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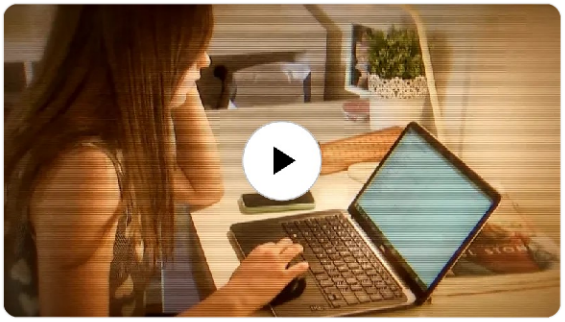
propaganda, dissemination of information—facts, arguments, rumours, half-truths, or lies—to influence public opinion. It is often conveyed through mass media.



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Propaganda is the more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols (words, gestures, banners, monuments, music, clothing, insignia, hairstyles, designs on coins and postage stamps, and so forth). Deliberateness and a relatively heavy emphasis on manipulation distinguish propaganda from casual conversation or the free and easy exchange of ideas. Propagandists have a specified goal or set of goals. To achieve these, they deliberately select facts, arguments, and displays of symbols and present them in ways they think will have the most effect. To maximize effect, they may omit or distort pertinent facts or simply lie, and they may try to divert the attention of the reactors (the people they are trying to sway) from everything but their own propaganda.

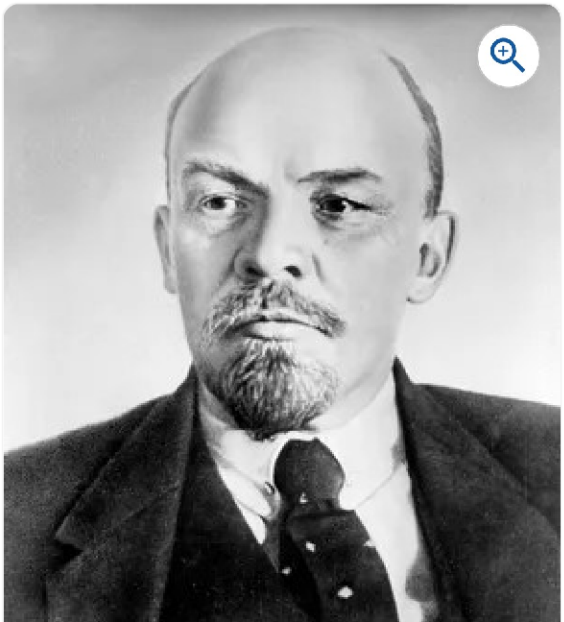
Comparatively deliberate selectivity and manipulation also distinguish propaganda from education. Educators try to present various sides of an issue—the grounds for doubting as well as the grounds for believing the statements they make, and the disadvantages as well as the

as the grounds for believing the statements they make, and the disadvantages as well as the advantages of every conceivable course of action. Education aims to induce reactors to collect and evaluate evidence for themselves and assists them in learning the techniques for doing so. It must be noted, however, that some propagandists may look upon themselves as educators and may believe that they are uttering the purest truth, that they are emphasizing or distorting certain aspects of the truth only to make a valid message more persuasive, or that the courses of action that they recommend are in fact the best actions that the reactor could take. By the same token, the reactor who regards the propagandist's message as self-evident truth may think of it as educational; this often seems to be the case with "true believers"—dogmatic reactors to dogmatic religious, social, or political propaganda. "Education" for one person may be "propaganda" for another.

Propaganda and related concepts

Connotations of the term *propaganda*

The word *propaganda* itself, as used in recent centuries, apparently derives from the title and work of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (Congregation for Propagation of the Faith), an organization of Roman Catholic cardinals founded in 1622 to carry on missionary work. To many Roman Catholics the word may therefore have, at least in missionary or ecclesiastical terms, a highly respectable connotation. But even to these persons, and certainly to many others, the term is often a pejorative one tending to connote such things as the discredited atrocity stories and deceptively stated war aims of World Wars I and II, the operations of the Nazis' Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, and the broken campaign promises of a thousand politicians. Also, it is reminiscent of countless instances of false and misleading advertising (especially in countries using Latin languages, in which *propagande commerciale* or some equivalent is a common term for commercial advertising).



To informed students of the history of communism, the term *propaganda* has yet another connotation, associated with the term *agitation*. The two terms were first used by the Russian theorist of Marxism Georgy Plekhanov and later elaborated upon by Vladimir Ilich Lenin in a pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?* (1902), in which he defined "propaganda" as the reasoned use of historical and scientific arguments to indoctrinate the educated and enlightened (the attentive and informed publics, in the language of today's social sciences); he defined "agitation" as the use of slogans, parables, and

Vladimir Lenin Vladimir Lenin, 1918.

half-truths to exploit the grievances of the uneducated and the unreasonable. Since he regarded both strategies as absolutely essential to political victory, he combined them in the term *agitprop*. Every unit of historical communist parties had an agitprop section, and to the communist the use of propaganda in Lenin's sense was commendable and honest. Thus, a standard Soviet manual for teachers of social sciences was entitled *Propagandistu politekonomii* (*For the Propagandist of Political Economy*), and a pocket-sized booklet issued weekly to suggest timely slogans and brief arguments to be used in speeches and conversations among the masses was called *Bloknot agitatora* (*The Agitator's Notebook*).

Related terms

Related to the general sense of propaganda is the concept of "propaganda of the deed." This denotes taking nonsymbolic action (such as economic or coercive action), not for its direct effects but for its possible propagandistic effects. Examples of propaganda of the deed would include staging an atomic "test" or the public torture of a criminal for its presumable deterrent effect on others, or giving foreign "economic aid" primarily to influence the recipient's opinions or actions and without much intention of building up the recipient's economy.

Distinctions are sometimes made between overt propaganda, in which the propagandists and perhaps their backers are made known to the reactors, and covert propaganda, in which the sources are secret or disguised. Covert propaganda might include such things as political advertisements that are unsigned or signed with false names, clandestine radio stations using false names, and statements by editors, politicians, or others who have been secretly bribed by governments, political backers, or business firms. Sophisticated diplomatic negotiation, legal argument, collective bargaining, commercial advertising, and political campaigns are of course quite likely to include considerable amounts of both overt and covert propaganda, accompanied by propaganda of the deed.

