

◆ Then Jesus said: ◆ And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. ◆

The first casualty in war is truth.

As my history teacher in Rhodesia reminded us: Beware the victor's version!

As early as 1930, John Dewey observed that: We are exposed to the greatest flood of mass suggestion that any people has yet experienced.

Propaganda is to Democracies what violence is to Dictatorships.

Propaganda, the calculated manipulation of public opinion to serve political and ideological interests, is pervasive. We are also exposed to commercial propaganda: Marketing and Advertising.

Propaganda aims to do other people's thinking for them.

Propaganda today has moved into prop-agenda, not only controlling what we think, but how we think, and what we think about.

Propaganda uses highly selective images, devious and prejudicial language. Dubious linkages, confusing issues and distorting reality with disinformation, is a daily reality.

George Orwell wrote: In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.

Karl Marx declared: The first battlefield is the rewriting of history.

Vladimir Lenin ◆ Propaganda and Agitation

In his book, What is to be Done, published in 1902, Vladimir Lenin defined propaganda as the use of historical and scientific arguments to indoctrinate the educated and intelligent masses. Agitation was described by Lenin as the use of slogans, stories and selective half-truths to exploit the grievances of the un-educated and ignorant masses.

Deceit is Justified

Every unit of the Communist Party was to have an Agit-Prop section. Deceit in propaganda is justified because the end justifies the means. As Vladimir Lenin regularly said: Treaties are like pie crusts, made to be broken. To tell the truth is a petty bourgeois habit, but to lie and to lie convincingly is a sign of superior intelligence.

The End Justifies the Means

The aim of propaganda is to rally people behind a cause. If this requires exaggerating, misrepresenting, or even lying about the issues, in order to gain that support, the end justifies the means.

Tactics of Propaganda

Common tactics used in propaganda are:

- Ignoring the historic context
- Using selective stories
- Utilising a narrow source of experts, those who tow the party line
- Demonising the enemy and
- Using a narrow focus (the zoom lens, rather than the wide angle lens of context.)

Truth Surrounded by Lies

Sir Winston Churchill, the British prime minister during World War II declared: In war time, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies.

Propaganda in America

Mark Twain, in 1916, described the rise of propaganda in America: Next the statesmen will invent cheap lies, putting the blame upon the nation that is attacked, and every man will be glad of those conscience-soothing falsities, and will diligently study them, and refuse to examine any refutations of them; and thus he will by and by convince himself that the war is just, and will thank God for the better sleep he enjoys after this process of grotesque self-deception.

Nazi Propaganda

Many people know that Joseph Goebbels used propaganda to advance the aims of the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler. What few people realise is that Nazi propaganda was based and modelled upon Allied propaganda against Germany in WWI. Joseph Goebbels was an ardent student of American public relations pioneer Edward Bernays.

Psychology and Social

Science

Bernays based his methodology on the social science researches of French psychologist Gustav Le Bon in his 1895 book: *The Psychology of the Crowd*; and on Sigmund Freud's 1922 book: *The Analysis of the Ego* and *Group Psychology*, as well as the research of Russian experimental psychologist Ivan Pavlov, as published in his 1926 book: *Conditioned Reflexes*.

The Committee on Public Information

Edward L. Bernays (1891-1995) was a nephew of Sigmund Freud. Bernays was a theatrical publicist who was employed by George Creel as a propagandist for the Committee on Public Information (CPI). President Woodrow Wilson of the United States, by executive order, created the Committee on Public Information in association with the Military Intelligence Bureau. The CPI was America's propaganda office. The CPI defined propaganda as: *The systematic, widespread dissemination, or promotion, of particular ideas, doctrines, or practices, meant to further a particular cause or agenda and weaken that of another. It is a systematic effort to manipulate attitudes, beliefs and actions by the use of symbols.*

Hidden Manipulators

German philosopher George Hegel, in his 1821 book: *The Philosophy of Right*, explained how in democracies the public is manipulated and persuaded by *hidden persuaders* and *hidden manipulators*. French author Anatole France, wrote: *Democracy is run by an unseen engineer.*

Controlling Public Opinion

Bernays based much of his methodology upon the works of Walter Lippmann, who wrote about controlling and managing public opinion. His ideas were later published in *Public Opinion* (1922) and *The Phantom Public* (1925).

