The Pictorial Stylings of Louis Raemaekers and Sir David Low:
A Comparison of Anti-German Cartoons from World War I to World War II

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**Introduction**

It is early in World War I, and the verdict has come back. Louis Raemaekers has been acquitted for treason. However, that is not the outcome the Germans wanted. The acquittal led to the Germans placing a bounty equivalent to $3000 on Raemaekers’ head. Similarly, just after World War II ended, a list came out detailing the people that would be the first to die at the hands of the Nazis if they had succeeded in invading England.1 David Low’s name was towards the top. What type of people were Raemaekers and Low that would warrant such a hostile action from the German government? Politicians? Generals? In fact, they were cartoonists. Louis Raemaekers and Sir David Low were wanted dead by the Germans in World War I and World War II respectively because of the cartoons they published in their countries and abroad, which damaged the public opinion of Germans.

Surely this fact alone speaks to the influence each cartoonist had. Being arguably the most influential cartoonists of their respective world wars, Raemaekers’ and Low’s images were widely disseminated throughout the world, making political cartoons even more effective and capable of shaping historical change. It is the artist’s job to take a situation and manipulate the audience’s perception towards a specific viewpoint. If an artist can do this well, he receives a certain degree of recognition either in his name or in his style. There were thousands of cartoonists publishing cartoons and propaganda during

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1 This refers to the Sonderfahndungsliste G.B. (also referred to as Hitler’s “Black Book”), which roughly translates into “especially wanted list” with the G.B. referring to Groß Britannien, or Great Britain. The book contained a 144-page-long list of 2820 names of politicians, writers, intelligence agents, etc. and would have been used to determine who the Nazis should round up and kill if they successfully invaded Britain. “The Black Book,” *Forces War Records*, accessed March 29, 2016, [https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/the-black-book](https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/the-black-book). Multiple sources, including Timothy Benson’s “Low and the Dictators,” indicate that not only did Low appear on this list, but he was considered a priority.
each World War, yet Louis Raemaekers and David Low were consistently considered the most important cartoonists of their wars. They shaped public perception of the Germans, initially within their own countries, then eventually expanding abroad to other Allied nations. Raemaekers’ approach created an emotional response in the Allied public through his depictions of German atrocities. Low focused on political events unfolding at the time, often ridiculing Hitler, while still portraying the Nazis as a legitimate threat. The heated reactions each cartoonist received from Germany’s political leaders during each war show not only how dangerous the Germans thought the cartoons were, but also how ways of thinking about Germans could be significantly shaped by the stroke of a pen.

**Theoretical Background**

Pictorial propaganda plays a significant role in any war effort. According to Ralph Haswell Lutz, there are many purposes of wartime propaganda: “to maintain the morale of the armed forces of the state, create a favorable state of mind at home, diminish the morale of the enemy, influence favorably neutral opinion concerning the reason, justice and necessity of the conflict, and, if possible, induce friendly action.”2 In order to accomplish these purposes, propaganda must be viewed with a certain level of importance in accordance to the running of the war itself. Perhaps it is under this rationale that Lutz cites propaganda as “one of the three chief implements of operation against a belligerent enemy” in his book, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, right up there with military and economic pressure. It is in this inherent value of propaganda that demonstrates its ability

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to significantly affect the war. In attempting to shape the public’s opinion about the war and the enemy, there is hope that the public will support the war—and in turn the thrashing of the enemy—through their actions: signing up for military service, buying war bonds, working in a munitions factory, etc.

In order to effectively shape public opinion and incite citizen participation, it was vital in World War I to mobilize and *unite* the civilian mind. ³ Lasswell states that civilian unity, unlike the structured and disciplined military, “is achieved by the repetition of ideas rather than muscles. The civilian mind is standardized by news and not drills.” Therefore it is through propaganda and newspapers that uniting the public’s mind is accomplished.⁴ It is also vital that this is done, because “disunity brings danger.” If the news is not presented to the public in the correct way or at the correct time during wartime, morale threatens to decrease among the population, in turn pitching them against the war effort.⁵

H.C. Peterson also stated that simple arguments and endless repetition were techniques that were frequently used in World War I propaganda. In phrases such as “poor Belgium” and “make the world safe for democracy,” there was a simple, uncomplicated idea that “could be understood by almost anyone.”⁶ Now taking these simple statements and repeating them continually, phrases would become “an integral part of the persons propagandized,” making the “originally dull literature” catch the attention of the public: headlines reading “Wrong done to Belgium” and “Necessity knows no law” were

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⁴ Ibid., 11.
⁵ Ibid., 16-17.
indisputable and frequent in the newspapers, meant to stir up interest and emotive responses in the readers.7

From there, repetitive statements sensationalizing the events of the war could actually create the stereotypical images and atrocity stories that one typically saw in the First World War. Adrian Gregory, author of The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War, made the connection of how figurative language in titles such as “Poor mutilated little Belgium” could be turned into “Poor mutilated little Belgians” and then “Rape of Belgium” would allude to the “the rape of actual Belgian women.” Gregory does not bring this up to negate or in any way imply that such atrocities did not happen, but he is highlighting the ways in which the press “[provided] a framework in which atrocity stories flourished.”8 This is an idea that is corroborated through the images produced by various cartoonists, such as Louis Raemaekers, throughout World War I.

Apart from depicting atrocities, another way in which to shape the public's attitude towards the enemy is by reinforcing or adding to preexisting, negative stereotypes. War in Cartoons is a collection of cartoons that were published in newspapers during WWI by American cartoonists. It was compiled and edited by George J. Hecht, however, in a new introduction by former Wittenberg History professor Charles Chatfield, it is noted that the cartoons “were consciously employed to reinforce general attitudes and notions, on one hand, and to promote specific programs on the other.”9 In this way, the Committee on

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7 Peterson, Propaganda for War, 40; Lutz, “Studies of World War Propaganda,” 504.
Public Information (CPI)\textsuperscript{10} encouraged cartoonists to “[manipulate] symbols instead of ideas in their effort to arouse emotional attachment to the cause...they brought together stereotypes and feelings wisely accepted but also broadly dispersed, and gave them the convincing consistency of public usage.”\textsuperscript{11} With that, the CPI could unify public opinion in the way they wanted without having to construct a new identity for the enemy that they hoped the citizens would accept. With a unified public opinion, it would then be easier to get Americans involved with the programs that the government thought would be most helpful to the war effort.

In the original introduction published in 1919, Hecht states that the CPI headed the Bureau of Cartoons, which published bulletins that “[were] sent [weekly] to every cartoonist in the United States. These bulletins contained subjects for cartoons as suggested by...government agencies.” However, there was no worry of losing artist individuality or producing hundreds of the same exact posters with these suggestions of specific subjects, because every cartoonist had their own unique style to express their thoughts.\textsuperscript{12} The suggested subjects did not include “specific pictorial ideas” or directions; the goal was to “enable cartoonists to be of the greatest possible service...[by helping] the Government in stimulating recruiting, popularizing the draft, saving food and fuel, selling

\textsuperscript{10} Lasswell defines the CPI: “A Committee on Public information was appointed, by order of the President, soon after the entrance of the United States into [World War I]. It was composed of the Secretaries of the Navy and War Departments, the Secretary of State, and Mr. George Creel” \textsuperscript{18}.

\textsuperscript{11} Hecht, \textit{The War in Cartoons}, 12.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 6.
Liberty Bonds and War Saving Stamps, warning against German propaganda and [solving] difficult war problems.”  

Hecht’s collection includes roughly one hundred cartoons drawn by twenty-seven of the most prominent American cartoonists during World War I. While each of the cartoons vary in style and focus, clear themes can be ascertained from artist-to-artist, cartoon-to-cartoon. One major theme is patriotism tied into a sense of duty. The idea of fighting for the right reasons—such as saving Germany’s helpless victims and democracy itself—is apparent in every cartoon depicting Uncle Sam or a smiling soldier.  

Another evident theme in this collection of cartoons is the inhumanity of the Germans. The cartoons in the collection range from images of domineering Germans standing over vulnerable or already dead men, women, and children to the Kaiser sitting on his throne, which rest on the shoulders of a desperate and exhausted German people. The publication dates of each of the cartoons are not listed, but many of them contain America in some shape or form. It is therefore reasonable to assume that America was involved in the war. This means that the sacking of Belgium and the sinking of the Lusitania have already happened; these two events resulted in an outpouring of outrage from the Allies in the forms of newspaper articles, propaganda posters, cartoons, etc. From these events, the image of Germany’s inhumanity has already been established, giving Americans a platform to build off of when they do enter the war in 1917. Even though America was not involved in the war during the sack of Belgium or the sinking of the Lusitania, they were still made

13 Ibid., 6.
14 Ibid., 49, 55, 59, 85, 125, 129, 151.
15 Ibid., 17, 21, 27, 31, and 53.
aware of such atrocious actions, at the very least through the efforts of the British, who made a great effort to appeal to America in the hopes of persuading them to enter the war. John M. MacKenzie, who wrote Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960, even went so far as to say, “that official propaganda was contemplated only in the conditions of the First and Second World Wars, and then only reluctantly, and principally for the consumption of foreigners, allies and neutrals.”