Another term related to propaganda is *psychological warfare* (sometimes abbreviated to *psywar*), which is the prewar or wartime use of propaganda directed primarily at confusing

psychwar), which is the prewar or wartime use of propaganda directed primarily at confusing or demoralizing enemy populations or troops, putting them off guard in the face of coming attacks, or inducing them to surrender. The related concept of political warfare encompasses the use of propaganda, among many other techniques, during peacetime to intensify social and political divisions and to sow confusion within the societies of adversary states.

Still another related concept is that of brainwashing. The term usually means intensive political indoctrination. It may involve long political lectures or discussions, long compulsory reading assignments, and so forth, sometimes in conjunction with efforts to reduce the reactor's resistance by exhausting him either physically through torture, overwork, or denial of sleep or psychologically through solitary confinement, threats, emotionally disturbing confrontations with interrogators or defected comrades, humiliation in front of fellow citizens, and the like. The term *brainwashing* was widely used in sensational journalism to refer to such activities (and to many other activities) as they were allegedly conducted by Maoists in China and elsewhere.

Another related word, *advertising*, has mainly commercial connotations, though it need not be restricted to this; political candidates, party programs, and positions on political issues may be "packaged" and "marketed" by advertising firms. The words *promotion* and *public relations* have wider, vaguer connotations and are often used to avoid the implications of "advertising" or "propaganda." "Publicity" and "publicism" often imply merely making a subject known to a public, without educational, propagandistic, or commercial intent.

Signs, symbols, and media used in contemporary propaganda

Contemporary propagandists with money and imagination can use a very wide range of signs, symbols, and media to convey their messages. Signs are simply stimuli—"information bits" capable of stimulating, in some way, the human organism. These include sounds, such as words, music, or a 21-gun salvo; gestures (a military salute, a thumbed nose); postures (a weary slump, folded arms, a sit-down, an aristocratic bearing); structures (a monument, a building); items of clothing (a uniform, a civilian suit); visual signs (a poster, a flag, a picket sign, a badge, a printed page, a commemorative postage stamp, a swastika scrawled on a wall); and so on and on.

A symbol is a sign having a particular meaning for a given reactor. Two or more reactors may of course attach quite different meanings to the same symbol. Thus, to Nazis the swastika was a symbol of racial superiority and the crushing military might of the German *Volk*; to some Asiatic and North American peoples it is a symbol of universal peace and happiness. Some Christians who find a cross reassuring may find a hammer and sickle displeasing and may

derive no religious satisfaction at all from a Muslim crescent, a Hindu cow, or a Buddhist lotus.

The contemporary propagandist can employ elaborate social-scientific research facilities, unknown in previous epochs, to conduct opinion surveys and psychological interviews in efforts to learn the symbolic meanings of given signs for given reactors around the world and to discover what signs leave given reactors indifferent because, to them, these signs are without meaning.

Media are the means—the channels—used to convey signs and symbols to the intended reactor or reactors. A comprehensive inventory of media used in 20th- and 21st-century propaganda could cover many pages. Electronic media include e-mail, blogs, Web- or application (app)-based social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and electronic versions of originally printed media such as newspapers, magazines, and books. Printed media include, in addition to those just mentioned, letters, handbills, posters, billboards, and handwriting on walls and streets. Among audiovisual media, the Internet and television may be the most powerful for many purposes. Both can convey a great many types of signs simultaneously; they can gain heavy impact from mutually reinforcing gestures, words, postures, and sounds and a background of symbolically significant leaders, celebrities, historic settings, architectures, flags, music, placards, maps, uniforms, insignia, cheering or jeering mobs or studio audiences, and staged assemblies of prestigious or powerful people. Other audiovisual media include public speakers, movies, theatrical productions, marching bands, mass demonstrations, picketing, face-to-face conversations between individuals, and “talking” exhibits at fairs, expositions, and art shows.

The larger the propaganda enterprise, the more important are such mass media as the Internet and television and also the organizational media—that is, pressure groups set up under leaders and technicians who are skilled in using many sorts of signs and media to convey messages to particular reactors. Vast systems of diverse organizations can be established in the hope of reaching leaders and followers of all groups (organized and unorganized) in a given area, such as a city, region, nation or coalition of nations, or the entire world. Pressure organizations are especially necessary, for example, in closely fought sales campaigns or political elections, especially in socially heterogeneous areas that have extremely divergent regional traditions, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, and educational levels and very unequal income distributions. Diversities of these sorts make it necessary for products to be marketed in local terms and for political candidates to appear to be friends of each of perhaps a dozen or more mutually hostile ethnic groups, of the educated and the uneducated, and of the very wealthy as well as the poverty-stricken.

Evolution of the theory of propaganda

Early commentators and theories

The archaeological remains of ancient civilizations indicate that dazzling clothing and palaces, impressive statues and temples, magic tokens and insignia, and elaborate legal and religious arguments have been used for thousands of years, presumably to convince the common people of the purported greatness and supernatural prowess of kings and priests. Instructive legends and parables, easily memorized proverbs and lists of commandments—such as the Ten Commandments of Judaism and Christianity and the Hindu *Manu-smriti* (*Laws of Manu*)—and highly selective chronicles of rulers' achievements have been used to enlist mass support for particular social and religious systems. Very probably, much of what was said in antiquity was sincere, in the sense that the underlying religious and social assumptions were so fully accepted that the warlords' spokespersons, the pharaohs' priests, and their audiences believed all or most of what was communicated and hence did not deliberate or theorize very much about alternative arguments or means of persuasion.

The systematic, detached, and deliberate analysis of propaganda—in the West, at least—may have begun in Athens about 500 BCE, as the study of rhetoric (Greek: "the technique of orators"). The tricks of using sonorous and solemn language, carefully gauged humour, artful congeniality, appropriate mixtures of logical and illogical argument, and flattery of a jury or a mob were formulated from the actual practices of successful lawyers, demagogues, and politicians. Relatively ethical teachers such as Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle compiled rules of rhetoric (1) to make their own arguments and those of their students more persuasive and (2) to design counterpropaganda against opponents and also (3) to teach their students how to detect the logical fallacies and emotional appeals of demagogues.

