"The Land of Rape and Honey": The Use of World War II Propaganda in the Music Videos of Ministry and Laibach
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Introduction

"Industrial" is a loud, powerful and often shocking style of avant-garde popular music. It is constructed from mechanical rhythms, harsh and distorted timbres, and dark minor key or modal harmonies, all of which contribute to the creation of a dystopian soundscape. This brutal postapocalyptic attitude is not produced, however, by the music alone. The visual images that accompany these Industrial bands during their live performances, and in their music videos, work with the music to design environments resembling a futuristic urban wasteland. These visual images frequently contain distorted scenes of riots or warfare, pictures of cogs, hammers, robots, or soldiers. These images, and others like them, evoke the imagery of World War II propaganda in their visual style and composition, which make use of bold colors, sharp lines, scenes of mass spectacles, and military themes. It is also quite common to find images that are directly related to World War II propaganda that promoted fascist ideologies or, more specifically, the German National Socialist, or Nazi, political party.

Many Industrial bands claim that these images are used solely for shock value, to send a political message to their audiences about the social systems in their respective countries and the evils of disguised fascism and totalitarianism in general. There is often, however, a dis-
crepancy between the stated authorial intent and the audience reception. By combining these propaganda images with a song’s musical affect, lyrical content, and the performer’s body language, Industrial groups intend to turn the propaganda of evil against itself. Such techniques can unfortunately often backfire into hate politics.

Two bands in particular, Ministry (from the United States) and Laibach (from the former Yugoslavia), take very different approaches to communicating with their audiences, especially American audiences. Ministry uses analogy to compare the evils of the Nazi party to what they perceive as the control of the American government over its population in the 1980s and ’90s. Laibach enacts the spectacle of fascist leaders in order to “unmask social neurosis” making totalitarianism identifiable. As a way to understand how and why these two Industrial bands utilize these particular visual signs in their fight against political control, and why it is such a problematic endeavor for them, it is important to first examine how propagandistic communication functions and what the objectives and motives were behind the use of propaganda during World War II.

Nazi Propaganda: Creating Images of Power

In their book Propaganda and Persuasion, Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell give a concise definition of propaganda: “Propaganda is the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.” Propaganda is then, by definition, a forceful action. It does not simply attempt to influence the receiver; it shapes and manipulates. Its purpose is to engage in direct communication with a subject, and to create a highly specific and almost reflexive behavior. In order to accomplish this effectively, the ideology behind any single piece of propaganda is typically limited to one specific area of thought. Hence propaganda, in its broadest sense, is about the control of information. The propagandist will typically target the images to specific groups or segments of the society, drawing on particular emotions (such as fear, hatred, or pride) in order to manipulate them into committing what might otherwise seem an undesirable act. For example, it is much easier to kill an enemy in battle if you believe him to be subhuman—and a common technique in this effort was to create difference along racial lines.

During World War II the German Nazi party produced some of the most striking and intensive propaganda ever created. Joseph Goebbels, the head of the Nazi Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, maintained that one of the primary goals of propaganda was to bring certain subjects to the attention of the masses and to
aid in their understanding of the relevant issues. His speech at the 1934 Nuremberg Rally, filmed in the famous movie by Leni Riefensthal, *Triumph of the Will*, made the National Socialist Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda’s view on the subject quite clear.

[Propaganda] is aimed at the broad masses. It speaks the language of the people because it wants to be understood by the people. Its task is the highest creative art of putting sometimes complicated events and facts in a way simple enough to be understood by the man on the street. . . . It is a question of making it clear to him by using the proper approach, evidence and language.³

This sentiment clearly echoes Adolf Hitler’s own precise, yet ominous, words on the subject recorded within the pages of his now infamous *Mein Kampf* from 1925.