Alternatively, Great Britain’s establishment of a government propaganda agency is a bit confusing and complex. Lasswell states that Great Britain initially established the War Aims Committee, which Peterson cites as the War Propaganda Bureau, in September 1914. This department set up the Wellington House, which was the main source of British propaganda materials. However, Lasswell, Peterson, and Lutz all maintain that Britain also made use of private companies and unofficial agencies to circulate propaganda materials. There were also numerous divisions, headed by different people, each with tasks of directing Britain’s propaganda to allied and neutral nations to gain their support and hopefully their involvement in the war. They would produce, translate, and distribute books, pamphlets, speeches, images, and cartoons to “the world’s newspapers and magazines, especially in America.”

Great Britain desperately wanted America to join in the war, which is why they directed much of their propaganda towards them. The Wellington House even went so far

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17 Lasswell, Propaganda Technique in the World War, 19; Peterson, Propaganda for War, 16.
18 Lasswell, Propaganda Technique in the World War, 19; Peterson, Propaganda for War, 18; Lutz, “Studies of World War Propaganda,” 508.
19 Peterson, Propaganda for War, 16 and 17.
as to “[exploit] the friendships and business connections of leading Britishers. It obtained lists of important Americans who had dealings with people in England and sent propaganda to them.” In order to appeal to America, Britain made “the Allies’ cause appear to be America’s cause—there must be developed a belief in the identity of interests between the United States and Great Britain”: “Every point of similarity between the two countries was stressed and re-stressed” in the effort to persuade American that the war was as much their fight as it was Britain’s.

In terms of appealing to the British people themselves in propaganda, Adrian Gregory argues that stories about British victims of German atrocities shocked and enraged the British people more than hearing about the atrocities in Belgium. It is perfectly reasonable to be more invested in hearing about deaths occurring in one’s own country than another country; however, it is significant to note that “such deliberate atrocities in Belgium received intermittent coverage” in British newspapers within the first year and a half. The *Daily Mail*, “undoubtedly the most influential newspaper with the mass public in 1914,” did not cover the front pages with atrocity stories as other countries were doing. In the first three weeks of the war, when the atrocities in Belgium were happening, the *Daily Mail* only printed “a couple of editorials and some columns of reportage on inside pages.”

If the atrocities that the “warlike and militaristic” Germans committed in Belgium were Great Britain’s excuse for entering the war—as Peterson argues—it would make more sense for the newspapers to be publishing sensationalist articles and cartoons to justify

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21 Peterson, *Propaganda for War*, 33 and 35.
22 Gregory, *The Last Great War*, 46, 47, and 49.
Britain’s entrance into the war. Peterson claims that Great Britain presented their entrance into World War I as coming to the defense of Belgium’s neutrality—something they had promised to protect.23

There are both subtle and conspicuous ways to circulate propaganda, such as through newspaper cartoons and war posters. Political cartoons have been a useful medium for disseminating information to the public since the seventeenth century; it is reasonable then that these propaganda organizations—the Ministry of Information and the Office of War Information—would claim to simply be doing just that. The characterizations of people and events in political cartoons call for a critical analysis. The Political Cartoon by Charles Press lists the three main types of cartoons: comic art, social cartoons, and political cartoons. Comic art is designed to amuse or entertain. This can be most readily seen through the Sunday Funnies in newspapers. Social cartoons are similar in that they seek to amuse, yet they are different in that they draw on a particularly frustrating or upsetting social issue and attempt to make it more tolerable by “bring[ing] a wry smile of recognition” to the viewer. Finally, the political cartoons champion a specific political faction or point of view.24 Their purpose then is to influence the viewer with “regards to specific political events of the day” or “predispose them to a particular action.”25

Samuel A. Towers alludes to the phrase “a picture is worth a thousand words” by reasoning that because a person’s primary contact with the universe is visual, “the impact

23 Peterson, Propaganda for War, 44-45.
25 Ibid., 13.
of one image is a thousand times more immediate than the impact of a thousand words.”

This sense of immediacy was especially vital when less of the populace was literate in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even now, however, political cartoons still find relevance in that they make their audience confront the current debates facing their community (whether it be local or international). Thomas Milton Kemnitz argues that it is also because of this immediacy that cartoons are “an ideal media for suggesting what cannot be said by the printed word.” What might be difficult to put into words might work better as an image. For example, writing about a leader’s weight might be offensive, but drawing them in a way that exaggerates their weight still makes the point, but now in a humorous way and without having to explicitly put it into words.

Caricatures can also be used in this humorous context to help the audience identify the particular person the cartoonist is drawing. Kemnitz describes caricatures as a cartooning technique involving the “exaggeration or distortion of features,” which Victor S. Navasky adds is rooted in stereotypes. Kemnitz goes further to state that “[p]olitical cartoons are specific: they depend on the viewer’s recognition of the characters, subjects, and events depicted.” In such instances, caricatures can act as an aid in recognition.

According to cartoon historian W.A. Coupe, “a theoretical understanding of political

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caricature involves an understanding of caricature itself.”

Looking at the way a person’s features have been distorted can tell you not only how they were perceived, but also what the artist is hoping to convey by choosing to exaggerate specific features. Applying that to political cartoons, such as those included throughout this paper, certain elements in the scene or the positioning of the figures can tell the viewer what the artist is choosing to highlight in addition to uncovering his overall message.

Charles Press also argues that a repeated theme in cartoons is the way in which the artist highlights the contrast between what is the reality and what could be considered as the ideal. However, Tower instead suggests, “political cartoonists work best ‘against’ rather than ‘for’ a subject.” This idea is particularly relevant when thinking about the political cartoons that appeared during wartime. Rallying the population against an enemy is much easier than rallying them for a particular wartime policy. You can dispute the need or effectiveness of victory gardens, but you cannot dispute the (potentially gruesome) fact that hundreds of your country’s soldiers died at the hands of the enemy. German historian Eberhard Demm claims that political cartoons actually take on a new function during wartime: “its task is to mobilize the population both morally and intellectually for war, explain setbacks, confirm beliefs in the superiority of the fatherland and proclaim the hope of final victory.” This change in function is in contrast to their previous antagonism of

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society and the government during peacetime. The cartoonists’ focus shifts from issues within their country to issues outside of their country.

Something that is utilized in cartoons—during both peace- and wartime—is the continued focus on a particular subject matter, such as a country’s leader. Thomas Rowlandson was the first to introduce a regular cartoon character in his pieces in 1812. Also around that time, James Gillray invented many of the stock characters for different countries (ex. Germany, France, England, and Russia) that are still being used today. Portraying a recurring character combined with using the stock characteristics to easily define a particular country has been highly influential in the way people view and understand cartoons, because it shapes their view of that country or figure—a view that was possibly nonexistent before—into whatever the cartoonist or government producing the image wants. Some might argue that shaping the public’s views in such a way would not be possible or effective. However, David Turley explains that Low was shocked that “ordinary Americans were ‘ill informed and irresponsible about politics outside their own local affairs.’” If the people you were delivering this information to do not have any prior knowledge about the leader or country, they would have no reason to suspect that what they were being fed was exaggerated or untrue. This made the cartoonists’ jobs easier, because they only had to help the public form an opinion instead of change it. However, that is not to say that cartoonists could easily produce a good and effective cartoon.

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33 Tower, *Cartoons and Lampoons*, 20 and 22.
Defining what makes a “good” political cartoon is difficult; instead, Press argues that it is easier to identify a “bad cartoon.” To put it simply, it all comes down to the strength of the message that is presented. For example, if a cartoon has a message that the audience can recognize as disingenuous, then it is a “bad” cartoon. The cartoonist can have highly developed artistic skill, but if their message lacks genuine sentiment or has a contrived enthusiasm, it cannot be considered a “good” cartoon. Press says “artistry is supplementary and contributory rather than central” to a cartoon and that it should not contain “unnecessary complications in its imagery or its title.” In other words, the message needs to be concise, powerful, and straightforward.

Up until the end of the eighteenth century, magazines were the preferred medium in which artists would publish their cartoons. However, around the turn of the nineteenth century, there was a switch to newspapers as the source for cartoons. Tower claims this was for two reasons: the first being that the cartoonists “were so powerful that they made enemies”; the second that the cartoonists were lured away from the magazines because the newspapers hired them to illustrate cartoons every day instead of only once a week. This then led to new techniques in cartoons, such as a heavier use of symbols to quickly sum up a political situation (e.g. the Republican elephant or the Democrat donkey).37

With this switch to newspapers and an increased use of symbols, political leaders were also depicted more in comics. Eberhard Demm revealed the advantage of using those who represented “the destiny or the politics of the enemy countries” (i.e. kings, politicians, 

36 Ibid., 19 and 22.
37 Tower, Cartoons and Lampoons, 146-147.
generals) to pitch the public against the desired enemy. Personifying these leaders allowed “hatred [to be] directed against a concrete person, depicted as ridiculous or horrid, and then by transfer of emotion, against the country as such.”

