



Anti-Japanese Propaganda

Presented by the Hampton Roads Naval Museum

Racism in Anti-Japanese Propaganda

In the immediate aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941), the United States government and public media began an all-out propaganda campaign targeting the Japanese. While some propaganda focused on the military differences between the two countries, most was designed with racism in mind. To evoke a sense of cultural superiority, American propagandists designed posters that portrayed the Japanese as weak, feeble, and as animals. Keep in mind how racism affects how a war is waged and what kinds of consequences racist imagery would have had on the home front.

“Don’t Save his Face! – Every Blow Counts in the Battle for Production” (right)

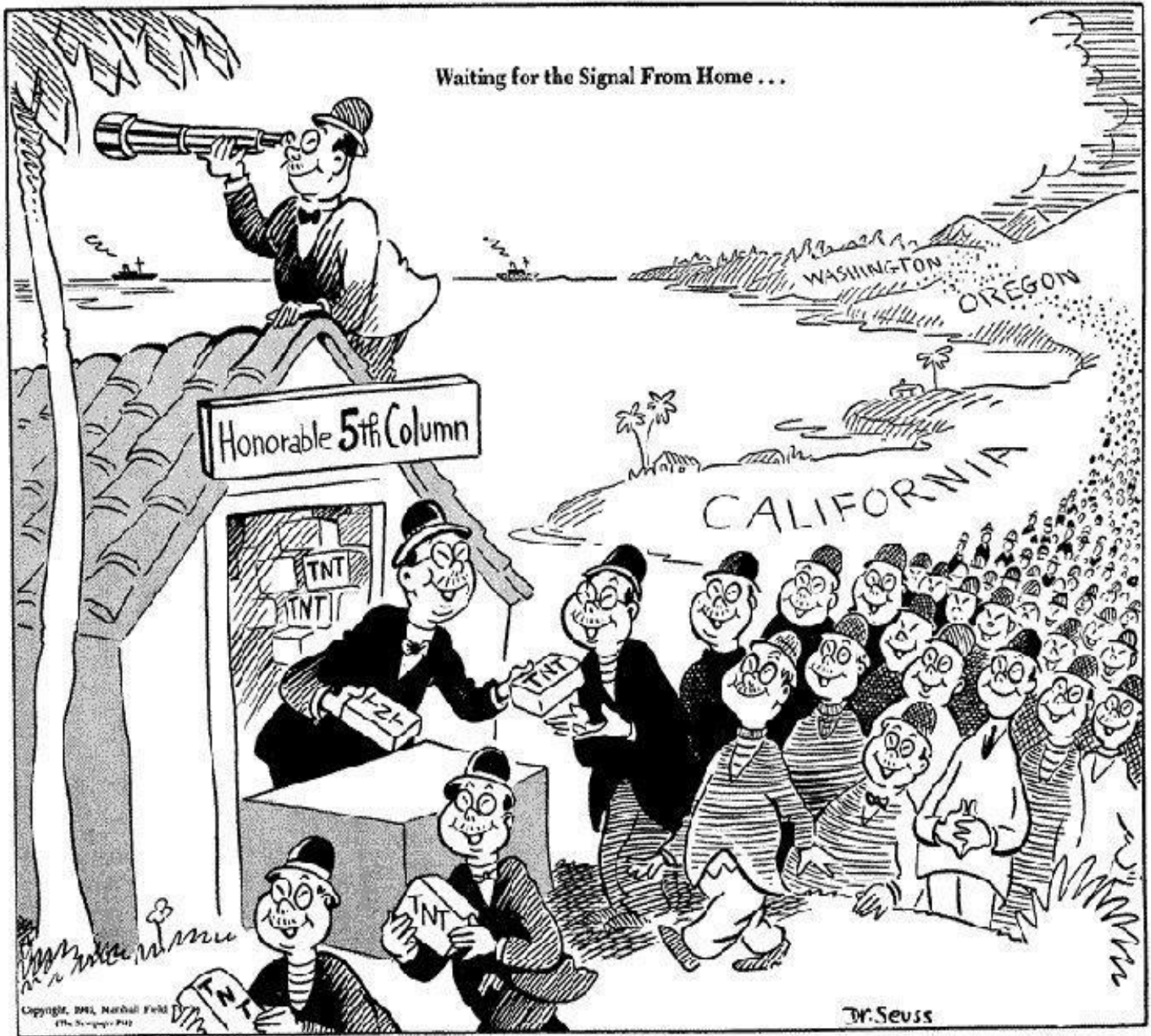
In this image, a fist with “American Labor” written on the arm punches the jaw of a caricatured Japanese person. The intense colors of red, white, and black catch the viewer’s attention as this action promotes American pride and fighting.



“Army, Civilian, Navy” (left)

Beginning in 1942, the Japanese occupied parts of the Aleutian Islands in Alaska known as Attu and Kiska. Occupation of the Aleutian Islands allowed for greater control of transportation in the Pacific Ocean. Take note of the racist representation of the Japanese. What does it mean to be a rat?

