

North Woods

History Honours

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Dressing the Reich: The Fear and Elegance in Nazi Uniforms

Germany was a nation both clad and obsessed with the uniform. Brian L. Davis, a uniform historian describes 240 different uniforms from the time of the Third Reich era. From coal miners, to Post Office employees, all the way up the Nazi hierarchy to Adolf Hitler himself, every man in the Reich had a uniform, in an “appeal to male vanity.”¹ Bernhard Teicher, in his memoir, writes of his time as a young soldier in Nazi Germany, “Of course, we were issued uniforms (ideally everybody in the Nazi *Reich* should have worn a uniform!).”² The Nazi Party’s desire for uniformity of thought and support extended directly to the propagandistic powers of the clothes that bore the Nazi insignia on the backs the German citizenry. True to its latin root ‘uni,’ the uniform served as a unifier in Nazi Germany.

Adolf Hitler believed that he was not a politician, but an artist at heart.³ In Thomas Mann’s 1938 essay, *Brother Hitler*, Mann asks in regard to Hitler and Nazism, “how can we fail to recognise in this phenomenon a sign of artistry?”⁴ From 1933 to 1945, this artistry would come to dominate Nazi rule; from architecture, to ceremony, to style and fashion. This artistry was heavily applied by the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda to create and use new techniques in propaganda to market the ideologies of the Third Reich. Although propaganda was not exclusive to the Nazis, their dedication to the art of political marketing was a novel approach to the dissemination of ideological, political and militaristic values within the German, European and world citizenry. It would be style and fashion, in particular the Nazis’ uniforms, that would benefit from their becoming spectacle as a result of propagandisation. The uniforms of the Nazis quickly became very much a cornerstone of the Nazi brand. Not only did Nazi uniforms promote uniformity, but they were well-designed, well-ornamented and

¹ Davis, Brian L. and Turner, Pierre, *German Uniforms of the Third Reich*, London: Arms and Armour Press, 1997; Nicholas O’Shaughnessy. *Marketing the Third Reich*, London: Routledge, 2018, p. 138

² Teicher, Bernhard R. *For All It Was Worth: A Memoir of Hitler’s Germany - Before, During and After WWII*. Biocomm Press, 2017, p. 150

³ Spotts, Frederic. *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*. Woodstock: Overlook Press, 2009, p. 3

⁴ Mann, Thomas. *Bruder Hitler, Gesammelte Werke*, 1938, Band XII, 845ff.; *Thomas Mann Essays*: vol. 4, 305ff.

well-tailored, combining elegant design with a reaction of fear and respect to promote the ideals of the Reich without uttering a single word.

The omission of clothing from historians' discussion of the effect of Nazi propaganda is not by accident. It was Joseph Goebbels, the Nazis' Reich Minister of Propaganda, who famously said, "Propaganda becomes ineffective the moment we become aware of it."⁵ The power in the uniform therein lies in its silence. The uniform is not a poster, a film, or a speech, but a silent, omnipresent actor that, like these media, is a piece of the Nazi propaganda machine. Goebbels' quote perfectly encapsulates the propagandistic impact of the uniforms worn during the time of the Third Reich. Consequently, Nazi dress and regalia are not the most talked about aspects of the Nazis' propaganda machine, but more than likely, the least touched upon. Regardless of silence and scarcity in conversation however, Nazi uniforms may have been the most effective for the very reason that Goebbels outlined: German citizens, enemies of the Nazi regime and foreigners alike were unaware that the Nazis they viewed were walking advertisements for the Reich. These uniforms may have been mute, but they constantly operated in service of the regime through their utilisation of both style and menace.

Uniforms, which have come to be known as one of the most visually-striking elements of Nazi aesthetics, served as one of the principal vectors of propaganda in the Third Reich. In biology, a vector is an organism, typically of the biting sort, that transfers a disease from one being to another—Nazi uniforms did just that. However, instead of fleas transferring the plague, the Nazis used clothing to present propaganda that conveyed their message of racial dominance and militarism without uttering a word. Uniforms operated as an arm of the Nazi ideals of *Volksgemeinschaft*, in English, a people's community and *Gleichschaltung*, the idea of bringing everything in line with the values of national socialism. The Nazi uniform aided in the destruction of personal identity and smoothed out the differences between German citizens thereby constructing both an egalitarian and passive society.

The main question of this paper is: how did the Nazi Party use its uniforms to exude elegance whilst eliciting fear in order to further its ideology into the minds of wearers, viewers and enemies? In other words, how was the uniform a piece of propaganda? I will argue that the

⁵ Joseph Goebbels, "Speech to the Reich Film Chamber," March 5, 1937

Nazis used uniforms to produce a fashionable aesthetic to serve as another arm of the Third Reich's propaganda machine—specifically, through the stark uniform that so occupies our memory of the image of the Nazis. I will look at the structure and implementation of the Nazi uniform and how it pertained to the promotion of the ideals of the Reich. By then using primary sources from vantage points, the perception and effect of these uniforms can be analysed and their propagandistic effect better understood.

This paper arises out of my own interests in the ability fashion to speak. A natural reaction of impressedness from seeing images of Nazi men clad in strong and svelte clothing forced me to recognise this regalia as different from ordinary uniforms. In other words these were the propagandistic impacts of Nazi fashion, generated from viewing images of Nazi elites and soldiers, felt decades after their design to have just that effect. I was interested in separating the crimes of the Third Reich and understanding how the regime's look could be evil, investigating whether the fear we associate with the Nazi uniform was an intention in design, or a function of the crimes committed by the Nazis. Did the Nazi uniform have a unique look for its time? Would an allied uniform look 'evil' if it was placed into the context of crimes such as the Holocaust? This question can be answered through the juxtaposition of the uniform against those of concurrent, non-German armies and peoples. Isolating an intention to create a uniform that functioned in such a multifaceted way spurred an interest within me to explore the possible depth of the Nazi uniform.

What I believe makes this paper special is that it explores an important and relevant topic: the usage of inanimate and non-vocal (through sound, text or image) techniques to disseminate information. My hope is that this paper will enlighten the reader to look more critically at the ability of potential actors at play in the political sphere. When it comes to gaining and maintaining power, anything can be in service of a regime— including fashion.

My discussion of uniforms spans the years of 1933 and 1945, the period in which the Nazis had the most power and influence. The main focus of this project is the uniforms of the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS, as they are the most oft-thought of aspect of the Nazi aesthetic. These uniforms were the most stylish and the most insidious— produced with a calculated intention of fear and admiration in its viewers. SS men were the crème de la crème of the Third Reich and the

face of the elite *übermensch* propaganda of racial purity that the Nazis would put forth. To a lesser extent, I will discuss the *Heer*, or land army forces of the Wehrmacht as these were the most widely-produced and worn and, by contrast, show the uniqueness of the SS uniform. The uniforms of the Wehrmacht also help to show the difference in the Nazi uniforms from other contemporaries armies through comparison.

