

THE USE OF BANK NOTES AS AN INSTRUMENT OF PROPAGANDA

PART I

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The ever popular *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines the word propaganda as "the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person". The dictionary goes on to state that by the act of propagandizing, such ideas, facts or allegations are deliberately spread to further one's cause or to damage an opposing one. Therefore, propaganda is a deliberate attempt by countries, individuals, or groups to form, control, or alter the attitudes of others through communication, with the intent that, in any given situation, the reaction of those so influenced will be that which is desired by the propagandist. In totalitarian states the government controls all permitted communication through monopolistic political parties and their officials.

The content of such propaganda may be either factual, a compelling argument, a rumor, or it may take on the form of half-truths or outright lies. No matter what the form, all propaganda is designed to influence public opinion. Deception and propaganda have been around since ancient times, however it was only recently that a label was given it. The term "propaganda" is derived from an organization set up in 1622 within the Catholic Church to carry on missionary work. It was known as the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, or *propaganda fide*.

Such communication can take on many forms, some obvious and others subtle. Some obvious forms immediately come to mind. The circulation of controlled newspapers, pamphlets, posters and radio/television transmissions are all effective in spreading the desired message. Less obvious are the erection of statues, the naming of streets and the messages both printed and concealed which are found on a nation's paper money. It is the use of bank notes as a vehicle of propaganda that is the subject of this article.

Paper money can be a handy tool in the hands of a cunning propagandist. How better to force a propaganda message upon the very citizenry at whom it is aimed, than by touting it on the money they use in everyday commerce? In this manner the propaganda message is drummed into the subconscious day in and day

out eventually becoming part of the national psyche. Such propaganda messages can take on a variety of forms, some subtle and others direct.

Early American and French Revolutionary Bank Note Propaganda

With the exception of the Chinese who invented paper money around the year 900A.D. and the Swedes who were the first Europeans to have a paper currency, the American colonists have the distinction of being the third such group to facilitate commerce through the use of a paper currency. This was due, of course, to the chronic shortage of “specie”, which was the term applied to circulating cash used in the New World. The Massachusetts General Assembly, weary of being hampered by an economy based upon barter and a few available pence, Spanish doubloons and an occasional home minted pine tree shilling, voted in December 1690 to issue bank notes denominated in English pounds. During the following century American colonists increasingly turned to the printing press as a solution to their cash problems. This practice ran counter to British tight money policy, which was meant to keep the colonies dependent upon Mother England. British attempts to regulate and enforce colonial trade eventually became one of the principal factors leading to the American Revolution.



It was none other than Benjamin Franklin who created the bank note designs for the 1775 issue of the United Colonies. Franklin shows a bloody hand impaled upon a torn bush on his 5 dollar bill.

He explained that the hand represented Britain and the bush the American colonies. The Latin motto, when translated, reads: “Put up with me or leave me alone”.

It was not long before the colonists recognized the inherent value of propaganda as a tool to get their message across to the unrelenting British. When the Second Continental Congress convened in May 1775 one of the first things they did was to pass a resolution authorizing the printing of paper money. These bills were issued under the auspices of the “United Colonies”, there not yet being a United States of America. They were denominated in Spanish milled dollars or the equivalent exchange value in silver or gold of any coin, which happened to be circulating in the colonies. By this time patriotic military build-up and revolutionary fervor were in full swing with the colonists becoming increasingly vocal regarding the oppression of the British home government. It is not surprising therefore that such anti-British sentiments should find their way onto these notes expressed as revolutionary propaganda.



This 50 dollar Continental Currency note features a thirteen tier pyramid such as found on our one dollar bill today. The thirteen steps stand for the thirteen colonies. The motto “PERENNIS” means EVERLASTING. This was powerful propaganda designed to bolster a fledgling nation.

At first the propaganda messages employed on continental currency were subtle, and required knowledge of Latin to be fully understood. One such design on the 5 dollar United Colonies note consists of a bleeding hand caught in a thorny bush enclosed in a circle with the caption *Sustine Vel Abstine*. Benjamin Franklin, the designer of this series of notes, explained the significance of his mystifying design in a Philadelphia newspaper. He wrote that the hand represented Britain and the bush the American colonies. The hand was stuck into the bush, but when an attempt was made to remove it the hand was torn by the prickly hawthorns to the point of bleeding. The Latin motto when translated reads loosely “Put up with me or leave me alone”. The 4 dollar note from this issue shows a wild boar charging a

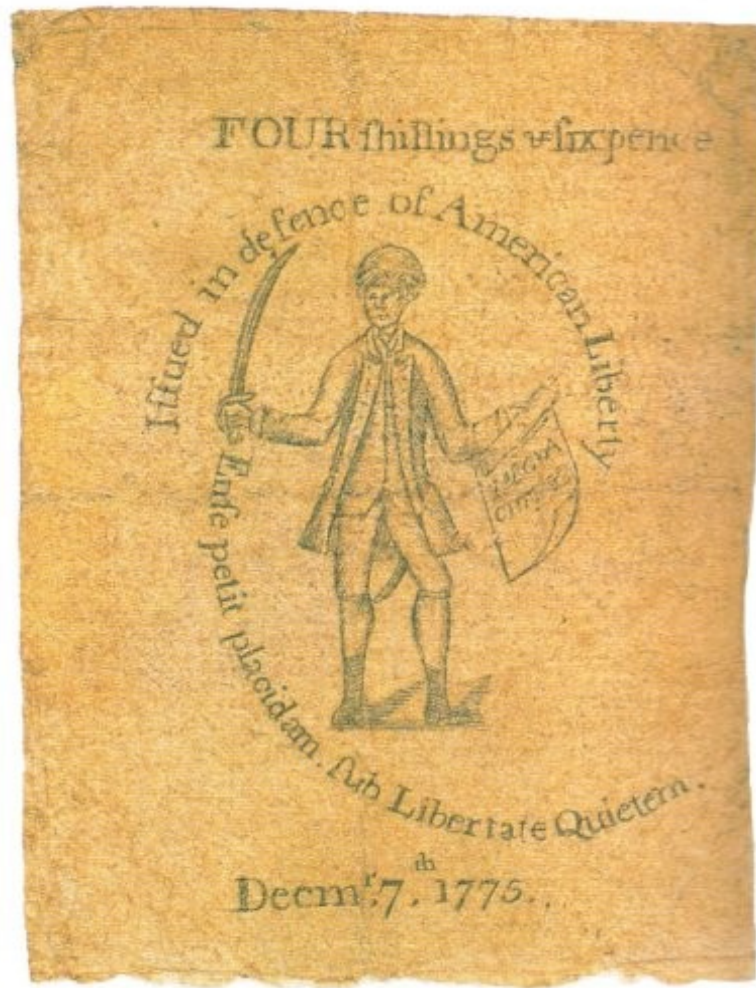
spear and carries a more direct and forceful message. The Latin motto *Aut Mors Aut VitaDecora* reads “Either death or an honorable life”. Several messages allude to the unity of the thirteen colonies: the 8 dollar bill featuring a harp of thirteen strings with the motto “The large and small colonies are in harmony”, while the 50 dollar bill shows a layered pyramid of thirteen steps. The Latin motto *Perennis* when translated reads “Everlasting”. This is the same pyramid seen on the back of our 1dollar bills today. The 80 dollar continental note depicts a large oak tree representing the nation. Its Latin motto reads *Et In Secula Seculorum Florescebit* or, “It will flourish forever and ever”. My favorite, however, is the unusual 55 dollar bill denomination which carries a depiction of the sun emerging from behind dark clouds with the accompanying motto: “After dark clouds comes the sun”.