This brings us to Dutch artist Louis Raemaekers, who directed considerable hatred towards Germany and Kaiser Wilhelm II. Raemaekers is considered the most influential cartoonist in World War I by many, including historian Isabel Simeral Johnson and former President Theodore Roosevelt. According to Demm, Raemaekers’ cartoons were so powerful that “the English distributed millions of copies of [them] all over the world” and were considered “one of the most dangerous weapons against Germany.” In one of the collections of Raemaekers’ cartoons that was published in 1916, H. H. Asquith—the Prime Minister of England during World War I—celebrated Raemaekers because he was able to “show us our enemies as they appear to the unbiased [sic] eyes of a neutral” country such as the Netherlands. According to Isabel Simeral Johnson, the country’s neutrality, in addition to Raemaekers’ “eye-witness of the invasion of Belgium,” gave Raemaekers “authority” to report in an unbiased way on the actions of the Germans. The ferocity with which he wanted to convince the rest of the world of Germany’s maliciousness despite his own country’s neutrality in the war, gave him even more credibility in his cartoons.

41 Louis Raemaekers, Raemaekers’ Cartoons: with Accompanying Notes by Well-Known English Writers, 7.
42 Johnson, “Cartoons,” 32.
In Franklynn Peterson’s article “The Powerful Pen of Louis Raemaekers,” he describes how the Germans were quite aware of Raemaekers’ influence: Kaiser Wilhelm II had “the blatantly anti-German cartoonist” arrested and accused of treason in 1914. Then when acquitted, they put a bounty out on his head. He sought refuge in England, but in congruence with British propaganda aims, was later sent to America “where it was hoped he might help influence Allied participation in the war.” His cartoons began to be published regularly by William Randolph Hearst and the Herald Tribune Syndicate, where they reached the eyes of millions of Americans. People everywhere were now being exposed to his impassioned cartoons.43

Raemaekers’ World War II equivalent was Sir David Low. Low was originally from New Zealand, but produced his famous cartoons of Hitler for the Evening Standard in London.44 Timothy Benson asserts that Low, “the most celebrated political cartoonist of the last century,” was someone who “contributed more than any other single figure and as a result changed the atmosphere in the way people saw Hitler.” It was his “humanitarian instincts and Liberal leaning [that] gave him a strong determination to oppose Hitler and everything he stood for” in his cartoons.45 Benson also describes how Low’s work was seen as prophetic because he “noticed how Hitler made plain his ambitions for a greater Germany and domination of Europe,” and included those seemingly unfathomable ambitions into his cartoons. Low took Hitler seriously in the 1930s when others did not,

giving him “remarkable insight as events unfolded” and ultimately earning him the reputation for predicting the events of the war.46

Also like Raemaekers, Low faced outside pressures because of the definitive effectiveness of his cartoons. Before World War II officially started, German and British leaders met multiple times on the basis of maintaining a good relationship. Benson explains that it was because of and a result of such meetings that British foreign policy personnel pressured Low’s editors and consequently Low himself to tone down his cartoons.47 Lord Halifax, who met with Joseph Goebbels, told the Evening Standard’s manager “[a]s soon as a copy of the Evening Standard arrives, it is pounced on for Low’s cartoon, and if it is of Hitler, as it generally is, telephones buzz, tempers rise, fevers mount, and the whole governmental system of Germany is in uproar.”48 Unable to subdue Low’s cartoons of Hitler, it later became public knowledge that “Low’s name had been highly placed on the Nazi death list” had Germany succeeded in invading Britain.49 While these cartoonists share many similarities in terms of their beginnings and overall importance during the wars they were drawing in, the contexts for which they each drew were vastly different, and therefore these contexts affected the styles in which they drew their cartoons.

**Louis Raemaekers and World War I**

World War I began in the summer of 1914 after Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Austria-Hungary then

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46 Ibid., 36.
47 Ibid., 37.
48 Ibid., 38.
49 Ibid., 41.
declared war on Serbia; subsequently each country's numerous allies entered the war as well, creating what was later deemed “the Great War” or “the First World War.” Throughout the war, Germany was the main aggressor. They made the first real military move of the war by attacking France in launching their Schlieffen Plan that involved an assault through neutral Belgium. This was met by outrage from the Allies, eventually pushing Britain into joining World War I by declaring war on Germany.

Germany’s push through Belgium also sparked the indignation of cartoonist Louis Raemaekers. Raemaekers was born in the Netherlands to a Flemish father and German mother in 1869. He was fluent in German, Flemish, French, and English, which would later prove useful with the widespread popularity of his cartoons. In 1909, the Amsterdam Telegraf began publishing his cartoons, but according to an article by Franklynn Peterson, Raemaekers began publishing cartoons attacking Germany as early as 1907, where he criticized Kaiser Wilhelm’s expansionist rhetoric. It was not until almost a decade later—during World War I—that people began to take notice.50

Raemaekers’ cartoons depicting the atrocities committed by the German army on their trek through Belgium was one of the first instances where his cartoons received widespread attention. So strong were Raemaekers’ opinions about the German atrocities in Belgium that he illustrated Emile Cammaerts’ booklet on the subject.51 Depicting atrocities became a major focus in Raemaekers’ cartoons. According to Steve Baker, Raemaekers’ cartoons were meant to “[draw] particular attention to the physical characteristics of the

51 Emile Cammaerts, Through the Iron Bars: Two Years of German Occupation in Belgium, (New York: John Lane Co., 1917).
depicted Germans in order to emphasize their ridiculousness or their loathsomeness."

One of the common themes Raemaekers would draw on in his cartoons was that Germans were subhuman and animalistic: for example, depicting Germans as savage apes. Another common depiction used by Raemaekers and other war propagandists was the threat Germans were to the innocent—normally depicted as white women. Finally, Raemaekers even used Kaiser Wilhelm II in his cartoons, portraying him as the figurehead or source of blame for all of the death that the war caused.

In "See the Conquering Hero Comes," Raemaekers draws the Germans as primitive and ape-like (Figure 1). This cartoon actually distinguishes between Germany's primitive and ape-like features: leading the pitiful pack is a man wearing nothing but a cape and warrior skirt; two gorillas are holding up the end of the man's cape and trudge along in his wake; and a vulture dripping with blood flies above and slightly behind the man. The man encapsulates the visage of a barbarian well with his scraggly beard, his bare feet and chest, the heads of his victims hanging from his belt, his “scepter” (which is really a child's hand stuck on the end of a stick), and his look of “ineffable self-satisfaction and arrogant disdain.” According to Arthur Shadwell—who wrote the corresponding commentary on the cartoon published alongside it in the collection—the apes behind the primitive man that are meant to represent the German army and navy are “dull and brutish. They are incapable of moral judgment; they follow their instincts and know no better.” They unthinkingly follow their master who is of “superior” mind. There are also skeletons in the background, as if the

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disembodied heads hanging from the man’s belt are not enough indication of the scene’s barbarity. This entire portrayal conveys to the audience that Germans are an unintelligent, brutish people who crudely kill their enemies.

Several of Raemaekers’ popular images throughout the war show an ape-like German brutally attacking a weaker, feminized country—a common portrayal utilized by Allied propagandists during World War I. One specific example comes from *Kultur in Cartoons*, a collection of Louis Raemaekers’ works. Entitled “Germany and the Neutrals” (Figure 2), the focus of the cartoon is on the large ape in the center; we know the ape represents Germany because he wears a belt that reads, “Gott mit Uns” (“God with us” in German). His large hands are on the dead bodies of naked women—“the Neutrals”—who are meant to represent neutral countries, like Belgium, that the Germans swept through. He has one gigantic hand smashed down over one of the women’s heads, which is surrounded by a pool of blood. The neutrals are depicted as women to convey their innocence and weakness in the matter. Their naked bodies also show that they were defenseless against their attacker. It is meant to create sympathy in the audience to see women fall victim to such a horrible beast. The implied sexual threat to the naked women in the cartoon is meant to arouse indignation in the viewers and fear for the safety of their own wives, sisters, mothers, and daughters. There is a skeleton in the background as well. The ape is baring his teeth and looking to his left, as if there is someone approaching out of the shot. The primitive violence rampant in this image is meant to convey to the audience that the Germans will beat down anyone who gets in their way, even the innocent and defenseless
neutral.\textsuperscript{54} This violent and gruesome portrayal was meant to “inspire hatred of the enemy...[in addition to] enflaming public opinion against Germany.”\textsuperscript{55}

