

MEMO FROM THE MAYOR

SUBJECT: Propaganda and PSYOPS—The Evil Twins of Tyranny, Part I

We're Being Manipulated Daily

The next several memos will explain how Madison Fifth Avenue and Big Government, plus a host of institutions, manipulate us daily. These manipulations “dumb us down”. How? We allow others to think for us. We allow others to tell us what to eat, drink, and wear, take for medicine, and who to vote for. Furthermore, thanks to three generations of inculcating college and public-school students with certain Marxist philosophies, and not the complete body of the Western Canon, while skipping science that can be questioned and debated, our children think Critical Theory is Critical Thinking—which Marx wanted all along.

Consider the most successful example of propaganda in the Twentieth Century. In the 1920s, the Era of the Flapper, American Jazz, and the rarely-adhered-to Prohibition, Big Tobacco hired Edward Bernays, called the Master of Propaganda, to increase its market share by 100%, namely, the untapped female market. The market was untapped because at that time, no self-respecting woman would think about smoking in public—maybe sneaking one now and then in the privacy of her home, but never in public. Bernays’ mission, then, amounted to getting American women as seriously addicted to tobacco as their husbands, brothers, and fathers.

How would Bernays go about eviscerating this cultural taboo? By showing the benefits of smoking, of course. (Does this technique sound familiar—considering the disappearance of countless taboos since the Sixties?) Without question, Women’s Rights have been an issue throughout US history, particularly following the Civil War, and especially during the Twentieth Century. From battalions of Suffragettes marching in local Fourth of July Parades at the turn of the century, to bandana-clad Rosy the Rivetter flexing her “guns” in her iconic World War II poster, proclaiming, “We can do it!”, women have sought equality in all things, and rightly so.

To Bernays, women had the “right” to smoke, get sick and die just like men. Besides, Bernays needed to make this taboo disappear in order to satisfy his Big Tobacco puppet masters, another unfortunate common theme in post-modern America.

After Big Tobacco engaged Bernays, magazines and newspapers throughout the nation depicted slender women smoking instead of eating candy. After all, sweets made women...well...heavier. No slender waistlines after eating a box of chocolates every week!

Obesity equals bad health, while slender people constitute the picture of superior health. Ironically, cigarettes helped people stay slender, or so the argument went. Could cigarettes, then, rationally be considered as healthy? That was the precise message Bernays pitched. As mentioned above, when we allow others to do our thinking for us without the exercise of our own critical thinking skills, we become a little dumber and maybe less healthy. The abuse of free will always have adverse consequences at some point.

Later on in Big Tobacco's propaganda, aka, advertising campaigns, particularly in the 1940's and '50s, it would pay medical providers to be featured hawking tobacco products. Dr. Cary Middlecoff, once a dentist, left his profession to become a professional golfer, winning several golf championships. Then in 1957, "Doctor" Cary Middlecoff endorsed Viceroy cigarettes in a Saturday Evening Post lay out, proclaiming they had "the smoothest taste." He died in 1998 at the relatively early age of 77. The original Marlboro Man, however, died at the age of 90. Ironically, he never smoked for real. He later resigned as "The Face" of Marlboro cigarettes because he thought he had set a bad example for children. Gadzooks! An adult taking ownership of his wrong conduct and goes on to do the right thing by ceasing such actions, i.e., repentance. Then again, that was last century.

Why the First Casualty of War Is the Truth

While probably lacking the credentialing to be considered an expert, still, Uncle Sam paid this writer \$100,000, tax free, to practice Information Warfare for one year in Kirkuk, Iraq. That year constituted a surreal "graduate school" experience—learning the craft on the fly, producing two television shows per week on Kurdish TV, developing "talking points" that changed the tactics of Al-Qaida in Iraq operating in the 116th Brigade Combat Team's Area of Operations, and sending daily "PowerPoints" back to CONUS that apparently Bush 43 and others studied.

Without question, information, in its broadest sense, has always been the single most important factor in any conflict after leadership and the quality of training the warriors receive. In fact, we know historically that the battle over information has been a part of warfare since warfare existed. For example, in 1870, Otto von Bismarck, the namesake of North Dakota's capital (You betcha; take dat to da bank!) incited the French into their unfavorable declaration of war against Prussia simply by manipulating the text of one telegram.

In 1905, the Russian Fleet Admiral engaged the Japanese Fleet in a running battle to gather and deny "signals intelligence" while steaming towards Vladivostok, yet astoundingly refused to

jam the reports of the location of the Russian ships being transmitted to the Japanese High Command. The outcome? He doomed the Russian fleet to destruction at Tsushima, thus, setting up Japan as a power in the Pacific to be reckoned with, manifesting itself on December 7, 1941. Information, then, includes “intelligence”, and, as often stated, in initial contacts with the enemy, almost all first reports (intelligence) are wrong. Yet that is only part of the reason truth is war’s first casualty.

Information Operations, a Kinder, Gentler Form of War

In a broad sense—though hardly finely tuned—what we used to refer to as propaganda is now encapsulated in what the military calls Information Operations, or, to be cool, simply IO. The Field Manual this writer used in Iraq, described IO as “actions taken to affect [the] adversary, and [to] influence others’ decision-making processes, information and information systems, while protecting one’s own information and information systems.” This word sandwich helps to explain why the US Army in particular, and the Joint Chiefs in general, keep monkeying around with the concept. I added the words “the” and “to” just to make it seem like American English.

Nevertheless, a robust doctrine has evolved in the area of Information Operations. Indeed, IO consists of twelve elements. We will consider these elements next time and discuss how the very institutions mentioned in the opening, particularly Big Media and Big Tech, partnering with Big Government, utilize many of them to make Americans think and act in certain ways. I hope these discussions will be an awakening experience for you. I know as I practiced these techniques, it changed my thinking.