Enlightening Elites

Walter Lippmann was a member of US Army Military Intelligence during World War I. Lippmann believed that most people are irrational and act chaotically. Because people are unable to independently make rational choices, they need to be guided by *a specialised class of enlightened elites*.

Lippmann described people as: *simple minded* and *sheep-like*, *incapable of formulating or organising their desires, interests and wishes*. Therefore *enlightened elites* can lead and educate the masses. As Lippmann put it:

Making of one general will out of a multitude of general wishes. Bernays stated:

The public must be regimented.

Mobilising Hate and War

In 1927, Harold D. Lasswell, a professor in Political Science at the University of Chicago, analysed the propaganda techniques employed by the Allies in WWI: *A new and subtler instrument must weld thousands and even millions of human beings into one amalgamated mass of hate and war and hope* propaganda. It is the new dynamic of society the fact remains that propaganda is one of the most powerful instrumentalities in the modern world. Propaganda is a reflex to the immensity, the rationality and the woefulness of the modern world. Lasswell explained that to: *Mobilise the hatred of the people against their enemy, represent the opposing nation as a menacing, murderous aggressor* represent the opposing nation as satanic; it violates all the moral standards

Objectives of Propaganda

Lasswell identified four major objectives of Propaganda:

- To mobilise hatred against the enemy who must be de-humanised, portrayed as barbaric, brutal, cruel and uncivilised.
- To preserve the friendship of Allies.
- To preserve the friendship, and if possible, to procure the cooperation of neutrals; and
- To demoralise the enemy.

Warning Against War

Before being elected as a *candidate for peace* in the Presidential Elections of 1916, Woodrow Wilson warned: *Lead this people into war,*

and they will forget there was ever such a thing as tolerance. To fight, you must be brutal and ruthless, and the spirit of ruthless brutality will enter into the very fibre of national life, infecting the congress, the courts, the policeman on the beat, the man in the street. In January of 1916, Wilson stated: This is a government of the people and this people is not going to choose war.

Reversal of Policy

After being elected, under the slogan of he has kept us out of the war, Woodrow Wilson established the Committee on Public Information which forged the nation (which was overwhelmingly opposed to intervention) into a situation where, if anyone believed that America's entry into Europe's war was a mistake, then they were branded a traitor!

Changing Perspectives

More than 8 million German-Americans lived in the USA and many were sympathetic to the cause of their homeland. One third of Americans were immigrants. Most Americans were not connected to the European conflict by blood, or capital and were not interested in waging war overseas. The Committee on Public Information (CPI) developed into the most formidable propaganda apparatus in history. A muck-raking journalist, George Creel, was appointed to lead the CPI. With a phenomenal budget, the CPI recruited from the best of business, media, academia and the art world. The CPI blended advertising techniques with a sophisticated understanding of human psychology.

Democratic Propaganda

It was the first time that a modern government disseminated propaganda on such a large scale. Although propaganda came to be linked with totalitarian regimes such as the Soviet Union and Red China, it is a fact of history that it first emerged in a democratic state. Although, as a journalist, George Creel had been an outspoken critic of censorship, the CPI immediately took steps to limit conflicting information. With the Espionage Act and Sedition Act Voluntary Guidelines were enforced on the news media and ensured that the mass media in the United States was flooded with pro-war material and perspectives. On any given week more than 20,000 newspaper columns were filled with material gleaned from CPI press releases.