Raemaekers continued to portray countries weaker than Germany as innocent women to create a natural incensed response to the horrible events happening during World War I. In Figure 3, nothing is left to the imagination: the Germans’ cruelty is obvious and grotesque in their dismemberment of a female France’s limbs. France is tied to a wooden post. One of her legs and both of her arms have been cut off and are now lying on the floor in front of her. Her clothes are torn to shreds and one of her breasts is exposed. While this is a color image, the only color that really sticks out is the red of France’s hat and her blood. The blood is smeared over the coat of the man performing the amputations—perhaps a crazy German doctor—and scattered across the floor. In this image, the feminine character is meant to represent not only innocence, but also pride. This is seen in the defiance of her expression, despite the fact that her neck is tied to the post, further constricting her movement. Raemaekers exploits the woman’s innocence and vulnerability by showing the Germans sadistically cutting off her limbs. The Germans’ male power—manifested through the restrained and scantily dressed France—dominates their female counterpart and shows that she cannot resist Germany who clearly has the upper hand.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{55} Demm, “Propaganda and Caricature,” 181.
\textsuperscript{56} Louis Raemaekers, “We Must so Destroy France That She can Never Again Resist Us,” (1917), \textit{America in the War}, 145.
Similarly, Raemaekers published a cartoon in 1914 with the caption “How I deal with the small fry” (Figure 4).57 It depicts Kaiser Wilhelm II crouched over the incapacitated bodies and of female “Belgia” and “Luxemburg." The way his body takes up almost the entire frame further communicates the domineering and powerful position he holds. The Kaiser's right knee is in Belgia's back and his right hand is restraining the back of her neck as he clutches his sword high in his left hand. His left foot is stomped down on the back of Luxemburg. With a murderous gleam in his eye, it is apparent that the Kaiser is about to bring down his sword and kill Belgia, followed by Luxemburg. Again, Raemaekers’ rampant use of female subjects falling victim to the brutalities of Germans such as the Kaiser aims to stir up an emotional response in the viewer, making them want to channel all of their energies to crushing Germany, in turn saving these women. In this instance, Kaiser Wilhelm II has become the personification of the German army that committed horrible atrocities in their invasion and occupation of Belgium and Luxemburg. Raemaekers is placing blame directly on Kaiser Wilhelm II for the atrocities, which is why he is the one committing them in this particular cartoon.

One of the most famous and deadliest battles of World War I was the Battle of Verdun. This eleven-month struggle in 1916 had over half a million casualties on both sides.58 The on-going stalemate was caused by the futile method of trench warfare. Each side dug a network of trenches stretching hundreds of miles from which they would fire back and forth at each other. The stretch of land in between each side’s trenches was

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57 Louis Raemaekers, “How I Deal With the Small Fry,” Raemaekers’ Cartoons with Accompanying Notes by Well-Known English Writers, 297.
referred to as “no man’s land,” and it was in those tens of yards that hundreds of thousands of soldiers lost their lives. Upon receiving the order from their officers, soldiers would climb out of their trench and rush at the opposing one in a fruitless attempt to overtake it. However, being an aboveground target with only a helmet and a rifle, it was easy for the opposing side to mow down the soldiers charging at them while they stayed protected in their trench. Lines would move back and forth constantly and infinitesimally so as to give neither side a clear lead. Constantly replacing the ever-growing casualty list of soldiers by throwing more out into no man’s land resulted in the high death toll and stalemate seen at Verdun.

It is in this context that Louis Raemaekers drew a cartoon entitled, “A Higher Pile” with the caption, “Crown Prince: ‘We must have a higher pile to see Verdun, Father’” (Figure 5).59 In this cartoon, Kaiser Wilhelm II is looking through a set of binoculars and his son is behind him peering over him on tiptoes into the unseen distance. They stand atop a huge pile of dead bodies; the bodies look all to be German soldiers, indicated by the Pickelhaube most of them seem to be still wearing.60 The pile of bodies continues in a wide, rough line extending into the background of the scene. The only other landscape is the remains of a barbed wire fence, which was a common defense in no man’s land to make the rush to the opposing trench even more difficult for the soldiers. With the caption and overall scene of this cartoon, Raemaekers is implying the triviality with which the German leaders regard human life and that they are disconnected from the destruction they have

60 The Pickelhaube is the German name for the spiked helmet that members of the German army wore during World War I.
created. After all, the Kaiser and his son stand on a pile of their fallen men with only a regard for their next move. A next move that will surely and needlessly cost more men their lives. This imagery and pathos convey that the Kaiser does not even care about the lives of his own men, begging the question, why would he show any more humanity to his enemy’s men? The Battle of Verdun was a futile battle, which according to this cartoon, only succeeded in accumulating massive piles of human bodies for the heartless Kaiser to have a good vantage point for in the next fight. Raemaekers used his impassioned feelings about what was happening in World War I to stir up similar feelings in his viewers by portraying Germans as ape-like beasts that would prey on innocent women and portraying the Kaiser as being manifestation of the death and destruction caused by German armies.

Even though Raemaekers’ cartoons were originally published in the Amsterdam Telegraf, “they were reproduced in every country on the globe,” because the powerful images and emotions they produced resonated with audiences beyond just his home country. In Hecht’s collection of American cartoons, he acknowledges the limited space he had to work with in his publication of The War in Cartoons, thereby preventing cartoons “published in American newspapers, by foreign cartoonists such as Louis Raemaekers and Captain Bruce Bairnsfather.” Of all the cartoonists Hecht could have recognized here, he chose to highlight Raemaekers. He even spent two paragraphs of his five-page introduction about cartoons in American newspapers on the established influence of Louis Raemaekers.

The collection of cartoons themselves share some similarities with Raemaekers’ work. There are several images focusing on a big-bad German—holding a weapon or a

62 Hecht, The War in Cartoons, 7-8.
corpse—with dead bodies and burning cities in his wake. They capture a similar essence to Raemaekers’ cartoons in that the viewer can see the cruel nature of the Germans and their overall lack of humanity. Some of these images also draw the Kaiser as the one committing these violent and horrible acts, therein laying the responsibility for the war and the Germans’ atrocities with him.

However, one important aspect that is unique from Raemaekers’ work is the theme of patriotism and the American sense of duty to save Germany’s helpless victims, to save democracy. Whether it is Uncle Sam giving you the option to work or fight, to buy bonds or to become bonded in chains, or an American soldier marching victoriously out of a battle, a sense of pride emerges. From that pride comes a desire to unite and contribute to the valiant effort that our brave soldiers have already committed themselves to.

Then in terms of the technique of the cartoons themselves, Raemaekers appears to have a unique style as compared to the collection from Hecht. While I am comparing one cartoonist’s unique style to the styles of various cartoonists based on a limited number of images, many of Raemaekers’ cartoons are made up of large, thick pen strokes. The thick, almost sloppy strokes communicate a more immediate sense of fervor. It is as if Raemaekers was so impassioned by what he was drawing that he used big, sweeping strokes to get the image out there, because people needed to see it. Immediately. Though some of the American cartoons from Hecht’s collection have some thicker strokes to fill in the background of the scene or indicate a destructed city, most of the cartoons have thinner, more controlled strokes. There is more cross-hatching and shading that adds

63 Ibid., 17, 21, 27, 31, 53, 115, 159, 163.
64 Ibid., 59, 125, 129, 151.
depth to the cartoons. The details are more finely drawn, so the viewer can see how each piece is important in making up the whole image. While both techniques effectively communicate their messages and arouse feelings from the audience, there is a raw passion behind Raemaekers’ images that draw the viewers in.

*Punch* Magazine, the established and respected British magazine founded in 1841, also had a lot to say about the war and had numerous cartoonists publishing images conveying their views of the Germans. Looking through their online archives, there is one cartoonist in particular that contributed a fair amount of anti-German cartoons to the magazine: Bernard Partridge. He published his first cartoon in *Punch* in February of 1891, then joined the staff later that year and remained a cartoonist for *Punch* for over fifty years. According to the British Cartoon Archive, organized by the University of Kent at Canterbury, Partridge’s “ideas were often supplied to him” by *Punch.* This appears to be a common method, seeing as it was also employed by America’s Bureau of Cartoons under the Committee of Public Information.

The archives cite Partridge with typically drawing only two main figures in his cartoons, “and [he] tended to draw grandiose, statuesque figures in classical poses.”65 Indeed, the images pulled from Punch’s online catalog confirm just that. In the harsher cartoons that he published during World War I, a German is the prominent figure in a classical pose. In “The Triumph of ‘Culture’”66 Kaiser Wilhelm II is shown standing

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powerfully over his most recent victims (women), who lie dead between his legs beneath him (Figure 6). His pistol is pointed down, still smoking, and he holds it in front of his pelvis with his hips jutted out. His other hand is firmly holding the imperial German flag, which billows in the wind across his shoulders. This entire image indicates male power and female vulnerability, similar to Raemaekers’ portrayal of the dismembered France. The women at his feet wear peaceful expressions on their faces, suggesting their helplessness and a resignation to their fates at the hands of a domineering man above them. The Kaiser’s powerful and sexualized stance, with a hateful expression on his down-turned face, in addition to the placement of the pistol and the position of the women between his legs, suggests that he raped his victims before shooting them.