Most American colonies had been issuing paper currencies of their own to meet various emergencies since 1750. This practice escalated after the war commenced in earnest in 1775. It soon became imperative to print money to outfit and pay the fledgling American army.

It was none other than Paul Revere who designed and printed the Massachusetts colonial issue of 1775. Revere, of course, is best noted for his famous ride throughout the countryside prior to the battle of Lexington and Concord to warn the patriots that the British were coming. Not knowing how the British forces would approach the town of Lexington on their mission to seize the powder stored there, Revere directed the citizen-soldiers along his route to keep an eye upon the tower of the Old North Church. There they would find one lantern lit if the British approached by land, and two if by sea. This gave the local militia, or Minutemen, time to assemble before the British arrived.

For this series of currency Revere chose to depict a Minuteman for the note’s common reverse. The Minuteman was best known as a citizen-soldier who could drop whatever he was doing to come to the common defense of the colony in a minute’s time. These bills are known as “Sword in Hand” notes, as the Minuteman is holding a sword in his right hand and the Magna Carta in his left. The legend above reads “Issued in Defense of American Liberty”, while the Latin below when translated reads “By the sword one seeks peace under freedom”. Issued after the American victory at the battle of Lexington and Concord, they carried a strong propaganda appeal to the patriotism of all Massachusetts colonials.

With little or no backing, continental notes had fallen to 1/110th of their specie value by 1781, eventually depreciating to 1000 to 1. After the revolution



Paul Revere designed the Massachusetts Bay Colony colonial notes of 1775. Printed after the battles of Lexington and Concord, he chose to portray the Minuteman as a patriotic symbol of American freedom. This choice had a profound propaganda impact upon the loyalties of colonists still doubtful about breaking with King George III.

was over the United States government got out of the paper money business altogether, not returning to it until 1861 when the outbreak of civil war required emergency cash to pay for another American army.

The colonial campaign of propaganda, which led up to outright defiance of British authority and to the eventual outbreak of hostilities, was not limited to paper money issues alone. Passionate appeals were made to citizens and enemy alike in the form of handbills. One such surviving leaflet was used to good advantage by the American forces at the battle of Bunker Hill. The appeal was directed at the British soldiers opposing them. In it wealth, health, food and economic status are played up simultaneously while the difficult political issues were ignored altogether. The message was direct, inviting the enemy to come over to the side of freedom, pointing out the sharp class distinctions between British officers and enlisted men and their poor state of subsistence in contrast to the life enjoyed by the American soldier. The handbill was simplicity itself, containing two columns of conditions one (the American) under the heading PROSPECT HILL and the other (British) under BUNKER HILL as shown in facsimile below:

XX	
<u>PROSPECT HILL</u>	<u>BUNKER HILL</u>
I. Seven Dollars a Month	I. Three Pence a Day
II. Fresh Provisions, and in Plenty	II. Rotten Salt Pork
III. Health	III. The Scurvy
IV. Freedom, Ease, Abundance and a Good Farm	IV. Slavery, Beggary and Want
XX	

This example of coercion could be considered as America's earliest surrender leaflet.