Mobilising the Masses

The CPI created a Division of Syndicated Features and recruited the help of leading novelists, short story writers and essayists to present the pro-war position in popular digestible format, reaching 12 million readers a month. The Division of Pictorial Publicity had at its disposal the most talented advertising illustrators and cartoonists of the time. Powerful posters painted in patriotic colours presented compelling images throughout the country. The poster propaganda motivated millions to enlist in the army and navy or buy Liberty bonds. The Division of Films ensured that the war was promoted in the cinema. The Hollywood film industry wholeheartedly supported the war effort with movie titles like: The Kaiser The Beast of Berlin, Wolves of Kultur, To Hell with the Kaiser and Perishing's Crusaders!

Propaganda Changes Attitudes

The cause of the Allies was creatively publicised in every available communication channel, including pulpits. Lasswell pointed out that propaganda wins wars, with words, pictures, songs, parades and many similar devices by the manipulation of collective attitudes.

Emotional Appeal

CPI propaganda showed the way for future propaganda agencies by appealing to the heart, not the mind. Emotional agitation and skilful manipulation made use of manufactured atrocity stories and simplistic slogans such as: Make the world safe for Democracy! Will Irwin, a member of the CPI, wrote after the war: We never told the whole truth not by any manner of means. G. S. Viereck quoted a Military Intelligence officer who declared: You can't tell them the truth. Victories were routinely manufactured by American military authorities, while defeats were suppressed.

Dishonesty was encouraged.

Sentimentality

The analysts attributed the failure of German propaganda in America to the fact that: *It emphasised logic over passion.* As Count von Bernstorff observed: *The outstanding characteristic of the average American is rather a great, though superficial, sentimentality.* The factual German Press releases failed to grasp this.

Altering Perceptions

As Lasswell observed: *So great are the psychological resistances to war in modern nations that every war must appear to be a war of defence against a menacing, murderous aggressor. There must be no ambiguity about who the public is to hate.*

Made Up Atrocity Stories

Bernays openly admitted that he and his colleagues used made-up stories to provoke the hate and fear necessary to raise war-bonds and recruits for the war. Some of their stories, such as a bathtub full of eyeballs and children being killed by the enemy were actually recycled stories from previous conflicts.

Propaganda Kills

So effective was the anti-German propaganda of the CPI in the USA that Dachshunds had to be renamed, 14 states banned the teaching, or speaking, of German in their public schools. Mobs assaulted American immigrants from Germany. At least one man, Robert Prager, a German coal miner, was lynched by an angry mob in Illinois.

Appealing to Idealists

The CPI recognised that while emotional appeals and simplistic stereotypes of the enemy could influence many, the intellectuals and pacifists needed different motivation. To them American military intervention in Europe was described as: *a campaign to end warfare forever and establish a league of nations.* To industrialists the war was modified as a conflict to destroy the competition of German industry. The propagandist does not need to ask if it is true, but merely, *does it work?*

The Value of Propaganda in Peacetime

In the final months of 1918, a war-weary American public ousted the Democrats who had led them into WWI. The Republican majority in Congress brought the CPI under increasing scrutiny. The director of CPI's foreign division later reported: *The history of propaganda in the war would scarcely be worthy of consideration here, but for one fact it did not stop with the Armistice. No indeed! The methods invented and tried out in war were too valuable for the uses of governments, factions and special interests.*

Regimenting the Public Mind

Edward Bernays took the techniques he had learnt in the CPI to Madison Avenue and became an outspoken proponent of propaganda as a tool for democratic governments. *It was of course the astounding success of propaganda during the war that opened the eyes of the intelligent few in all departments of life to the possibilities of regimenting the public mind.* (*Propaganda, by Edward Bernays, 1928*)

Subverting Society

Most Americans came to realise that they had been lied to and manipulated by deceit disguised as news. Many sought to pin complete responsibility for America's involvement in the ruinous World War on *hate mongering militarists in the CPI.* However, as one noted: *Ultimately their guilt is less important than the questions their activities raised about the role of propaganda in a democratic society.* The whole theory of democratic society was rooted in the belief that free citizens could form their own opinions about the issues of the day to decide their collective destiny. Freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, freedom of association, freedom of thought and freedom of religion are fundamental necessities for any democratic process.