Partridge’s cartoon parallels Raemaekers’ cartoons in their subject matter—a domineering German above the bodies of dead women, implying a sexual threat—yet the style of the drawings themselves are vastly different. Partridge is more detailed in his images, including the background. Many of Raemaekers’ images are one-dimensional in the sense that there is one clear subject in the foreground of his images and not much else to get sidetracked on in the background. Partridge has a lot to look at in “The Triumph of ‘Culture’” besides the Kaiser and his immediate victims: there is part of a brick house showing that has a wooden shutter hanging off its hinges, there are more bodies and destructed buildings as well as a fire whose smoke billows into the sky and across the razed village. All of these elements are precisely drawn so that the viewer can fully grasp
the destruction of the scene caused by the Kaiser. Even the Kaiser’s face is smoothly shaded to show the angles in a more realistic way. Despite Partridge’s feeling that his work was “rushed to meet deadlines,” it did not diminish the level of detail he drew in his cartoons, creating a realistic image that viewers could really picture in their minds.

The propaganda-ridden cartoons that cartoonists like Partridge and Raemaekers were producing were meant to catch the eyes of millions and convince them of Germany’s treachery, in turn, compelling them to support the war effort against the abhorrent Germans. David Low’s cartoons were similarly circulated. He was drawing for a newspaper four days a week, where his cartoons were “syndicated to a hundred and seventy journals worldwide.” This perhaps attributed to Raemaekers’ and Low’s vast popularity by expanding their audiences outside of their localities, thereby implanting their ideas and messages in the minds of people all over the world.

World War II and Sir David Low

In contrast to the First World War, the Second World War saw a shift in the focuses of the images that were being distributed among the Allied populations. In an online collection of cartoons published in Kansas’s newspapers, many styles from many different cartoonists give their perspective on Hitler and the events of the war. Ethel Snoddy, from Emporia, Kansas, documented the Second World War by clipping roughly 3500 cartoons from the various newspapers she received throughout the war (1941-1945). She passed it

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down to her nephews, who eventually donated the cartoon clippings to their local museum as well as digitizing some of them and uploading them to the Internet. Her fastidiousness during World War II now gives history enthusiasts a wonderful look at the types of images the general public were seeing in their newspapers. The collection of cartoons was published in the *Emporia Gazette*, the *Kansas City Star*, or the *Kansas City Journal*. S.J. Ray, a locally famous cartoonist, at the Kansas City Star, drew a number of the cartoons in the online collection; however, the newspapers do not simply contain local cartoonists. They also printed "cartoons it received over the wire from newspapers throughout the country as well as from England and even Australia."  

I only looked through about seventy images from the collection; nevertheless, a set of themes appeared. Throughout the war, cartoonists used animals to characterize nations. It was typical to see images such as French collaborators portrayed as rats, Hitler as a snake or vulture, the Japanese as mosquitoes or monkeys. A popular characterization, for whenever Germany was fighting (and losing) to the Russians, was depicting Russia as a bear. The idea behind this being that Russia is large, intimidating, and ruthless. Indeed, the images depicting Russia as a bear demonstrate just that: Hitler has fallen down the "Russian Steppes" with a bloody and vicious bear about to strike; Hitler is a dentist and has stuck his entire upper body into the mouth of a huge bear, anxiety written all over his face at the possibility of Russia closings its jaws and crushing him in half; Hitler shoveling Nazi

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soldiers down the throat of a larger-than-life bear by the hundreds.\textsuperscript{70} The sheer size of Russia and the manpower it so implies make a meal out of Hitler and his armies. Hitler is being ravaged and overpowered by the immense force that is Russia, and this is being played out in these various cartoons. David Low did not make much use of this tactic of using animals and their qualities to characterize people or nations (with the ever so slight exception of Figure 9). He drew them true to their likeness, although sometimes giving them exaggerated features.

Similar to World War I, a theme that is especially unique to America and can be seen throughout its cartoons during wartime is patriotism. Americans like to highlight the values on which the country was founded—liberty—and their pride in that fact. In appealing to America's national mission with stories displaying "national honor, tests of manhood, and moral redemption," its citizens see themselves as exceptional and worthy of the pride they exude.\textsuperscript{71} The theme of sacrifice is then used in concordance with patriotism in times of war as a motivating tool to get the American people more involved and invested in the war. That being said, Ethel Snoddy's online collection has its fair share of images playing into ideas of patriotism and sacrifice. Such themes are readily identifiable through distinctly American symbols including Uncle Sam, the American flag, bald eagles, the smiling all-American soldier, the Statue of Liberty, and President Roosevelt. One example of

\textsuperscript{70} Rice, "The Russian Steppes," August 1941; "You Can Never Be Certain Until They’re All Yanked Out," August 1, 1941; "Mein Costs," August 1, 1942, Aunt Ethel’s War, accessed March 20, 2016, ww2cartoons.org.

this comes from a cartoon published in 1941 entitled, “So Help Us, God!” (Figure 7).\(^{72}\) It is a relatively straightforward cartoon depicting Uncle Sam, dressed in revolutionary garb, authoritatively walking forward. A large American flag waves in his immediate background, and he clutches a sword that has the remnants of a Nazi flag torn around it. The strength and pride that exudes from Uncle Sam’s stride communicates to the viewer that he has accomplished his goal of crushing the Germans, which is also communicated through the torn Nazi flag and the diminishing smoke that trails in the background—where Uncle Sam is walking away from. His job is done and he did it with honor for the sake of America and other nations whose liberty has been jeopardized by the Nazis.

The images seen in *Punch* Magazine are not similar in the same patriotic sense as seen in American cartoons. Indeed, *Punch* continued to play a significant role past World War I and into World War II. *Punch* Magazine was not just a significant source of British cartoons during the First World War. According to BBC Today, during the Second World War, “it was decided that *Punch* was so essential to British morale that its paper ration was increased.”\(^{73}\) Because of this and its long-respected establishment, their cartoons can establish a context for comparison to Low and the previously mentioned cartoons. British cartoons are inherently different from American cartoons. As a whole, their cartoons tend to avoid depicting animals to symbolize a particular person, country, or idea. Many of the *Punch’s* World War II cartoons are a commentary of daily life during the war. That being


said, I will not attempt to understand the dry and subtle jokes that are bound to be over my American head. Instead, my focus will be how the cartoons from Punch depicted Hitler.

Punch’s cartoons tend to be realistic in human likeness, if satirical, and intelligent. However, there are also funny, cartoonish, and straightforward images: a boy and a girl stand apart with their arms crossed, trying to think of something to occupy their time. The caption reads, “I know what—let’s go pretend we’re Hitler and go and annoy everybody.”74 The cartoons of Hitler himself demonstrate that same sense of mocking in the way they portray him acting or reacting absurdly. In one cartoon, Hitler is about to goose-step right off a cliff because he is too busy admiring his Luftwaffe that currently soars above him.75 In another, he is depicted as out hunting with Joachim von Ribbentrop and Joseph Goebbels when they come across a sign that reads, “Trespassers WILL be prosecuted,” to which they respond, “There, look at that! Sheer intimidation!”76 These ribs that the Punch cartoonists

74 “I know what—let’s go pretend we’re Hitler and go and annoy everybody,” PUNCH Magazine Cartoon Archive, published Dec. 27, 1939, accessed March 22, 2016, http://punch.photoshelter.com/image?&_bqG=29&_bqH=ejzlZxXYdXwcq0nSDy_3N053K7XIKXbzcHTxT301MjIq1tzlyNbAyNAACK89412Bn28SU_7w07YzlkpzuUljWwULyj4ttCZAdGuwaF0_pYhsKUP7llZVPgSULOZhrbv6BxiW1pcFLyjaWJScoeYoUuQOUuToXFHg5eNe7mxQrOYMEgUA7kl4rAg--&GI_ID=.

75 “Little Adolf, Head-in-Air,” PUNCH Magazine Cartoon Archive, published June 12, 1940, accessed March 22, 2016, http://punch.photoshelter.com/image?&_bqG=27&_bqH=ejxtj810wzAQhJ.muxBjKQwJkg.uvTbNjbf4j8KvnVYFCkWNaHvg8bgCjgD.tvZj221fettOlfKLRa61mj3eftx.9OzWz2FspqXYWbTM1WFpjlzkm9e.e7tdq.dueyyQnBlmxe1x0m.MhQKhtKjayYKpv5TD8jlsLkPwlejj8jLP4wzSB01tjHQms2MRdJqh0VMiwtrEA7URT6MtTPWcyv0qhhWJKEVpc0Diyh4iGv1_ud8w.Hzop8T6MGrQ9iTWIWBWsZ8qSA5J0wPpgFwzfa.xsMwrp.Wm7Ob60RT0kF00XuX8B3Tp z1w--&GI_ID=.

make towards Hitler and his tendency to idealize and overreact in situations are also an
effective means at displaying his characteristics to the general populace. It is through
images such as these that the British population becomes informed on current events and
political personnel. This sense of mocking the enemy’s leader could very well have been a
unique attribute of British humor and cartoons, seeing as Low also did this in a large
portion of his cartoons.

