

## Research on the propagation characteristics of American propaganda Paintings during the Korean War

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**Abstract:** With the success of the "hydrogen bomb" test on the Korean Peninsula on January 6, 2016, the Korean Peninsula crisis continued to deteriorate, seriously affecting the ecological balance of world peace and development, and the "war without smoke" has never stopped. The Korean War broke out in 1950 has become a hot topic in the international community. The propaganda pictures scattered all over the world during the war play an important role in spreading psychological warfare. As an important weapon to spread psychological warfare during the war, propaganda pictures have become a new topic for scholars to study the soft weapons of war. This paper takes the propaganda pictures of U. S. troops during the Korean War as the research object, analyzes the theme, design ideas, propaganda means of the U. S. military propaganda pictures, as well as the communication characteristics and methods embodied in the dissemination of psychological warfare.

### 1. Introduction

With the success of the "hydrogen bomb" test on the Korean Peninsula on January 6, 2016, the Korean Peninsula crisis continued to deteriorate, seriously affecting the ecological balance of world peace and development, and the "war without smoke" has never stopped. The Korean War in 1950 has become a hot topic in today's international community. The propaganda pictures scattered throughout the war play an important role in spreading psychological warfare and are of great importance to the development of the war. Looking back on history, the US Army in World War I and World War II did have brilliant results in spreading psychological warfare. In many cases, propaganda pictures in the war did play an important role in winning various victories for the US Army, and also made the use of the US Army in spreading psychological warfare more in-depth and mature than other countries. However, during the Korean War, the US military communication psychological warfare did not get its desired effect, but exposed many problems in its communication process. In the Korean War, a complex battle between the two camps, the United States mistakenly assessed China's national conditions and willingness to send troops. In addition to the usual exaggeration of the U.S. military's power and sense of justice, the first large number of propaganda pictures were used to explain and distort China, the Korean military and the Soviet Union and Russia, which was also one of the reasons for the failure of the war.

### 2. Propagation characteristics of posters in wartime

Publicity posters, also known as "posters". A painting that aims at propaganda and encouragement and combines short appeal words, usually refers to a political propaganda picture. Generalized propaganda paintings, including posters and commercial advertisements of cultural activities, are characterized by concise and prominent shapes and bright colors. Most of them have been duplicated and posted on the streets or public places. They have evolved from early picture leaflets. [1] Propaganda painting is an important part of artistic creation in the period of war and social development, as well as a "characteristic medium" in the media.

How to combine the propaganda pictures as a good media with mass communication to produce obvious psychological guidance is also what this article has been trying to elaborate. First of all,

posters have certain propagation characteristics. One is the indirect nature. As a media, poster has no direct effect on the audience itself; secondly, publicity. Poster is a media used by different audiences. Thirdly, it is scientific and technological. The creation method of poster itself has certain scientific and aesthetic functions; fourth, dispersity. Posters are widely dispersed in every corner of society. Secondly, the poster is representative. The war propaganda pictures and the political propaganda pictures have certain class representativeness and interest representativeness. These points in the war period of the spread of information just to the audience psychology produced a huge role, fully reflects the characteristics of the propaganda picture.

### 3. The characteristics of American propaganda paintings

Throughout the history of the development of propaganda, whether in the chaotic period of World War I, or the brutal storms of World War II, or the vigorous war of resistance against Japan and the world's power disputes, the characteristics of the war propaganda pictures have strong similarities. Although the U. S. military posters have different styles and forms, they have a common performance characteristics. That is to say, according to the contents and themes of the war period, highlight the theme, ingeniously conceive, rich in profound connotation and bright colors, so that the audience in a short period of time by a great deal of appeal and persuasion, and left a deep impression.



Figure 1

The real intention and purpose of the war posters is to make different audiences accept these political propaganda works, so that the attitudes and beliefs of the audiences will change with the underlying official ideology behind the creators. During the Korean War, American propaganda pictures were mainly realistic and naturalistic in style. In the performance of both pictures and texts, visual impact was always the primary purpose of promoting propaganda pictures. Different styles of painting, graphics and arrangement of pictures brought various shocking feelings to the audience, so that the audience can be more clear. Accurately understand the intention of the poster. As shown in Figure 1, the lines in the picture are simple and clear, and the colors are single. The images depict the scene of people in cold and hungry weather. The US army wants to give a psychological strike to the Chinese volunteers in this form of intuitive graphics.



