

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM
FIGHTING THE FIRES OF HATE
America and the Nazi Book Burnings

Did you know?

Declaring that "Books are Weapons in the War of Ideas," this poster was featured in bookstore window displays during World War II. Posters like this one were issued by the Office of War Information (OWI). The OWI, an arm of the federal government, was charged with providing accurate war information to the public, promoting an understanding of war policies, stating war aims, and maintaining high morale on the home front.



Poster, Office of War Information, ca. 1943.

AMERICA AT WAR:
**BOOKS ARE WEAPONS
 IN THE WAR OF IDEAS**

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What do you think?

World War II took place before the popularity of television and long before computers. People had less immediate access to information. How do you think this context would influence the impact of a colorful poster?

The importance of books was given wartime currency in the slogan "Books Are Weapons in the War of Ideas." The German students who participated in mass book burnings had given American war propagandists the perfect image—burning books—to symbolize the antithesis of America's free marketplace of ideas. What do you think the American government hoped to achieve by issuing propaganda pieces like this one? Who was the intended audience for this poster?

ARTIFACTS SPEAK
 FOR THEMSELVES
What can you discover from them?

10
 YEARS
 EDUCATION
 REMEMBRANCE
 CONSCIENCE

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