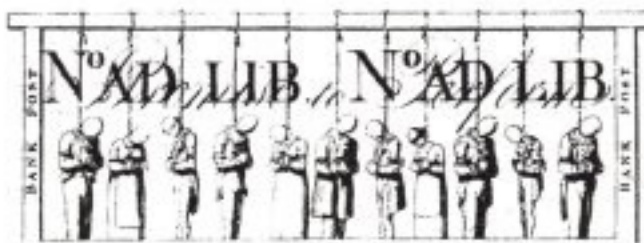
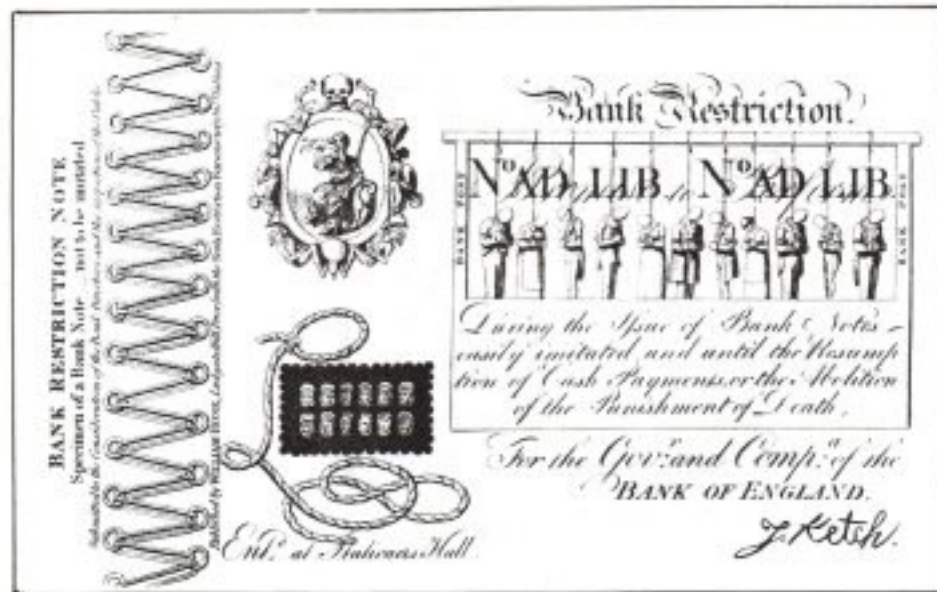
The most far-reaching American propaganda of the Revolutionary War appeared in the form of a series of pamphlets entitled *Common Sense* written by Thomas Paine, himself a citizen-soldier. These pamphlets did more than anything else to win the war. The pamphlets swayed the way Americans thought until the balance of popular opinion was tipped in favor of a free and independent United States. Paine did this by stating the case for independence so convincingly that all could understand and support the revolutionary ideas he espoused.

After the American War of Independence, the next usage of propaganda on bank notes of which I am aware occurred during the French Revolution. “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” was one of many propaganda mottos in use during the French Revolution. Robespierre advocated its use as early as 1790. When the monarchy under Louis XVI fell in 1792, the old French financial system was bankrupt. To sustain the First Republic, the Revolutionists continued printing money under the old system, which had been based on the confiscated lands of the Catholic Church. These notes were known as “assignats” and were denominated in livres and later in a new monetary unit, the franc. After Louis XVI’s execution and the liberation of the country, the royal assignats were replaced with new issues of the French Republic. Several of these notes bore the motto “Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite ou la Mort” which was worked into the design. Out of the hunger, inflation, fear and hardships brought about by the revolution, the French people hung on to their faith that if they won they would bring liberty, equality and fraternity to the world.

The Bank Restriction Note of 1818

Not all propaganda messages are to be found on genuine circulating paper money. In some cases purely fanciful designs were created in the form of real money to attract the attention of the public to the propagandists’ objective. One such example of an early fantasy note is the Bank Restriction Note, which appeared in Great Britain in 1818.

Life in England at that time was harsh. The severity of punishment for a wide range of capital offenses in Great Britain during the 1700s was both cruel and excessive. The number of capital offenses for which the death penalty was administered steadily increased until 222 crimes were adjudged punishable by death. The death penalty included such crimes as stealing from a house in the amount of forty shillings, from a shop of five shillings, robbing a rabbit warren, cutting down a tree and the counterfeiting of bank notes and the passing of same. Juries tended not to convict when the penalty was great and the crime was of lesser importance; however there was no shortage of “hanging judges” who did not hesitate to impose the harshest penalty allowed under the law. The severity of punishment for forgery and passing counterfeit notes aroused a public outcry between 1797-1821. It was during this period that the Bank of England’s new 1pound notes were frequently counterfeited. They were so poorly made that they could easily be forged, the resulting bogus notes being virtually indistinguishable from the real thing. Despite being notoriously easy to counterfeit, the Bank of England made no attempt to correct the problem despite the fact that both men and



The gallows



Britannia shown as a cannibal devouring babies



Hangman's noose



Faces of the condemned

George Cruikshank's "Bank Restriction Note" of 1818 was a gruesome condemnation of Britain's criminal justice system. At the time, the penalty for forging and passing counterfeit currency was death by hanging. Upon witnessing a woman hanged for the crime of "passing", Cruikshank, a London newspaper illustrator, created his note in protest. The Bank Restriction Note caused such a furor of public indignation that the laws concerning counterfeiting and passing were reduced to "transport", usually to Australia.

women were routinely hanged for these offenses. Public concern centered upon poor and uneducated people who could not distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit notes, and thus fell afoul of the law.

George Cruikshank, a satirical cartoonist and newspaper illustrator, was so moved after witnessing a woman hanged outside Newgate Prison for passing a forged note that he returned home, sat down and in ten minutes sketched out the design of his “Bank Redemption Note”. This effort ultimately led to the abolishment of capital punishment for these crimes and the saving of untold lives.

Cruikshank’s “bank note”, engraved from his original design, is a nauseating parody of the Bank of England 1 pound note. It is adorned with gruesome imagery and blunt dialog. Engravings of skulls, the hangman’s gallows, nooses and a ghastly rendering of Britannia gobbling infants abound. The capital £ pound sign is rendered as a noose and in place of the denomination are printed the distorted faces of the condemned. The note is reputed to have been authorized by the Governor and Comptroller of the Bank of England and is signed with the signature of “J. Ketch”, or Jack Ketch, the common nickname for a hangman in Britain at that time.

The principal vignette on the note shows eleven corpses hanging from a scaffold labeled BANK POST with the words PROMISE TO PERFORM in the background. The words BANK RESTRICTION appear above the scaffold; and below it the engraved text reads: “During the Issue of Bank Notes - easily imitated, and until the Resumption of Cash Payments, or the Abolition of the Punishment of Death”. Along the left hand border of the note Cruikshank cunningly printed the mocking phrase “Specimen of a Bank Note - Not to be Imitated”.

In this way the inaction of the Bank of England and the overzealous application of law by the hanging judges was held up to public scorn. As a result of the public outcry which ensued, a law was passed in 1823 exempting about 100 crimes from the list of those punishable by death. Among them were the crimes for counterfeiting and passing of bogus notes. Cruikshank regarded this victory as the most satisfying of his life.