Figure2



Figure3

The history of war propaganda has a long history, and its influence must be a gradual rise and slow down with education and knowledge. During the Korean War, the level of education received by the audience could not be said to be complete, especially in the Korean Peninsula and the fledgling Chinese military and civilian. Therefore, the U. S. military propaganda in the content of the use of concise, with a small number of words, ingenious exaggeration to show. Making posters more vivid, novel, persuasive and appealing. Therefore, the poster is concise and straightforward, and becomes the preferred external feature of the audience. As shown in Fig. 2, the content of the picture is exaggerated to express the pain of the Chinese volunteers in the battlefield, the threat of death, the worries of their relatives at home, the calls and thoughts of their mothers, and the desire to return home as soon as possible. Its purpose is to arouse the feelings of homesickness and homesickness of Chinese volunteers, and has reached the psychological of war weariness.

In any war period, the interests of each country are different, leading to different political positions. The mixed contradictions during the period are pluralistic, regardless of ethnic, religious or folk culture differences, will result in different positions of mutual exclusion between regimes attitude, the War Poster upheld the political position is clear and firm, the audience's ideological and emotional is single and strong. The propaganda posters displayed by the US Army during the Korean War are clear-cut, single-minded and strongly directional and guiding. As shown in Figure 3, the poster shows very intuitively that the Chinese Volunteer Army was forced into the Korean battlefield by the Soviet Union and Russia, and both the Volunteer Army and the Korean army were forced into the artillery fire of the war. The propaganda picture of the US Army has a distinct political stance, and it also has strong directivity and guidance. Because most of the ordinary soldiers in the war are single-minded and susceptible to political delusion, the purpose of the picture is to deceive the Chinese volunteer army and the Korean army, so that the other side can reach a misjudgement of the war, so that the Chinese volunteer army and the Korean army are considered to be deceived by the Soviet Union and Russia into the war.



Figure 4

Regimes in different political centers and economic circles will not adopt the same way of propaganda. The mechanically developed European and American countries may use printed paper to distribute propaganda pictures in full swing, while Asian countries may still use woodcut to publicize. During this period, the propaganda means of the U.S. military camp in the Korean battlefield were varied and the media were rich. During this period, the propaganda means of the U.S. military camp in the Korean battlefield were varied and the media were rich. At the end of the Korean War, the U.S. military launched about 2.5 billion leaflets by air, artillery and even manual means. [2] Under the condition of abundant materials, the US military uses various forms of land, sea and air to spread the propaganda pictures effectively. In view of the special situation of the Korean battlefield, it adopts appropriate means to achieve the propaganda intention. As shown in Figure 4, the picture depicts the United Nations Army led by the United States, which possesses advanced weapons and artillery, plays an important role in complex terrain battlefields, and even spreads effectively in the battlefield by placing leaflets with artillery, thus allowing soldiers to receive immediate psychological blows, fears, cowardice and inferiority. Wait for emotion.

#### **4. Communication context of US propaganda**

The propaganda painting mentioned above is always an objective summary from the outside, and the final value evaluation of the propaganda painting, in addition to the form, also has its own internal communication context for the communication of psychological warfare.

The mode of propaganda during the war is undoubtedly the most worthy of analysis, but also the focus of military action experts. Vertical and horizontal sexual transmission and covert sexual transmission are probably the most widely used in the Korean battlefield. Among them, horizontal sex communication is the inevitable way of communication between the same class and level. In the practice of propaganda posters, hidden sex communication embodies the purpose of education in the form and content of communication. The U. S. military used a large number of brief words, pictures crisp propaganda pictures, so that the audience at that time can easily understand the other side of the propaganda intention, to achieve the purpose of propaganda. In addition to posters, many other forms of media are covert. It is worth mentioning that vertical sexual communication in the Korean battlefield has played the greatest guiding role, officers to soldiers, superiors to subordinates, cadres to the masses, such communication often resort to mass media and organizational media to promote. Moreover, the cross vertical propagation has contributed to the emergence of the embryonic form of the two level communication.

