occurred within the ranks as mentioned in the next section.

### **Problems with Espionage**

R. Harris Smith (1972), author of *The OSS: A Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, touches on one of the greatest difficulties in running an intelligence-gathering agency with a

division such as Morale Operations. Most espionage institutions are run by the credo 'the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing.' Smith (1972) recounts, "One MO agent was sent to Greece to spread the rumor of German withdrawals; within weeks another branch of the OSS reported this information as an intelligence 'scoop'." (p. 13) Troubles such as these plague all espionage exploits but are more predominant in nascent institutions such as the OSS. Lawrence H. McDonald (1991) also makes note of the difficulty in separating fact from fiction when utilizing black propaganda.

Like an unmanageable form of germ warfare, however, MO's black propaganda found its way back into American minds, where it was reported as authentic information in the press. To encourage German soldiers to disobey Hitler's Last Stand Order, MO disseminated within German lines the notion that German officers would soon go underground. The *New York Herald – Tribune* reported this disinformation as a 'super – secret' document revealing plans of the German High Command to fight a third world war. (p. 10)

One particular instance that caused consternation among the ranks of the Allied occurred with Joker program. When the Nazis discovered the frequency on which the Joker program aired, they jammed the signal as it was thought that this program could not be dismissed as an amateurish attempt at psychological warfare. In addition for fear of the program appearing on other frequencies they jammed those as well. While that prevented Joker from airing, it also impeded other Allied broadcasts as well. In addition, it was

discovered that Joker did not have prior sanctioning from the Psychological Warfare Division (PWD), which created tensions between the PWD and OSS. (Laurie, 1996, p. 206)

These types of occurrences, while not common, do interfere with espionage and oftentimes backfire against the agents disseminating the propaganda. However, obstacles such as the aforementioned, were far fewer than one might expect in a burgeoning espionage institution such as the OSS. More often than not, the black propaganda emerged effectively and precisely at the predetermined target and implemented its plan to discourage and denigrate morale.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS**

This study examines the time period of 1943 to 1945 during World War II. World War II began on September 1, 1939 when the Nazis invaded Poland. The United States entered the war in December of 1941 after the Japanese attacked an American base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The war ended in 1945 with the defeat of Europe and Japan in May and September respectively. The use of propaganda during wartime was not a new concept but the United States began utilizing it on two fronts, a subversive front (black propaganda) and an overt front (white propaganda). The United States' federal organizations all fought for the right to utilize propaganda and so it swam in a quagmire of different organizations before the black propaganda fell underneath the umbrella of the Office of Strategic Services and more specifically the Morale Operations branch of that organization. With a green light, the organization began officially propagating 'black' newspapers, broadcasts, leaflets and much more.

Director Bill Donovan described the Morale Operations Branch in a memo to the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

For nearly two years prior to the capitulation of Germany, OSS conducted clandestine operations designed to weaken the

resolution of the enemy and maintain the spirit of resistance in occupied countries. Broadcasts, rumors, and all types of written materials provided the Germans with evidence – apparently within their own ranks – that their plight was hopeless. These operations were mounted from bases on the enemy's perimeter in the Near East, the Mediterranean, Western Europe, and Scandinavia. (Office of Strategic Services. (September 13, 1945). Declassified document. *Memorandum of Information to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff*. (Record Group 226.) Author: Director William J. Donovan.)

This paper will focus primarily on news articles and leaflets supplemented by radio broadcasts to grasp the full scope of the black propaganda machine.

### **The Acquisition**

The author gathered primary sources in Washington D.C. by visiting the National Archives and the Library of Congress although most information came from the National Archives. Many secondary sources were utilized in the Texas State University Library as well as the University of Texas libraries. The author also used the assistance of a graduate student from the University of Maryland, College Park for additional gathering of documents. In addition, books from libraries throughout the United States were requisitioned through the university's inter-library loan program.

**Newspaper**

The primary newspaper used for this study was *Das Neue Deutschland* the OSS originated paper created to look like a German propagated paper. This was utilized because it was the main source of 'black' news articles and was the most available.

**Leaflets**

Leaflets were found throughout the archives and did not originate from a specific title such as the newspapers. These were generated frequently by many different people both on the front lines and in offices back in Washington D.C. The leaflets were dispersed by the hundreds of thousands, utilizing many different methods, into the front lines in hopes they would be influential to Germans wishing to defect or spy for the United States.

**Radio Broadcasts**

The radio broadcasts (printed transcripts) gathered by the author are from secondary sources but originated in their primary form from the National Archives. The author also examined reports of the successes and failures of radio broadcasts as primary sources. The author examined these in the context to show the greater picture of black propaganda and how it is necessary to have a broad scope of propaganda rather than a single source.

### **Sample Selection (External Documents)**

The samples utilized were samples of convenience. The National Archives house millions of documents and in order to do an exhaustive search, years would have to have been dedicated to the project. Thus, the author utilized every source she was able to gather in the amount of time that she had available. The author culled the National Archives Office of Strategic Services index from Record Group 226 and pulled every file that referenced the Morale Operations Branch. She then photocopied all files that pertained to the black propaganda, reports, and the propaganda materials themselves. After the selection process, a total of 50 external documents (leaflets and news articles) were used for the thesis.

### **Analyses**

The papers and leaflets were written in German, as they were intended for German troops, and thus the author of the thesis needed to employ a translator in order to be able to complete the analysis. The translator was found through the University of Texas system, is a German native, and thus the author trusts that the translations are reliable and true. The analyses of black propaganda are based upon four criteria, media used, tactics, targets, methods of dispersion. The author created a matrix to help facilitate the analysis of the

propaganda, particularly the quantitative aspect of the paper. By putting each sample into a category in the matrix, the author was able to view the propaganda in a broad scope and analyze it quantitatively. Further the matrix aided qualitative analysis by yielding relationships between the propaganda targets, medium and tactics as well as a date correlation. (See Appendix A)

### **Other primary sources (Internal Documents)**

The author also assessed numerous other documents gathered from the Morale Operations branch in the National Archives in order to supplement the criteria for analysis described above. These supplements include letters from operatives describing dissemination methods, tactics, dates, times, targets, effectiveness, operational tactics, usefulness, enemy reactions, intricate details, successes and failures of many operations. These documents are critical to the success of the thesis as they provide the author with necessary information in order to examine the propaganda in the most effective light. Altogether 20 internal documents were used for the thesis.

### **Timeframe**

Research was begun in the fall of 2002, when the author went to Washington D.C. to begin research at the National Archives.