Is Propaganda Compatible with Freedom?

However, during the First World War, America's political leaders decided that their citizens were not making the correct decisions, quickly enough. So they flooded the

channels of communication with dishonest messages that were designed to stir up emotions and provoke hatred of their long time trading partner, Germany. The war came to an end. But the propaganda did not. Today many who espouse the ideals of democracy behave like dictators and propagandists. The question is whether propaganda is compatible with freedom. Propaganda clearly undermines a population's ability to think clearly and critically about world events. Simplistic, emotional appeals undermine logic and reason.

Discerning Between Information and Disinformation

Students of propaganda soon noted that while the CPI was the largest propaganda operation to that date, it was not actually the first such deception operation. Shortly after the end of the American Civil War (or War Between the States) journalist Colburn Adams wrote: *The future historian of the late war will have a very difficult task to perform – sifting the truth from falsehood as it appears in official records.*

Newspaper Wars

Two prominent newspapermen took the credit for leading America into the Spanish-American war of 1898. William Randolph Hearst (1863 – 1951), and Joseph Pulitzer, editorially clamoured for US military intervention against Spain. Through disinformation and media manipulation these newspaper tycoons induced the United States to wage an unnecessary war against Spain. Sensational, inflammatory and propagandistic articles and editorials in Pulitzer's *World* and Hearst's *Journal* succeeded in inciting war hysteria and public enthusiasm for war with Spain.

Organising a War

Randolf Hearst famously sent artist Frederick Remington, and other *Journal* correspondents to report on the Civil War in Cuba. When Remington reported: *Everything is quiet. There is no trouble here. There will be no war. I wish to return.* Hearst sent the following famous telegram in reply: *Please remain. You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war.*

Inciting Conflict

Pulitzer and Hearst published inaccurate coverage, rumour, subterfuge, hearsay and outright fictitious reports to drum up a feverous public demand for war. On 15 February 1898, the US Battleship *Maine* blew up in Havana harbour. The cause of this explosion was never determined, but the immediate US media reaction was to blame Spain. Pulitzer and Hearst clamoured for war with titles such as: *Maine explosion caused by bomb or torpedo?* Later Hearst's *Journal* ran the headline: *How do you like the Journals' war?*

The Father of Spin

After WWI, Edward Bernays pioneered Public Relations (PR) and became known as *The Father of Spin*. As the PR consulter for the American Tobacco Company, he campaigned to convince American women that they should smoke Lucky Strike cigarettes (*the torches of freedom*) to emancipate themselves!

Public Relations

Today American businesses spend trillions of dollars on marketing. PR firms employ over 150,000 workers.

Adolf Hitler on Propaganda

In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler analysed Allied propaganda techniques used during the First World War: *The art of propaganda led in understanding the emotional ideas of the masses and finding, through a psychologically correct form, the way to the attention, and then to the heart, of the masses. The purpose of propaganda is to convince the masses its effect for the most part must be aimed at the emotions. The war propaganda of the English and the Americans was psychologically sound. By representing the Germans to their own people as Barbarians and Huns, they prepared the individual for the terrors of war all effective propaganda must be limited to a very few points and must harp on these in slogans until the last member of the public understands what you want him to understand by your slogan to be a*

leader means to be able to move the masses ♦ the intelligence of the masses is small. Their forgetfulness is great. They must be told the same thing a thousand times. </p>