The function of propaganda does not lie in the scientific training of the individual, but in calling the masses’ attention to certain facts, processes, necessities, etc., whose significance is thus for the first time placed within their field of vision. The whole art consists in doing this so skillfully that everyone will be convinced that the fact is real, the process necessary, the necessity correct, etc. But since propaganda is not and cannot be the necessity in itself, since its function, like the poster, consists in attracting the attention of the crowd, and not in educating . . . its effect for the most part must be aimed at the emotions.⁴

Hitler makes it quite clear that in his view the propagandist is not attempting a scientific or educational training of the masses but is instead trying to create a direct emotional response to specific stimuli. The posters and banners of the Third Reich used large simplistic illustrations, heavy, dominating slogans, and bold colors (especially red, due to its ability to grab people’s attention). These symbols were designed to make the Nazi party look powerful through representations of, or analogy to, the eagle, marching troops, swords, fire and blood, the swastika, and the German-Nazi flag. As both Goebbels and Hitler state, all Nazi propaganda was simple, clear, and dealt only with a single topic, making sure that there was very little room for confusion on the part of the receptor. This propaganda assault was not limited to visual images but also had a strong sonic component as well. The auditory call of “Sieg Heil,” or “hail victory” was a central point of the Nazi maintenance of power. It combined a vocal shout and a physical gesture, both of which allowed participants to “join in the chant” and partake in the political movement in a very physical way; one that capitalized on the base human emotions and calculated mob mentality.
Counter-propaganda and Appropriation

These images have been appropriated and reconstructed for use as weapons in the fight against the ideology of fascism since the very first days of their existence. Throughout World War II images and slogans were often seized by the Allies and used as counter-propaganda to turn public opinion against the Axis forces. At this time elements of the propaganda were altered to evoke different thoughts and emotions for a new audience. One example of how propaganda can be modified to serve the opposing viewpoint can be seen in the Office of Strategic Services alteration of a popular German postal stamp.

During World War II it was quite common for the National Socialist Party to issue postal stamps featuring idealized pictures of Hitler. In fact, an entire series of stamps in different monetary denominations was issued showing a famous profile painting of Hitler, and the 12pf Hitler Head stamp is shown in Figure 1. These stamps served an important function within Nazi Germany, reinforcing the image of Hitler as an admirable and respected leader (much the same as the picture of any world leader on the currency of his/her nation state places a trust and value in that leader’s ideals, whether these be current or historical). The American OSS decided that sending propaganda mail to German citizens in their homes, under the guise of official Nazi correspondence, would be an excellent way to undermine the morale of the common German citizen. Two versions of an American propaganda stamp were made, the first an almost exact replica of the German 12pf stamp that would be used to mail the letters, which were then dumped into German mail trains during raids. The second version of the stamp was included inside the letter, one assumes for use by the receiver, although I doubt if any were actually put into circulation. This second stamp has a skull mask painted over Hitler’s face and alters the original text from “Deutsches Reich” (German Empire) to “Futsches Reich” (Future-Ruined Empire) (see Figure 2).

Figure 1: German postage stamp from World War II picturing Adolf Hitler.
Another example of symbolic alteration can be seen in a U.S. war bonds poster that displays the shadow of the Nazi swastika moving across a grassy field about to engulf three small American children (identified by the American flag one of them is holding) (see Figure 3). The caption states, “Don’t Let That Shadow Touch Them / Buy War Bonds.” The Nazi symbol of power, the swastika, is turned into a shadow of Nazi aggression and evil, as if something terrible was hovering just above the children, waiting to strike. This “shadow” is suggested as placing children’s lives in danger and a way that one can help is made clear: buying war bonds. The message, like the original propaganda it is based upon, is simple and effective. It is through this kind of process that many of the iconic images from World War II have developed strong and differing significance for people around the world.

When popular music groups decide to use World War II propaganda in their recordings, music videos, or live performances, they must contend with a number of possible interpretations depending on the audience member’s individual relationship to the images. Industrial music bands typically use Nazi and fascist propaganda in one of two basic ways. First, it is often used as an attempt at nonpolitical appropriation, simply as symbols of power and authority. Many bands like Nitzer Ebb and Throbbing Gristle redesign the symbols in order to situate the band in the position of power formally held by a political figure or group. This method is problematic since the original images are still so fresh in our cultural vocabulary that the redesigned symbols have led to unwanted acts of aggression fueled by the message and force of the original.5

The second basic category of Industrial music appropriation is the use of fascist signs to make a specific political statement within a live performance or music video. While the Industrial bands Ministry and
Figure 3: American war bonds poster.
Hanley and Laibach both make use of Nazi/fascist imagery, their artistic tactics for doing so are very different.