Research continued through 2003 and writing commenced Spring of 2003 and was completed in the Spring of 2004.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Media* – radio, newspaper, leaflet

*Tactics* – these tactics are defined in Chapter 2 and are enumerated as: glittering generality, name calling, bandwagon, transfer, testimonial, plain folks, card stacking, wedge-driving, bogeyman, and pipedream.

*Targets* – the main target for the propaganda was German troops, although many times it was aimed at the bourgeoisie in order to coerce them into providing information on troop movement, and encourage defecting, particularly if they had knowledge that deemed important to the Allies, and/or if they had special skills that the Allies could utilize.

*Methods of dispersion* – dispersion came in the form of a broadcast (via airwaves), by plane drops, through the mail, by ground troops as well as many other methods which were creatively employed to distribute the propaganda.

### **Media**

*The Newspapers—*

*Das Neue Deutschland:* OSS Director, General Bill Donovan, wrote in a memo to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on

September 13, 1945, "...OSS/Algiers began printing and infiltrating *Das Neue Deutschland*, the organ of a non-existent democratic peace party within Germany. Copies of this paper were delivered to resistance forces in large quantities for distribution throughout France, Italy, and Yugoslavia." (Office of Strategic Services. (September 13, 1945). Declassified document. *Memorandum of Information to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff*. (Record Group 226.) Author: Director William J. Donovan.)

### *Leaflets-*

Leaflets were used, in many different campaigns. Leaflets were small, flyer-like one or two page newssheets generally making a proclamation or detailing a brief news story. Leaflets could be created easily in the field, were printed on poor-quality paper, and were generated expediently for a fast turn-around. Leaflet campaigns were some of the most utilized propaganda operations on both sides of the war and were distributed in all theatres.

### *Radio-*

Radio was created for those who neither cared to read, nor couldn't read or those who preferred to hear voices or were more swayed by a more tangible presence. Radio was utilized as a method to reach the enemy with music, poems, supposed Nazi-defectors, and the sounds of women from back home among other things. The black radio stations were often broadcast from England and France, but purported to be inside Germany.

**Tactics-**

The author chose 50 samples of Morale Operations black propaganda randomly in order to examine them for propaganda tactics. The tactics: glittering generality, bandwagon, name calling, testimonial, transfer, plain folks, card stacking, bogeyman, wedge-driving, and pipe – dream, have been previously defined. While almost every tactic was employed at some point, Morale Operations favored some methods over others.

Bandwagon, proved to be the most utilized approach by the Morale Operations branch. This is a common war-time propaganda tactic to encourage people to follow what the majority are already ostensibly doing. Out of the 50 examined print media, seven utilized bandwagon exclusively and 13 used bandwagon in concert with another tactic for a total of 20 instances or almost one-half of the time in which the bandwagon method was employed.

One leaflet utilizing bandwagon stated:

Our alliance has taken over the holy duty to create order in Germany first, and then to come soon to a peace with the enemy powers. It is up to you, Comrades of the Westfront, to show that you are the true Germans. Every member of the SS is immediately to be disarmed and in case of resistance rendered harmless. Every officer and every man has to be prepared for retreat to Germany. (Office of Strategic Services. (n.d.) Declassified Document. *Officers, Underofficers, and*

*Soldiers! Comrades!*. (Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda].  
Author: Anonymous.)

Another example of bandwagon in a leaflet is:

All the soldiers have realized that Hitler's regime isn't interested in protecting the homeland, but to keep their horrible leadership even if it costs the entire population...

To us, soldiers on the front, there is only one answer: disarm and shoot each SS man, tear the swastikas from their uniforms and march back into the homeland under leadership of the Fatherland officers, then we will create order after we get rid of the [Nazi] Party...(Office of Strategic Services. (n.d.) Declassified Document. *Comrades!*. (Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda]. Author: Anonymous.)

Yet another bandwagon leaflet calls for even more loyalty to the supposed German peace party, calling for soldiers to give their lives to the cause:

We are on the fronts and shall give our lives to stop the Hitler regime and its crimes. We are determined to risk our lives for it; for freeing Germany of its oppressors. Every single person is obliged to make it his duty to fight against Hitler, not for Hitler. Spread the newspaper! Establish your own pockets of resistance! Take Action!! ...(Office of Strategic Services. (March 26, 1945) Declassified Document. *Der Meldereiter*. (Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda]. Author: Anonymous.)

A *Das Neue Deutschland* article also employs the use of bandwagon. The article discusses a peace treaty that the Germans ostensibly rejected:

It can only be in the interest of every German, that crimes committed by members of the [Nazi] party are finally being punished and Germany can recreate its good name again. It is a horrible crime to the German future that this deal was rejected. Every day worsens our situation and brings us closer to a downfall. Germany's only hope would be to accept the freedom treaty right away and try to build a new Germany. (Office of Strategic Services. *Kein zweites Versailles*. (1944, July 15). Declassified Document. *Das Neue Deutschland*, n.p. [Newspaper Propaganda].)

The bandwagon tactic lends itself well in wartime because it is a call for inspiration and action. The very nature of the military is that millions of people take orders from a few and the bandwagon appeals to that herd mentality; 'we are all doing it, so should you'.

In addition to bandwagon, wedge-driving was found to be another prevalent method employed in black propaganda by the Morale Operations Branch. Out of the 50 examined external documents, wedge-driving was utilized 12 times, 6 times by itself and 6 times in concert with another tactic. Wedge-driving propaganda attempts to create a chasm between groups or individuals by providing fodder to instill mistrust in the target of the propaganda.

One leaflet, utilized in 1944, attributed to the fictitious, MO created, Soldattengruppe West (Western Soldiergroup), exemplifies wedge-driving in this manner:

When dozens of our officers are being hung suddenly, like regular thieves, whom are we supposed to, in the discipline we

are accustomed to, recognize as a steady authority, whose orders we have to follow, without thinking?

The answer is: We cannot trust anyone but our own brains. (Office of Strategic Services. (1944) Declassified Document. *Komraden*. (Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda]. Author: Soldatengruppe West.)

The newssheet *Der Oesterreicher* attempted to further sever the relationship between Germany and Austria. Here is an example of wedge-driving from that newssheet dated September 23, 1944.

The breakdown of the Third Reich is imminent and with it the reincarnation of a free Austria. After years of suppression and exploitation through Hitler's bandits, after years of a horrible war, which we neither wanted nor caused, we can see the dawn of a better future. This better, happier future we must earn for ourselves, by doing everything to free ourselves from the cross the Reichs-Germans made us bear...(Office of Strategic Services. Ende Und Anfang. (1944, September 23). Declassified Document. *Der Oesterreicher*, n.p. [Newspaper Propaganda].)