Sir David Low was born and raised in New Zealand. He was inspired early in life by
British comics that had been imported to New Zealand, from which he would imitate their
styles. In 1902, he published his first cartoon at the young age of eleven in the Christchurch
Spectator, his school’s paper. By the time Low was twenty, he was a cartoonist in Australia
for the Sydney Bulletin. Soon after the end of World War I, Low emigrated to London,
landing a job with the Star in 1919. It wasn’t until 1927 that Low moved over to the
Evening Standard, which was where he published all of his famous cartoons throughout
World War II.77

World War II began on September 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland.
However, in the years leading up to the formal declarations of war, Germany was making
many changes politically, militaristically, and economically. In 1933, Adolf Hitler was
elected German Chancellor under President Paul von Hindenburg. After Hindenburg died in
1934 at the age of 87, Hitler dismissed the democratic government that elected him by
declaring Germany to be in a state of emergency. This allowed Hitler to suspend citizens’

77 Maurice Horn, Low, Sir David (1891-1963), vol. 1, The World Encyclopedia of Cartoons,
civil rights, which was done with the purpose of restoring Germany to its former glory before World War I and the Treaty of Versailles. When Germany surrendered and World War I ended, they had to take responsibility for the war and pay the Allied nations billions of dollars in reparations, thereby destroying their economy. Hitler played on the emotions of a struggling nation by telling the German people he could give them jobs and food if they put their trust in him. Now in this totalitarian state, Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland— in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles—eliminated political opposition, and began annexing bordering nations that he felt needed to be united with Germany throughout the 1930s.

Meanwhile, the rest of Europe watched, sitting idly by. Britain and France made feeble attempts to discourage Hitler from invading other nations, but fearing another world war, they adopted the policy of appeasement. Through it all, David Low was publishing cartoons. However, his unrelenting mockery of Hitler—unsurprisingly displeasing to Hitler himself—also caused problems with the British in their policy of appeasement. The Nazis banned the *Evening Standard* in Germany as well as any other paper publishing Low’s

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78 The Rhineland is a region of land between Germany and France, centered around the Rhine river. It was meant to act as a buffer zone between the two countries, which was why the Treaty of Versailles stipulated for it to be demilitarized: “All fortified works, fortresses and field works situated in German territory to the west of a line drawn fifty kilometres to the east of the Rhine shall be disarmed and dismantled.” Treaty of Versailles, Ch. IV, Fortifications, Art. 180, [http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Articles_159_-_213](http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Articles_159_-_213).

79 Appeasement was adopted with the desire to avoid another war like World War I. With an estimate of 38 million casualties, World War I’s devastation was still quite poignant in everyone’s collective memory. The British and French tried to “appease” Hitler by initially attempting to negotiate, but eventually giving in, to his demands. Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, ensured “peace in our time” after putting the appeasement policy into action in 1938. He met with Hitler and agreed to Hitler’s demand to annex the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain did this without consulting the Czechoslovakians or the French.
cartoons. When Lord Beaverbrook travelled to Germany in an attempt to lift the ban in 1933, “the Nazis told him that the *Evening Standard* would remain banned as long as Low was its cartoonist.” Then in 1936, the British government pressured Low to “tone down” his cartoons so as to not “affect [Lord Beaverbrook’s] personal relations with the Nazis while on his visit to the [Berlin Olympic] Games.” Stanley Tiquet, the Assistant Editor at the *Evening Standard* said they did not want anything published in the newspapers that would “prejudice international peace and, particularly, the good relations between all the countries now represented in Berlin.” The situation escalated into actual censorship; the *Evening Standard’s* editor Percy Cudlipp refused to publish one of Low’s cartoons because “[w]e do not want...to run what will seem to be a cartoonist’s campaign against the dictators....I suggest, therefore, that for the present you avoid the dictators altogether.” Low was being told by his editors to not draw Hitler and Mussolini and even had his work including the dictators rejected for publication so that the British government would not offend Germany, thereby maintaining peace with them. Knowing now that none of these attempts to diminish Hitler’s militaristic actions would be even remotely successful, it seems ridiculous that the British government would go to such lengths to subdue a cartoonist. However, it also shows just how powerful those images were and the influence they had over those who saw them.

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81 Ibid., 37-8.
One month before the Olympic Games began, Low came out with a cartoon entitled, “Stepping Stones to Glory” (Figure 8).\textsuperscript{82} In the cartoon, the ‘Spineless Leaders of Democracy’ are piled on top of each other, making a staircase, which Hitler is goose-stepping up while thumbing his nose. There is a carpet laid out for Hitler to walk on, each step labeled differently: Rearmament, Rhineland Fortification, Danzig, ?, ??, !!, !!!...Boss of the Universe. This cartoon is meant to communicate the frustration Low felt towards the Allies in their appeasement policy. Depicting Hitler goose-stepping—a German army march—conveys Hitler’s increasing threat of military force. He is also thumbing his nose, a sign of derision and contempt, which is most likely directed towards the democratic world leaders that is he stepping on to get to his end goal of “Boss of the Universe.”\textsuperscript{83} He is also sticking out his tongue as he is thumbing his nose, another way in which Hitler is mocking the Allies and showing his complete disregard for them. The way in which Low draws Hitler in this cartoon is almost juvenile. Hitler has a ridiculous expression on his face because his tongue is sticking out; his fingers are pointed in different directions to draw our attention to the action of thumbing his nose, a childish action; and even though the goose-step can communicate military threats, it would be quite difficult to do going up the stairs without looking awkward and ridiculous.

Hitler has already passed the first couple of steps, and the question marks and exclamation points are meant to indicate further unknown actions that Hitler will be


making to get to the top. The first three figures have their faces viewable to the audience to place blame directly on them for Hitler’s first few unimpeded steps. The rest of the democratic leaders making up the staircase have their faces and bodies sloped down and out of view, in either resignation or death. This could indicate their impending deaths as Hitler continues to take militaristic action or the seeming futility in attempting to stop him, leading to their resignation. Combining the passivity of the democratic leaders in the cartoon with Hitler’s silly-looking actions, Low is portraying the “Spineless Leaders of Democracy” simply giving in to the spoiled child that is Hitler.

This cartoon is meant to criticize the passivity of the Allies and how their current handling of the situation will only perpetuate Hitler’s impression that he can walk all over the Allies. Low asserts that this will eventually result in Hitler ruling the world. Of course, that is a bit dramatic, but it shows the path these small steps are leading towards and what the outcome could be if Hitler continues unobstructed. Low is attempting to warn the public that this type of continued inaction will not end well for anyone. While he is commenting on Hitler’s actions, this cartoon is more so meant to highlight and criticize the Allies that are allowing it to happen. It is almost as if their compliance and passivity is what is causing Hitler to take such actions. If the Allies were not compliantly lying down en masse, forming this easy staircase for Hitler, he would not be able to fulfill his end goal.

While Hitler was often the subject of Low’s cartoons throughout World War II, the focus of his cartoons is not as easily categorized into a common theme as Raemaekers’ were, seeing as Low’s cartoons were focused more on specific topics rather than broad circumstances. Low used his cartoons to comment heavily on the political matters of the
time—such as his displeasure with appeasement—always inserting some hint of sarcasm or satire to amuse the audience and keep them interested. In this sense, Low’s drawings follow Press’ definition of a social cartoon in that they seek to amuse by making a frustrating social or political issue more tolerable. Raemaekers’ cartoons very clearly fell under the categories of political cartoon and propaganda, because they had a firm position on a subject and sought to lead their audience into a specific action or opinion based on that position. This difference in technique in depicting the enemy is on full display when comparing the cartoons of Raemaekers and Low. Kemnitz asserted that “techniques vary with subject matter,” which is exactly what is seen with Raemaekers and Low. Raemaekers takes the approach of vilifying the enemy by depicting them as atrocity-committing monsters, while Low played on Hitler’s ‘impassioned’ personality by often depicting him making wild gestures, though Low also frequently showed Hitler as a purveyor of death like Kaiser Wilhelm II. While their purposes are the same—to turn public opinion against Germany—their focuses are fundamentally different, therefore affecting the technique in which each cartoonist is depicted. This creates differing negative perspectives of the Germans in the eyes of the viewers.

