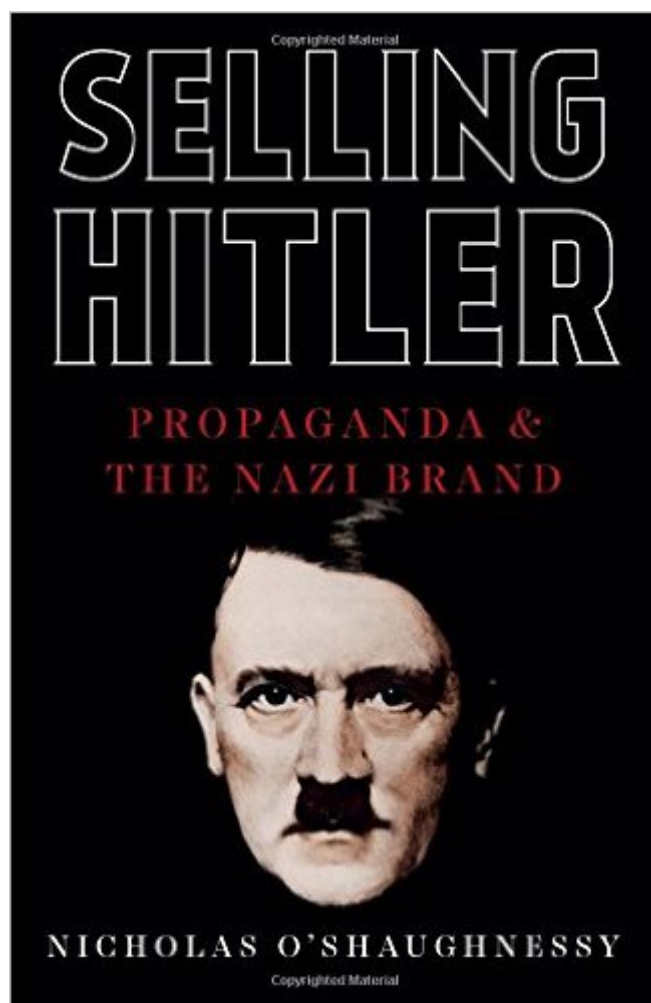


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Selling Hitler: Propaganda And The Nazi Brand



Synopsis

Hitler was one of the few politicians who understood that persuasion was everything, deployed to anchor an entire regime in the confections of imagery, rhetoric and dramaturgy. The Nazis pursued propaganda not just as a tool, an instrument of government, but also as the totality, the *raison d'être*, the medium through which power itself was exercised. Moreover, Nicholas O'Shaughnessy argues, Hitler, not Goebbels, was the prime mover in the propaganda regime of the Third Reich - its editor and first author. Under the Reich everything was a propaganda medium, a building-block of public consciousness, from typography to communiqués, to architecture, to weapons design. There were groups to initiate rumours and groups to spread graffiti. Everything could be interrogated for its propaganda potential, every surface inscribed with polemical meaning, whether an enemy city's name, an historical epic or the poster on a neighbourhood wall. But Hitler was in no sense an innovator - his ideas were always second-hand. Rather his expertise was as a packager, fashioning from the accumulated mass of icons and ideas, the historic debris, the labyrinths and byways of the German mind, a modern and brilliant political show articulated through deftly managed symbols and rituals. The Reich would have been unthinkable without propaganda - it would not have been the Reich.

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Customer Reviews

Hitler started out in PR. He was an army propagandist. When the war was over and he found himself back in civilian life, he joined a small labor party as communications director. He soon

ousted the founder and created an incident in Munich that led to a sensational trial. This made him a national politician and celebrity. He devoted two chapters of Mein Kampf to the importance of propaganda. He developed the truck-mounted loudspeaker to publicize speeches and martial music. He was constantly on the radio. He invented quasi-religious ceremonies like the entrance of the flagbearers. The endless repetition of simple and simplistic slogans cemented his party's control of mindset. He admired the British propaganda machine, claiming it was responsible for victory over Germany in WWI. Under Hitler, Germany became enamored of Madison Avenue, and applied its lessons. Selling Hitler is a master class in brand marketing. The Nazis controlled all communication. When Hitler made a speech, everyone had to place speakers in the streets so all would hear him. The party bought a film studio and produced newsreels to suit, as well as feature films that reminded viewers of the greatness that was Germany, the traditions and the myths that built a nation. In addition to radio, newspaper, film and public spectacles, Hitler actively spread rumors in whisper campaigns. Like internet "facts" today, Nazi propaganda, repeated constantly, soon became truths. "The idea was not to brainwash, but to show that the great mass of Germans believed" and so should you. Everyone was to be on message, all the time. It was as high pressure and comprehensive a marketing campaign as was ever implemented. Symbolism was the default mode of Nazi terminology. Everything was measured for its symbolic possibilities.

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