Another common tactic is the 'bogeyman' tactic. In this manner the propaganda attempts to invoke a feeling of terror into the intended target. It is a method that demonizes and purports a feeling of a monstrosity toward the enemy. In a *Das Neue Deutschland* article entitled Perpetuum Mobile, dated July 15, 1944 the 'bogeyman' propaganda is exemplified as such:

...And now the terrible awakening: The war is lost, the entire

world is determined to get rid of national socialism. But those men, first the Kaiser and then Hitler, who supported and controlled will never accept their defeat, everything evil in the human character seems embodied in them, the arrogance, the greed, the need to have power and all that is carried by the ice-cold lack of regard which will not back away from anything. (Office of Strategic Services. Perpetuum Mobile. (1944, July 15). Declassified Document. *Das Neue Deutschland*, n.p. [Newspaper Propaganda].)

Leaflets also employed the bogeyman tactic as is evidenced in this leaflet distributed sometime before November of 1943:

...When the trap was shut, 300,000 soldiers of the Axis stood on Tunis' soil. 50,000 have fallen or were wounded. 250,000 have given up, more than half of them were Germans...The same Allied troops, which were victorious over the Germans in Tunis are closing the iron ring around you again. The trap is closing. (Office of Strategic Services. (1944) Declassified Document. *Komraden*. (Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda]. Author: Soldatengruppe West.)

Two more tactics evidenced in the sample selection are plain-folks and pipe-dream. The plain-folks tactic appeals to the 'people' and is generally attributable to the 'people'. It asserts that since it stems from the bourgeoisie that it must be applicable to its audience, also bourgeoisie. This leaflet, created in 1944, states, "Comrades: Today the mass of the little people is being spoken to, they are being promised a new division of goods, socialism and the blue of the sky." (Office of Strategic Services. (1944) Declassified Document. *Komraden*.)

(Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda]. Author: Soldatengruppe West.)

Of the sample selection of 50 articles, four utilized the 'plain-folks' method of propaganda.

The pipe-dream device is used to simulate a feeling of wishful thinking. A radio transcript from the 1944 'Soldatensender' program gives an excellent example of the pipe-dream method:

Let's get back to our own good old fatherland...to the German Rhine. A good bottle of Rhine wine or Mosel sure is something they can't copy. Gee remember the strawberry punch we used to make...and a good ten cent cigar...what more do you want. My father always said...to eat and drink are the three best things in life. (Mendelsohn, 1989, p. 17. Excerpted from declassified radio transcripts. Office of Strategic Services. (Record Group 226))

The pipe-dream tactic creates an impetus for the soldier to regain what they have lost in the war, the tranquility of peace-time, the assurance of the 'good-life'. The 'pipe-dream' was employed three times out of 50 articles, and utilized in four different radio transcripts.

Propaganda tactics are often very effective when they are blended together into one news story or leaflet, one example being bandwagon and testimonial. When an established and credible person or group calls everyone to follow, the audience is even more compelled to believe that the source of the leaflet is in fact genuine.

The following leaflet exemplifies this very situation: the academic community, appeals to academicians in the German army. The trusted voice of a fellow student appeals to other students in hopes of convincing them to follow based on their mutual academic careers. This leaflet also happens to utilize the bogeyman tactic as well in order to intimidate and subjugate the enemy. Here is the example of testimonial, bogeyman and bandwagon combined in one leaflet:

### *Testimonial*

“To the academics in the German army:

We students, most of us former veterans, know what victory is...we knew if you fell, you fell as a winner. Victory or death – back then, the slogan made sense...” Office of Strategic Services. (n.d.)

Declassified Document. *Akademiker in der Deutschen Wermacht*.

(Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda]. Author: Hans Scholl-Bund.)

### *Bogeyman*

“...The enemy has three times as many people as we do...[the enemy] dominates the air over all battlefields, over the occupied zones and partially over Germany. Our ships had to flee from the seas...” Office of Strategic Services. (n.d.) Declassified Document. *Akademiker in der Deutschen Wermacht*. (Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda].

Author: Hans Scholl-Bund.)

*Bandwagon*

“...End the War! Today! Announce capitulation with your troops! Save Germany from Destruction! Save yourself and your soldiers for Germany!” (Office of Strategic Services. (n.d.) Declassified Document. *Akademiker in der Deutschen Wermacht*. (Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda]. Author: Hans Scholl-Bund.)

Blending tactics within the MO propaganda appears to be a very common technique in order to appeal to all the senses. Why utilize only one tactic when two can prove to be twice as effective?

Another leaflet combines wedge-driving and bandwagon techniques:

*Wedge-driving*

“Soon the fate of Germany will be a certain one; Austria needn’t and musn’t take part in this fate because the hate of the whole world isn’t directed against us but only against the Third Reich” (Office of Strategic Services. (n.d.) Declassified Document. *Aufruf an alle wahren Oesterreicher!*. (Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda]. Author: Bund Wahrer Oesterreicher.)

*Bandwagon*

[The Allies] are coming to help us with our fight for freedom. Whoever helps us to free ourselves from the dominance of Hitler cannot be our enemy and we cannot show resistance to our allies. Therefore our solution in this difficult hour must be: No senseless resistance against the approaching Allies!! Out with the Germans! Long live the freed Austria!

(Office of Strategic Services. (n.d.) Declassified Document. *Aufruf an alle wahren Oesterreicher!*. (Record Group 226). [Leaflet Propaganda]. Author: Bund Wahrer Oesterreicher.)

As is evidenced by the aforementioned examples, tactics were cleverly inculcated to evince many different sentiments from the enemy. The goal of black propaganda was to arouse stirring emotions within the minds and souls of the enemy and play upon the weaknesses in their psyche. It encouraged the enemy to dream a fictitious dream, to embrace a false hope and to espouse the lies beneath the surface of the voice behind the radio or the hand behind the pen of the newspapers and leaflets.

### **Targets-**

Based on the author's research it can be concluded that MO generated black propaganda directed at Germany was aimed primarily at two targets: troops and civilians. Rarely was anything aimed at anyone in positions of high command as it was assumed that those person's loyalty to the Nazi regime was unquestionable. Therefore, most propaganda focused on enlisted men and the local populous of the enemy countries such as Italy, Germany and Austria.

A semi-monthly report, an internal document within MO, provided an example of an intended target in this manner when discussing the dissemination of propaganda: "A bogus proclamation to German troops, signed by von Brauchitsch was printed and

disseminated.” (Office of Strategic Services. (August 3, 1944).

Declassified document. *Semi-Monthly Report, MO Section Period 15-31, July, 1944.* (Record Group 226.) Author: Eugene Warner, Chief MO Afqh.)