After 1824 those found guilty of counterfeiting or passing notes were subject to the new “Act for the Transport of Offenders from Great Britain”. The Transport Act, as it was known, was ultimately responsible for the relocation of these recalcitrants “beyond the seas” and out of British prisons. Australia is most grateful for this bit of English history, for it was the principal recipient of these early settlers to her shores.

A Bogus Confederate States of America 20 Dollar Note

Although counterfeiting is a form of deception, it is usually not associated with propaganda except in time of war when the product produced has the intended aim of weakening and demoralizing the enemy. During the Civil War the South had no hard currency and was hard pressed to keep up with the demands of everyday-commerce. They did this by issuing series after series of bank notes repayable after the cessation of hostilities. Many printers in the South were under contract with the Confederate government to print these notes. The printers by and large chose their own designs, so it was quite common to have several different 5 dollar bills circulating side-by-side at one time. To add to this the designs were constantly changing, as new issues were authorized by the Confederate Congress, so it was difficult for the average person to distinguish between them. The North was quick to capitalize upon this situation by manufacturing bogus notes for which no genuine counterpart existed.



During the Civil War the North was active in attempting to undermine the South's economy. This bogus Confederate 20 dollar bill was entirely fictitious, having no genuine counterpart.

Nonetheless, after being smuggled into the Confederacy, it gained acceptance as the real thing and was widely circulated throughout the South. Today this specimen is known among collectors as the "Female Riding Deer" note.

The most famous of these bogus creations is the Confederate 20 dollar 'issue' of 25 July 1861, a bill known among collectors as the "Female Riding Deer" note. The note was similar in genuine design to other Confederate notes in circulation, so it would not appear unusual to those who were accustomed to have different notes

of the same denomination in their possession. This twenty featured a woman riding a deer as its central vignette. Other ornamentation included an Indian smoking a pipe and the customary numeration expressed as “20s” and “XXs”. To make the note appear convincing its face states that it is “Fundable in Confederate States Stock bearing Eight Percent Interest”. The notes were hand-numbered in two places and contained printed signatures, which should have been a dead giveaway, as all genuine Confederate notes were signed by hand. The circumstances surrounding its issue are unknown; however, it was possibly the inspiration of one Samuel C. Upham, a Philadelphia merchant who dedicated his war years to making the South miserable. By his own admission he acknowledged responsibility for counterfeiting over 1.5 million notes, which were then smuggled into the South during the period 1862-1863. That the female riding deer CSA 20 dollar bill was widely accepted in the South as a genuine issue of their government there is no doubt, as almost all surviving specimens are well worn from circulation.

Post World War I Bank Note Propaganda

The years between World War I and II brought the use of bank notes as a vehicle for propaganda to a new level. All sorts of revolutionary causes and old hatreds found expression on these notes. Passions were raised and old fears rekindled as these messages made their rounds. I will cite several of the better known examples here.

When the Bolsheviks overthrew the Russian imperial government in 1917 they replaced the then circulating tsarist notes with their own. By 1920 the communists were in full control of Russia and anxious to export their ideology abroad. To facilitate this the 1921 Soviet bank note issue carried a message inviting open rebellion against all anti-communists. These notes contained an exhortation for all workers to rise up and unite behind the communist cause. Simply stated the propaganda read “Workers of the World Unite!” The message was repeated six times in English, French, Italian, German, Chinese and Arabic. That should just about reach everybody!

At the conclusion of World War I the Allies exacted a heavy penalty upon a defeated Germany in the form of war reparations, which included unbearable financial payments for the cost of the war and the outright ceding of German territory to France. German citizens were outraged over such excesses, but were powerless to do anything about it. The mishandling of German affairs after World War I was a principal factor leading to the rise of Adolph Hitler and to World War II. Much of this anti-French sentiment found its way onto bank notes. One such



Consolidating their hold on Russia after the 1914 revolution, the Soviets felt sufficiently strong by 1921 to advocate world communism. The propaganda message on the reverse of this Soviet 10,000 rouble note exhorts workers, in six languages, to unite in overthrowing the capitalists of the world.

notgeld issue of the German town of Kahala depicts an obese 'France' in the form of an archer pointing an arrow at a helpless 'Germany', which is bound to the stump of a tree. The emaciated Germany, shown as little more than skin and bone, is riddled with arrows and is about to receive another in the form of further war reparations.



German notgeld of the 1921-1923 period often contained anti-French propaganda. Here a rotund France, swollen by German war reparations, is about to unleash another arrow at a "helpless" Germany already overburdened with debt. The note is for 75 pfennig and is from the town of Kahla.

Perhaps the best-known example of anti-French sentiment is the famous German "ghoul" note. By 1922 the post-war inflation, which was about to bring Germany to her knees, was just taking off in earnest. The Reichsbank at this time released a new 10,000 mark note bearing a reproduction of Albrecht Durer's "*Portrait of a German Worker*". Durer was the most gifted painter and engraver of the German renaissance period. Born in Nuremberg, he was apprenticed in 1486 to the Flemish painter Michael Woljmath. During his lifetime Durer produced over one thousand masterpieces on canvas and as woodcuts and engravings. Albrecht Durer's German worker would not be nearly as well known today if it were not for this note.

The Reichsdruckeri engraver assigned to the task of designing the note presumably took it upon himself to hide a propaganda message in the design by modifying the neck and surrounding area of Durer's workman. The altered portrait



Neck



Rotate 90°



Ghoul

In 1922 the post World War I inflation was just getting started in Germany. Prices were skyrocketing. The 10,000 mark Reichsbank note of the time bore a reproduction of Albrecht Durer's "Portrait of a German Worker" as its principal vignette. A propaganda message was hidden in the portrait in the form of a "ghoul", or vampire, which is seen to be drinking blood from the worker's throat. The ghoul represents France, sucking Germany dry as a result of excessive war reparations.

and its message were visible only to those who knew the secret of its location. By turning the note ninety degrees counter-clockwise, the neck then reveals a vampire, or ghoul, complete with skullcap. The ghoul appears to be drinking the blood from the worker's throat. The symbolism is obvious. The ghoul was seen as the French, sucking the blood out of Germany through exorbitant war reparations of money and territory.