Early students of rhetoric also examined what contemporary analysts would call the problem of source credibility—what speakers can say or do to convince their hearers that they are telling the truth, are well-intentioned, are public-spirited, and so forth. For example, an Athenian lawyer defending an undersized man on trial for murder might instruct him to say to a jury: "Is it likely that an undersized man like me, so often ridiculed for being clumsy with a sword, would have attacked and killed this very tall war veteran who is famous everywhere for his swordsmanship?" But a tall and strong defendant might be told to invert the plea: "Would any man of my unusual height, who is rather well known to have slain 300 Persians in sword fights, have allowed himself to be drawn into a quarrel with this puny man—knowing full well that a jury of reasonable Athenians would be inclined from the start to hold me guilty if someone killed him?" So well did Greek rhetoricians analyze the arts of legal sophistry and political

demagoguery that their efforts were imitated and further developed in Rome by such figures as Cicero and Quintilian. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and similar works by others have, indeed, served as model texts for Western scholars and students from antiquity to the present day.

There have been similar lines of thought in other major civilizations. The Buddha in ancient India and Confucius in ancient China, both advocated, much as Plato had, the use of truthfulness, "good" rhetoric, and "proper" forms of speech and writing as means of persuading people, by both precept and example, to live the good life. In the 4th century BCE in India, Kautilya, a Brahman believed to have been chief minister to the emperor Chandragupta, reputedly wrote the *Artha-shastra* ("The Science of Material Gain"), a book of advice for rulers that has often been compared with Plato's *Republic* and Niccolò Machiavelli's much later work *The Prince* (1513). Kautilya discussed, in some detail, the use of psychological warfare, both overt and clandestine, in efforts to disrupt an enemy's army and capture his capital. Overtly, he said, the propagandists of a king should proclaim that he can do magic, that God and the wisest men are on his side, and that all who support his war aims will reap benefits. Covertly, his agents should infiltrate his enemies' and potential enemies' kingdoms, spreading defeatism and misleading news among their people, especially in capital cities, among leaders, and among the armed forces. In particular, a king should employ only Brahmans, unquestionably the holiest and wisest of men, as propagandists and diplomatic negotiators. These morally irreproachable experts should cultivate the goodwill of their king's friends, and of friends of his friends, and also should woo the enemies of his enemies. A king should not hesitate, however, to break any friendships or alliances that are later found to be disadvantageous.

Similar advice is found in *Bingfa* (*The Art of War*) by the Chinese theorist Sunzi, who wrote at about the same time. "All warfare," he said, "is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe that we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him."

The spread of all complex political systems and religions probably has been very largely due to a combination of earnest conviction and the deliberate use of propaganda. This mixture can be detected in the recasting in various times and places of the legends of the messiah in Christianity and Judaism, of heroes of the Hindu *Mahabharata*, of the Buddha, of the ancestral Japanese sun goddess, of the lives of Muhammad and his relatives, of the Christian saints, of such Marxist heroes as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Ilich Lenin, and Joseph Stalin, and even in the story of George Washington and the cherry tree.

Scattered and sometimes enlightening comment on political and religious propaganda has occurred in all major civilizations. In ancient Greece and Rome there was much writing on

occurred in all major civilizations. In ancient Greece and Rome there was much writing on election tactics. In 16th-century Italy, Machiavelli discussed, very much like Kautilya and Sunzi, the uses of calculated piety and duplicity in peace and war. In Shakespeare's plays, Mark Antony (in *Julius Caesar*) and the Duke of Buckingham (*Richard III*) display the principles of propaganda and discuss them in words and concepts that anticipate 20th-century behavioral scientists. They refer to such propaganda stratagems as the seizure and monopolization of propaganda initiatives, the displacement of guilt onto others (scapegoating), the presentation of oneself as morally superior, and the coordination of propaganda with violence and bribery.

Modern research and the evolution of current theories

After the decline of the ancient world, no elaborate systematic study of propaganda appeared for centuries—not until the Industrial Revolution had brought about mass production and raised hopes of immensely high profits through mass marketing. Near the beginning of the 20th century, researchers began to undertake studies of the motivations of many types of consumers and of their responses to various kinds of salesmanship, advertising, and other marketing techniques. From the early 1930s on, there have been "consumer surveys" much in the manner of public opinion surveys. Almost every conceivable variable affecting consumers' opinions, beliefs, suggestibilities, and behaviour has been investigated for every kind of group, subgroup, and culture in the major capitalist nations. Consumers' wants and habits were studied for a limited time in the same ways in the socialist countries—partly to promote economic efficiency and partly to prevent political unrest. Data on the wants and habits of voters as well as consumers are now being gathered in the same elaborate ways in many parts of the world. Beginning in the early 21st century, many Web sites (especially social networking platforms) and Internet service providers, as well as thousands of applications developed for use with browsers and smartphones, collected massive amounts of personal data about the consumers who used them, generally without their informed consent. Such data potentially included consumers' ages, genders, marital status, medical histories, employment histories and other financial information, personal and professional interests, political affiliations and opinions, and even geographic locations on a minute-by-minute basis. The collected data was then sold to information or data brokers, who aggregated it and sold it to advertising firms, who in turn used it to identify potential customers for their corporate clients and to make their commercial messages more effective.

Large quantities of such information were also collected about voters and drawn upon for nationwide political advertising campaigns costing billions of dollars annually. Such messages have taken up a high percentage of advertising space or time on social networking platforms and other popular Web sites, in newspapers and magazines (both electronic and printed), and

on radio and television. Critics have argued that advertising expenditures on such a scale, whether for deodorants or presidents, tend to waste society's resources and also to preclude effective competition by rival producers or politicians who cannot raise equally large amounts of money. A rising tide of consumer resistance and voter skepticism has led to various attempts at consumer education, voter education, counterpropaganda, and proposals for regulatory legislation. Most such proposals in the United States have been unavailing.

As far back as the early 1920s, there developed an awareness among many social critics that the extension of the vote and of enlarged purchasing power to more and more of the ignorant or ill-educated meant larger and larger opportunities for both demagogic and public-spirited propagandists to make headway by using fictions and myths, utopian appeals, and "the noble lie." Interest was aroused not only by the lingering horror of World War I and of the postwar settlements but also by publication of Ivan Pavlov's experiments on conditioned reflexes and of analyses of human motivations by various psychoanalysts. Sigmund Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1922) was particularly relevant to the study of leaders, propagandists, and followers, as were Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) and *The Phantom Public* (1925).