<h3>Tactics of Propaganda</h3> <p align="justify">The tactics of propaganda have been analysed by numerous studies. Professor Johann Galtung listed some of the tactics used in propaganda, including:</p> <div> Decontextualizing violence : Focusing on the irrational without looking at the reasons♦ Dualism: Reducing the number of parties in a conflict to two, (when often more are involved.) Manichaeism : Portraying one side as good and demonising the other as evil. Armageddon: Presenting violence as inevitable, omitting alternatives. Confusion : Focusing only on the conflict arena, but not on the forces and factors that influence the violence. Never explaining why there are acts of revenge and spirals of violence. Failure to explore the causes of escalation and the impact of media coverage itself. Failure to explore the goals of outside interventionists , especially big powers and bankers. Failure to explore peace proposals and offer images of peaceful outcomes. Confusing cease fires and negotiations with actual peace and Omitting reconciliation as a viable option. </div> <h3>Distorting Perspectives</h3>

<p align="justify">Propaganda does not need to be true, as long as it is plausible. Sometimes it can tell the truth, but withhold the point of view from the other side to create a distorted perspective.</p>

<h3>Preparing a Nation for War</h3> <p align="justify">British journalist, Phillip Knightley, identified the four stages in preparing a nation for war:</p> <div> The Crisis: Negotiations are failing! We♦re on the brink of war! War is inevitable! The Demonization of the enemy leader. The Demonization of the enemy as individuals. Atrocities: Even making up stories to whip up and strengthen emotional reactions. </div> <h3>Betrayal of Trust</h3> <p align="justify">Knightley observed: The media demands that we trust it, but too often that trust has been betrayed. </p>

<h3>Propaganda Strategies</h3> <p align="justify">Miren Gutierrez of Inter Press Service summarised propaganda strategies as follows:</p> <p align="justify">Incompleteness
 Inaccuracy
 Driving the agenda
 Milking the story
 Exploiting that we want to believe the best about ourselves
 Perception management
 Reinforcing existing attitudes and
 Simple repetitious and emotional phrases.</p>

<h3>Words are Weapons</h3> <p align="justify">Words are weapons in warfare. Propaganda involves word games. Name calling of the target nation by labelling people, groups and institutions in a negative manner.</p> <h3>Glittering Generalities</h3> <p align="justify">Glittering generality with regard to allies, labelling their people, groups and institutions in a positive manner.</p>

<h3>Euphemisms</h3> <p align="justify">Euphemisms are used to pacify the audience with bland meanings and connotations, such as pacification, technical incursion, etc. Civilian casualties are referred to as: collateral damage. Murder is replaced with: liquidation. Terror bombing of cities is called: saturation bombing or strategic bombing campaign. Starvation of civilian populations is called an economic blockade or sanctions. Looting of farms and murder of farmers is called: dekulakisation or land reform. Racial decriminalisation is called: Black Economic Empowerment and Affirmative Action. Sexual perversion is called Alternative Lifestyles.</p>

<h3>False Connections</h3> <p align="justify">False connections are used to transfer symbols and imagery of positive

institutions to strengthen the acceptance of the cause. Making use of testimonies from individuals not qualified to make the claims made (for example having sportsmen advise on how one should vote in a Referendum!).

Ordinary Appeals

Special appeals include: the *everybody's* doing it, join the bandwagon argument, through words designed to heighten or exploit fear and an appeal to ordinary citizens by leaders doing ordinary things that the viewer can identify with.

Thought Control

In 1921, American journalist Walter Lippmann said that the art of democracy requires the *manufacture of consent*. George Orwell described it as *thought control*. As democracies cannot control people by force, it controls them by influencing what they think, how they think and what they think about. Propaganda is to democracies what violence is to dictatorships.

Gullibility of the Public

Propaganda tends to work because people wish to believe the best about themselves and their country. It is often very hard to believe that our own leaders could possibly lie to us! From how the media portray them, they seem such likeable people!