**Ministry (Awareness Through Analogy)**

Ministry is an Industrial synth-rock band that originated in Chicago, the home of Wax Trax records (the largest independent Industrial music record label during the 1980s), Chicago Trax (a recording studio used by Industrial bands), and the focal point of the American Industrial music scene. The group consists of only two full-time members, Alain Jourgensen and Paul Barker, but also employs a rotating line-up of Industrial music all-stars. Their music is based around pounding drums, distorted guitars, cold synthesizer tones, and sampled voices taken from violent popular films, such as *Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket*, and *Fistful of Dollars*. The album covers and promotional material help to support the brutal attitude of the music by picturing factories, riots, skulls, and artistically altered head-shots of the band members.

In 1988 Ministry released its fourth full-length record entitled *The Land of Rape and Honey*. The title track resurfaces in three different versions over the next four years, and each version of the song, first as a radio single, then as a live performance, and finally as a music video, offers different possibilities for interpreting the Nazi propaganda signs contained within.

The original version that appears on the *Land of Rape and Honey* album is fairly typical of Ministry's music, except that it contains vocal samples taken from Nazi audio recordings instead of the more common film quotations. The most striking sample is the repeated "Sieg Heil" shout that is the most important sonic element of the pre-verse and post-chorus. The aggressive nature of the song combined with the Nazi samples has caused some listeners to believe that Ministry is asking them to participate in a Neo-Nazi rally. The way in which the members of Ministry present themselves and their music, however, is a major factor working against this interpretation. First of all, Industrial music in general makes use of shock tactics on a regular basis as a form of protest. Bands attempt to shock their listeners with the horrors of something negative, instead of telling them the positive alternatives. For example, the band Skinny Puppy is well known for its stance against animal cruelty. But instead of telling the audience how they might contribute to this fight by purchasing animal safe products or living a vegetarian lifestyle, the band shows graphic vivisection and slaughterhouse film footage on gigantic screens during its performances.

Ministry uses this same tactic to make a political point in "The Land
of Rape and Honey.” The name of the song is an obvious play on words. Paul Barker says that he saw the slogan printed in an advertisement for the Canadian town of Tisdale in northeastern Saskatchewan, whose main exports are rapeseed and honey. The actual town slogan is “the land of rape and honey.” But the title as used by Ministry is clearly connected to the biblical phrase “the land of milk and honey” from the Song of Solomon. This play on words, combined with the other lyrics, suggests to the listener the point of the song: that, in Ministry’s view, Americans were promised one thing (democracy, liberty, and justice) and they are living something else (totalitarianism, control, and censorship). In this context, the “Sieg Heil” sample is used to make an analogy to Nazi Germany where the government was telling the German people that it was fighting on their behalf while it was simultaneously slaughtering innocent people by the thousands. Yet the German public, for the most part, continued to follow the rule of the National Socialist party, joining in the chant and blindly participating in their own bondage. It is this sort of subliminal participation that Ministry is attempting to uncover, believing that mapping this brief history lesson onto current social commentary will allow fans to see the deception the band perceives within the American government. However, Ministry never actually offers a course of action for the newly “enlightened.”

“The Land of Rape and Honey” was consistently performed during Ministry’s 1988 and 1989 world tours, where the song served as an encore to most of the shows. This was almost always preceded on stage by a speech from Jello Biafra (see Figure 4). His speech during the concert is a mockery of the United States’ pledge of allegiance. The basic point he is proposing is that the American government is really just controlling its public under a friendlier “Yankee swastika” (his term), where very few people are receiving the honey while the masses are effectively being raped. Alain Jourgensen returns to the stage after the speech wearing a storm-trooper helmet that has a Nazi death head on it, and the band begins to play. Jourgensen and Biafra then make mocking gestures to the audience including the “Sieg Heil” salute, except that Biafra sucks his thumb like a baby when his hand is down (see Figure 5). Just as the song “The Land of Rape and Honey” sampled Nazi audiotapes, the live performance samples Nazi film by showing images of Nazi troops marching, Adolf Hitler, and concentration camps, on large video monitors behind the band. This performance from the 1989 Ministry tour was captured on film and then released in 1990 as both a live CD and an hour-long video entitled In Case You Didn’t Feel Like Showing Up (Live).