Another memo discussing a radio broadcast noted the target as such:

“Early broadcasts, aimed at destroying the internal solidarity of the German civilian population by spreading false rumors and creating confusion purportedly emanated from a German commander broadcasting in Germany who had long disapproved of Nazi politics.” (Office of Strategic Services. (February 3, 1945). Declassified document. *Report on MO/ETO – July 1944-January 1945.* (Record Group 226.) Author: Lt. (jg) John D. Wilson.)

A ‘Report on the Psychology of and Morale of German Troops’ dated March 25, 1943-breaks down targets into further detail.

- a) Age groups – Older men are on the whole more discontented than younger – and in quite a high proportion of combatant German troops. (?25%) [sic] is over 30. They are more capable of reasoning than the younger ones. But at the other end of the scale it is possible just to perceive a gleam of hope. The 19-year olds – also numerous – are if anything less enthusiastic for the war than those in their middle twenties. (Office of Strategic Services. (March 25, 1945). Declassified document. *Report on Psychology and Morale of German Troops.* (Record Group 226.) Author: Anonymous.)

- b) Married Men –These are more anxious than the rest to get the war over, and more ready to consider the war on individual terms. But they are correspondingly less ready to take the risk, e.g. of deserting for fear of reprisals on their families. (Office of Strategic Services. (March 25, 1945). Declassified document. *Report on Psychology and Morale of German Troops*. (Record Group 226.) Author: Anonymous.)
- c) Old Soldiers – Men who have been with the army uninterruptedly for 5 or 6 years – and there are not a few such – are noticeably more critical than the rest. Their exasperation has stung them into thought. (Office of Strategic Services. (March 25, 1945). Declassified document. *Report on Psychology and Morale of German Troops*. (Record Group 226.) Author: Anonymous.)

Another target, no less important but based on geography rather than military vs. civilian, was the Austrians. It was extremely important to the OSS to create a firm wedge between Germany and Austria, and play upon the natural Austrian pride. MO employed the ‘divide and conquer’ mentality when targeting Austrians and attempted to engender doubt, fear, angst, and resentment in the minds of the Austrians as a means to achieve their goal.

### **Methods of Dispersion-**

The Morale Operations Branch created a plethora of ways in which to distribute black propaganda. An analysis of internal documents revealed various manners of distribution. Several of these

are enumerated from a top-secret document printed July 15, 1943 entitled "Propaganda In the Field". Attached to this document is a letter from an officer connected to the First Army in North Africa dated March 25, presumably 1943 although that is not indicated. The following examples are derived from this unnamed officer's letter.

The propaganda to which the officer refers is leaflet propaganda and he gives four ways in which it was distributed: Air, Patrols, Agents and Shells.

The method of an air-drop indicates that the leaflets were dropped from the body of a plane. The officer notes "There seems no reason why any fighter aircraft equipment with a flare-chute should not drop up to 4 or 5,000 leaflets without the pilot being asked to do more than pull a handle." (Office of Strategic Services. (July 15, 1943). Declassified Document. *Propaganda in the Field*. (Record Group 226). Author: Anonymous). A follow - up report from the officer dated July 4, 1943 to the original letter from the officer notes:

The distribution by air on a large scale began about the 15<sup>th</sup> of April [presumably 1943] and continued to the end of the campaign. The larger proportion of leaflets were dropped by 'Strategic Bombers' on targets round [sic] Tunis and Bizerta, but a very large number were dropped on tactical targets on the actual battlefield, by the medium and light bombers...I know no exact figure but I estimate that in this period about 3 ½ million German leaflets were dropped in Tunisia. (Office of Strategic Services. (July 15, 1945). Declassified Document. *Propaganda in the Field*. (Record Group 226). Author: Anonymous).

Another method of distribution to which the officer refers is patrols.

The officer's letter states:

This method of distribution is of course only possible in the peculiar circumstances of warfare on this front, which is more or less static and yet without close contact. There are large belts of unoccupied territory between us and the Germans which may be anything up to 7 or 8 miles deep, and which are visited only by patrols from both sides. In them are farms, even villages which we may visit one night and the Germans the next. It is in such places that leaflets get left about. (Office of Strategic Services. (July 15, 1943). Declassified Document, *Propaganda in the Field*. (Record Group 226). Author: Anonymous).

The third dispersion method employed is the utilization of agents. The officer notes that he distributed leaflets to other agents from British and French organizations who ostensibly had the means to get it across the lines but they were deemed as an unreliable resource.

The most effective method that the officer referenced was the use of firing shells onto the front lines containing leaflets. The officer believed that this is by far the most effective method of distribution. He states:

At present I can dispose of about 35,000 leaflets a week by this means, and I think 1,000 leaflets by shell is worth 50,000 by aircraft. German troops, though plentiful enough, are after all fairly thin on the ground. An aircraft may drop its

leaflets 25 miles behind the line, where unless they fall near a road, no German will ever see them; it may drop them in forests, in swamps, in lakes, in the sea or in inaccessible mountains. But a shell can put them down accurately on an actual German position, on the few square yards out of many square miles where Germans are to be found. (Office of Strategic Services. (July 15, 1945). Declassified Document. *Propaganda in the Field*. (Record Group 226). Author: Anonymous).

The officer goes on to state the drawbacks: occasionally leaflets become burned or torn in the process, a wind-drift of about 300 feet during a fall, as well as the necessity of leaflets being cut to a specific size.

The July 4, 1943 follow-up report states that shell distribution continued to grow as time progressed. The report notes that between April 19<sup>th</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup> approximately 500 shells were fired, or 35/day, and targeted at the strongest enemy resistance. The shells delivered an estimated 275,00 leaflets to the enemy, which, the officer equates to 5 million by air drop. (Office of Strategic Services. (July 15, 1943). Declassified Document. *Propaganda in the Field*. (Record Group 226). Author: Anonymous).

Another memo from Lt. (jg) John D. Wilson to Margaret Yates, dated February 3, 1945, discussed dissemination of leaflets between July 1944 and January 1945. The memo begins by discussing recruitment for the agents in order to disseminate the propaganda. The agents were then dispensed to spread rumors and distribute

pamphlets, stickers and posters (appr. 15,000). A qualified printer and leaflet writer were also added to the group so that leaflets might be printed in the field. The memo reported that in October of 1945 more than 33,000,000 leaflets were either dropped or fired at enemy civilians and troops. In addition, the unit obtained recordings from the field to use during black radio broadcasting. Of note, the memo reports the broadcast of the General Beck/Joker program mentioned in Chapter 3. (Office of Strategic Services. (February 3, 1945).