On the Korean battlefield, the U.S. military has used a variety of communication psychology: intimidation, blackening the other side, distorting the facts; the representative of justice, slandering the other side; alienation of alliances; self-embellishment of strong, threatening the other side; profit-oriented strategies, persuasion; play up the countryside, tear-jerking and so on. The U.S. military made full use of the mentality of the soldiers and people of the former Soviet Union, China and Korea, who were rivals on the Korean battlefield at that time. First, for the former Soviet Union, the U.S. military used the usual blackening method, in the propaganda picture wantonly distorted the facts, rendering the former Soviet Union is a bloody hegemonic country. Secondly, for the Chinese soldiers on the Korean battlefield, the use of a profitable lure policy, such as food, wine, etc. appear in the poster, conveying that "as long as you give up resistance, there will be food and drink." This also reflects the U. S. military in order to lure the other side, timely understanding of the situation of China's grain shortage at that time, in the propaganda of the early preparatory work done. Thirdly, the psychological transmission of the Korean civilians and soldiers is more complicated, and intimidation, threats, nostalgia, interests and so on are almost used. It is undeniable that at that time, a group of people really affected. It can be said that standing at the angle of theory. The propaganda of the role of the government and the military and civilian psychology, has also become a progressive move in the dissemination of psychological warfare, compared with the World War I and World War II blank, has actually expanded more classification.

During the Korean War, mass information was extremely closed, and it was necessary to understand and recognize the content and purpose of propaganda through various media. Publicity pictures, as one of the media used by the U. S. side, with the help of graphic and textual expression, through various symbols, exaggeration and other forms of expression, the theme of propaganda will be presented in this media. At that time, most of the major media organizations and media groups, equipment and other countries from participating in the war, we know that the U. S. military at that time, as a United Nations force in Korea, the strength of its media organizations can not be underestimated. At the same time, the Americans who have studied the communication psychological warfare have even carried a certain number of media people on the battlefield, which promote the establishment of media groups, the formation of plans, the greatest effect from production to final production, and information feedback, so that the propaganda picture can be higher in the whole process of communication. Efficiency has made the US Army the main body of communication.

#### **5. Revelations from US Army Poster**

The proponents of psycho-warfare continue to claim that psycho-warfare is a strategic approach

that is more flexible, less lethal, and less costly than conventional warfare. With this theory being verified, popularized and overturned in various countries, the poster gradually reflects its due value. During the Korean War, the U. S. military used propaganda pictures as a weapon to spread psychological warfare, more or less played a role, but in this war, it did not get the desired results. First of all, the US military neglected some key issues, especially the assumption by US media organizations that Sino-DPRK-Soviet relations were similar to those between employers rather than equal allies, which totally violated our daily principles of civil-military interpersonal relations. Secondly, these propaganda pictures in the people, soldiers, not only did not achieve the ideal role of mass communication, but also made a large number of opinion leaders in the process of dissemination, not only did not help the U.S. military, but also played a positive role in correcting mistakes, greatly promoting the Soviet Union, China, the Korean army. The determination and confidence of the people to unite. Looking back on history, on the Korean battlefield, the U. S. military propaganda posters failed in spreading the use of psychological warfare. As an important part of psychological warfare in war, propaganda pictures need to be correctly guided and guided on the basis of interpersonal relations. Only in this way can they play an active role in psychological warfare in war.

## **6. Conclusion**

As a developing country, in recent years, Chinese scholars are also constantly exploring the forms and means of propaganda warfare in the war environment. At present, there are few literatures about the war propaganda pictures in academic circles. As a kind of soft weapon in war, the propaganda pictures have been studied and expanded by scholars in the field for a long time. At present, the increasingly complex relationship between countries, from the analysis and study of the characteristics of the U. S. military propaganda during the Korean War, summed up the methods and means for reference and use, for future cultural exchanges and international communication has an important reference.

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