In this paper I will first discuss the form of the Nazi uniform, both of the Wehrmacht and the SS, to more fully comprehend the uniform. Next I will discuss the uniform in the context of the *volksgemeinschaft* and *gleichschaltung* in order to show how the uniform functioned as a unifier; an actor in service of national socialism. Finally, through comparison and primary source accounts, I will show how the Nazi uniform was in and of itself a piece of propaganda: something wearers took pride in donning and a source of impressedness and fear for viewers.

To begin to understand the complexity of how the Nazi uniform was perceived, one must first understand the level of craftsmanship involved in the Nazi uniform. To make the argument that the Nazi uniform was not any ordinary uniform, it is necessary to understand the form of the uniform: what it consisted of and how the uniform itself was fashionable. The descriptions below will be of both the SS uniform and those of the Wehrmacht.

For the *Schutzstaffel*, the uniform was a piece of pageantry. *Schutzstaffel* literally translates to ‘protection squadron.’ Thus, this group was designed as a security unit for the National Socialist party in the late 1920’s, later evolving to more paramilitary status.⁶ Because the SS was a paramilitary organisation and was not primarily focused on combat and frontline operations, the uniform was created with a much more sinister intention. The SS was responsible for establishing the police state within Germany prior to the Second World War and took control of the police and security operations in order to repress resistance to the state and Hitler. The SS’ power and control would only grow as the war drew closer.⁷ The SS was under the purview of Heinrich Himmler who wanted this elite fighting force to don a uniform that gave off the same

⁶ Weale, Adrian. *The SS: A New History*. London: Little, Brown and Co. 2010, p. 26

⁷ Dear, Ian; Foot. *The Oxford Guide to World War II*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 814-185

impression that organisation embodied. The SS imposed strict vetting in order to only have the most racially pure soldiers under its purview.⁸

The SS uniform, because of the elite nature of the organisation, took on more symbolism; more ornamentation that would promulgate both the wearer and viewer's images of Aryan traits and masculinity. The SS uniform was all black, as opposed to the Wehrmacht's field grey, giving it an air of crispness and power exclusive only to black dress. In addition to the same elegant effects of the Wehrmacht uniform, the SS uniform added its own ingredient of fear to the fashion of the Third Reich. Fear was an aura to be felt, not by the wearer, but by the viewer. This again was a deliberate intention of the uniform. Himmler himself, in a nod to the intention of the SS uniform, said, "I know there are many people who fall ill when they see this black uniform; we understand that and don't expect that we will be loved by many people."⁹ This statement shows the direct intention of building fear into the SS uniform. This fear was to be so strong, that it would make some detest the uniform; even falling ill upon its sight.

Toward the end of 1932, the all-black SS uniform was being produced in the factories of the Hugo Boss company. These uniforms were designed by SS man and artist Karl Diebitsch and a graphic designer named Walter Heck.¹⁰ As the 1930's unfolded, the uniforms of the SS were very similar to those of the Wehrmacht. However, the main point of difference for the SS dress was its design by men of such artistic background and their stark black nature. The hiring of these men to design the SS uniform perhaps shows the necessity of talented craftsmen and designers to successfully construct a uniform that could function in the fearful ways that Himmler had intended, but remain elegant enough to instill confidence in its wearer and unifying enough to strengthen the SS organisation as a unified whole. The SS did include field grey uniforms similar to those of the Wehrmacht in their ranks later in the 1930's, but the black uniform is the strongest example of the insidious and infamous SS look.¹¹

⁸ Roderick Stackelberg. *Hitler's Germany: Origins, Interpretations, Legacies*. London; New York: Taylor & Francis, 2002, p. 116

⁹ Himmler, Heinrich. *Die Schutzstaffel als antibolschewistische Kampforganisation*, Munich: 1936, p. 29 as quoted in Burleigh, Michael. *The Third Reich: A New History*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2001, p. 192; Bender, Roger James and Taylor, Hugh Page. *Uniforms, Organization, and History of the Waffen-SS*, Mountain View: R.J. Bender Publishing, 1969, p. 45

¹⁰ McNab, Chris. *Hitler's Elite: The SS 1939-45*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2013, p. 90

¹¹ Flaherty, Thomas H., ed. *The Third Reich: The SS*. Time-Life Books, 1989, pp. 88-92



Heinrich Himmler wearing his black SS-Reichsführer uniform at Dachau concentration camp. Note: the wide lapels displaying SS rank insignia (also visible on the SS men behind him), the swastika arm band and a sabre handle at his left side. Additionally, this photograph shows the stark contrast of Himmler's black SS uniform against the pale complexion of the Dachau inmate's attire—another attempt to show the dominance of the Nazi party simply through clothing.¹²

In upper ranks, the centerpiece of the SS uniform was a jacket that much more closely resembles a blazer or suit coat than a tunic. Instead of buttons extending to the collar, the jacket's fastening mechanism ended closer to the sternum. This was to display a brown or white collared shirt and black tie—dress that was formerly part of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) uniform.¹³ The jacket also featured large lapels which led up to large collars, which were used to distinguish divisions of the SS similar to those used by the Wehrmacht. Notably, the two SS *siegrunes* on the right collar worn by both the *Waffen-SS* and the *Allgemeine-SS*, the two largest divisions of the SS—the administrative and armed wings respectively.¹⁴ The SS runes were a symbol of fear, simply

¹² Bundesarchiv Bild 152-11-12, Dachau, Konzentrationslager, Besuch Himmlers

¹³ Ley, Robert. *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP*, Auflage 1937, p. 297; Toland, John. *Adolf Hitler*, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1976, p. 220

¹⁴ Stein, George. *The Waffen-SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War 1939–1945*. Cornell University Press, 1984

because of what they represented. In ancient Nordic culture, the *siegrune* represented the sun, the all-powerful leader of the solar system and, for the Nazis, a symbol of victory.¹⁵

Also well known, the *SS-Totenkopfverbände*, who ran the Nazi concentration camps, wore a skull, or *Totenkopf* (death's head) on both their right collar and caps. Some Waffen-SS members wore the death's head on their cap, with SS runes on their collar.¹⁶ The death's head skull, to Himmler, was a constant reminder to SS men that "at all times to be willing to risk the life of ourselves for the life of the whole."¹⁷ The SS runes and the skull show that the SS uniform had a level of form to it that went beyond just its impression at face value. The deeper meaning of the uniform was almost cult-like with esoteric symbolism adorned across its surface. This exclusivity of symbols gave both the viewer and the wearer a feeling of exclusivity. For the wearer, it was the feeling of being part of an elite and purely aryan club, designed to protect the Führer and Germany. For the viewer, mysticism and fear surrounded the uniform— this was accoutrement only available for the strongest and purest of soldiers. A hint of sinister elitism was felt just by seeing the uniform— its complexities and symbols not fully understood. The insignia of the SS clothing took on a new meaning in its own right. The ability for these symbols to embody the ideal of victory; of defying death; of power for the organisation meant that there were subliminal parts of the uniform that reflected the values of the Nazi party and its leaders.

