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USA v. Imperial Japan in WWII- "Why We Fight... But Is It Real? "

Rationale:

-Often in Sophomore US history classes we discuss the lead-up, execution, and aftermath of World War II regarding Japan but overlook the demonization of the Japanese nation, military, culture, and ethnicity done during the wartime years. It is important to show students that the Japanese nation was not and is not what is portrayed in US propaganda and that the USA used propaganda to demonize the Japanese in the run-up to war and immediately following the events of Dec. 7th, 1941 and how they were overwhelmingly inaccurate in their depictions to the reality of the Japanese people, culture, and forces. Students will be asked to deconstruct the methodology of propaganda and reflect on why aspects of Japanese culture and nationality were changed and manipulated. This lesson plan will require approximately 4 class periods to complete (150-160 minutes).

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will understand the historical reasons why propaganda has been used and the inherent dangers in its use
- Students will be able to identify propaganda in multiple media forms
- Students will understand the fallacies and falsehoods propaganda uses
- Students will understand the effects of propaganda on a population

Ohio Academic Content Standards for Social Studies:

- S09.1
 - Detect bias and propaganda in primary and secondary sources of information
- S09.2
 - Evaluate the credibility of sources for logical fallacies, consistency of arguments, unstated assumptions, and bias
- S09.3
 - Analyze the reliability of sources for accurate use of facts, adequate support of statements, and date of publication
- CI9.3
 - Analyze how governments and other groups have used propaganda to influence public opinion and behavior
- S010.1
 - Determine the credibility of sources by considering the qualifications

and reputation of the writer, agreement with other credible sources, recognition of stereotypes, accuracy and consistency of sources, and the circumstances in which the author prepared the source

Essential Questions:

- 1- What is the intent of propaganda and what methods does it use to achieve its ends?
- 2- What feelings do you get from propaganda?
- 3- What form can propaganda take? How can you tell when something is propaganda?
- 4- How did the United States use propaganda against the Japanese in World War II? Was the propaganda an accurate depiction of the Japanese military, culture, and people?

Strategy:

-The first day of the lesson will be set aside to teach about Japan's early modern history in regards to the threat of imperial domination and how they responded to it. Additionally, you will teach about the traditional culture of Japan, Japanese values, and how they related to their actions in this period of time. The purpose for this is to set up a frame of reference for the students to place the propaganda that will follow in the next 2 days into. The second day will be comprised of viewing the documentary "Why We Fight". This series of films were the quintessential propaganda films of the era made by the United States originally for use only with the armed forces and eventually redistributed for civilian consumption. In particular we will watch "The Battle of China" which depicts the Nanking Massacre, the Construction of the Burma Road, and the Battle of Changsha. I must note that there are some parts conflict with their school district's acceptable use policy and adjust the viewing accordingly. During the viewing of this video students are to write down events and depictions that are in line with what we have learned about Japan and the Japanese people and also things that seem to be depicted incorrectly either intentionally or mistakenly. On the third and fourth days we will look at political propaganda cartoons created by Dr. Seuss as a hook to bring the students into the activity. Tables in the classroom will be arranged into numbered stations the students can rotate around to. Students will pair up and look at a cartoon set up at a station and write down what they think the cartoon deals with and whether or not it is an accurate depiction of the Japanese. We will then discuss during the 2nd half of the 4th day what the students thought of the propaganda, what effect they believe it was intended to create, if it was fair/just to create propaganda in such a manner, and do these stereotypes still persist today.

Materials:

- Handout of essential questions
- Copy of "Why We Fight" documentary
 - Capra, Frank, Dir. *Why We Fight: 60th Anniversary Edition*. Timeless Media Group: 2005, Film.
- Photocopies of Political Cartoons from "Dr Seuss Goes To War"
 - Minear, Richard. *Dr. Seuss Goes To War*. 1st. New York: The New Press, 1999. Print.

Evaluation:

-Students will be evaluated formally by reading and Scoring/Grading their writing assignments and will be evaluated informally by their responses during the discussion

Possible Follow-Up Learning:

-This lesson can in most likelihood be modified to follow the same pattern/methodology with other states that have been the victim of the use of propaganda (i.e. Germany, the USA, Britain, etc).