In 1927, an American political scientist, Harold D. Lasswell, published a now-famous book, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, a dispassionate description and analysis of the massive propaganda campaigns conducted by all the major belligerents in World War I. This he followed with studies of communist propaganda and of many other forms of communication. Within a few years, a great many other social scientists, along with historians, journalists, and psychologists, were producing a wide variety of publications purporting to analyze military, political, and commercial propaganda of many types. During the Nazi period and during World War II and the subsequent Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, a great many researchers and writers, both skilled and unskilled, scholarly and unscholarly, were employed by governments, political movements, and business firms to conduct propaganda. Some of those who had scientific training designed very carefully controlled experiments or intelligence operations, attempting to quantify data on appeals of various types of propaganda to given reactors.

In the course of this theory building and research, the study of propaganda advanced a long way on the road from lore to science. By the second half of the 20th century, several hundred more or less scholarly books and thousands of articles had shed substantial light on the psychology, techniques, and effects of propaganda campaigns, major and minor.

Eventually nearly every significant government, political party, interest group, social movement, and large business firm in the advanced countries developed its own corps of

movement, and large business firm in the advanced countries developed its own corps of specialized researchers, propagandists, or "opinion managers" (sometimes referred to as information specialists, lobbyists, legislative representatives, or vice presidents in charge of public relations). Some have become members of parliaments, cabinets, and corporate boards of directors. The most expert among them sometimes are highly skilled or trained, or both, in history, psychiatry, politics, social psychology, survey research, and statistical inference.

Many of the bigger and wealthier propaganda agencies conduct (overtly and covertly) elaborate observations and opinion surveys, among samples of the leaders, the middle strata, and the rank and file of all social groups, big and little, whom they hope to influence. They tabulate many kinds of data concerning those contents of the Internet, the press, films, television, and organizational media that reach given groups. They chart the responses of reactors, through time, by statistical formulas. They conduct "symbol campaigns" and "image-building" operations with mathematical calculation, using large quantities of data. To the ancient art of rhetoric, the "technique of orators," have been added the techniques of the psychopolitical analyst and the media specialist and the know-how of the administrators of giant advertising agencies, public relations firms, and governmental ministries of information that employ armies of analytic specialists and "symbol-handlers."

It is a commonplace among the highly educated that people in the mass—and even people on high educational and social levels—often react more favourably to utopian myths, wishful thinking, and nonrational residues of earlier experiences than they do to the sober analysis of facts. Unfortunately, average citizens who may be aware of being duped are not likely to have enough education, time, or economic means to defend themselves against the massive organizations of opinion managers and hidden persuaders. Indeed, to affect them they would have to act through large organizations themselves and to use, to some extent, the very means used by those they seek to control. The still greater "curse of bigness" that may evolve in the future is viewed with increasing concern by many politically conscious people.

The components of propaganda

Contemporary propagandists employing behavioral theory tend to analyze their problem in terms of at least 10 questions:

1. What are the goals of the propaganda? (What changes are to be brought about? In whom? And when?)

2. What are the present and expected conditions in the world social system?

3. What are the present and expected conditions in each of the subsystems of the world social

system (such as international regions, nations, lesser territories, interest groups)?

4. Who should distribute the propaganda—the propagandists or their agents?

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5. What symbols should be used?

6. What media should be used?

7. Which reactors should the propaganda be aimed at?

8. How can the effects of the propaganda be measured?

9. By what countermeasures can opponents neutralize or suppress the propaganda?

10. How can such countermeasures be measured and dealt with?

In the present state of social science, this 10-part problem can be solved with only moderate confidence with respect to any really major propaganda campaign, even if one has a great deal of money for research. Yet if propagandists are to proceed as rationally as possible, they need the best answers that are available.

Goals

Goals are fairly easy to define if propagandists simply want to sell a relatively safe, useful, and simple good or service. When propagandists aim to convert great numbers of people to a religion or a new social order or to induce extremely dangerous collective action like a war or revolution, however, the definition of goals becomes highly complex. It is complicated further by problems about “means–goals” or intermediate goals: probably the campaign will have to go on for a long time and will have to be planned in stages, phases, or waves. Propagandists may find it hard to specify, even to themselves, exactly what beliefs, values, or actions they want to bring about, by what points in time, among different sorts of people. Very large and firmly held complexes of values are involved, such as prestige, peace of mind, income, and even life itself or the military security of entire nations or regions—even, in modern times, the annihilation of all humankind. In such a situation, a mass of intricate and thorny value dilemmas arises: Is military or revolutionary victory worth the price of economic ruin? Can a desired degree of individual liberty be achieved without too much loss of social equality? Is a much quicker achievement of goals worth a much greater amount of human suffering? Are war crimes to be

achievement of goals worth a much greater amount of human suffering? Are war crimes to be committed in order to win a battle? In short: What are the propagandists willing to risk, for what, across what periods of time?

Present and expected conditions in the world social system

Under modern conditions, each act of propaganda is apt to have effects in several parts of the world. Some of these may boomerang unexpectedly against the propagandists themselves unless they can visualize the global system and its components and anticipate the problems that may arise. The global system, moreover, is inexorably changing. As population, trade, travel, education, and technology evolve, new centres of political, cultural, and economic power emerge. This social evolution, extremely rapid in current times, tends on balance to limit the use of more simplistic and parochial kinds of propaganda and increases the need for more sophisticated, scientifically formulated, and universalistic (world-oriented) types.

Present and expected conditions in subsystems

In many times and places in the past and in certain circumstances in the present, propagandists have profited handsomely by ignoring the welfare of a nation or the world and appealing to extremes of religious, racial, political, or economic fanaticism. This has paid off very well, in the short run at least, within many subsystems. But it has also been successful within whole nations, particularly when the propagandists' goal was to sow discord and confusion rather than to influence opinion across a broad population. Prudent propagandists must therefore decide what mix of universalistic and particularistic symbolism will best serve their purposes at given times in given places. The choice is never an easy one: parochial or class-conscious or national groups may be aroused to the highest passions, and they are numerous and diverse and often highly incompatible with one another and with the imperatives of the nation or the world.