Crowd Psychology

During the Nuremberg Trials, General Hermann Goring was reported to have said: *It is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it be a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them that they are being attacked and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism, and exposing their country to danger. It works the same in any country.*

Perception Management

John Rendon, the Founder of the Rendon Group, a PR Agency, told cadets at the US Air Force Academy: *I am a politician who uses communication to meet public policy objectives. In fact I am an information warrior and a perception manager. Did you ever stop to wonder how the people of Kuwait City, after being held hostage for seven long and painful months, were able to get hand-held American flags? Well, you now know the answer. That was one of my jobs.*

Manipulating Public Opinion

Another propaganda tactic is character assassination. Smear tactics are used to discredit, or destroy the reputation of someone perceived as an obstacle to the policy makers. The calculated manipulation of public opinion to serve political and ideological interests is achieved by appealing to the emotions to create reality which demands the action desired by the policy makers.

Holocaust in Rwanda

I documented the ease with which the orchestrators of the genocide in Rwanda confused international journalists and abused the national media to mobilise the unprecedented concentration of carnage. The massacres were meticulously organised in advance. The MRND government of Rwanda manipulated the international media by portraying the killings as *spontaneous, tribal anarchy, uncontrolled tribal killing, tribalism,* the result of *the war*.

Disinformation

A smokescreen of disinformation allowed the killers to proceed with their diabolical plans and kill over 800,000 people in a mere six weeks. They isolated their victims by imposing a news blackout, cutting telephone links, establishing a dense network of roadblocks and imposing a nationwide curfew. By cutting communications and restricting travel, they isolated their victims and sought to stifle the flow of news. They also timed the genocide to be launched on 6 April 1994, when most African correspondents were in South Africa for the Mandela elections. With most foreign news distracted by events in South Africa, the mass murderers in Rwanda were able to play *the humanitarian card,* pleading for emergency aid, all while they were engaged in

genocide.

Mobilising Mass Murder

While deceiving the international news media, the MRND mobilised their national news media to denigrate all the targeted Tutsi tribe as *foreigners*, *Hamitic invaders*, *cockroaches*, *racial supremacists* who needed to be *returned to Ethiopia* by having their bodies thrown into the Nyabarongo River. Wild rumours were recklessly spread by Radio RTLM accusing the Tutsis of sinister plots. Popular poets and songwriters composed songs to provoke the majority Hutu tribe to hate their Tutsi neighbours. By totally dominating the mass media, the Hutu extremists were able to mould minds and fill them with hatred and a lust for blood.

Hundreds-of-thousands of Hutu people were motivated to murder their neighbours. Hutu teachers murdered Tutsi students. Hutu doctors and nurses murdered Tutsi patients. Hutu priests and bishops murdered Tutsi congregants. The Holocaust in Rwanda was yet another proof that propaganda kills.

Dehumanise the Enemy

Many of the massacres of prisoners and atrocities committed against civilians in WWI and WWII, including the systematic saturation bombing of cities, would not have been possible without the demonization of the targeted enemy and their civilian population by propaganda. The farm invasions in Zimbabwe were preceded by state propaganda vilifying whites in general and farmers in particular. The Mau Mau murders in Kenya and the Simba massacres in the Congo were also motivated and mobilised by propaganda which dehumanised the targeted white farmers and missionaries. The incessant, anti-white propaganda in South Africa has led to over 3,000 brutal murders of white farmers in some of the most torturous ways possible. Songs such as *◆Kill the Boer! Kill the farmer!◆* sung by prominent ANC leaders are like pouring petrol on a fire. The fact is that propaganda changes perceptions and people.

Propaganda kills.

The Truth Sets Free

That is why it is absolutely essential that we know the truth of history to recognise the lies of propaganda. We need to study the truth in the Bible so that we can be freed from the deceptions of the world.

◆You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.◆ John 8:32

Dr. Peter Hammond
The Reformation Society
P.O. Box 74 Newlands 7725
Cape Town South Africa
Tel: 021-689-4480
Fax: 021-685-5884
Email: mission@frontline.org.za
Website: www.ReformationSA.org

A PowerPoint presentation of this article is available on Slideshare. Click [here](http://www.slideshare.net/frontfel/propaganda-11477547)