Declassified document. *Report on MO/ETO – July 1944-January 1945.* (Record Group 226.) Author: Lt. (jg) John D. Wilson.)

In late October an independent radio operation, supplementing the Paris programs, was broadcast from the UK for the first time; it involved a series of messages broadcast supposedly from General Beck to the German people. The outcome was successful enough to warrant consideration of further black programs beamed to Germany from the UK...(Office of Strategic Services. (Office of Strategic Services. (February 3, 1945). Declassified document. *Report on MO/ETO – July 1944-January 1945.* (Record Group 226.) Author: Lt. (jg) John D. Wilson.)

One of the most poignant turn of events for the Morale Operations branch was the assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler. MO exploited this information very quickly in their campaigns in order to further drive a wedge between the Germans and their leaders.

The MO memo 'Semi Monthly Report, MO Section, Period 15-31 July, 1944' details many of the tactics used and methods employed in order to facilitate an effective campaign utilizing the Hitler attack. It was decided to print special leaflets and a proclamation signed by a top German general calling on German troops to take various revolutionary actions, in addition to printing an 'extra' edition of *Das Neue Deutschland*. For reasons of expediency it was determined an air-drop was not the best method to disperse the propaganda. Instead they used German prisoners to infiltrate behind enemy lines, as deep as three miles into enemy territory, and post the leaflets on trees, buildings, trucks, as well as scattering them among the city streets. (Office of Strategic Services. (August 3, 1944). Declassified document. *Semi-Monthly Report, MO Section Period 15-31, July, 1944*. (Record Group 226.) Author: Eugene Warner, Chief MO Afqh.)

The aforementioned exemplifies the necessary creativity it takes in order to utilize information and propagate it to the necessary targets at a moment's notice. MO operated with carefully planned out missions but also had to have the necessary skills to develop and execute an operation within hours.

In order to gain a further understanding of the scope and breadth of see Appendix B for a chart from the Rome branch detailing the ongoing operations of the Morale Operations branch including

newssheets such as *Das Neue Deutschland* and the leaflet campaign, *Wie Lange Noch*.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION OF CENTRAL QUESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **Discussion of Central Questions**

Central to this study are four questions, the answers to which are drawn from primary sources such as memos, reports, letters, and internal documents. Conclusions are also drawn from the aforementioned analyses of external documents such as leaflets and black newspapers.

The questions are: What role did black propaganda generated by the Morale Operations Branch of the OSS play in World War II as directed toward Eastern Europe and Germany? Did news, radio, leaflets and posters act in concert or separately? What were specific campaigns? Is there a concrete definition of success when measuring the effectiveness of these types of campaigns?

The first question, what role did black propaganda generated by the Morale Operations Branch of the OSS play in World War II as directed toward Eastern Europe and Germany, can be answered by a memo from Director William J. Donovan to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 13, 1945. He states:

Copies of Das Neue Deutschland were among the items known to have been delivered by the enemy mail system. German soldiers who received this paper were court-martialed when it was found in their possession. Das Neue Deutschland was emphatically denounced by the Nazi press on several occasions during the last winter. Post-war surveys indicate that 44 per cent of the German troops in Italy knew of the chimerical movement represented by this publication. All told, approximately thirty million items of subversive printed matter were infiltrated into enemy-held areas of the Mediterranean Theater. Nearly ten thousand Wehrmacht and Fascist troops bearing OSS leaflets surrendered to Allied and Partisan forces prior to the final collapse.

On the Western Front, OSS agents disseminated subversive leaflets and rumors. In September 1944 the illusion of a rising spirit of rebellion was created by broadcasts such as one which purported to originate in a German town where the "garrison" had overthrown the Nazis and "seized" the radio station. Last winter a series of broadcasts was made by a fictitious German resistance leader for whom principals in the Munich revolt (late April 1945) expressed a high regard after the end of the hostilities. From Sweden and Switzerland OSS directed leaflets, stickers and especially rumors into adjacent occupied countries as well as into Germany. (Office of Strategic Services. (September 13, 1945). Declassified document.

*Memorandum of Information to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff.*  
(Record Group 226.) Author: Director William J. Donovan.)

By defining achievements and operations, the excerpt above defines the task and role of black propaganda. Black propaganda was the quiet shadow behind the front lines, the whisper in every

German's ear slowly denigrating morale, misinforming troops, and coercing the enemy to believe that the very premise upon which they fight, is morally, ethically and fundamentally skewed.

The role it played was a support role, clinging to the edges of battle but not ensconced in the trenches. Black propaganda helped fill in the cracks that those on the front lines neither had the time nor knowledge to fill. It was meant to drive soldiers to surrender, to encourage enemy superiors to mistrust their own soldiers, and to fill troops with mistrust for their country, their leader and their cause.

Could the war have been won without black propaganda? Possibly, although one will never be able to answer that. However, OSS Director, General Donovan, felt it so vital to the success of the war that he fought other federal agencies not only for the right to utilize black propaganda but also for the right to exclusively control it.

The next question, 'did news, radio, leaflets and posters act in concert or separately?', seems easily answered with a yes or no but in fact bears a more detailed answer. Black propaganda was mainly seen as one entity by the outside world, or even other organizations within the federal government, but within the walls of the Morale Operations branch, it appears each operation was treated as a separate unit and utilized for different purposes as well as attempting to reach different groups and individuals. Oftentimes, as is the case in clandestine operations, few people knew all the operations actually

being executed, most were simply concerned about their immediate task at hand rather than the global picture of black propaganda. So in that sense, each operation was in and of itself acting, and thought to be, its own undertaking.

However, black propaganda depended on bombarding its targets, constantly having a flow of propaganda from many different media, such as radios, leaflets, rumors, posters, and newspapers and thus the further each substantiated the Allied cause, the more effective each could be. The strategy was carried out with each mission having its own identity and smaller goals, supporting the larger goal of winning battles, if not the war.

As one question often begets another, the former question begets the next one in asking what were some of the specific campaigns? As many campaigns were executed and the author can only examine a few, the author will attempt to lay out campaigns germane to this thesis as detailed by the Morale Operations branch in a memo from the MO Reports office to the Director, Secretariat on April 23, 1945.

**Radio:**  
**Black Propaganda Broadcasts**

“General Beck” Program

*Objective:* wedge driving

*Implementation:* purported medium wave clandestine program by supposedly purged General Ludwig von Beck telling Germans Nazi

military amateurism had lost the war; that to liquidate traitors, sue for peace, and save Germany from annihilation was the only way out. *Effectiveness:* Front page newspaper articles in Sweden and England, and repeated in the US and France carried reports on broadcasts as authentic

#### “Radio Paris”

*Objective:* to capitalize on fear of all Germans and make Germans believe impending wide-scale destruction of Germany by Allies (broadcast in German)

*Implementation:* Broadcast purportedly coming from “Commander” of an undesignated town in the path of U.S. advance who is resisting “scorched earth” retreat orders – preparing to deliver his town intact to Allies, urging other German towns to do likewise.