Propagandists and their agents

The use of seemingly reputable, selfless, or neutral agents or so-called front organizations, while propagandists themselves remain behind the scenes, may greatly aid the propagandists. If the authorities are after the propagandists, seeking to suppress their activities, the propagandists must stay underground and work through agents. But even in freer circumstances, the propagandists may wish someone else to speak for them. For instance, propagandists may not speak the reactors' language or idiom fluently. They may not know what reactors associate with given symbols. Or the reactors' cultural, racial, or religious feelings may bias them against propagandists and thus tend to deny them a favourable hearing. In such

cases the use of agents is inescapable. Furthermore, if the propaganda fails or is exposed for what it is, the agents can be publicly scapegoated while the real propagandists continue to operate and develop new stratagems. The prince, said Machiavelli, may openly and conspicuously bestow awards and honours and public offices, but he should have his agents carry out all actions that make a man unpopular, such as punishments, denunciations, dismissals, and assassinations.

A complicated modern campaign on a major scale is likely to be planned most successfully by a collective leadership—a team of broadly educated and skilled people who have had both practical experience in public affairs and extensive training in history, psychology, and the social sciences. The detachment, skepticism, and secularism of such persons may, however, cause them to be viewed with great suspicion by many reactors. It may be important, therefore, to keep the planners behind the scenes and to select intermediaries—"front men," Trojan horses, and "dummy leaders" whom the reactors are more likely to listen to or appreciate.

Modern social-psychological research, dating from Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), makes clear the wisdom of traditional insights concerning the supreme importance of leadership in any group—be it the family, the nation, or the world social system. The rank and file of any group, especially a big one, have been shown to be remarkably passive until aroused by quasi-parental leaders whom members of the group admire and trust. It is hard to imagine the Gallic wars without Julius Caesar, the psychoanalytic movement without Freud, the Nazis without Adolf Hitler, or the major communist revolutions without Lenin and Mao Zedong and their politburos. These leaders were real—not dummies invented and packaged by image makers from an advertising agency or public relations firm. In the age of massive opinion researches, however, and with the aid of speech coaches and makeup artists and the magic impact of the Internet and television, it has become increasingly possible for image makers to create figureheads who can affect the votes and other behaviour of very large percentages of a national audience.

Selection and presentation of symbols

Propagandists must realize that neither rational arguments nor catchy slogans can, by themselves, do much to influence human behaviour. The behaviour of reactors is also affected by at least four other variables. The first is the reactors' predispositions—that is, their stored memories of, and their past associations with, related symbols. These often cause reactors to ignore the current inflow of symbols, to perceive them very selectively, or to rationalize them away. The second is the set of economic inducements (gifts, bribery, pay raises, threats of job loss, and so forth) which the propagandist or others may apply in conjunction with the

symbols. The third is the set of physical inducements (love, violence, protection from violence) used by the propagandist or others. The fourth is the array of social pressures that may either encourage or inhibit reactors in thinking or doing what the propagandist advocates. Even those who are well led and are predisposed to do what the propagandist wants may be prevented from acting by counterpressures within the surrounding social systems or groups of which they are a part.

In view of these predispositions and pressures, skilled propagandists are careful to advocate chiefly those acts that they believe the reactor already wants to perform and is in fact able to perform. It is fruitless to call upon most people to perform acts that may involve a total loss of income or terrible physical danger—for example, to act openly upon democratic leanings in a totalitarian fascist country. To call upon reactors to do something extremely dangerous or hard is to risk having the propaganda branded as unrealistic. In such cases, it may be better to point to actions that reactors can avoid taking—that is, to encourage them in acts of passive resistance. The propagandists will thereby both seem and be realistic in their demands upon the reactor, and the reactor will not be left with the feeling, "I agree with this message, but just what am I supposed to do about it?"

For maximum effect, the symbolic content of propaganda must be active, not passive, in tone. It must explicitly or implicitly recommend fairly specific actions to be performed by the reactor ("buy this," "boycott that," "vote for X," "join Group Y," "withdraw from Group Z"). Furthermore, because the ability of the human organism to receive and process symbols is strictly limited, skillful propagandists attempt to substitute quality for quantity in their choice of symbols. A brief slogan or a picture or a pithy comment on some symbol that is emotion laden for the reactors may be worth ten thousand other words and cost much less. In efforts to economize symbol inputs, propagandists attempt to make full use of the findings of all the behavioral sciences. They draw upon the psychoanalysts' studies of the bottled-up impulses in the unconscious mind, they consult the elaborate vocabulary counts produced by professors of education, they follow the headline news to determine what events and symbols probably are salient in reactors' minds at the moment, and they analyze the information polls and attitude studies conducted by survey researchers.

There is substantial agreement among psychoanalysts that the psychological power of propaganda increases with use of what Lasswell termed the triple-appeal principle. This principle states that a set of symbols is apt to be most persuasive if it appeals simultaneously to three elements of an individual's personality—elements that Freud labelled the ego, id, and superego. To appeal to the ego, skilled propagandists will present the acts and thoughts that they desire to induce as if they were rational, advisable, wise, prudent, and expedient; in the

same breath they say or imply that they are sure to produce pleasure and a sense of strength (an appeal to the id); concurrently they suggest that they are moral, righteous, and—if not altogether legal—decidedly more justifiable and humane than the law itself (an appeal to the superego, or conscience). Within any social system, the optimal blend of these components varies from individual to individual and from subgroup to subgroup: some individuals and subgroups love pleasure intensely and show few traces of guilt; others are quite pained by guilt; few are continuously eager to be rational or to take the trouble to become well informed. Some cautious individuals and subgroups like to believe that they never make a move without preanalyzing it; others enjoy throwing prudence to the winds. There are also changes in these blends through time: personalities change, as do the morals and customs of groups. In large collectivities like social classes, ethnic groups, or nations, the particular blends of these predispositions may vary greatly from stratum to stratum and subculture to subculture. Only the study of history and behavioral research can give the propagandist much guidance about such variations.

Propagandists are wise if, in addition to reiterating their support of ideas and policies that they know the reactor already believes in, they include among their images a variety of symbols associated with parents and parent surrogates. The child lives on in every adult, eternally seeking a loving father and mother. Hence the appeal of such familistic symbolisms as "the fatherland," "the mother country," "the Mother Church," "the Holy Father," "Mother Russia," and the large number of statesmen who are known as the "fathers of their countries." Also valuable are reassuring maternal figures like Queen Victoria of England, the Virgin Mary, and the Japanese sun goddess. In addition to parent symbols, it is usually well to associate one's propaganda with symbols of parent substitutes, who in some cases exert a more profound effect on children than do disappointing or nondescript parents: affectionate or amiable uncles (Uncle Sam, Uncle Ho Chi Minh); admired scholars and physicians (Karl Marx, Dr. Sun Yat-sen); politico-military heroes and role models (Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Mao, "the wise, mighty, and fatherly Stalin"); and, of course, saintly persons (Joan of Arc, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Buddha). A talented and well-symbolized leader or role model may achieve a parental or even godlike ascendancy (charisma) and magnify the impact of a message many times.