Waiting for the Signal From Home ...

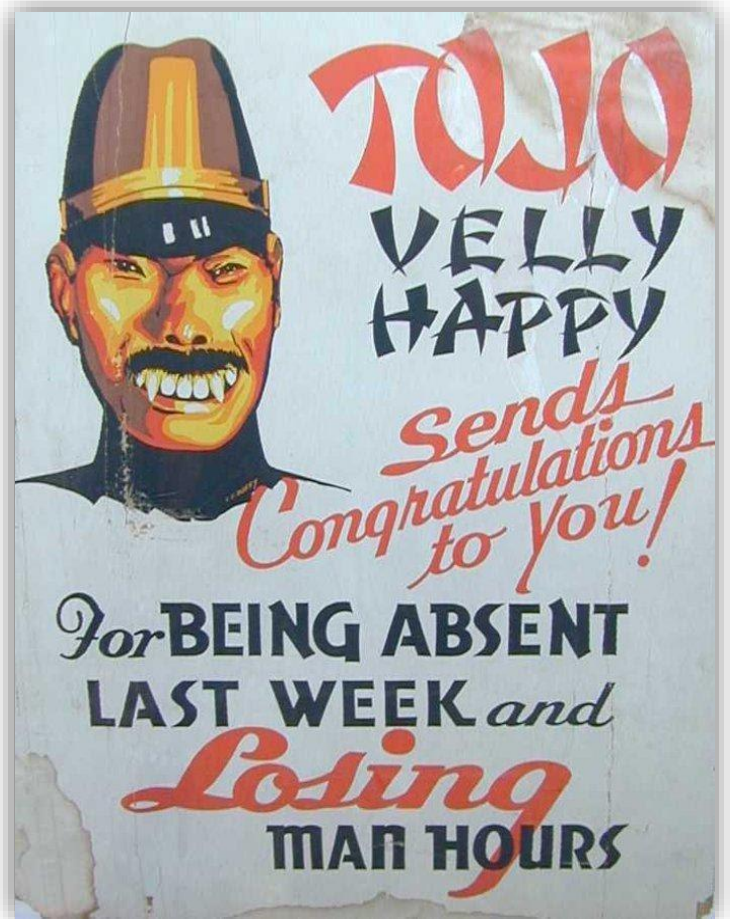


“Waiting for the Signal From Home”

Dr. Seuss’s black and white cartoon depicts a long line of Japanese people happily waiting to take TNT. Also, notice the uniform look of the Japanese people. Despite surviving in memory as a children’s book author, Dr. Seuss spent much of his early career as a political cartoonist. His early cartoons never shied away from using racist imagery like above. Later in his life, Dr. Seuss would change his opinion on racism and would write children’s books like *The Sneetches* (published in 1961), which were meant to celebrate inclusivity.

“Tokio Kid Say –” and “Tojo Velly Happy”

In these two posters, the artists have made a purposeful attempt to portray the Japanese people with subhuman features. For instance, both posters depict Japanese with large, sharp teeth. In the second poster, the designer targeted the Japanese accent by pointing out their difficult pronunciation of the letter “r,” a move calculated to appeal to racist Americans.



"How to Spot a Jap"

HOW TO SPOT A JAP

by MILTON CANIFF

Prepared by

SPECIAL SERVICE DIVISION, SERVICES OF SUPPLY

UNITED STATES ARMY

Who are you?—nee EE SHER! SHAY	Wait a minute—duh UHNG EE! duh UHNG
What do you want?—nee EE YAH!oo SHEHM-muh	Where can I sleep?—nah AH- lee yoh OH SHWAY! JEE- AH!oo dee DEE! FAHNG
Bring some drinking water— nah AH KAI shw AY LAI	I want to eat—waw UH YAH!oo CHER FAHN
Bring some food—nah AH FAHN! LAI	I haven't any money—waw UH MAY yoh OH CHEE-YEHN
How far is the camp?—JÜN YING yoh OH DAW UH yü AHN	I have cigarettes—waw UH yoh OH SYAHNG YEHN
Where is water?—nah AH lee EE yoh OH shw AY	I am sick ("I have sickness")— waw UH yoh OH BING!
Where is the nearest village?— dee EENG JINI DEE! TSOON-da DZAI nah AH- lee	I am an American soldier— waw UH SHER! may AY GAW BING
Be careful—yah OO S YIN	I am your friend—waw UH SHER! nee EE DEE! PUHNG yee OH

HOW TO SPOT A JAP

RYAN, YOU AND TERRY
HAVE BEEN OUT IN
CHINA FOR A
LONG TIME... HOW
ABOUT SHOWING THE
MEN A FEW POINTS
OF DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE JAPS
AND OUR ORIENTAL
ALLIES!

YES,
SIR!

by MILTON CANIFF



In this shocking poster, soldiers are taught how to identify the difference between Japanese and Chinese people. This poster also has a clearly racist undertone.