#### “Musac Project”

Turns out transcriptions of American popular music, whose lyrics are given MO twists, for use in joint Anglo-American Black Radio Operations over Soldatensender-Calais. Total production of recordings 312 popular songs translated and recorded in New York... [utilizing] popular singers such as Greta Keller [and] Marlene Dietrich.

#### “Capricorn”

Black Radio Operation emanating from British Black transmitter somewhere in England.

*Objective:* To induce Germans to give up [a] losing fight by advocating immediate end of war acceptance of unconditional surrender as the only way to avoid complete annihilation of the German nation.

*Implementation:* 10 minute daily programs consisting of short and medium wave broadcasts...reaching Rhine, to Berlin and Munich, by a character “Hagedorn”, indoctrinating German people with [the] idea that Nazis have destroyed Germany. (Office of Strategic Services. (April 23, 1945). *Mo/ETO-MEDTO-METO Major Achievements; Submitted for Budget Committee.* (Record Group 226). Authors: MO Reports Office)

### **Newspaper**

#### “Das Neue Deutschland”

A newspaper purporting to represent the Peace Party inside Germany.

*Objective:* 1) to put an end to war 2) liquidate Nazi Party 3) set up a new German state on democratic principles

*Dissemination:* By secret air lifts to pin points by infiltration of German POW’s, and by special mass air drops using black technique

*Effectiveness:* German deserters came through the lines with copies; enemy recognition of *Das Neue Deutschland* in special warning to troops (Information to troops No. 371 October 1944); Himmler's publication *Das Schwarze* 'exposed' *Das Neue Deutschland* to German troops in front page story.

#### "Cornflakes"

German mailbag project used to expand distribution of MO subversive lines and ideas in Germany.

Implementation: Faked German mailbags each filled with 500 addressed stamped, postmarked, cancelled letters with destination tags, enclosing copies of *Das Neue Deutschland*, poison pen letters and other material with MO twists

Operations: Mailbags dropped by 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force planes in low flying strafing missions over marshalling yards and around railroad stations. (Office of Strategic Services. (April 23, 1945). *Mo/ETO-MEDTO-METO Major Achievements; Submitted for Budget Committee.* (Record Group 226). Authors: MO Reports Office)

### **Leaflet**

#### "Sauerkraut" Missions

*Objective:* to undermine the will to fight of enemy troops on the Italian front; a novel technique was employed by passing willing, carefully screened, trusted German POW's back into enemy lines with freshly conceived rumors, leaflets, 'official-proclamations' [and] fake orders.

#### "Wie Lange Noch"

Large scale leaflet campaign. A numbered series of sixteen leaflets, all in the same visual and literary style, bearing the same identifying question, "Wie Lange Noch" (How much Longer?) were disseminated over a period of months as the purported media of a clandestine group of German soldiers and civilians protesting against Nazi rule. A hand symbol, using three extended fingers to suggest the 'W' of Wie was also suggested and repeated on each leaflet.

The objective:

- 1) Nazis taking the best of food and women
- 2) Imported workers disrupting the homeland
- 3) German 'secret weapons' never arriving
- 4) Air raids making home-life hopeless
- 5) Goebbels' falsehoods becoming ridiculous

To give the appearance of a concerted campaign, wall stickers were devised. Behind the lines agents, while distributing the leaflets,

plastered stickers on German vehicles, posters, walls, books, doors, windows, plates etc....

An unusual link in the 'W' chain was the composing, printing, and distribution of a foxtrot named *Wie Lange Noch?*, which, by itself, seemed like any other popular tune devoted to the eternal plaints of parted lovers. However, if connected with the 'W' campaign, the song becomes another anti - Nazi manifestation - the voice of a sad and oppressed people asking 'How Much Longer?' the fascist yoke will have to be borne...(Office of Strategic Services. (April 23, 1945). *Mo/ ETO-MEDTO-METO Major Achievements; Submitted for Budget Committee.* (Record Group 226). Authors: MO Reports Office).

The final question, and possibly the most important: Is there a concrete definition of success when measuring the effectiveness of these types of campaigns?

There is not a mathematical formula which defined operation success, or even some quantifiable determination by which it could be concluded as a success. For example, in other areas of the OSS, an operation might consist of dismantling a vital bridge necessary for enemy movement. When the bridge is destroyed, the operation is deemed successful, as it is categorically determined that the bridge no longer exists. With black propaganda, as it is a psychological mission, and moves within the confines of the human mind, one has trouble concluding any measure of success or failure.

With that in mind, MO attempted on every level to find measures by which to determine operation success or failure. By examining internal documents, one can find several definitions of operational victory or defeat.

A letter from an officer dated July 15, 1943 discusses a mission that began in March and concluded in May regarding leaflet propaganda. He notes:

The results I was able to record by April 5<sup>th</sup> were not very striking, but already a fortnight later the position had improved very considerably. By the end of April it was rare – at least on the front I was most concerned with – to find a German prisoner who had not read one or more of our leaflets and it was very common to find prisoners with leaflets concealed about them. I estimate...85% of prisoners had read leaflets and some 15% had leaflets with them. (Office of Strategic Services. (July 15, 1945). Declassified Document. *Propaganda in the Field*. (Record Group 226). Author: Anonymous).

This officer attempts to glean a measure of results by estimating how many enemy troops have read or procured the leaflets. However, his caveat on effectiveness is as follows:

These facts do not necessarily prove that our propaganda was effective but conversations with prisoners, including officers, convinced me that on the whole it made a definite contribution to the collapse of the enemy. (Office of Strategic Services. (July 15, 1945). Declassified Document. *Propaganda in the Field*. (Record Group 226). Author: Anonymous).

An MO progress report memo dated June 30, 1945 discusses the effectiveness of radio propaganda based on interviews with three Wehrmacht officers. All the officers had listened to the Soldatensender West program as well as another program personality, "Hagedorn". The personality, Hagedorn, was considered a true

underground leader by the German officers and evinced valid sentiments by anti-Nazis. The officers expressed an assumption that Hagedorn had eluded Nazi capture and felt that he would be of immeasurable help to the Allied cause. (Office of Strategic Services. (June 30, 1945). Declassified document. *MO Branch Progress Report 1-30 June 1945*. (Record Group 226.) Author: Anonymous.)