Despite the many facets of Low’s cartoons, I will be focusing on his depiction of Hitler since that was what gave Low the most trouble as well as increased his fame. Low himself conceded that Hitler’s severe displeasure at his cartoons only fueled him to continue. It was especially the way in which Low portrayed Hitler—as a “harmless fool”—

84 Press, The Political Cartoon, 12.
85 The World History textbook by Ellis defines propaganda in its glossary as “the spreading of ideas and information to promote a certain cause or to damage an opposing cause.”
86 Kemnitz, “The Cartoon as a Historical Source,” 83.
that seemed to irk the dictator so much. Low admitted, “No dictator is inconvenienced or even displeased by cartoons showing his terrible person stalking through blood and mud... [It] feeds his vanity... What he does not want to get around is the idea that he is an ass, which is really damaging.”

There has been debate among scholars as to which is a more effective way of portraying the enemy: drawing them as dangerous monsters or as ridiculous fools. Both aim to turn the public against the enemy, but the opinions they have of said enemy will be vastly different. When portraying the enemy as an atrocious beast (like Raemaekers did in World War I), the viewers will see him as a serious threat and respond with animosity. Conversely, if one tries to discredit the enemy by depicting him as a blundering fool (like Low does in World War II), those being discredited will respond with animosity. It also runs the risk of the primary viewers not necessarily understanding the enemy for the threat they actually pose: he will be seen as an easily crushed opponent, and perhaps not with the seriousness the situation calls for.

This contrast in technique is particularly noticeable when examining Raemaekers’ and Low’s cartoons. Out of the Raemaekers cartoons discussed above, only the first one (“See the Conquering Hero Come”) shares a similarity to Low’s style of discrediting the

88 Cartoon historian W.A. Coupe comments on this matter in his article, “Observations on a Theory of Political Caricature.” He argues that within the past two centuries, there has been a tendency to “represent enemies and opponents as puny, insignificant creatures who are to be laughed at rather than hated or feared.” Humor is then being used as “a defense mechanism, its function being to release tension and neutralize fear” (91). He also comments on David Low’s depiction of Hitler in this context saying that because Low “showed Hitler as Ludicrous... [it] did not strike despondency into his readers... he [Low] probably contributed to the conviction that it ‘couldn’t happen here’. Such absurd little men surely could not constitute a serious political threat!” (92). This same quote appears in Benson’s “Low and the Dictators,” but according to Coupe originates from L.H. Streicher’s, “David Low and the Sociology of Caricature.”
enemy's maturity or intelligence. Raemaekers is attempting to discredit the Germans by drawing them as ridiculous oafs, with their primitive dress and the leading figure's unintelligent, but smug expression. However, at the same time, Raemaekers employs the characteristic of them being subhuman by drawing the latter two as apes. With that characterization comes the idea of barbarity, and from that, a fearfulness for their animalistic brutality. In this particular cartoon from Raemaekers, the scary violence is not as immediate—even though there are detached heads and skeletons in the scene—because of the blank expressions of the primitive German apes. But when looking at the next image (Figure 2, “Germany and the Neutrals”), that fear of animalistic barbarity is present. The same type of barbarity and carelessness for humanity is present in the following cartoons of Raemaekers’ as well as most of the cartoons he published throughout World War I. Raemaekers tended to rely on the barbarity of the Germans as the fuel to portray his subjects instead of drawing them as fools as Low did. Perhaps Raemaekers agreed with secondary sources in thinking that drawing the enemy as unintelligent would not elicit the correct reaction from the audience.

Low was quite the opposite; he preferred a hint of subtle humor in his cartoons instead of overwhelming despair and barbarity that war caused. Early in the war—1939—Low published a cartoon of Hitler captioned, “You may have begun man—but I, Adolf Hitler will finish him” (Figure 9).\(^{89}\) Hitler is standing on the mighty hand of God, which has descended from the heavens. With one fist raised and the other pointing back at God, Hitler shouts his proclamation printed in the caption. Hitler’s tiny frame fits entirely on God’s

\(^{89}\) Low, "You May Have Begun Man—But I, Adolf Hitler, Will Finish Him," *Years of Wrath.*
pinky finger and his screaming with his arms above his head could be a way to make himself seem large and threatening, even though God clearly has the upper hand. The intent here is to exaggerate the scene and Hitler’s overall exuberance to diminish his reputation. It is difficult to believe someone’s seemingly far-fetched proclamations; however, Low himself stated that he took Hitler’s claims seriously and drew about them. While insulting Hitler by depicting him as an over-exaggerative, tiny man who is no threat for God, Low is also bringing more awareness to Hitler’s claims and the seriousness of them. The difficulty here is that one cannot judge if it was cartoons like this one that confused the public into thinking Hitler was a silly and outrageous man instead of a fanatical man capable of atrocious acts.

A few years later in July 1942, Low came out with another cartoon entitled, “In Occupied Territory” (Figure 10).90 Hitler and Heinrich Himmler—head of the SS—are in the foreground on the right, behind them are five people that have been hanged. Below them, lies a pile of bodies—their predecessors. Those who are hanged have their hands tied behind their backs, and their heads and necks are just above the top of the picture, so the audience cannot see them. Is this perhaps to spare the public from the grotesque image of a broken neck hanging from a rope? Raemaekers would have drawn something like that clearly to stir up an emotional response to the treachery, perhaps focusing on a woman and showing her naked or with her clothes in tatters like in Figures 2-4. Raemaekers would highlight the domineering German and the savageness with which he is treating the innocent, defenseless woman. The justified indignation of such horrible acts fueled the

90 Low, “In Occupied Territory,” Years of Wrath.
public's hatred of the Germans in World War I; it was these “hate cartoons” that were “brought forth in such abundance in the shape of allegorical ogres and atrocity jokes...[i.e] pictures of babies on bayonets.”91 However, Low does not touch on that at all. Low wants the emphasis to be on Hitler and his caption instead of the depressing and atrocious behavior that is exhibited. Why?

This fundamental difference in focus demonstrates the difference thirty years has made. What worked for pictorial propaganda in the First World War might be completely different than what worked in the Second World War. With the collective memory of World War I and the tragic images still in the public's head, cartoonists such as Low sought to shape the people's perceptions in a different way. Emotions are not always rational, so instead of trying to solely create blind hatred, the public was informed through witty political cartoons in addition to blatant propaganda to shape their opinions against their enemies. That is not to say that people were not shown horrible images, but perhaps there was a realization that showing only those types of images can deflate morale. In addition, if there was more humor inserted into the situation, it might lighten the depressing mood and make the news of all of the terrible events slightly more bearable.

“In Occupied Territory” combats that potential deflation of morale with inserting a caption meant to invoke a wry sense of humor in the depressing situation, keeping with the social cartoon definition. In the cartoon, Hitler is looking at Himmler and says, “Why don’t they like us, Heinrich?” This cartoon was published in July of 1942 and is, therefore, reflecting the despairs of the time with a little cheek. For this was when it was clear that

Hitler was having the Einsatzgruppen and the SS round up Jews to be killed or deported to concentration camps to be killed later. What Hitler says in the caption is perhaps a legitimate question for him, due to the neutral expression on his face, but is turned into a ridiculous comment by drawing the people he is responsible for killing directly behind him. This dry sense of deadpan humor was a way to cope with the terrors that one was seeing or hearing about on a daily basis. While it does not make the viewer lightheartedly laugh, it still allows them to grin at the grim situation. Low’s recognition of this and his ability to capture both despair and frustration in one witty sentence was what made him and his cartoons so popular. He was able to synthesize such horrible acts with the satire of political figures’ actions to inform and subtly influence the public and its perception of Hitler and Germany.

Later that year in December of 1942, Low published a more serious cartoon commenting on what was happening to the Jewish population under Hitler’s command (Figure 11).92 In “I’ve settled the fate of Jews’—‘and of Germans,’” Hitler is depicted as a monstrous man, skulking in front of the cloaked Nemesis—the goddess of divine retribution—with an open-topped train car packed full of people in the background. The train car is labeled “Jews to the slaughter house,” an obvious reference to concentration camps and the Holocaust. There is debate among scholars as to what extent the Allied governments and public knew that the Holocaust was happening in 1942, but based on this cartoon, it is clear that people like David Low took notice of what was happening or suspected to be happening to the Jews that the Nazis were deporting.

92 Low, “‘I’ve Settled the Fate of Jews’—‘and of Germans,’” *Years of Wrath.*
In the cartoon, there is a boxcar filled with Jews in minimal to no clothing—it is difficult to tell since the cartoon only shows the tops of their heads. They are packed into the car so there is little to no room for them to move—as if they were shepherded into the train car like cattle. They all have distressed expressions on their faces, and some of their arms are stretched up in worry and prayer to exemplify the hopeless situation. Then Hitler stands crouched over in the foreground and is caricatured as a beast. The man is undeniably Hitler based on the haircut and facial structure, but he is growling and has devilish pointed ears that contort his face. He is hunched over in a wide stance with his arms spread out like an ape. His hands are rough looking and claw-like with his fingertips coming to points. He looks as if he is transforming into a ferocious ape before the sinister-looking Nemesis.