¹⁵ Yenne, Bill. *Hitler's Master of the Dark Arts: Himmler's Black Knights and the Occult Origins of the SS*. Zenith Imprint, 2010, p. 68

¹⁶ Michaelis, Rolf. *Insignia of the Waffen-SS: Cuff Titles, Collar Tabs, Shoulder Boards, Badges*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2016, pp. 8-26

¹⁷ Longerich, Peter. *Heinrich Himmler. Biographie*, München 2010, p. 298



This SS Black Armoured Vehicle Tunic (Army-Style) strayed away from the buttoned center, relying only on a waist-belt to fasten the tunic. Displayed is the strong black colour of the SS uniform as well as its ability to be stylish and fashionable, despite being an army tunic. This version, being army-style, shows that the SS had its own hand in crafting its uniforms, not just borrowing from its Wehrmacht counterpart.¹⁸

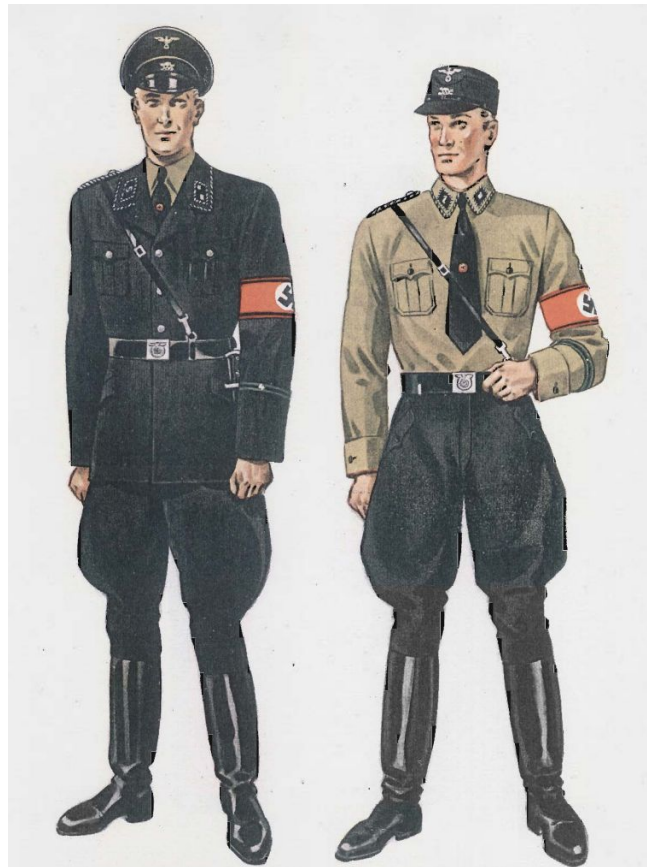


SS-Sturmbannführer, Max Hansen, displays both the SS sig runes on his collar, and the Totenkopf on his cap.¹⁹

¹⁸ Spotts, p. 53

¹⁹ Bundesarchiv Bild 183-J12779, Max Hansen

The SS black colourway extended to all parts of the uniform. Breeches, knee high jack boots and waist belts with silver belt buckles were employed for the same reasons as the Wehrmacht.²⁰ The intention to give off an impression of an elite, aryan force, the SS utilised the same illusions of style to make their men look taller. In the first above image, the waistbelt of the SS uniform shows a dedication to an effect of leanness in its wearers with the tightly pulled belt around the center of the tunic. In the second above image of Max Hansen is wearing the field grey SS uniform. Due to his leadership in the Waffen-SS, the armed section of the SS, Hansen's uniform is more akin to the Wehrmacht uniform than those of the non-combat SS forces. The two images show the versatility of the SS uniforms, along with their stylish details.



Mockups of the SS uniform and red swastika armband with and without jacket from the Organisationsbuch der NSDAP, 1937.²¹

²⁰ Ley, Robert. *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP*, Auflage 3, Munich: Eher, 1937, p. 527

²¹ Ley, p. 524

As discussed above, the hat of Nazi uniforms could display which unit or division its wearer belonged to. For the SS, and more specifically, the SS-Totenkopfverbände, wore a silver death's head on their cap. For other units of the SS, a silver eagle cap badge was displayed on the front of the cap.²²

The SS employed many smaller pieces of accoutrement to further their appeal, elegance and powerful appearance. These smaller elements could help balance out the uniform's elements of fearfulness. This effect would give the wearer more flexibility and pride in wearing a uniform of elegance, instead of its only effect being the installation of fear in its viewer. One of the softening components of the black uniform was a red swastika armband worn on the left arm of the SS jacket.²³ This stark contrast of the red accent was an advertisement for the Party and produced a visible effect that promoted both the symbolism and colourway of the Nazi party.²⁴ A sabre could sometimes accent the SS uniform during formal occasions, a further sign of respect to the aristocratic past of Germany.²⁵ In the above photo of Himmler visiting Dachau concentration camp, the intended effect of his wearing of the sabre is most likely to promote that aristocratic and *übermensch* image on the enemies of the state that were interned there.

²² Michaelis, p. 16

²³ Davis, Brian Leigh, and Malcolm McGregor. *Badges and Insignia of the Third Reich: 1933-1945*. London: Leopard, 1997, plate 32

²⁴ Ley, p. 524

²⁵ Williamson, Gordon. *Waffen SS Handbook 1933-1945*, Stroud: Sutton, 2003



*Heinz Von Westernhagen in Rome, Italy, 1938.*²⁶

These small additions to the SS uniform gave the entire ensemble a very deliberate and sophisticated look. From various symbols, to accoutrement, the SS uniform was an amalgamation of mysticism, history, detail and symbolism all alluding to Germany's past, present and forecasted future.

The jackboots themselves were another unmistakable cornerstone of the Nazi uniform aesthetic that was present in the Wehrmacht, SS and entire Nazi hierarchy's dress. The stark black leather from which the boots were made gave the entire uniform a level of class not possible with materials like rubber or canvas. The conjunction of high jackboots and riding breeches made their wearer appear taller and therefore stronger— in line with aryan ideals. This combination also alluded to the Prussian Hussar cavalry of Germany's past. These elite imperial guards wore black dress and cavalry attire, such as boots and plumed pants. The adoption of the same attire by the Third Reich showed an ode to history that strongly exuded German tradition through clothing giving the Nazis an air of a connectedness with German history. By tying

²⁶ Heinz Von Westernhagen, Rome, Italy, 1938

together the uniform with a black leather boot, an air of elegance similar to that of a dress suit was integrated into a fully-fledged military outfit. This elegance gave all Nazi uniforms their unmistakable style and craftsmanship.