Media of propaganda

There are literally thousands of electronic, written, audiovisual, and organizational media that a contemporary propagandist might use. All human groupings are potential organizational media, from the family and other small organizations through advertising and public relations firms, trade unions, churches and temples, theatres, readers of novels and poetry, special-

interest groups, political parties and front organizations to the governmental structures of nations, international coalitions, and universal organizations like the United Nations and its agencies. From all this variety of media, propagandists must choose those few media (especially leaders, role models, and organizations) to whose messages they think the intended reactors are especially attentive and receptive.

In recent years the advent of personal computers and mobile phones and the development of the Internet has brought about a massive, worldwide proliferation of systems and facilities for news gathering, publishing, broadcasting, holding meetings, and speechmaking. At present, almost everyone's mind is bombarded daily by far more media, symbols, and messages than the human organism can possibly pay attention to. The mind reels under noisy assortments of information bits about rival politicians, rival political programs and doctrines, new technical discoveries, insistently advertised commercial products, and new views on morality, ecological horrors, and military nightmares. This sort of communication overload already has resulted in the alienation of millions of people from much of modern life. Overload and alienation can be expected to reach even higher levels in coming generations as still higher densities of population, intercultural contacts, and communication facilities cause economic, political, doctrinal, and commercial rivalries to become still more intense.

Research has demonstrated repeatedly that most reactors attempt, consciously or unconsciously, to cope with severe communication overload by developing three mechanisms: selective attention, selective perception, and selective recall. That is, they pay attention to only a few media; they fail (often unconsciously) to perceive therein any large proportion of the messages that they find uncongenial; and, having perceived, even after this screening, a certain number of unpleasing messages, they repress these in whole or in part (i.e., cannot readily remember them). Contemporary propagandists therefore try to find out: (1) what formative experiences and styles of education have predisposed their intended audiences to their current "media preferences"; (2) which of all the Web sites, electronic or printed publications, television shows, leaders, and role models in the world they do in fact pay attention to; and (3) by which of these they are most influenced. These topics have thus become the subjects of vast amounts of commercial and academic research.

In most cases, reactors are found to pay the most attention to the Web sites, publications, shows, leaders, and role models with whose views they already agree. People as a rule attend to communications not because they want to learn something new or reconsider their own philosophies of life but because they seek psychological reassurance about their existing beliefs and prejudices. When propagandists do get people's attention by putting messages into the few media the people heed, they may discover that, to hold people's attention, they must draft a

message that does not depart very far from what people already want to believe. Despite the popular stereotypes about geniuses of politics, religion, or advertising whose brilliant propaganda converts the multitudes overnight, the plain fact is that even the most skilled propagandist must usually content himself with a very modest goal: packaging a message in such a way that much of it is familiar and reassuring to the intended reactors and only a little is so novel or true as to threaten them psychologically. Thus, revivalists have an a priori advantage over spokespersons of a modernized ethic, and conservative politicians an advantage over progressives. Propaganda that aims to induce major changes is certain to take great amounts of time, resources, patience, and indirection, except in times of revolutionary crisis when old beliefs have been shattered and new ones have not yet been provided. In ordinary periods (intercrisis periods), propaganda for changes, however worthy, is likely to be, in the words of the German sociologist Max Weber, "a slow boring of hard boards."

For reasons just indicated, the most effective media as a rule (for messages other than the simplest of commercial advertising) are not the impersonal mass media like electronic and printed newspapers and news services and television but rather those few associations or organizations (reference groups) with which individuals feel identified or to which they aspire to relate their identity. Quite often, ordinary people not only avoid but actively distrust the mass media or fail to understand their messages, but in the warmth of a reference group they feel at home, assume that they understand what is going on, and feel that they are sure to receive a certain degree of emotional response and personal protection. The foremost reference group, of course, is the family. But many other groups perform analogous functions—for instance, the group of sports fans, the church, the trade union, the club, the alumni group, the clique or gang. By influencing the key members of such a group, propagandists may establish a "social relay" channel that can amplify their message. By thus concentrating on the few, they increase their chances of reaching the many—often far more effectively than they could through a plethora of communications aimed at larger audiences. Therefore, one important stratagem involves the combined use of mass media and reference-group channels—preparing materials for such media as news releases or broadcasts in ways designed specifically to reach certain groups (and especially their elites and leaders), who can then relay the messages to other sets of reactors.

The reactors (audiences)

The audiences for the propagandist can be classified into: (1) those who are initially predisposed to react as the propagandist wishes, (2) those who are neutral or indifferent, and (3) those who are in opposition or perhaps even hostile.

(3) those who are in opposition or perhaps even hostile.

As already indicated, propaganda is most apt to evoke the desired responses among those already in agreement with the propagandist's message. Neutrals or opponents are not apt to be much affected even by an intensive barrage of propaganda unless it is reinforced by nonpropagandistic inducements (economic or coercive acts) or by favourable social pressures. These facts, of course, are recognized by advocates of civil disobedience; their propagandists would contend that sloganeering and reasoned persuasion must be accompanied by sit-ins and other overt acts of passive resistance; they aim for a new climate of social pressure.

Measurement of the effects of propaganda

The modern world is overrun with all kinds of competing propaganda and counterpropaganda and a vast variety of other symbolic activities, such as education, publishing, news reporting, and patriotic and religious observances. The problem of distinguishing between the effects of one's own propaganda and the effects of these other activities is often extremely difficult.

The ideal scientific method of measurement is the controlled experiment. Carefully selected samples of members of the intended audiences can be subjected to the propaganda while equivalent samples are not. Or the same message, clothed in different symbols—different mixes of sober argument and "casual" humour, different proportions of patriotic, ethnic, and religious rationalizations, different mixes of truth and the "noble lie," different proportions of propaganda and coercion—can be tested on comparable samples. Also, different media can be tested to determine, for example, whether results are better when reactors read the message on Facebook, observe it in a spot commercial on television, or hear it wrapped snugly in a sermon. Obviously the number of possible variables and permutations in symbolism, media use, subgrouping of the audience, and so forth is extremely great in any complicated or long-drawn-out campaign. Therefore, the costs for the research experts and the fieldwork that are needed for thorough experimental pretests are often very high. Such pretests, however, may save money in the end.