Ministry’s intent is to use analogy to demonstrate that the American government is a controlling force disguising its true fascist self.
Figure 4: Jello Biafra's speech at a Ministry concert.

Figure 5: Biafra and Jourgensen during "The Land of Rape and Honey".
The purpose of Biafra’s speech is to make this point clear before the propaganda images are shown. The live version of the song is much more intense than the album version, heightening the emotional content by adding a visual component that consists of strobe lights, red sirens, a giant chain-link fence, projected videos, and band members marching with American flags (see Figure 6). The members of Ministry are careful to explain the ideology behind their performance before they begin it. Their actions on stage then support the ideology and focus the performance into a sharp critique of the social/political situation in the United States. Although many audience members follow Biafra in his first few salutes (once again, see Figure 4), they soon realize the critical aspect of the performance and stop participating.

When the live version of the song was released as a video single in order to promote the *In Case You Didn’t Feel Like Showing Up (Live)* album, a substantial change was made—the Biafra speech was removed. This creates a situation where the visual and sonic signifiers combine without the clear statement of intent beforehand. This is a risky position for Ministry since the television viewer might reread the signs in their original context of Nazi propaganda and not within Ministry’s analogy commentary. It seems odd that Jourgensen, who was so careful to explain the song when he could, would now leave out a critical part of the performance. It may be possible that the record company
(or MTV) saw Biafra’s speech as inflammatory and requested that it be removed, or it may have been simply a timing/length issue for a video that was to be shown on TV. Some of the meaning contained in the original audio version of the song becomes blurred when it is combined with the visuals and receives no introduction. Jourgensen has, however, attempted to explain the song, to create a clearer understanding, in other places such as media interviews.

As the front man of the group, Jourgensen has never been one to shy away from interviews. When asked about the Land of Rape and Honey album in a 1991 interview with Rolling Stone magazine, Jourgensen replied, “All we’re ever saying is ‘think for yourself, question authority.’ It’s very, very simple. Everyone wants things precut, homogenized, spoon-fed, and I won’t give it to them. ‘The Land of Rape and Honey’ is a completely anti-fascist song. That’s what we’re fighting against.”

Jourgensen goes on to admit that a number of people still don’t understand and think that the show is pro-fascist. Even with all of the band’s precautions, including Jourgensen’s use of his “star power,” which allows him to release information through major media outlets, it is still impossible for Ministry to generate a specific response from all audience members, so one can imagine the problems a band like Laibach faces when its mode of presentation is purely satirical.

Laibach (Deconstruction through Enaction)

Laibach is an Industrial band from Slovenia in the former Yugoslavia. The members started performing in 1980 and eventually the band became one of the founding members of the NSK—a virtual government that does not believe in geographical borders—and began calling themselves Laibach Kunst. They soon published the “10 Items of the Covenant,” which they considered to be a manifesto for their artistic movement, much like the manifestos of Dadaism and Futurism in the early part of the twentieth century. The somewhat obvious connection to the fascist aspects of the Italian artistic movement Futurism and its various manifestos should not be overlooked. The “10 Items” were handed out at the band’s concerts (and are now available on their website) and were used as an attempt to explain their mission as part of the NSK. While these “10 Items” were designed to serve an educational function, they were extremely cryptic and did not offer much help to the average listener attempting to understand the music. So, despite these intellectual statements they essentially presented themselves from 1980 until 1993, on stage, in recordings, and on television, as a Neo-Fascist/Neo-Nazi band. When interviewed on Yugoslavian television in the mid-1980s they appeared
wearing uniforms with armbands depicting the band's logo (basically a large + surrounded by a gear, which can be seen in the middle right of Figure 9 below), and posters showing the clichéd Communist representation of the working man. Their answers to the interviewer's questions were very detailed and obviously drafted beforehand. Everything about the interview was scripted to make them look evil and powerful. The Nazi imagery became even more intense and explicit during the music video created for their 1987 song "Geburt Einer Nation."