The memo goes on to note:

This is one of the most amazing comebacks from intelligent listeners that any black radio program has ever had and indicates that the scripts themselves and the moving and dramatic voice of the actor actually served as a rallying point in the last days of the collapse. (Office of Strategic Services. (June 30, 1945). Declassified document. *MO Branch Progress Report 1-30 June 1945*. (Record Group 226.) Author: Anonymous.)

As with any black propaganda the highest measure of effectiveness is believability and the memo referenced above lends credence to the fact that German officers distinctly believed in and embraced the notion that 'Hagedorn' was in fact a viable spokesperson for peace within Germany.

Another means of determining effectiveness is the acknowledgement of certain propaganda by the German government. The Germans only publicly denounced propaganda that proved particularly detrimental to the morale of German troops. In this example the Morale Operations Branch was able to acquire a German document condemning several black propaganda operations. The

internal document dated February 2, 1945 and addressed to Mr. Eugene P. Warner, Chief of MO Branch, and from Jan F. Libich, H.F. Broch de Rothermann, and Edward Zinder, MO Branch, discusses the information in the captured German document as well as its implications.

In accordance with the German propaganda line, this enemy comment tries to remind the Germans that 'the enemy terms himself Murder Inc.', an inscription found on the jacket of an American pilot; they also warned the Germans of what terrible things would happen to them if they followed the advice of DND and stopped fighting.

The fact that the enemy underlines heavily his statement that 'Das Neue Deutschland' is to be considered as 'Enemy Propaganda' might be a sign for his belief that the Germans could eventually think that 'DND' is an actual underground newspaper. Furthermore the commentator tries to counteract its effect on the members of the 'DND' movement, which shows that he even presumes there is such a thing as the 'DND' movement in Germany. They also refer to the editors as 'enemy agents', which means Germans. (Office of Strategic Services. (February 2, 1945). *Comment to SHAEF PWD captured German document #108034, "Mitteilungen fur die Truppe", October 1944, containing comments to the New Plan.* (Record Group 226). Authors: Jan F. Libich, H.F. Broch de Rothermann, Edward Zinder).

This report validates that the propaganda succeeded even in convincing the German government that the MO generated black newspaper, *Das Neue Deutschland*, did in fact originate from a

German peace party instead of Allied intelligence. Further analysis of the captured German document proved additional sanctioning by German government as propaganda to be refuted and ignored:

The 11 January 1945 issue of "Das Schwarze Korps" [The Black Corps; Heinrich Himmler's newspaper for the German SS and most important political weekly printed in Hitler's own publishing house] carries an article entitled 'We Don't Care...' vehemently denouncing and attacking 15 September 1944 issue of DND. This article is being given the most prominent position possible in said newspaper...In size as well as regards the importance of the forum by which it is carried, it is the strongest and most extensive reaction yet evinced by German officialdom to any Allied subversive propaganda...

The reaction to it in 'Das Schwarze Korps' is therefore cumulative proof that the subversive effect of DND had attained such a degree that German propaganda deemed it less dangerous to possibly further publicize DND by public denunciation than to let its subversive force go unchecked. (Office of Strategic Services. (February 2, 1945). *Comment to SHAEF PWD captured German document # 108034, "Mitteilungen fur die Truppe", October 1944, containing comments to the New Plan.* (Record Group 226). Authors: Jan F. Libich, H.F. Broch de Rothermann, Edward Zinder).

Effectiveness proved to be a complication in the Morale Operations machine. Each small success in and of itself might have evinced a reaction deeming black propaganda a waste of time. However, the culmination of successes over the three-year period,

established the credibility of black propaganda as an effective tool for warfare.

## **Conclusions**

The findings with regard to black propaganda generated by the Morale Operations Branch of the Office of Strategic Services were not unusual or unexpected. The use of the bandwagon tactic as a primary means employed by propagandists is not an anomaly in the study of propaganda as it is an oft-used wartime tactic. In addition, the use of wedge-driving as an important method did not prove to be an irregularity as it too lends itself well to black propaganda and war-time convention.

The significance and original contribution of the study lies in the fact that, to the author's knowledge, no study of this kind has been performed on Morale Operations Branch black propaganda. The analysis of random samples of black propaganda generated by the OSS encourages further exploration of war-time propaganda in order to better understand effectiveness of propaganda. As propaganda is still an oft-utilized tactic in psychological warfare, bringing the past into the future will further propaganda research and aid those currently involved in propaganda dissemination. The author hopes her contribution to propaganda research will bring to the forefront an

increased awareness of black propaganda tactics, their effectiveness, and their short-falls, in the genre of psychological warfare.

There were several weaknesses that occurred with the study that could be rectified in future studies. The author would have like to have had a greater sample selection for usage. Utilizing over 500 samples would have been optimum but given time and monetary restrictions, the sample selection stayed limited. In addition, adding further samples of posters and additional radio transcripts would have greatly increased the breadth and scope of the study and added an additional layer of knowledge from which to draw. The author also would recommend several analysts schooled in black propaganda to give additional feedback on the selection rather than just the author's own, to lend greater objectivity to the study.

There is very little additional exploration of the use of black propaganda by the Morale Operations branch in the OSS. It is a subject with infinite possibilities given the resources but substantial neglect because of the magnitude of the task. The secondary literature available gives scant recognition to a topic that crosses educational barriers including history, psychology, sociology, mass communication, and military tactics. Psychological warfare is increasingly prevalent in today's society and leaflet propaganda is even being used in the current war on terrorism.

The Morale Operations branch suffocated under the weight of political scrutiny and ideological obstruction. It was also caught in a turf war between the military, the OWI and the OSS to name a few. Every opinion proved to be a needle in the voodoo doll and slowly choked the effectiveness out of the branch in spite of its staunchest supporter, OSS Director Bill Donovan. Donovan's ideas with regard to propaganda were progressive and sat in the body of realism; do what it takes to defeat the enemy, regardless of cost. The truth does not always set you free. Many idealists fundamentally rejected that postulate and fought to only utilize white propaganda strategy.