An alternative to controlled experimentation in the field is controlled experimentation in the laboratory. But it may be impossible to induce reactors who are truly representative of the intended audience to come to the laboratory at all. Moreover, in such an artificial environment their reactions may differ widely from the reactions that they would have to the same propaganda if reacting un-self-consciously in their customary environment. For these and many other obvious reasons, the validity of laboratory pretests of propaganda must be viewed with the greatest caution.

Whether in the field or the laboratory, the value of all controlled experiments is seriously

Whether in the field or the laboratory, the value of all controlled experiments is seriously limited by the problem of "sleeper effects." These are long-delayed reactions that may not become visible until the propaganda has penetrated resistances and insinuated itself deep down into the reactor's mind—by which time the experiment may have been over for a long time. Another problem is that most people acutely dislike being guinea pigs and also dislike the word propaganda. If they find out that they are subjects of a propagandistic experiment, the entire research program, and possibly the entire campaign of propaganda of which it is a part, may backfire.

Another research device is the panel interview—repeated interviewing, over a considerable period of time, of small sets of individuals considered more or less representative of the intended audiences. The object is to obtain (if possible, without their knowing it) a great deal of information about their life-styles, belief systems, value systems, media habits, opinion changes, heroes, role models, reference groups, and so forth. The propagandist hopes to use this information in planning ways to influence a much larger audience. Panel interviewing, if kept up long enough, may help in discovering sleeper effects and other delayed reactions. The very process of being "panel interviewed," however, produces an artificial environment that may induce defensiveness, suspicion, and even attempts to deceive the interviewer.

For many practical purposes, the best means of measuring—or perhaps one had better say estimating—the effects of propaganda is apt to be the method of extensive observation, guided of course by well-reasoned theory and inference. "Participant observers" can be stationed unobtrusively among the reactors. Voting statistics, market statistics, press reports, police reports, editorials, and the speeches or other activities of affected or potentially affected leaders can also give clues. Evidence on the size, composition, and behaviour of the intermediate audiences (such as elites) and the ultimate audiences (such as their followers) can be obtained from these various sources and from sample surveys. The statistics of readership or listenership for electronic, printed, and telecommunications media may be available. If the media include public meetings, the number of people attending and the noise level and symbolic contents of cheering (and jeering) can be measured. Observers may also report their impressions of the moods of the audience and record comments overheard after the meeting. To some extent, symbols and leaders can be varied, and the different results compared.

Using methods known in recent years as content analysis, propagandists can at least make reasonably dependable quantitative measurements of the symbolic contents of their own propaganda and of communications put out by others. They can count the numbers of words given to the propaganda in an electronic or printed news source or the seconds devoted to it in a radio or television broadcast. They can categorize and tabulate the symbols and themes in the propaganda. To estimate the implications of the propaganda for social policy, they can tabulate

propaganda. To estimate the implications of the propaganda for social policy, they can tabulate the relative numbers of expressed or implied demands for actions or attitude changes of various kinds.

By quantifying their data about contents, propagandists can bring a high degree of precision into experiments using different propaganda contents aimed at the same results. They can also increase the accuracy of their research on the relative acceptability of information, advice, and opinion attributed to different sources. (Will given reactors be more impressed if they hear 50, 100, or 200 times that a given policy is endorsed—or denounced—by the president of the United States, the president of Russia, or the pope?)

Very elaborate means of coding and of statistical analysis have been developed by various content analysts. Some count symbols, some count headlines, some count themes (sentences, propositions), some tabulate the frequencies with which various categories of "events data" (news accounts of actual happenings) appear in some or all of the leading news publications ("prestige papers") or television programs of the world. Some of these events data can be counted as supporting or reinforcing the propaganda, some as opposing or counteracting it. Whatever the methodology, content analysis in its more refined forms is an expensive process, demanding long and rigorous training of well-educated and extremely patient coders and analysts. And there remains the intricate problem of developing relevant measurements of the effects of different contents upon different reactors.

Countermeasures by opponents

Some countermeasures against propaganda include simply suppressing it by eliminating or jailing the propagandists, burning down their premises, intimidating their employees, buying them off, depriving them of their use of the media or the money that they need for the media or for necessary research, and applying countless other coercive or economic pressures. It is also possible to use counterpropaganda, hoping that the truth (or at least some artful bit of counterpropaganda) will prevail.

One special type of counterpropaganda is "source exposure"—informing the audience that the propagandists are ill-informed, are criminals, or belong to some group that is sure to be regarded by the audience as subversive, thereby undermining their credibility and perhaps their economic support. In the 1930s there was in the U.S. an Institute for Propaganda Analysis that tried to expose such propaganda techniques as "glittering generalities" or "name-calling" that certain propagandists were using. This countermeasure may have failed, however, because it was too intellectual and abstract and because it offered the audience no alternative leaders to follow or ideas to believe.

In many cases opponents of certain propagandists have succeeded in getting laws passed that have censored or suppressed propaganda or required registration and disclosure of the propagandists and of those who have paid them.

Measures against countermeasures

It is clear, then, that opponents may try to offset propaganda by taking direct action or by invoking covert pressures or community sanctions to bring it under control. Propagandists must therefore try to estimate in advance their opponents' intentions and capabilities and invent measures against their countermeasures. If the opponents rely only on counterpropaganda, the propagandists can try to outwit them. If they think that their opponents will withdraw advertising from their news publication or radio station, they may try to get alternative supporters. If they expect vigilantes or police persecution, they can go underground and rely, as the Russian communists did before 1917 and the Chinese before 1949, primarily on agitation through organizational media.

Social control of propaganda

Democratic control of propaganda

Different sorts of polities, ranging from the democratic to the authoritarian, have attempted a variety of social controls over propaganda. In an ideal democracy, everyone would be free to make propaganda and free to oppose propaganda habitually through peaceful counterpropaganda. The democratic ideal assumes that, if a variety of propagandists are free to compete continuously and publicly, the ideas best for society will win out in the long run. This outcome would require that a majority of the general populace be reasonably well-educated, intelligent, public-spirited, and patient, and that they not be greatly confused or alienated by an excess of communication. A democratic system also presupposes that large quantities of dependable and relevant information will be inexpensively disseminated by relatively well-financed, public-spirited, and uncensored news gathering and educational agencies. The extent to which any existing national society actually conforms to this model is decidedly an open question. That the world social system does not is self-evident.