The Deutsche Reichsbank obviously supported the anti-French propaganda on its notes, as the 10,000 mark note underwent three revisions during its existence without modification to the ghoul design. Inasmuch as these notes are still very plentiful today, a nice example of a propaganda note may be added to a collection for very little cost.

The most widespread use of propaganda on bank notes during the post World War I period was directed at the German hatred of the Jews. Anti-Semitic notes began to appear in profusion about the time inflation became a serious concern. Not only had the Jews been seen to profit from World War I, they were associated by most Germans as being sharp businessmen who drove a hard bargain. As inflation raged and bank notes became worthless overnight the average German saw his life's savings disappear down the drain. It became a struggle to survive, there often not being enough money to pay for even basic necessities such as food. This was fertile ground for various opposition political parties eager to place the blame for Germany's shortcomings. By and large the Jews became the victim of this pent-up wrath. By 1923 these groups were using actual bank notes, which had become valueless, as propaganda vehicles. The 1000 mark Reichsbanknote of 15 September 1922 was one such note which was frequently overprinted on the back with anti-Semitic political vindictive. Such vile slogans as these are encountered on the backs of this note:

“Out with the Jews”

“Gold is in the Jewish Bank, only dung remains in your hands”

“The Jews took the silver, gold and bacon, this dirt (referring to the 1,000 mark worthless bank note) he left for you”

It was not long before these slogans were widely used in German elections. Soon swastikas began to appear on notes overprinted by the National Socialists (Nazis). The Communist Party circulated one overprinted note, which stated: “Comrades, how much longer will you endure the plunder and swindling of the

Jewish International?” The Racist-Social Bloc floated a different overprint directed at the Communist Party leader Radeck. It read: “Soviet Jew Radeck, Railroad robber, Murderer of workers, Greatest capitalist in Europe; Workers, is this your leader? Vote the Racist-Social Bloc!”

With the rise of the Nazi Party bank note slogans became even viler. Since it was generally believed the Jews had been instrumental for starting World War I for their own profit, one overprint suggested that in any future war the Jews be sent into the first front line. Not all notes were overprinted on the printing press. Several examples of bank notes with homemade typewritten sentiments exist. One such example of the hatred abroad at the time states: “Pray three times a day that Moses will return, and that he would then lead all Jews through the Red Sea, where with God’s help they will all be drowned”.

Other propaganda was aimed at the British and Americans. One example to be found on the back of a 500 billion mark note of 1923 states that during the inflation this note could buy only one loaf of bread. The loss of all savings, unemployment, hunger and misery were blamed on Jewish speculation and the un-kept promises of freedom and independence, which had been promised by the British and Americans.

Incredibly these sentiments were accepted by the average German who swallowed the anti-Semitic propaganda without challenge. Together with Hitler’s promises of revenge for the indignities suffered as a result of the Versailles Treaty and the future glory of the Third Reich, they did much to hasten Germany into a war she could not win.

Homegrown Propaganda of the French Resistance

During War World II Germany occupied much of France. The remainder, which was not under direct control of the Nazis, was called Vichy France after the capital of the same name. Vichy, in the south of France, was governed by a German puppet, the elderly and doddering Marshall Petain, a one time French hero of World War I. Vichy territory was not subject to actual occupation by German troops. Petain’s government gave the appearance of independence, but in all ways was subject to the orders of Hitler and other Nazi officials.

As the war dragged on, resistance mounted to the Nazi occupation of France. By 1943 the movement was active in acts of sabotage: the ambushing of German troops, the blowing up of railroad stock and in assisting Allied airmen to escape



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During the World War II occupation of France, ordinary citizens defied their occupiers by pasting the bust of Hitler, cut from German postage stamps, onto circulating 20 franc notes. The stamps were pasted onto the note to make it appear that the Breton fisherman was strangling him, much to the delight of loyal Frenchmen.

after being shot down over France. These resistance fighters were hard to identify, carrying out their normal occupations by day and sabotage by night. Through their

valor France kept its dream of freedom from oppression alive during these difficult days.

Not everyone could be active in the resistance, however. The average citizen, nonetheless, could find ways to raise their morale and lower Germany's prestige through propaganda. One such popular activity involved a sort of "do-it-yourself" propaganda kit. The method was simple and the materials readily at hand.

During the German occupation the Bank of France continued to issue bank notes for both occupied and Vichy France. These ranged from 5 franc notes up to 5,000 francs. One of the most common notes in everyday circulation was the 20 franc bill which featured the likeness of a Breton fisherman on its obverse side. The fisherman is busily engaged in pulling in his catch with a stout rope attached to his net. By carefully cutting out the bust of Hitler from a common German postage stamp, and pasting it in the lower left hand corner of the note, the meaning of the vignette was abruptly altered. Now we see the French fisherman strangling Hitler by the neck with his bare hands and his rope! Every time one of these notes was passed from hand to hand, a powerful message was sent.

The series of stamps containing the bust of Hitler were issued in October 1938 in commemoration of the Nazi Congress at Nurmberg and remained in circulation throughout the war. In some instances a portrait of Petain was substituted when creating this homegrown propaganda; however, these are much scarcer than the Hitler version.

The Ghetto Notes of Theresienstadt

It had long been a goal of the Nazi Party to settle the Jewish question by establishing "resettlement camps" into which the Jews could be concentrated and controlled. The infamous conference at Gross Wannsee called by Hitler's Gestapo Chief, Reinhard Heydrich, provided what was to become known as "the Final Solution to the Jewish Problem".

It was announced at the conference that, in addition to the "labor camps" being set up throughout Occupied Europe, a special ghetto would be established only for highly qualified Jews. To be eligible for this special treatment a Jew had to be (1) a German war veteran with war incurred disabilities, (2) a veteran who had been awarded the Iron Cross First Class or higher decoration for bravery on the field of battle, (3) a prominent Jew who had made a sufficiently substantial

contribution in the fields of science, government, medicine or the arts and humanities to have gained worldwide recognition, or (4) be over sixty-five years of age.