As seen in the cutout images above, the Nazis did copy a practice of the fashion industry: the creation and usage of a style guide to set the standard for their various regalia and props to be used in support of the NSDAP. This style guide was put together by Robert Ley and was named *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP* (Organisation Book of the NSDAP). In this book, there are several images of Nazi uniforms styled on cut-out men. These images set the grade for how the uniform should be worn and how it should look (see below). What the creation of such a book suggests is that the uniform was very much a piece of regalia in service of the party as much as a banner, flag or logo. The inclusion of the uniform among these party ornaments proves that the role the uniform played for the Reich was equal to any other piece of inanimate pageantry associated with the party: a role very much calculated and valuable to the promotion of Nazism.

In order to craft a more organised *volksgemeinschaft*, there had to be standards involved in order to set the tone for what and was not acceptable in the usage and utilisation of various Nazi regalia. Robert Ley, head of the German Labour Front from 1933 to 1945, published a 678-page book, entitled *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP*, outlining what was acceptable in terms of the use and display Nazi regalia in 1937.²⁷ In 1937, Ley was also an the lead *Inspekteur*, or *Reichsorganisationsleiter* for the Nazi party, a title in which, true to creating the *volksgemeinschaft*, was tasked with organising the national socialism across Germany.²⁸ The *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP* was comprised of instructions on how to design and arrange flags, banners, insignia, uniforms, even drums that bore the Nazi logo to be used in Nazi meetings, parades, ceremonies and rallies.²⁹ The importance of this book is that it shows an absolute attention to detail when it came to crafting uniformity in the display and execution of Nazi party uniforms and insignia. Similar in nature to a style guide used in the fashion industry, the *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP* offered explicit mock-up illustrations of how to wear a Nazi uniform. This book only offers a look at how to dress for Party events and ceremonies, but

²⁷ "Dr. Ley's Brain: Study by Army Doctors Show Nazi Suicide was Medically Degenerate". *LIFE*. February 4, 1946, p. 45

²⁸ Orlow, Dietrich. *The History of the Nazi Party: 1933–1945*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973, p. 22

²⁹ Ley, Robert. "Table 73". *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP*. Zentralverlag. 1937

nonetheless shows the necessity of sartorial accuracy when it came to the wearing of a Nazi uniform. For crafting a proper *volksgemeinschaft* in Germany, Ley's style guide was an essential step. It is not enough to simply ask for conformity and obedience in regard to proper dress and personal appearance. That being so, the Nazis issued a guidebook on how to correctly dress like a Nazi. The effect of this book, despite who it was given to, shows that uniformity in sartorial conduct at every Nazi event was heavily desired as was the establishment of a *volksgemeinschaft*.

Gleichschaltung would have been another effect of the *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP*. Coordination of everyone under the proclaimed standards of dress for Nazis was promised by Ley's guide. Because so many individuals wore a uniform in Nazi Germany, this style guide would have coordinated thousands of individuals under the standards of the Reich. Ergo, the uniform now took on an additional life of its own in its ability to bring many peoples under the purview of the Nazi Party. Ley's book gave the uniform more power; entitling it to force people to wear it a strict manner, to keep the clothing clean and to Nazify someone even more than they may have already been. For aryan ideals, the book served as propaganda for them too. The ideal physique of the man in the eyes of the Nazis is seen in the illustrations of the models wearing the uniforms. Tall, lean, blond, all the physical characteristics the Nazis promoted are observed in the organisational book. The integration and injection of aryan ideals into, around and onto the uniform itself is omnipresent in the guide's pages. Ley's guide shows the uniform's embeddedness within a massive party apparatus that spared no detail. The *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP* brought the uniform into a place where it could become a function of the ideals of the Third Reich.

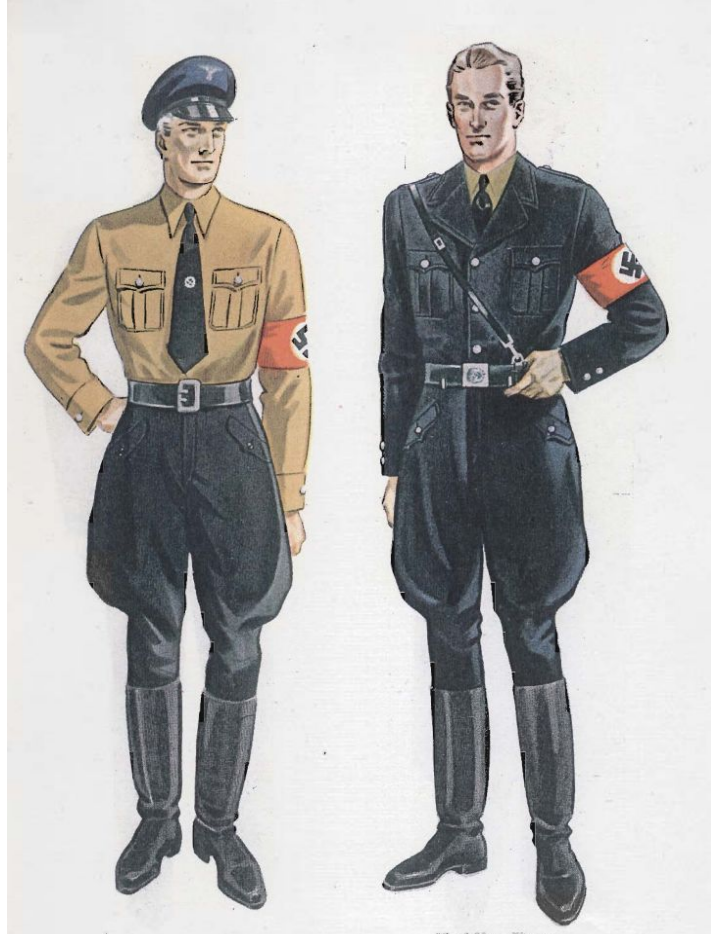


Illustration detailing the style guidelines for the wearing of an SS uniform. Note: the rigidity of the lines in the uniform, the centered button-alignment of both the shirt and tunic with the belt buckle, and the general symmetrics.

These aspects were undoubtedly expected by all wearers of the uniform.³⁰

³⁰ Ley, 297



SS officer's uniforms. The stark effect of the pagented black SS uniform is apparent here as the colourway provides a background for showing off the various accoutrement and elegant details, such as gold buttons and belt buckles.³¹

Uniforms perfectly served the purpose of the *volksgemeinschaft* and *gleichschaltung*. Goebbels, through his extensive and his ministry's groundbreaking propagandistic techniques, aimed, "to unite all creative persons in a cultural uniformity of the mind."³² The effect this uniformity would have been perfect for an authoritarian regime: a people who support a government and its plans for the nation. As mentioned above, Germany was a nation of some 240 different uniforms for various jobs. The effect of this extensive uniformity would have been great: "Uniforms... emphasise the loss of individuality and dehumanise their wearers. When thousands are alike, no one individual seems to matter."³³ Therefore, the ability to dehumanise an

³¹ Ley, 471

³² Fussell, Paul. *Uniforms: Why We Are What We Wear*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2002, p. 20

³³ Joseph, Nathan. *Uniforms and Nonuniforms*, Greenwood Press, 1986, p. 83

entire citizenry with the issuing of uniforms brings about an ability to pull at the emotions of a massive group, shunning individual meaning— and therefore resistance.