"Geburt Einer Nation" is an original Laibach composition based around Queen's song "One Vision." This was to become a common technique for Laibach, remaking popular music recordings in their own style which inevitably gave them a "fascist" spin: the most famous examples are an album containing different versions of the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil," and a remake of the whole Beatles album Let It Be.14 The lyrics of the original Queen track "One Vision" seem to be about a world free of war and pain in which everyone is able to live together in peace.15 When asked why they chose to remake this song the band members claimed that they liked it because it showed how a band like Queen understood the power it had over an audience—the way it could mold them to a single vision (their own) though their status as pop-music stars. Laibach intensified this aspect of the song by making a few changes to the lyrics—mostly omitting certain lines of the text, and then translating them into German. The song is renamed "Geburt Einer Nation" [Birth of a Nation] and the lyrics instantly take on a very dark and fascist overtone. Such lines as "Ein Mensch, ein Ziel, und eine Weisung" [One man, one goal, one mission] pick up an entirely new set of connections (i.e., Hitler, German superiority, World War II) especially when sung in the deep growling bass voice of Laibach's lead singer.

The album version of "Geburt Einer Nation" opens with a few bars of "The Star-Spangled Banner," which segue into a very metronomic march drumbeat that is eventually joined by synthesized strings and trumpets.16 As in the Queen version, the chords and melody are kept the same and the song remains in the key of D; however, everything is locked to a tight rhythmic grid. Figure 7 shows the image of Laibach that accompanies this music in the video for the song. The band is shown marching down a long hallway in what looks like a very "modern" subway station, as they are filmed from below in order to make them look as if they are towering above the viewer. The members of Laibach are instantly placed in a clear position of power.

As in their earlier television interviews, the band is dressed in uniforms reminiscent of the Axis powers during World War II. The band member shown in the foreground of Figure 8 wears a Hitler-style
moustache and the uniform of the SS, while the drummer in the background adopts a typical propaganda pose of marching drum corps from both Italian and German posters. Figure 9 is taken from the ending of the “Geburt Einer Nation” video, and it combines all of these other fascist/Nazi elements in a frightening whole. The lead singer is seen marching up a red hill, passing the other band members who are still dressed in their military uniforms; however, they are now playing the hunting horns common to Nazi pastoral images. The Laibach flag is draped in the lower-left corner and looks strikingly similar to the swastika banners used by the Nazis during World War II.

In 1993 Laibach attempted to explain clearly its ideology with the appearance of the music video documentary Laibach: A Film from Slovenia, distributed by their European record label, Mute. The following is a short transcription from the opening of the video in which an unseen narrator attempts to explain the band’s mission.

In the beginning you were four men, feared persona, one body who took on the state, not by opposing it but by assuming its shape. . . . Like Lenin, Hitler and Stalin before you, your ten covenants gave ample forewarning of your intentions. If your fanaticism was frightening it was also the source of your terrible attraction. In making the politics of totalitarianism the subject of
Figure 8: Laibach, “Geburt Einer Nation”.

Figure 9: Laibach, “Geburt Einer Nation”.
early Laibach quotes, you wore its uniforms and customized the symbols of Stalin and Hitler. You mobilized the totalitarian impostors of rock to challenge audiences and authorities alike to recognize the nature of power.\textsuperscript{17}