The site chosen for this special place was the old Austrian fortress town of Terezin in German-occupied Czechoslovakia. The Nazis renamed the place Theresienstadt. In January 1942 the Czech inhabitants of Terezin were ordered out by Heydrich to make way for the Jewish settlers. The Jews arriving at Theresienstadt thought that they had been chosen to receive special treatment in accordance with the promises made to them by the Germans. Little did they know the inhuman fate that awaited them.

Throughout the war small bits of information concerning the plight of European Jews in the occupied territories began to filter out of Germany and into the West. These snippets of information soon revealed horrific occurrences, which spoke to the crimes being perpetrated against the Jews by the Third Reich. The world was stunned and disbelieving upon hearing of these atrocities. Rumors as to the Jewish plight ran rampant.

Faced with the knowledge that their program to annihilate the Jews was no longer a secret, the Nazis needed to refute the rumors and alleviate the world's growing concerns. This had to be done without disrupting the final solution to the Jewish question. What was to be done with the prominent Jews who had been sent to Theresienstadt? Questions about their well-being were beginning to arise outside Germany. To solve the problem, Heydrich created a master plan of deceit and subterfuge. He decided to turn Theresienstadt into a "model" ghetto, which could be shown off to the outside world to as an example of Nazi largess and thereby thwart further outside inquiry.

The Nazis set aside an outside area of Theresienstadt for their model ghetto to be used for propaganda purposes. Within this serene façade lay the real concentration camp of sixty thousand Jews. Jakob Edelstein was appointed Elder. In this capacity he was responsible for enacting the orders given to him by the Germans as well as running the day-to-day affairs of the ghetto. After Danish Jews began arriving in the camp, the Danish and Swedish Red Cross commenced inquiring about their whereabouts and condition. This caused the Nazi SS to dress up Theresienstadt for outside eyes. A special guided tour was planned for their Danish and Swedish guests. Prior to opening the ghetto for inspection, the Nazis encouraged the Jews to participate in an active cultural life of music, the theatre and lectures. Streets were paved, buildings painted, flower beds planted, flower boxes



Theresienstadt, in Czechoslovakia, was set up by Nazi Gestapo Chief Reinhardt Heydrich as a “model” ghetto for Jewish prisoners. Using this cover, he succeeded in fooling Red Cross authorities into believing the Jews were being given humane treatment. The ghetto notes of Theresienstadt were part of this elaborate subterfuge.

added to windowsills, benches set in place and even a playground was built. No detail was left untouched. A sign was made which read "Boys School" and placed over the door of an empty building. To add a touch of reality another sign was posted which read "Closed During the Holidays". Of course there never was a school.

To create the effect of a model ghetto with a thriving economy the SS had special ghetto money printed. This local ghetto currency consisted of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 kronen notes. Each note was given the heading *Quittung* (coupon) for so many kronen. The notes were complete with series and serial numbers. All are dated 1 January 1943. The front of the note contained the Jewish six-pointed star, the place of issue (Theresienstadt) and the facsimile signature of the Jewish Elder Edelstein. The back of the notes carried a portrait of Moses holding the Ten Commandments within an oval. In the portrait Moses' hand covers up the commandment "Thou Shalt Not Kill". In an effort to make the notes sound convincing the following text was added: *Wer diese quittung verfälscht oder nachmacht oder gefälschte quittungen in verkehr bringt wird strengstens bestraft*" (Whoever alters or counterfeits this note will be severely punished).

When all was ready the SS invited the Red Cross to come and examine the ghetto for themselves. On the day of the visit bakers baked loaves of bread and fresh vegetables were delivered. The Red Cross representatives were given a guided tour of the model ghetto and shown the kronen notes used by the Jews. They went away impressed with the treatment and overall efficiency of the camp.

Of course, there was no Theresienstadt bank as there was no backing for the notes. Having fulfilled their propaganda role, they were worthless and could buy nothing. The Jews made use of them in their card games. The notes found in collections today are uniformly uncirculated, for this reason. They remain, however, as a gruesome reminder of man's inhumanity to man.

A total of 139,00 Jews passed through Theresienstadt on their way to Auschwitz. In May 1945 the ghetto and its remaining 17,320 inhabitants were liberated. Gestapo Chief Heydrich was reported to have been immensely pleased with his successful deception but did not live to enjoy it. He was ambushed and killed by a partisan bomb a short time later.

German Propaganda Notes Air Dropped over North Africa

In the summer of 1942 German tanks and armored units rolled across the Libyan Desert in what appeared to be an unstoppable invasion of Egypt. The Suez Canal in German hands would drastically alter the outcome of the war. Several examples exist of German attempts to demoralize the Arab population leading up to their final drive on Cairo.

The first such effort involved dropping facsimiles of American two and ten dollar bills over Tunisian and Libyan towns in an attempt to dissuade the Arabs from supporting the Allies. The Jefferson 2 dollar and Hamilton 10 dollar notes all had the same serial number (serial B673360096A for the two dollar note, and F05934811A for the ten). The text when translated from Arabic read:

“Oh Muslim Brother - The note shown here is the one which the English and Americans seek to enslave the world with. Remember, oh Muslim Brother, that the blood of your brethren has flowed like rivers in order to increase the fortunes of these robbing overlords who sponge on the lands of Allah and his followers. Look at current events and those that have occurred in all areas of Islam under the disastrous occupation of the Anglo-Americans.

This is an auspicious time for rapid action to salvage the last remnants by revolting against the Anglo-American imperialist tyranny. Now is the time to act, and if you delay until tomorrow, it will be too late.

Remember, oh Muslim Brother, that with the defeat of the Anglo-Americans, hatred enemies of Islam, you will secure not only your own lives but also those of your children. Allah supports you and will shield you from danger in driving off the Jewish occupation which has always been sucking your blood throughout all the lands of Islam”.