The silent nature of the uniforms in their ability to de-individualise the German citizenry would have also opened the door to more overt propaganda. On the topic of resistance, if everything one sees is obviously propaganda, it is hard to trust the state producing it. However, if one is able to trickle propaganda into an omnipresent actor, like a uniform, more effort can be put into other, more overt media, such as film and radio. The uniform served as the silent actor in the propaganda machine— able to make thousands a walking advertisement for the Nazi regime without the printing of any text or production of any radio broadcast or film.

With a description of the intricacies of the style and design of various Nazi uniforms, comes the question: how did the German uniform of the 1930's and the Second World War differ from the uniforms of other nations, particularly the allied powers whom were enemies of the Reich. For one, there are many similarities between the uniforms of the Wehrmacht and the Uniforms of the SS. This trend of consistent design and style gave the Nazis a sustained look no matter what the branch, division or unit. This image allowed for a unvarying image of the forces fighting for the German people. Furthermore, the decoration and fashion-conscious design of the German uniform as opposed the regalia (or lack thereof) of the Allies created a likeness of dominance. A brilliant example of this contrast is an image of General Victor Fortune standing next to Erwin Rommel after the former's June 1940 surrender at Saint Valéry in France.



General Victor Fortune and General Major Erwin Rommel at St. Valéry after the surrender of Fortune's 51st Division to Rommel's 7th Panzer Division, 12 June 1940.³⁴

The stark contrast between the two men is so obvious, it is impossible to miss. Rommel stands proud and postured in his well-fitted jacket, his collar and belt pulled tight, his medals glistening and his hat perched atop his head firmly, as if to accentuate the rest of his uniform. Fortune stands disheveled; cuffs hanging mid-way down his hands, collar unbuttoned and clothing undecorated and blousey. It cannot go unnoticed that Rommel's regalia gives a pompous air of power. Fortune stands defeated—both in style and combat. However, this is most likely exacerbated by the fact that this meeting is planned. What this means is that Rommel has taken the vanity of his own uniform into consideration when meeting with his enemy. For Rommel and the rest of the German army, this was an opportunity for a double-victory. Fortune and his forces had already surrendered to the Germans, but if the Nazis could appear more powerful, through subtleties such as their manner of dress, they could install their own curated image into the eyes and minds of their onlookers. This effect could be far more pervasive for the Germans as it could

³⁴ Imperial War Museum RML 342

create and install a fear that could outlast a simple battle result. At Saint Valéry, the Nazis used an opportunity for the silent international language of fashion to further their victory.

Moreover, at the end of the war, upon Germany's defeat in 1945, many German citizens saw allied uniforms for the first time. Now, ordinary Germans were able to compare the visual effect of the allied uniforms to that of the Nazi uniform. Victor Klemperer, a famous German diarist and victim of heavy Nazi persecution, kept a diary of daily life in the Third Reich. In May 1945 he wrote on just that comparison:

“The Americans make neither a vindictive or arrogant impression. They are not soldiers in the Prussian sense at all. They do not wear uniforms, but overalls or overall-like combinations of high trousers and blouse all in gray-green; they do not carry a bayonet, only a short rifle or a long revolver ready at hand; the steel helmet is worn as comfortable a hat, pushed forward or back as it suits them.”³⁵



*American World War II Uniforms.*³⁶

³⁵ Klemperer, Victor. *I Will Bear Witness*, New York: Random House, 1999, p. 488

³⁶ North, Jonathan. *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Uniforms of World War II: An Expert Guide To The Uniforms Of Britain, America, Germany, USSR And Japan, Together With Other Axis And Allied Forces*, Lorenz Books, 2015, pp. 10-26

Klemperer's description of the uniforms of American forces entering Germany at war's end is palpably unimpressive. Klemperer is so conditioned to seeing the Nazis' theatrical dress that he expects flamboyance and pageantry in any army's fashion. The United States Armed Forces' unimpressive regalia makes no impression showing just how elegant the Nazis' uniforms were. This juxtaposition of uniforms provides evidence that the propagandistic role of the uniform was unique to the Third Reich. With the pomp missing from the entering Americans' uniforms, Klemperer's reaction echoes what is seen in the photo of Fortune and Rommel— strength in the German uniform and muted style in those of the Allied powers.

With such dedication to design and obvious difference from other nations in the Nazi uniform, it must have been an immensely powerful garment to its wearer. Thus, in this section, I will discuss the function of the Nazi uniform: the role the regalia played in its wearer, its viewer and its ability to elicit fear and elegance simultaneously.

For all its beauty and stylistic elegance, the Nazi uniform, particularly those of the SS functioned as a vector of fear. As Himmler stated, the intent of the uniform was quite intentionally to be one of fear— so much so that the *Reichsführer* predicted that the very viewing of the black dress may cause observers to fall ill. With the understanding that it was Himmler's intention for viewers to fear the uniform, how did the Nazi uniform function as a vector of fear in the eyes of enemies of the German state?

Holocaust survivor Sam Genirberg survived Hitler's invasion of his Polish hometown of Dubno, which is now part of Ukraine. Fortunately the young man passed as a non-Jewish Russian and was spared his life, deported to a German work camp. Genirberg recalls from the work camp an interaction with an SS: “‘Get up men, time to go. This is not a resort,’ shouted the man in a German military uniform. A cold chill went through me when I looked up and saw the SS insignia on the man's sleeve.”³⁷ Here, Genirberg waits to announce his shock and fright. It is not the man's angry shouting that sends a chill down his spine, but the SS insignia on his sleeve. In trueness to the functionality of the SS uniform as a vector of propaganda for the Reich, the clothing becomes more powerful than booming words, with simple insignia eliciting chills.

³⁷ Genirberg, Sam. *Among the Enemy: Hiding in Plain Sight in Nazi Germany*. Los Gatos, CA: Robertson Publishing, 2012,

The difficulty in eliciting fear is that terror has the possibility of drowning out the elegance of the uniform. An incredibly scary uniform is seldom seen as elegant and beautiful in the same vein. The aforementioned style details however serve as careful modifiers of this fearful design to sharpen the view of the uniform into one of smoothness and finesse. Frederic Spotts describes of the SS uniform: “Uniforms were of enormous importance, obliterating individuality and the hierarchic order of society while manifesting the encompassing power of the party and state. In the rank order of uniforms, those of the SS – black, svelte, decorated...and complemented with heavy black leather boots – were the most aesthetically suggestive. These were clearly men who were not only supremely violent but also supremely beautiful.”³⁸

Moshe Ziv, imprisoned at a concentration camp in Sárvár, Hungary echoes the dual sentiment of the Nazi uniform’s terror and elegance. Ziv recounts: “We saw the German officers get up from their places immediately. For the first time in my life I saw their uniforms in all their glory; up until now I had only seen pictures in newspapers. The uniform included shiny boots, Nazi insignia on the sleeve, a visored hat with a skull embroidered in silver thread, and white gloves.”³⁹ Even though Ziv’s position is one of horror, he still recalls the fine intricacies of the SS uniform. In most situations of such immense repression, one would not notice many details, focusing only on survival. However, the panache of the detailed SS uniform is too much for Ziv to ignore— he recounts the uniform’s beauty even in the face of fear.