The Laibach mission, as they explain it, is to deconstruct the images of fascism and totalitarianism through enactment and hopefully eventual identification on the part of the audience. Laibach’s problem arises from the fact that its concerts and videos are presented from start to finish as a fascist event. Since the band makes no attempt to subvert this image it has the aura of authenticity: look once again at the powerful image in Figure 9, which contains almost no element of parody. In an interview with a Yugoslavian reporter the band responded to questions regarding the atmosphere of their live shows stating, “[Our purpose is] to provoke maximum collective emotions and release the automatic response of masses.”\textsuperscript{18} The similarity of this statement to the earlier quotations by Goebbels and Hitler is striking, and I believe not accidental, since the members of Laibach frequently make references to Hitler and the Nazi party in their music, interviews, and videos (as seen in the previous transcription).\textsuperscript{19} In their conception these quotations and references to Nazi propaganda are supposed to unmask the evil of propaganda itself through “ritualized demonstration of political force, and . . . other manipulative approaches.”\textsuperscript{20} The band members have explained that they attempt to make their symbols multilayered so that they cannot be easily deciphered during a single concert. It may take both repeated listening and viewing, and a person willing to “seek knowledge,” in order to fully understand their work. They did attempt to “enlighten” their audiences via the “10 Items”; however, we must realize that not only might some audience members fail to receive the printed flyer, but also that many who did might not understand it, due to its intentionally loquacious scholarly language. The result is that many Laibach fans began to revel in the evils of the band and to take their stage act at face value. Two more transcriptions from Laibach: A Film from Slovenia show the reaction of fans as they left a Laibach concert held in Chicago in 1989.

Interview One

\textit{Interviewer:} Excuse me, can I have your statement about tonight's show, please?

\textit{Spectator:} I think it was neo-fascist, but I'm not sure if it was a joke or not. So that's what I'm trying to figure out, do you know are they . . . ?

\textit{Interviewer:} No, I don't, but why do you think it was neo-fascist?

\textit{Spectator:} Umm, well I just had an incredible like, subconscious
urge to march, and I think my friend did as well. . . . I felt pride in a country I did not belong to.

*Interviewer*: And you didn’t like that?

*Spectator*: Oh no, I liked it, I just want to know if they are serious or not.

Here the spectator is clearly attracted to the band’s fascist display but seems to have trouble judging if it is in fact sincere. Laibach seems too real to be real. In fact its sanitized music, with its military rhythms, horn calls, and growling bass vocals, and the stage act, with the band’s mannequin-like appearance and lack of rock and roll enthusiasm, in many ways appears more fascist than actual fascists. Laibach acts as we expect such persons to act; after all, the band members often refer to themselves in interviews as Laibach Kunst, or Laibach Art. Yet, it is clear that many audience members may still be getting the wrong message from the concert.

A second interview transcription demonstrates how many audience members may have some clue about Laibach’s motives, but they are unable to verbalize what they have learned.

**Interview 2**

*Spectator 1*: Americans are full of shit. America is full of shit.

*Interviewer*: And what does that have to do with Laibach?

*Spectator 1*: . . . no one understands, I don’t wanna say nothing.

*Interviewer*: Why not?

*Spectator 1*: You don’t understand America, it’s unexplainable.

*Interviewer*: What does Laibach tell you about America?

*Spectator 2*: It’s totalitarianism.

*Spectator 1*: It’s unexplainable, it’s unexplainable. We need a fucking third party in America. Beyond . . .

*Spectator 2*: It’s like a screwdriver for the masses.

This second interview shows two young men who have their messages mixed, but at least in a semi-positive way. Although somewhat inarticulate, they have processed the information in the way Ministry would want them to—as analogy—and in fact maybe this is because of Alain Jourgensen. Both Ministry and Laibach were on tour in the United States in 1989 and would have had a similar fan base drawn from the Industrial music subculture. One problem with the fans’ response, however, is that Laibach actually wants people to feel disgust for the whole concept of totalitarianism. Laibach is not trying, like Ministry, to confront the American government.\(^{21}\)
Sign or Simulacrum?

With so many ways of appropriating and utilizing these Nazi propaganda images it is hard for audiences to know how they should respond. These symbols still resonate with the atrocities carried out during World War II, and it is very hard to disassociate the images from their original signification. The propaganda, along with the driving rhythms of the music, creates a very powerful experience, one that should not be used or taken lightly.