In October and November 1942 the Luftwaffe air dropped photographic facsimiles of British 1 pound notes over Alexandria and Cairo which carried a message to all Egyptians on the reverse. The Arabic text on the back of the notes was addressed to “Our Muslim Brothers” and read:

“If you examine this note you will remember the time when you could buy ten times its weight in gold. This is because the note was guaranteed by a great empire with all its power and wealth. By now its power is gone, its wealth has vanished like wet paper. So what is the value of this note today?

You certainly know the truth. Every day that the war, started by Great Britain, continues the power of the Empire diminishes - every battle lost causes further devaluation of the British Pound. Soon the day will come when a street beggar will not even accept it as a gift. It is God's will that Britain should disintegrate. It will happen soon."

The German prophesy did not come true, as their armored columns were decisively stopped and defeated a short time later at the battle of El Alamein and eventually driven out of all of North Africa.

A British Parody of a French Fifty Franc Note

In June 1941, a year after the fall of France, an interesting caricature of the 50 franc note then circulating was dropped over occupied territory. This note was the brainchild of the Political Intelligence Department of the British Foreign Office. The propaganda on the note is directed at Germany's deteriorating financial condition and the cost to France of the German occupation. The bogus currency, known as 'Code 90', was dropped over France on the nights of 10 through 13 June 1941. The 50 franc notes were delivered by the Royal Air Force and a British Army Balloon Unit. Some specimens carry a punch hole, while others do not. Those found with the punch hole reveal that they were sent to France by free balloon across the English Channel. Notes without punch holes were dropped by air.

The bogus note contains many alterations from the genuine article. These are designed to make the Germans and their lackeys look like robbers in the eyes of the public and to decry the cost to France of the occupation. Pierre Laval (the French puppet) and Adolph Hitler adorn the columns at left and right. On the signature lines the title *Le traître Laval* (the traitor Laval) is substituted for the customary *Le Caissier General*, and *L'espion Abetz* (the spy Abetz) in lieu of *Le Secrétaire General*. The dejected scribe has written on the scroll before him "Cost of occupation = 400,000,000 francs per day". An empty treasure chest lays open on his desk. In place of a serial number the parody carries the date 23.6.1940, which was the day that General de Gaulle announced the formation of a 'Free France' to carry on the fight against Germany throughout the remaining French territories. At the bottom of the note is a cartouche bearing the words *Aux Boches pillant riens impossible* (To the plundering Germans, nothing is impossible). The reverse of the note is used to detail the cost France must bear for the occupation. A close comparison between the genuine note and its propaganda counterpart will reveal these differences.



British Intelligence created this parody of the Banque de France 50 franc note to call attention to the deteriorating financial condition within France. These notes were delivered over France by both airdrop and free balloon flight on the nights of 10-13 June 1941.

Other Propaganda Notes of the European Theater

British and American warfare psychologists working for the Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office had long been working on a scheme to forge regular German currency and drop it over the Fatherland. When presented to Parliament, this plan was vetoed for fear of reprisal. The War Cabinet then issued a directive to the psychological warfare offices stating that on no account were German banknotes to be counterfeited. The Germans had no such compunctions however. They succeeded in producing near perfect British pound note forgeries produced under 'Operation Bernhard', but could not print sufficient quantities soon enough. By the time they were ready the Luftwaffe had lost control over British skies and could no longer complete their delivery. The War Cabinet did not, however, restrict the printing of bogus bills of other types, which would be useful in delivering propaganda aimed at demoralizing the German armed forces.

Such notes were readily available in the form of *Behelfszahlungsmittl*, German Auxiliary Payment Certificates, which had been in circulation since August 1942. These notes were a military currency used by German soldiers, airmen and sailors to buy articles at their canteens. The Auxiliary Payment Certificates had a dual value - one for soldiers and one for civilians. For military personnel the note was valued at ten times its face value. Thus a 1 Reichsmark note was worth 10 Reichsmarks but the same note in the hands of a civilian would only bring 1 mark. This series of notes had blank backs, which made them ideal for the addition of propaganda messages. The warfare psychologists chose the 50 Reichspfennig denomination for their purposes.

The paper used in the manufacture of these notes was painstakingly copied even down to reproducing the watermark. After the bogus obverse had been printed, various propaganda messages were added to the reverse side. At least four such messages were used. Three contain four lines of poetry and one seventeen lines of propaganda. One example is cited here:

“50 pfennig heiss’ ich -
Um 4.50 bescheiss’ ich
Jedermann, der denkt,
Dass Hitler ihm was schenkt.”

“50 pfennigs is my name -
I’ll cheat everyone of
4.5 mark who thinks Hitler
gives him something”

The notes were printed in England by a private firm under the utmost secrecy. When ready for distribution they were taken to a newspaper office adjacent to an airfield. This office was already under contract to produce



To be effective, propaganda leaflets must spread out when dropped from the air. One such scattering device, which was used to open canisters in mid-air, was the barometric fuse shown here. Bank notes could be packed either in bomb canisters or boxes. When airdropped over enemy territory, a Billy Mitchell B-25 bomber could carry seventeen such canisters, each containing 40,000 such notes.

newspapers and leaflets to be dropped over Germany. Here the bogus *Behelfszahlungsmittel* were packed into airdrop containers together with the other propaganda items. After the war airmen began to tell of their experiences. The routine was to have these containers delivered to the pilot just before takeoff on a bombing run. Instructions accompanying the bag instructed the pilot as to which city was the target of the propaganda airdrop.

When dropping propaganda leaflets on the enemy, they must be scattered to be effective. Several scattering devices were employed to achieve this. The most effective proved to be the barometric fuse, which was attached to a canister being jettisoned from the aircraft. Upon reaching a preset pressure during freefall, it would open the canister allowing the individual notes to scatter to the four winds. Other scattering devices included slip strings, which unwrapped packages in midair and a belly tank attached to the fuselage of the aircraft, which could release leaflets and notes in a continuous stream at a controlled speed.