³⁸ Spotts, pp. 52-53

³⁹ Ziv, Moshe. *Buttons in My Soup*. Tzameret Books Ltd, 2018, p. 370



Members of the SS-Totenkopfverbände pose at Gross-Rosen concentration camp. Note: their polished riding boots.⁴⁰

Albin Greger, a German drafted into the SS, almost exactly copies Ziv's analysis of the refined SS outfit whilst describing his neighbor: "He was in the black uniform of the SS *Totenkopfverbände* (Death's Head Organisation), in shining black riding boots and with all kinds of silver on his collar. I was very impressed. He was still the same fellow, though, smiling placidly and saying little."⁴¹ Here Greger almost perfectly reflects the language from Moshe Ziv. Not only was the SS Death's Head Unit uniform impressive, but each person, independent from each other and of different levels in society, notes the same impressive nature of the uniform itself. The impressions both include noting the silver accents and the uniform's shiny black boots. These two reflections compound the universal effect of the SS-Totenkopfverbände

⁴⁰ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Martin Mansson

⁴¹ Greger, Albin. *Memoir of a German Soldier*. Edited by Christopher Greger. Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014, p. 42

uniform. These two details of the uniform are rather minute. Not only are the silver accents and the shining leather riding boots smaller details of the uniform, they also show an attention to detail that the wearer took great pride in keeping these aspects of his everyday clothing clean and never letting the elegance of the uniform fall short.

A unique ability for the uniform to be both impressive and scary. Instead of just a functional outfit, or just a piece of dress wear, the Nazi uniform was both, instilling fervent pride in its wearer, appeal in its viewer and fear in its enemies. An example of pride in its wearer is the wearing of Nazi party decorations on the battlefield. While the SS uniform may have trumped the elegance of those of the Wehrmacht, this did not stop Wehrmacht soldiers from doing everything in their power to show how much pride they had in the uniform they wore on their backs.

The Iron Cross was widely given for acts of leadership bravery or valour. The Cross was awarded an estimated four and a half million times in 2nd Class distinction and 300,000 times of 1st Class distinction during World War II.⁴² The Iron Cross was awarded in various other distinctions as well, including in the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with with Golden Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds, which was only awarded once– to Hans Uldrich.⁴³ Much pride surrounded the Cross– this is evidenced by the wearing of the Iron Cross, not just with formal dress, but with the uniform in a battle setting.

⁴² Previtera, Stephen Thomas. *The Iron Time: A History of the Iron Cross*, 2nd ed, 2007, Winidore Publishing, p. 322

⁴³ Maerz, Dietrich. *The Knights Cross of the Iron Cross and its Higher Grades*, [English], Richmond, MI, B&D Publishing, 2007, pp. 310-311



A Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross from September, 1st 1939.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes (ab 1. September 1939).



German soldier in brush combat conditions still proudly displaying his Iron Cross fastened to the button holes of his German Army Service Tunic.⁴⁵



Waffen-SS of a soldiers laugh in front of a camouflaged panzer in France, 1944. The Iron Cross is again visible around the center man's neck— despite his wearing of camouflage.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Bundesarchiv Bild 1011-278-0899-07, Foto: Böhmer 1944 Januar-Februar

⁴⁶ Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-721-0387-05A, Theobald, Frankreich, SS-Panzersoldaten vor Panzer

The above photos display Wehrmacht soldiers in field dress, proudly displaying their Iron Cross decorations, despite the outside conditions. At first glance, these photos display the fierce pride held by soldiers in their country and therefore, the Nazi party. However, these photos were taken from the Bundesarchiv, the German Federal Archives in Koblenz, Germany. The provenance of these photos reveals that they are most likely staged for propaganda purposes. Both photos were taken in 1944, late into the war and well into the Nazis' years of defeat. The need for positive morale-instigating propaganda during this time was high. A display of soldiers, proud of their decorations for bravery and valour fills that need. These photos would have been an attempt by the Nazi regime to harness the pride in one's uniform and broadcast it to the greater German citizenry, military or otherwise. Herein lies the unspoken facet of power imbued by the uniform: the ability to curate an image; to instill an ideology without speaking a word.

The wearing of the Iron Cross in battle, orchestrated or not, shows a pride in a soldier's identity within the hierarchy of the Wehrmacht and Third Reich. These photos display that this pride is to be taken so seriously that the award should always be with you. To be given an award for bravery, valour or sacrifice shows an integrity and dedication to a regime that then becomes, not an accessory to, but a part of the Nazi uniform. For some, the cross meant safety from persecution or accusations of treasonous behaviour as it portrayed German loyalty. For others, it meant an infallible Reich, a government that was so strong and instilled so much pride in its soldiers; a cause they were dedicated to.

In order to maintain the pride of the Nazi party despite facing of defeat, many Officers kept their decorations as an integral part of their everyday dress. Bernhard Teicher, a Wehrmacht soldier in Italy, recounts his commander: "The battalion commander was a major, highly decorated with the *Ritterkreuz*, the Knight's Cross, amongst his other battle medals. He was always in full immaculate uniform, with the swastikas in view on his medals and uniform tunic."

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⁴⁷ Teicher, Bernhard R. *For All It Was Worth: A Memoir of Hitler's Germany - Before, During and After WWII*. Biocomm Press, 2017, p. 230

For Allied soldiers, enemies of Nazi Germany, seeing immaculate decorations on the battlefield instilled envy. Seeing the pride in a nation's soldiers, even in harsh and trying conditions did not make the fight against the Nazi menace any easier. Abbott Lansing Wiley, a battery commander in the 347th Field Artillery Battalion of the 91st Infantry Division, between Florence and Bologna, Italy describes capturing a German Officer: "a day or so later, down the corner of this hill comes an infantry Jeep and they've got a German officer as a prisoner. I couldn't believe my eyes—here's a German officer in full dress, with a hat on, full uniform, everything, a monocle in his right eye, his boots are as black and polished as could be. I looked at my boots, they were mud and snow, I'd probably had my trousers on for three weeks, but anyway, I thought I must be in the wrong army."⁴⁸ Almost out of a movie is Wiley's description of the capture German officer. Despite his capture, the pride in his uniform by the German does not falter. Instead, he is dressed as immaculately as ever. The soignée nature of the Nazi is so powerful that it, albeit for a moment, causes the American to second guess his army— due to fashion. A German officer has just been captured— a victory— yet envy in uniform cause a split-second longing to look as strongly as the captured.