The Greek goddess Nemesis is facing away from the audience; the only part of her that is not covered by her cloak is her hands, which look boney and harsh. Based on the way the cloak hangs off of Nemesis, she appears to be quite thin or that the cloak is much too large for her. The goddess of divine retribution was meant to exact punishment for those who showed arrogance towards the gods. She is writing a list labeled, “The horrors to be repaid.” Professor Binita Mehta describes the scene as the Nemesis “[standing] watch, keeping record of Hitler’s hubris and cruelty” for which he must later pay, saying that Low “implicates the whole of Germany, embodied in Hitler, in the destruction of the Jews...The

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93 Many Holocaust survivors attest to the horrid conditions they were forced to endure on these train rides to the concentration camps. They were packed in shoulder-to-shoulder so that no one could sit or lay down, and they were not given any food, water, or bathroom breaks on their multiple-day-long journeys. They were truly treated like animals and without humanity.
cartoonist draws the dictator in an animal-like position, representing the lack of humanity in the perpetrators of the Holocaust.” This cartoon is meant to signify that while Hitler has determined the fate of the Jews (i.e. slaughter), Nemesis is taking account of it all and therefore determining the fate of the Germans as well.

It was in early 1942 at the Wannsee Conference that German officials came up with the “Final Solution to the Jewish Problem,” which was to exterminate all the Jews of Europe. By the end of 1942, when Low published this cartoon, the Germans had begun implementing their plans by deporting Jews to death camps, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, and Sobibór, on a large enough scale that the rest of the world took notice. With Low’s cartoon, he is commenting on the horror and inhumanity of Hitler who is sending thousands of Jews “to the slaughter house.” Surely no human being could commit such a heinous act against his fellow man; therefore, Hitler has been transformed into an ape-like beast to further communicate the subhuman likenesses that made him capable of such inhumanity. This change in tone of Low’s cartoon from witty and cheeky to horrible and grave demonstrates just how seriously he viewed the situation and wanted others to view it. While “Stepping Stones to Glory” served as a warning as to what continually acquiescing to Hitler might lead to, there was a goofy and humorous element to it. However three years later, Hitler’s true colors and aggression have become apparent, and this situation Low draws in the “Fate of Jews” cartoon is deathly serious. There is no place for humor; thousands are being carted to their deaths.

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Low’s depiction of Hitler here is more in line with something one would see from Raemaekers. The German leader is looking very animalistic and savage, skulking in front of a Death-like figure. His features are distorted, making him appear more threatening and terrifying. This man is a monster to be feared. Similar to “How I dealt with the small fry,” (Figure 4), it is clear that Germany's leader is directly responsible for the fate of these innocent people. While in Figure 4, Kaiser Wilhelm II is drawn overwhelmingly large to indicate his role and the image’s overall focus, Figure 11 recognizes that same sense of blame and responsibility even though Hitler is not the only focus, indicated by his smaller size (comparatively to the Kaiser in Figure 4).

Even when first viewing the image, Hitler is not the first sight that catches one’s eye: it is the boxcar of Jews being led “to the slaughterhouse.” Low meant it to be this way because while he wants people to know that Hitler is responsible, this is an unthinkable act that is happening to thousands of people. He wants us to identify with those carted off to their deaths and the immorality of it all. Our focus should be on saving them—surely Hitler will be made to pay for his atrocious sins if not by the Allies than by a higher power—because it is happening now and it must be stopped. Low goes much farther with his imagery and message in his cartoons than Raemaekers. There again brings up the debate as to whether a simplistic and direct message—as standard propaganda and effective cartooning calls for—is more effective than a witty or detailed one. The difference thirty years can make in terms of experiences that have shaped a person’s worldview has clearly affected the cartoons of Raemaekers and Low.
Cartoons Across the Waters and Wars

The propaganda and cartoons put out by the Allies during the World Wars varied in style and focus, but found similarity in the overall intent of their messages as well as the themes they used to convey those messages. The primary messages encourage civilians to support and participate in the war effort as well as turn public opinion against the enemy through discrediting or demonizing them.

The most common theme in America appealed to its citizens’ patriotism and pride in their nation. In World War I, images of grinning or determined soldiers, the American Flag, an ambitious Uncle Sam, etc. frequented the newspapers. Then in World War II, similar ideals depicted through fierce soldiers, more American flags, a now more serious Uncle Sam, etc. These images elicit pride and strength in the American people, which in turn creates a positive attitude towards their actions in the war. This will then encourage each citizen to take a more active role in the war, thereby achieving propaganda’s purpose.

The next most readily seen theme in American World War I cartoons was the demonization of the Germans. Such topics were manifested through images like the Kaiser’s apathy towards human life (German or otherwise), monstrous German soldiers looting and ruthlessly killing, the thousands of ruined homes and families. These images best resemble Raemaekers’ cartoons as they play up the same type of atrocious behaviors exhibited by the Germans. The style of the cartoons from Hecht’s collection varies in technique, in accordance with the varied artists drawing them. Some are more detailed and

95 Hecht, *The War in Cartoons*, 59, 125, 75, 49, 129; Aunt Ethel's War, “So Help Us, God,” “On His Shoulders,” “Beginning to Understand the Nazi Philosophy.”

96 Hecht, *The War in Cartoons*, 53, 17, 21, 163, 23, 107, 123.
have thin, fine strokes, while others have thicker, more jagged strokes and a more simplistic scene.

The cartoons from Ethel Snoddy’s World War II collection offer a different theme to discredit or demonize the Germans. They seem to play up the use of animals to describe their subjects and current situations, a less despairing theme than in World War I. While the cartoons are not always nice and chaste, they do not possess the overwhelming despondency of the cartoons from World War I. Again, this is perhaps a lesson from World War I to not overwhelm viewers with horrible images and an attempt to keep up morale. To be frank, there really is no good comparison to make between America’s World War II cartoons and David Low’s perhaps besides the subtle humor behind Hitler’s scared or nervous face when being pursued by the bear that is Russia.

Keeping in mind that a main purpose for British propaganda during World War I was to get America to join the war, the work of cartoonists like Bernard Partridge relay a general negative message about Germans. Like Raemaekers and some American cartoonists from the time period, Partridge depicts Germans committing atrocities. Unlike some of the images from American cartoonists and Raemaekers, Partridge’s cartoons are very detailed and descriptive, portraying every aspect of the Germans’ crimes.

However, detail could be a theme in and of itself for the cartoons published in *Punch*, seeing as the cartoons it published during World War II contain much of the same, all-encompassing detail that really gives the viewer a larger picture of the scene that is being

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98 Partridge, “The Triumph of ‘Culture,’” and “God (and the Women) Our Shield! Study of a German Gentleman Going into Action.”
set. While David Low is by no means simplistic and minimalistic in the majority of his cartoons, there is an inherent difference in the level of depth and scenery of the cartoon as a whole compared to those cartoonists drawing for *Punch*. Low also tends to clearly outline the different subjects and objects in his cartoons, then adding shading to give the scene a realistic, three-dimensional depth (evident in Figures 9 and 10). *Punch* cartoons are different in that they use a lot of cross-hatching, which in no way hinders the depth of the scene that is being depicted, however, it is not as smooth and crisp as Low’s images.

It is also in that regard that *Punch* cartoons compare to American cartoons during both World Wars. The American cartoons exhibit a lot of cross-hatching as a way to add darkness and depth to the image, as well. The main difference between American and *Punch* cartoons that I examined is a scene’s overall depth. *Punch* cartoons include a sufficient amount of background scenery, which is just as detailed and cross-hatched as the foreground. American cartoons typically do not include much of a background in their cartoons as a way to further develop the story of the image. Their primary focus is on the subject in the foreground and the purpose it is serving. Across countries and across time periods, there are links in these images that tell a larger story than just what is depicted: we as viewers see what is unique to that specific artist in terms of technique, style, focus, or message and how themes or symbols can be understood by international audiences.

David Low’s relentless mockery of Hitler is plainly seen in his cartoons, earning him not only wide respect and recognition, but also a top spot on the Nazi death list. Louis Raemaekers was in a similar position in World War I with his portrayal of German atrocities, as there was a large cash reward for anyone that could deliver him to the
Germans. Had the Allies failed in beating the Germans in the world wars, the lives and histories of these outspoken cartoonists might have been forgotten. While their names still might not be instantly recognizable today, the fame they acquired during their times for the works they created will be deservedly remembered by academics and those who lived through it.
Images

Figure 1

“See the Conquering Hero Come.”
Figure 2

“Germany and the Neutrals”
Figure 3

“We Must so Destroy France That She can Never Again Resist Us”
Figure 4

“How I dealt with the small fry”
Figure 5

“A Higher Pile”
Figure 6

“The Triumph of ‘Culture’”
Figure 7

“So Help Us, God!”
Figure 8

“Stepping Stones to Glory”
Figure 9

“You may have begun man—but I, Adolf Hitler will finish him”
Figure 10

“In Occupied Territory”
Figure 11

'I've Settled the Fate of Jews’—‘and of Germans’
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