In efforts to guard against "pernicious" propaganda by hidden persuaders, modern democracies sometimes require that such propagandists as lobbyists and publishers register with public authorities and that propaganda and advertising be clearly labelled as such. The success of such measures, however, is only partial. In the U.S., for instance, publishers of journals using the second-class mails are required to issue periodic statements of ownership,

circulation, and other information; thereby, at least the nominal owners and publishers become known—but those who subsidize or otherwise control them may not. In many places, paid political advertisements in news publications or on television are required to include the name of a sponsor—but the declared sponsor may be a "dummy" individual or organization whose actual backers remain undisclosed. Furthermore, agents of foreign governments or organizations engaged in propaganda in the U.S. are required to file forms with the U.S. Department of Justice, naming their principals and listing their own activities and finances—but it is impossible to know whether the data so filed are correct, complete, or significant. In many Western industrial nations, similar registrations and disclosures are required of those who circulate brochures inviting investors to buy stocks and bonds. This principle of disclosure, which appears so useful with respect to foreign agents and securities salesmen, is not often applied, however, to other media of propaganda. (In the U.S. the disclosure of certain types of political campaign advertisements and contributions is required, but the requirement is easily circumvented.) In many countries, claims made in propaganda (including advertising) about the contents or characteristics of foods and drugs and some other products are also subject to registration and to requirements of "plain labelling." In some places, consumer research organizations, privately or publicly supported, examine these claims rigorously and sometimes publish scientifically based counterpropaganda. In view of the apparently massive effects and the certainly massive expenses of political propaganda on the Internet and television, there are many movements afoot in democracies to limit expenditures on campaign propaganda and to require networks to give time free of charge for even the minor parties, especially in the weeks immediately preceding elections. There have also been movements to require that political propaganda be halted for a specified number of days before the holding of an election—the idea being that a cooling-off period would allow voters to rest and reflect after the communication overload of the campaign period and would prevent politicians and their backers from using last-minute slander and sensationalism.

Authoritarian control of propaganda

In a highly authoritarian polity, the regime tries to monopolize for itself all opportunities to engage in propaganda, and often it will stop at nothing to crush any kind of counterpropaganda. How long and how completely such a policy can be implemented depends, among other things, on the amount of force that the regime can muster, on the thoroughness of its police work, and, perhaps most of all, on the level, type, and distribution of secular higher education. Secular higher education invariably promotes skepticism about claims that sound dogmatic or are made without evidence; and if such education is of a type that emphasizes humane and universalistic values, an ignorant or unreasonable authoritarian regime is not

likely to please the educated for very long. If the educated engage in discreet counterpropaganda, they may in the end modify the regime.

World-level control of propaganda

One of the most serious and least understood problems of social control is above the national level, at the level of the world social system. At the world level there is an extremely dangerous lack of means of restraining or counteracting propaganda that fans the flames of international, interracial, and interreligious wars. The global system consists at present of a highly chaotic mixture of democratic, semidemocratic, and authoritarian subsystems. Many of these are controlled by leaders who are ill educated, ultranationalistic, and religiously, racially, or doctrinally fanatical. At present, every national regime asserts that its national sovereignty gives it the right to conduct any propaganda it cares to, however untrue such propaganda may be and however contradictory to the requirements of the world system. The most inflammatory of such propaganda usually takes the form of statements by prominent national leaders, often sensationalized and amplified by their own international broadcasts and sensationalized and amplified still further by media in the receiving countries. The only major remedy would lie, of course, in the slow spread of education for universalist humanism. A first step toward this might be taken through the fostering of an energetic and highly enlightened press corps and educational establishment, doing all it can to provide the world's broadcasters, news publications, and schools with factual information and illuminating editorials that could increase awareness of the world system as a whole. Informed leaders in world affairs are therefore becoming increasingly interested in the creation of world-level media and multinational bodies of reporters, researchers, editors, teachers, and other intellectuals committed to the unity of humankind.

Bruce Lannes Smith

Table of Contents

political spin, in politics, the attempt to control or influence communication in order to deliver one's preferred message.

Related Topics: political system • public relations • Potemkin village • deception

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Spin is a pejorative term often used in the context of public relations practitioners and political communicators. It is used to refer to the sophisticated selling of a specific message that is heavily biased in favour of one's own position and that employs maximum management of the media with the intention of maintaining or exerting control over the situation, often implying deception or manipulation.

In the political context, it is often associated with government press conferences in which it is understood that the press secretary or the government official has a vested interest in communicating a political message to have a desired outcome, often to the neglect of delivering the full truth of a situation. In such situations, the press conference room is sometimes cynically referred to as the "spin room" and the schedule of briefings as the "spin cycle."

Spin techniques may include careful timing in delivering information, selective presentation of facts, careful selection of words and phrases meant to invoke certain responses in hearers, choice of sound bites, or redefining of terms and phrases. Skillful practitioners of spin are sometimes pejoratively referred to as "spin doctors," "spin merchants," or "spinmeisters," among other unflattering terms.

Famous and successful "spinsters" in the political arena have included Mike McCurry, who was press secretary to U.S. President Bill Clinton and has been called a "spinmeister extraordinaire" for his ability to maintain charm and wit while occasionally misleading reporters, intimidating and also courting correspondents, and managing a litany of damaging stories coming out of an administration mired in controversy.

Another well-known example to whom the label has been applied is Peter Mandelson, who was head of British Prime Minister Tony Blair's publicity machine and successful political campaigns. He was considered ruthless in his management of the media in favour of Blair's message and using the media to cast opposers in a negative light.

The rise of spin and media pressures has been said to be harmful to the political system in that it contributed to ongoing cynicism among journalists and the voting public as politics

came to be increasingly viewed more as theatre than governing. In the early 21st century, concern over the effects of spin manifested in the popular culture with the rise of talk shows, talk show personalities, and self-proclaimed “fact-checkers.” Examples include American television and radio personality Bill O’Reilly and his show *No Spin Zone* and numerous Web sites proclaiming to help a cynical and unsuspecting public unravel the barrage of political spin.

Sandra Braun