The effectiveness of the uniform to bring about sentiments of both terror and finesse show the unique propagandistic value of the Nazi uniform within the context of the Third Reich machine. As Goebbels stated, for propaganda to be effective, it must remain under the radar; out of recognisable sight. As evidenced above, the uniform has the ability to subtly affect one's emotions, a key trigger in decision-making. Albin Greger would go on to say of his neighbor's fantastic change upon donning the SS-Totenkopfverbände uniform: "The SS *Totenkopfverbände* was in charge of the concentration camps where such terrible things happened as we found out after the war. I cannot imagine my mild mannered and slow witted childhood friend in the role of a brutal prison guard. But a uniform and a little power have changed so many other men before."⁴⁹ Here it is quite clear that the uniform has the ability to have an emotional propagandistic effect on its wearer. Pride and power as a product of a uniform demonstrate the ability of the uniform.

⁴⁸ Rozell, Matthew A. *The Things Our Fathers Saw: The Untold Stories of the World War II Generation, Volume IV: Up the Bloody Boot, the War in Italy*. Hartford, NY: Woodchuck Hollow Press, 2018, pp. 162-163

⁴⁹ Greger, p. 42

Anthony Pratkanis writes, “when an emotion is aroused and experienced, it can involve a number of psychological processes that can then be used as a platform for promoting and securing influence and compliance.”⁵⁰ Albin Greger’s friend was more than likely emotionally aroused by the strapping on of his SS uniform, thus his psychological processes could have been changed. This change could have resulted in the compliance for the change from “slow witted” to “brutal prison guard” that Greger observed. Here is one display of the uniform’s ability to change a man. By tapping into the psyche of an ordinary person, a certain change occurs. Much like uniformity can take personal choice and therefore resistance out of the regular life, the pathos of the uniform can change the man. The addition of power behind the uniform and what the symbols adorned on it represent, can change the man from a normal neighbor, to a member of the most organised killing squad in human history.

The crimes of the Third Reich have doubtless contributed to the staying power of the Nazi uniform. Simply knowing the actions of the regime, the clothing itself still elicits a great and unique effect; it still serves as an advertisement for the regime, albeit in a different way. This continued advertising, despite the regime’s defunctness, is aided by the vast interest in the Nazi party. The uniform adds an extra dimension to that: despite these acts, this regime was still able to produce an innovative aesthetic; one that built beauty and fear into the very design and production of clothing; one that appealed to soldiers and citizens emotionally and powerfully. These were not brown-shirted rabble-rousers of the early Reich, but often quaffed men with sharp uniforms. This shows the uniqueness of the Nazi uniform. In fact, in 1999 the British editor of *GQ* magazine was fired for placing Nazi Field Marshal Erwin Rommel on a list of the Best Dressed of the 20th Century—⁵¹ showing the hesitancy some people still had at the turn of the century with addressing the Nazi’s chicness.

The uniform’s staying power and message is reflected in film. The ability for the uniform to represent a group so strongly both during the Nazis’ reign and after proves the uniform’s strength in design. The uniform had the ability to imbue the values of the Reich, with its design continuing to embody the evil that the regime stood for even today. Just as I have looked at

⁵⁰ Pratkanis, Anthony R. “Social Influence Analysis: An Index of Tactics” in “The Science of Social Influence”

⁵¹ “GQ Editor Fired for Putting Nazis on Best-dressed List for 1900s.” DeseretNews.com. 23 February 1999. <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/681885/GQ-editor-fired-for-putting-Nazis-on-best-dressed-list-for-1900s.html>

primary sources from various vantage points, I will also do this here. By looking at film throughout the 20th century, it is possible to track the development of the Nazi uniform on the silver screen.

The Nazi fashion aesthetic model has been imitated as a method for conveying evil through recognisable symbolism and imagery. Even in mockery, the Nazi uniform retains its image as a signifier of power and austerity. The uniform, whether produced in humour, or in imitation holds onto a crisp and clean aesthetic, with both insignia and rigidity of design. Simply put, the Nazi uniform maintains a status as a symbol of wearable evil, just as Heinrich Himmler had intended it to and just as it was perceived by various contemporaries. Nazi imagery through fashion on screen remains one of the most identifiable symbols of evil.

The Great Dictator, Charlie Chaplin's 1940 mockery of Adolf Hitler, fascism and the cult of Nazism, heavily borrows from Nazi attire in the construction of a faux dictatorship for cinematic purposes. What is so interesting and unique about this film's critique of Nazi Germany is its timeline of filming. The film began production just days after the Nazi invasion of Poland and the European allied powers' declaration of war on the Third Reich. Because Chaplin's film was shot during the height of Nazi power, the film offers a primary analysis, not just of Nazi politics, but of how those outside of Germany perceived the Nazi aesthetic. The film also shows how the Nazi uniform was one unique enough to be imitated with little work. To the question of whether or not the Nazi uniform had a 'look' to it, *The Great Dictator* answers that. In the famous globe scene, Charlie Chaplin's character, Adenoid Hynkel, wears a clean and coiffed uniform. He wears jodhpurs, complemented by knee-high, black leather jackboots and a slim, tailored jacket, adorned with large SS-like insignia on its collars and large lapels.



Charlie Chaplin as Adenoid Hynkel. The mock SS runes on the collar, the sharp lines, pockets, jodhpurs and boots are all nods to the uniforms of the Nazis and the image of Adolf Hitler.⁵²

⁵² *The Great Dictator*, Produced by Charlie Chaplin, Directed by Charlie Chaplin, Written by Charlie Chaplin, Performed by Charlie Chaplin, United Artists, 1940



Photograph from Hitler's visit to Finland, 4 June 1942. Save hat and waist belt, the uniform worn by Charlie Chaplin is almost exactly like Hitler's.⁵³

The flamboyant uniform of Hynkel (Chaplin) bears an almost carbon-copy resemblance to those of the Nazi elite, specifically Hitler— even in black and white film. This was exactly Chaplin's intention so to be crystal clear as to who he was representing. The uniform of *The Great Dictator* is so simple, it could have been purchased at a clothing store the day of filming. There are no large military adornments, badges of rank, or even colour. However, by using each piece of the outfit together and by tailoring the clothing to fit the wearer, Chaplin's vêtements work in unison to create a recognisable symbol of a dictatorship, superiority and power.