Many additional propaganda notes are known to have been used in the European theater of operations. Some examples include:

1. Nazi Secret Service use of American dollar bill replicas dropped over Paris in October 1943 to spread anti-Jewish propaganda.
2. German copies of the newly released "Emis en France" 5 franc invasion money for use in 1944 by American forces in France. These notes carried a message directed at the civilian population, which described the money as Jewish and worthless.
3. German facsimiles of American 1, 2 and 10 dollar bills dropped over Sicily and Italy in 1944 urging the Italians to resist in the name of Fascism.
4. German made copies of 1929 pre-war Yugoslavian 100 dinar bank notes bearing a Wehrmacht seal over the watermark area. These notes offered an amnesty to all partisan soldiers deserting to the German army.
5. A similar "Deserters Pass" airdropped over Yugoslavia in 1943. It takes the form of an American 10 dollar bill and reads in German, Slovenian and Cyrillic "Don't shoot! - take this man to the nearest Command Post and treat him well"
6. A German made copy of the Slovenian 10 lir partisan note, dropped over Slovenia by the Luftwaffe during 1944. The reverse propaganda message reads: *Ita denar je prav taka niča, kakor obljube iz Moskve in Londona* (This bill is worth nothing - just as the promises of Moscow and London).

Polish Army Overprints of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising

As the Soviet army overran Eastern Europe and approached Warsaw, it called upon the Polish Home Army to rise and fight beside them. With the Red Army nearing the outskirts of Warsaw in August 1944, the insurrection began. The home army known as the Polska Armija Krajowa, or simply “AK”, was loyal to the London based Polish Government in Exile, which in turn was backed by Great Britain. Supplied with Allied arms, the AK rose up and vigorously attacked the German armed forces within Warsaw in an effort to assist the advancing Soviets.

The currency in use in Poland at the time was that of the German controlled Bank Emisyjny w Polsce (the Polish Emission Bank) one of several German banks set up to administer the currency of occupied countries. These notes consisted of Emission Bank notes of 10, 20, 50, 100 and 500 zloty denomination from the 1940 emission and 1, 2, 5, 50 and 100 zloty from the 1941 issue. The “Gott Strafe England” overprint was applied only to the ½, 1 and 2 notes of the Polish State Loan Bank, which had previously been issued in 1917. It is possible that this is the work of a private individual.

Once the Warsaw revolt was under way, Poles of the different army units commenced overprinting circulating Polish Emission Bank notes with various propaganda slogans. I have seen four different overprints from this period. The rubber hand stamps used to apply the slogans to the bank notes were administered to whatever notes happened to be at hand, the denomination having no bearing on the propaganda message being sent. As a consequence, all overprints do not appear on every Emission Bank denomination.

There are a total of eight Warsaw uprising overprints. The four most frequently encountered are:

1. The Polish eagle within a chevron, below which the following text appears: *Braterstwo broni Anglii Ameryki Polski Niech Zyje* (Long live the Anglo-American-Polish brotherhood in arms).
2. The Polish eagle within a circle below which appears the following text: *Okreg Warszawski Dowodztwo Zgrup. IV* (Group IV Command, Warsaw District)



August 1944 saw Russian troops overrunning Eastern Europe. As the Soviets approached Warsaw they asked the Polish Home Army to rise up and assist them in fighting the Germans. Suddenly, without explanation, the Soviets withdrew their army and abandoned the Poles to their fate. Sixty days later Warsaw lay in ruins. During the uprising various Polish army units hand-stamped the German occupation Polish Emission Bank notes then in circulation with various propaganda messages. This 50 zloty note bears the hand-stamp reading: OKREG WARSZAWSKI DOWODZTWO ZGRUP. IV (Group IV Command, Warsaw District).



Warsaw Uprising overprints were placed on whatever notes were at hand. Consequently, the various propaganda messages can be found on most denominations. Two additional stamps appearing on the 50 zloty note are shown here. The one at the top reads: “Long live the Anglo-American-Polish Brotherhood – in Arms.”

3. A square with a small eagle flanked by the initials "A.K." with text below which reads: "*Regula*" *Pierwszy zold powstancy, Sierpien 1944 R.* (Polish Army – the first pay in the uprising, August 1944). Note: This somewhat confusing translation refers to the first occurrence in which overprinted Emission Bank notes were used to pay "Regula" troops during the uprising.
4. A double circle. Within the inner circle is a scaffold with a swastika hanging from it. The outer circle, in German, reads *Deutscheland liegt an allen fronten* (Germany is losing on all fronts).

The Polish catalog *Katalog Nadrukow Okolicznosciowych na Banknotach* lists additional overprints which I have not seen and do not have translations for, as follows:

5. *Polski Wojskowy/Oboz Kobiet*
6. *Polska Walczy/ I Zwycieza*
7. *Ghetto Walczy*
8. *Gott Strafe England*

Upon reaching Warsaw's city limits the Russian advance suddenly came to a halt without warning. No further assistance to the Poles was forthcoming from the Soviets. In an effort to keep the A.K. in the field the Royal Air Force and American air units organized an aerial supply line; however this assistance proved inadequate to save the situation. The A.K. capitulated after sixty days of intense fighting, leaving Warsaw in ruins.

After the war was over the explanation for the withdrawal of Soviet support at the gates of Warsaw and the betrayal of the Poles was revealed. Stalin realized that further support of the Polish Home Army would run counter to his own political agenda. With the end of the war approaching, Stalin was determined to keep Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe within the Soviet sphere of influence. Stalin saw the British backed A.K. and the Warsaw uprising as a threat to his future. The Soviet dictator had other plans for post war Poland and simply abandoned the A.K. and the Polish Government in Exile to their fate. Had he



Front and back of the Polish Emission Bank 100 zloty note. The reverse of the note carries a hand-stamp depicting a scaffold and swastika device which bears the caption: "Germany is Losing on All Fronts". After four years of ghetto occupation this propaganda message must have lifted the spirits of all Warsaw citizens.

been confronted with a victorious A.K., Stalin would have had great difficulty imposing his own puppet government upon Poland once the war was over.

In Part II we will discuss the use of Allied propaganda against the Japanese during World War II operations in the Pacific, Chinese propaganda against their Japanese invaders, Vietnamese war propaganda notes, the propaganda of Islamic Fundamentalism, and finally propaganda used in the glorification of communist states.