If a fan is aware of an image’s source, this could lead to unwanted acts of aggression fueled by the message and force of the original image, which is passed on through the band’s use. I believe that sometimes the signifier and signified become so strongly connected that it is hard to separate the two. Perhaps that is what these bands are hoping for, that the origin of the sign is so powerful that it immediately connects with the audience, shocking them, awaking them, violently attacking them. Then once the image has grabbed the audience, the band can do its work. Ministry’s intention is to connect the images to America, saying, “be careful that what you see does not become what you are.” Laibach is attempting to criticize and deconstruct the images by acting out the very horror they represent. However, audiences can still interpret these signs in many ways and that is why the element of education is so important to Industrial music bands. Laibach was able to reach an audience through their 1993 video A Film from Slovenia, and Ministry makes use of the lead singer’s “star power” to transmit a message through the rock press. Unfortunately, the problem of audience interpretation continues to exist if no one is listening to or looking at these components of the bands’ work.

NOTES

Portions of this article were previously presented at the International Association for the Study of Popular Music—U.S. Branch, and the NYU Music/Image in Film and Multimedia conference.

2. During World War I, one German poster aimed at upper-middle-class neighborhoods showed black French soldiers raping German women while the German men were away at war. This poster not only capitalized on the German man’s fear of leaving his wife and family but also gave him an easy target for his anger.
5. This issue is far too detailed and problematic to deal with here, and is the subject of a more advanced study in my Ph.D. dissertation.
6. Some musicians who have played with the group at one time or another are: Richard 23, Chris Connelly, Mike Scaccia, William Rieflin, David Ogilvie, Trent Reznor, Martin Atkins, William Tucker, and Gibby Haynes.

7. The Land of Rape and Honey is actually the first Ministry album to feature bassist Paul Barker. The three earlier albums were basically Jourgensen solo projects with various session players.


9. Making somewhat morbid or vulgar alterations to quotations, titles, and words has become a standard way of creating album titles for Ministry, for example, The Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Taste, The Dark Side of the Spoon (a reference to both Pink Floyd and heroin abuse), The Tapes of Wrath, and their 2000 live tour entitled “SphincTour.”

10. Biafra is from the hardcore band The Dead Kennedys and is also a member of the Ministry side project Lard.


12. Laibach is the old Austro-Hungarian empire name for the Yugoslav town of Ljubljana. When the Germans occupied Ljubljana during World War II they changed the name back to Laibach. The name of the band thus refers directly to Nazi aggression and the “rewriting” of history. The NSK is an actual organization that promotes a de-centered, nongeographical government for the world, yet it has many of the same fascist overtones as the band Laibach. Other elements of the NSK consist of a theater group, a literary magazine, and a graphic arts section (Laibach Kunst being the musical/sound element of NSK).

13. For example, the following is from the fifth item of the covenant posted on the website http://www.Laibach.nsk.si/ “The internal structure functions on the directive principle and symbolizes the relation of ideology towards the individual. The idea is concentrated in one (and the same) person, who is prevented from any kind of deviation. The quadruple principle acts by the same key (EBER-SALIGER-KELLER-DACHAUER), which—predestined—conceals in itself an arbitrary number of sub-objects (depending on the needs).”

14. Laibach’s stated intention was to “[rewrite] history, which every now and then has to be corrected and reinterpreted to be useful for the future.” This statement, like so many made by the band, is a direct connection to the Third Reich’s statements on art and history.

15. I must admit that after listening to the Laibach version so many times I now find it hard to deal with the original Queen version on its own and understand what the lyrics might have meant in a world without Laibach.

16. It is never made clear what role the United States is supposed to play in this “vision”—aggressor, victim, or enemy—though the title “Geburt Einer Nation” inevitably recalls D. W. Griffith’s notorious 1915 film Birth of a Nation. This issue is not resolved in the music video, which removes “The Star-Spangled Banner” from the beginning and never makes any clear references to the United States.

17. Transcribed (by the author) from Laibach: A Film from Slovenia, on Mute Video, 1993. It has been translated as closely as possible to the spoken text, including all the original grammatical errors.

18. Taken from a 1985 interview published on the Laibach website www.laibach.nsk.

19. It is important to remember that Laibach: A Film from Slovenia was not released until 1993 and hence the “very-clear” message presented therein would not have been common knowledge until that point.


21. Once again, if “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the start of “Geburt Einer Nation” is supposed to carry any particular message we are never told what that message is.