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This assignment was developed to be used in SSH 110 (East Asian Civilizations), but can also be used in SSH 106 (World History from 1500) and SSH 114 (Modern Japanese History). SSH 110 is a course primarily for non-majors and is a beginning-level (survey) course. This assignment comes towards the end of the semester, in week 10 or 11, when we are discussing World War II. This assignment is aligned with the Global Learning core competency, and meets those specific learning objectives by giving students a chance to analyze in-depth one dimension of a global event (the widespread use of propaganda during WWII), and importantly gets them to consider and negotiate competing perspectives on “the other” during this tumultuous period. It also gets students to consider and analyze the ethical consequences of both propaganda and of censorship by governments. This assignment would take approximately two weeks to complete: students would complete a reading assignment for contextual background on US-Japan enmity in the 1930s-40s (from John Dower’s *War Without Mercy*), would spend one class-session doing the Think/Pair/Share activity, and would have one week to complete the 3-4 page writing assignment. This assignment would be worth 15% of their overall grade (equivalent of a midterm exam). This is a new assignment that was inspired entirely by the “Meanings of War” seminar. Specifically, November’s “Mediations of War” readings and discussion reminded me of the many powerful wartime propaganda posters (on both the Japanese and the American side) that I have come across over the years. The seminar helped to give me the time and headspace to develop this assignment, and I made modifications and improvements to the assignment based on the workshopping and feedback I received from two colleagues during the seminar.

Target Course: SSH 110: East Asian Civilizations – high-stakes assignment

(can also be used in SSH 106: World History from 1500 and SSH 114: Modern Japanese History)

Assignment: US-Japan Enmity – WWII Wartime Propaganda Posters

Think/ Pair / Share in-class activity, followed by an individual, at-home writing assignment

In Class (low-stakes):

--Distribute WWII propaganda posters to students (3 or 4 copies of each)

--Have students respond to the following questions, first on their own and then find classmates with the same poster and compare responses:

- 1) How do nations depict an enemy in wartime propaganda?
- 2) How and why do nations dehumanize an enemy?
- 3) Does propaganda reflect the “real” sentiments of a nation?
- 4) Why do nations try to control and censor the media during wartime?

At home (high-stakes):

Write a 3-4 page (double-spaced) paper that synthesizes the in-class discussion we had about wartime propaganda. **Your paper must have a thesis statement that takes a position on the role of wartime propaganda posters, and must use at least two of the distributed posters as evidence supporting your thesis statement.** Please use the four discussion questions above to help guide and formulate your original thesis statement.

Learning Objectives:

1. To understand the dehumanizing ways that nations depict one another in their wartime propaganda (i.e., how they make it easier to hate and kill the “other”)
2. To understand that war is not just about bullets and bombs but that it is also about shaping and controlling images of oneself and one’s enemy in order to facilitate the death and destruction.
3. To be aware of the hatred that Japanese and Americans had towards each other during the war. (And how quickly, for the most part, this hatred disappeared in the postwar period. Or at the very, least, how this hatred did not lead to an insurgency against the American Occupation or violence against the Japanese during the Occupation).
4. To try to connect blatant racism in propaganda to other forms of dehumanization (e.g., political rhetoric) that continue to be effective tools of warfare

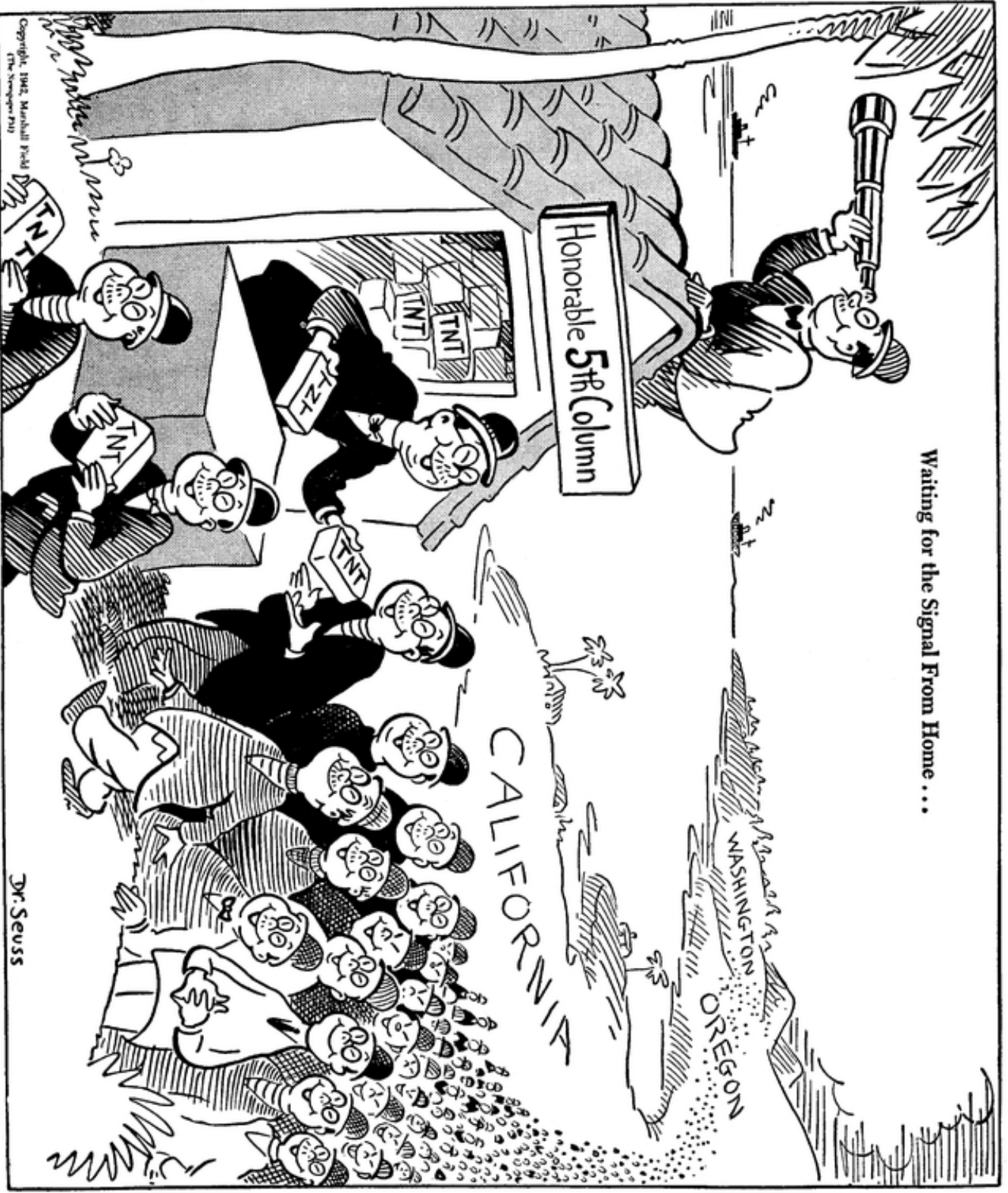
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