Moving to the post-war period and more theatrical and fantastic cinema, the Nazi uniform's evil has oft been utilised to portray evil without verbal explanation. The distinguishable uniforms of the Third Reich have served and continue to serve as inspiration for

⁵³ Hitler in Finland for Mannerheim's 75th birthday, 4th June 1942. Printed in *Suomen Kuvalehti* in 1942 and again in 2006. Captured from PDF

the attire of evil groups. Just as the uniform was easily recognisable as an embodiment of national socialist values in the Third Reich, a Nazi-modeled uniform can embody evil in the post-war period just the same. The website, TvTropes states: “A quick and easy way to suggest a group of people are evil in fiction is to give them uniforms that resemble those worn by the Third Reich.” The website then goes on to list every television show, series or movie that has borrowed from the stylings of the Nazi uniform’s aesthetic to convey evil. Over 100 references to Nazi fashion are present.⁵⁴ The Imperial Army of George Lucas’ *Star Wars* franchise follows closely the cuts and designs of Nazi uniform. Paul Fussell, American historian and World War II veteran, writes that Lucas directly sought inspiration for the evil Imperial Army’s attire from the Third Reich as at the time of filming in the late 20th-century, it was the most immediate, convincing and recognisable conveyance of evil for the viewer.⁵⁵

When one observes stills from the *Star Wars* Trilogy’s final installment, *Return of the Jedi*, the uniform and personnel formation of the Imperial Army are noticeably taken from those of Nazi Germany. First, the uniforms are a grey/green tunic, with both top and bottom uniform. Every soldier matches in this apparel. Collars, cuffs and breast lines are all perfectly symmetrical. A black leather belt wraps around the waist to give a slim look to its wearer. Caps are worn to complement the uniform and serve as a part of the outfit in the same colourway, rather than as an accessory. In certain scenes, the higher ranking Imperial Army officers are seen walking perpendicular to straightly-rowed, lower-ranking men— a nod to the hierarchy and uniformity of all aspects of the dictatorship.

⁵⁴ "Putting on the Reich." TV Tropes. <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/PuttingOnTheReich>.

⁵⁵ Fussell, Paul, *The Boys' Crusade: The American Infantry in Northwestern Europe, 1944-1945*. New York: Modern Library, 2005



Imperial Army officers in Star Wars: Return of the Jedi. The waist belts, caps and breast insignia immediately conjure images of Nazi uniforms. The coat fasted with the waist belt is very similar to the SS Black Armoured Vehicle Tunic (Army-Style) pictured earlier in this paper.⁵⁶

When these elements are compared to images from the Third Reich, they are strikingly similar. While insignia and military awards are absent from the chests of the galactic villains, there is little missing when the images are juxtaposed. In a 1941 image of Rudolf Hess greeting German Armed Forces officers in Munich, the subordinate officers are neatly lined, facing the higher ranking Hess. Each officer is wearing an Army Officers' Piped Field Service Tunic, with clean, angled collars, sharply lined jackets, and black leather belts around the waist— down to the edges of these costumes, the resemblances are profound.

⁵⁶ *Star Wars: Episode VI – Return of the Jedi*, Produced by Howard Kazanjian, Directed by Richard Marquand, Written by George Lucas and Lawrence Kasdan, Performed by Michael Pennington (as Imperial Officer Moff Tiaan Jerjerrod), 20th Century Fox, 1983



Rudolph Hess greets Officers of the German Armed Forces, 27 January, 1941. Waist belts, sharp collar lines and uniform lines are all similar to the above image from Star Wars.⁵⁷

These images, when placed side-by-side show just how pervasive Nazi fashion was, even through the 1980's film industry. The addition of an Iron Cross to the uniform of a Imperial soldier would make it so it would not be out of place in Germany under the Third Reich. The striking similarities between the villains of a Hollywood film, and the most dangerous villains in the history of the world show that the latter's propagandistic usage of fashion and the aesthetics of personal appearance came to be one of the most defining memories of their existence. The borrowing of Nazi aesthetic, decades after the fact, maintains Nazi fashion's place in history as a sign of power and unforgettable evil.

Today, the Nazis are remembered for the most vicious and destructive war the world has ever known. Tens of millions perished primarily as a result of Nazi Germany's insurgency. However, we are fascinated with this regime which was only in power for the span of twelve

⁵⁷ Davis, Brian Leigh, *German Army Uniforms and Insignia, 1933-1945*, London: Brockhampton Press, 1998, p. 137

years. To get to the bottom of this, countless historians have written of the various subjects that accompany the Third Reich. From biographies, to accounts of battles, to the publication of images, Nazi Germany has cemented its place as one of the most written about regimes in history. However, few historians have tackled the subject of the Nazis' uniforms. Historians like John Angolia and Brian L. Davis, some of the most well-written historians of Nazi uniforms have published massive uniform bibles on Nazi regalia. Many scholars have written on Joseph Goebbels, the Reich's propaganda machine, and published collections of the propaganda of the Third Reich. Despite the works put forth on these topics, no historian has heavily delved into how uniforms could have served as an actor for the Reich's ideals, values and propaganda machine. No historian has looked at how the uniform could be a piece of elegant dress whilst instigating impressedness and fear in its observers. I hope to bring about a discussion on how uniforms truly were a factor in the perception and adoption of the Nazi party in Germany; an advertisement for the values of National Socialism.

Reading these primary sources, it was apparent that to the creator, the wearer and the viewer, the uniform had the ability to speak for the Nazi Party with the utterance of no words. The values and ideals of national socialism could arise from the clothing itself, like the ability for clothing itself to craft a community of people under one polity. Thus, it was now possible to see the Nazi uniform as extensions of the Nazi ideals of the *volksgemeinschaft and gleichschaltung*.

Reflecting on the use of the uniform in propagandistic images extended the power of the uniform. The uniform could serve as a source of pride of a nation, of the success of the Nazi regime and of power. Through medals, insignia and staged photographs, the uniform could indoctrinate viewers and wearers alike into an acceptance of Nazism. The uniform could convey power, which could therefore change a German citizen into a co-conspirator in the Holocaust.

Seeing Nazis in film also piqued my interests in the staying power of the Nazi uniform. In the world of Hollywood, where actors are separate from the crimes of the Reich, I still saw an image of evil that seemed so easily conveyed, simply due to a uniform. In poring over images, reading translated interpretations and viewing Nazi reproductions in the years following the

Second World War, I believe I have isolated the feeling of the indoctrination of the Nazi uniform.

In summary, this project was inspired out of a powerful personal interest. The major difficulty in this project was an inability to read German. However, the uniqueness of the utilisation of images allowed me to both read and see history. Unlike many other projects, I could look at the subject matter concretely, as vast images exist of Nazi archives. In other words, I could see the materials on the man and exactly how they would have been viewed by contemporaries.

The Nazis used uniforms in their ever-engaging propaganda machine and to proposit their ideals and values of aryanism, racism and dominance. The real power of the Nazi uniforms lies in its ability to be both menacing and beautiful, fear-instilling and elegant. The Nazis' artistry is evident in their ability to produce an image that very much was and an ability to use uniforms as a vector of propaganda. This craftsmanship and thought in design shows the true genius of the Reich's campaign of information. While visible and omnipresent, uniforms, propaganda and the advertisements of the principles of the Third Reich as a whole, in the words of Joseph Goebbels, work best when one is not even aware of their existence.