Ultimately the OSS was dissolved and bled into its successor the Central Intelligence Agency. The tactics utilized by the Morale Operations branch during their tenure with the OSS remain a viable and useful tool for warfare in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

***All warfare is based on deception. There is no place where espionage is not used. Offer the enemy bait to lure him.***

***-- Sun Tzu***

## **APPENDIX A**

<b>Doc.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Medium</b>
1	Airplane and Nationalists	15-Jul-44	testimonial/pipedream	troops	DND*
2	No Second Versailles/ The Freedoms Conditions/ Hitler Refuses to Save Germany from Downfall	15-Jul-44	bandwagon	troops	DND
3	Dr. Franz Riemer Murdered By Gestapo	15-Jul-44	editorializing/bogeyman	troops	DND
4	The German population...	15-Jul-44	bandwagon/editorializing	troops	DND
5	How Much Longer	15-Jul-44	editorializing/wedgedriving	troops	DND
6	The Oath	15-Jul-44	plain folks	troops	DND
7	Perpetuum Mobile	15-Jul-44	editorializing/bogeyman	troops	DND
8	In the Field	22-Jul-44	deception	troops	postcard Leaflet
9	Officers/Underofficers Etc.	no date	bandwagon	troops	Leaflet
10	Comrades	no date	bandwagon/wedgedriving	troops	Leaflet
11	Comrades	22-Jul-44	bandwagon	troops	Leaflet
12	Der Meldereter	no date	bandwagon	troops	Leaflet
13	Home Country News	no date	wedgedriving	troops	Leaflet
14	Italy the Forgotten Front	no date	deception/gossip/diver	troops	Leaflet
15	Proclamation	18-Apr-45	testimonial	troops	Leaflet
16	They shall not have...	no date	bandwagon/cardstacking	troops	Leaflet
17	Planned Mass Murder	15-Mar-45	deception/bandwagon	troops	DND
18	From Our Division	26-Mar-45	bandwagon	troops	Leaflet
19	Volksstrum	15-Nov-44	wedgedriving/bandwagon	troops	DND
20	Italy is Now Against You	B/f Nov 1943	deception/edit./bogeman	troops	Leaflet
21	Tunis Repeats Itself; German	B/f Nov 1943	editorializing/bogeyman	germ off	Leaflet
22	Catania has Fallen	B/f Nov 1943	bandwagon/exaggeration	troops	Leaflet
23	Soldiers from the 15th and 29th div	B/f Nov 1943	bandwagon/	see title	Leaflet
24	The Axis is Broken	B/f Nov 1943 btn jul/nov	bandwagon/deception	troops	Leaflet
25	Mussolini has Fallen	43 btn aug/nov	testimonial	troops	Leaflet
26	3 Newsbriefs/3 Consequences	43	exaggeration/card stcking	troops	Leaflet
27	Captive Lt. Writes	B/f Nov 1943	testimonial/bandwagon	troops	Leaflet
28	German Soldiers in Sicily	B/f Nov 1943	card stacking/exaggerat.	troops	Leaflet

29	Front News	B/f Nov 1943	testimonial	troops	Leaflet
30	Watercadavers in the Streets of Messina	B/f Nov 1943	card stacking/bogeyman	troops	Leaflet
31	The Battle in Sicily Ended	B/f Nov 1943	card stacking/bogeyman	troops	Leaflet
32	German Soldiers in Italy	B/f Nov 1943	card stacking/bogeyman	troops	Leaflet
33	Farmers in Uniform	1944	plain folks	citizens	Leaflet
34	Letter 'Comrades'	1944	plain folks	citizens	Leaflet
35	Letter 'Comrades' 2	1944	wedgedriving/bogeyman	troops	Leaflet
36	Letter 'Comrades' 3	1944	plain folks	citizens	Leaflet
37	German Soldier!	1944	bogeyman/bandwagon	citizens	Leaflet
38	Don't Believe in Miracles	1944	bogeyman/bandwagon	troops	Leaflet
39	Officers of the Westfront	1944	test/bandwagon	officers	Leaflet
40	To the Academics in the German Army	no date	testimonial/bandwagon	academ.	Leaflet
42	The God who let iron grow	no date	bandwagon	grenad/tr	Leaflet
43	To All the Austrians	no date	wedge-driving	citizens	Leaflet
44	Information for the German Economy	15-Sep-44	wedge-driving	citizens	Leaflet
45	The Clock has struck 12	no date	wedge-driving/bandwagon	troops	Leaflet
46	The Bitter Truth	no date	card-stacking	troops	Leaflet
47	Our Report	3-Feb-45	card-stacking/wedge	austrians	DO**
48	The New Germany	26-Jul-44	wedge-driving	troops	DND
49	End and Beginning	23-Sep-44	wedge-driving	troops	DO**
50	Rebirth of Germany	26-Jul-44	wedge-driving	troops	Leaflet

\*\* Der Oesterreicher  
\*Das Neue Deutschland

## **APPENDIX B**



II. PRODUCTION SCHEDULED FOR EARLY RELEASE

<u>ITEMS PROPOSED</u>	<u>PROPOSED VOLUME</u>	<u>PROPOSED TIME OF RELEASE</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
1. "Das Neue Deutschland", 3rd Edition	75,000	15 August, 1944	
2. Feldpost Letters (Large)	75,000	12 August, 1944	
3. Statement on German Financial Situation	50,000	7 August, 1944	
4. German Underground Mimeographed Paper	20,000	8 August, 1944	
5. Train Sabotage Booklets (In Italian)	1,000	7 August, 1944	
6. German Song, "Wie Lange Nooh"	50,000	10 August, 1944	
7. Picture Leaflet (Women Traitors to Party)	100,000	9 August, 1944	
8. Invitation Card for German Soldiers (Sex Motif)	100,000	10 August, 1944	
9. Feldpost Letter (Small)	75,000	15 August, 1944	
0. Tear Strips of German News Papers	75,000	13 August, 1944	
1. Stamp Pads (Hitler Death Head)	2,500	5 August, 1944	(200 per day until total delivery completed)
2. Wall Stencils	8,000	15 August, 1944	(Production Begins)
3. Wall Slogans	30,000	8 August, 1944	
4. German Soldier Burial Forms (Du?)	50,000	9 August, 1944	

DECLASSIFIED  
 AUTHORITY: WPA 8-13-84  
 BY: MARRA Date: 11/10/02

REPRODUCED FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## **ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS**

Records of the Office of Strategic Services (RG 226)

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Sarah Binion was born on March 2, 1976 in Fort Worth, Texas to Emily Evelyn Helm Binion and Warren Sidney Binion. She lived in Fort Worth, Longview, Houston, and Austin. She attended Second Baptist High School in Houston, Texas and subsequently graduated from Southwest Texas State University with a B.A. in Mass Communication and a minor in Chemistry in May 2001. In August 2001 she entered graduate school in the inaugural M.A. program for International Studies at Texas State University at San Marcos. Her achievements during this time were: acceptance into the Presidential Management Fellowship Program, Membership in the Sigma Iota Rho International Studies Honors Society, and being a part of the inauguration of the International Center of Austin (ICA) and serving on the ICA Communications Committee.

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