

et cetera

On Propaganda

Elizabeth Briant Lee and
Alfred McClung Lee

**The Fine Art of
Propaganda Analysis—
Then and Now**

Neil Postman

Propaganda

Randall L. Bytwerk

**Und Ihr habt doch gesiegt:
Rhetorical Functions of a
Nazi Holiday**

Jacques Ellul

**An Aspect of the Role of
Persuasion in a Technical Society**

Thomas M. Steinfatt


**Evaluating Approaches to
Propaganda Analysis**

Terence P. Moran

**Propaganda as
Pseudocommunication**

Edward L. Bernays

**Human Engineering and
Social Adjustment**

 Peter L. Haratonik

**Propagandist as Propagandee:
The *Final Entries* of Joseph Goebbels**

**HUMAN ENGINEERING
AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT**

EDWARD L. BERNAYS*

REVOLUTIONS IN TECHNOLOGY, transportation, and communications of the last century continue today. They have brought and continue to bring us closer to the One World Wendell Willkie envisaged. No longer is anyone anywhere an island unto himself. We are all part of a whole, getting closer to each other all the time. Practically, the world is one room. Adjustments of individuals and groups to one another become a necessity, the order of the day. Some use the expressions "dependence" and "interdependence" to describe today's situation. Peaceful coexistence is the great desideratum. Adjustment must take place between all in the society, between nations and nations, groups and groups, individuals and individuals, between seller and buyer, between all members of the society.

The revolutions that brought us all closer together have brought with them increased literacy. That has brought people into greater participation in all activities of the society. This has also increased "people power" and its importance to all elements of the society.

Adjustment of groups and individuals with each other is brought about by their actions and the words they use to project their actions. Word symbols play an ancillary role to action in aiding the process of adjustment. They develop understanding that produces socially responsible action by those exposed to them. They also bring understanding to those affected by action.

Actions and words resolve potential conflict in the society and bring about adjustments. In the public interest, maladjustments between groups and groups, individuals and individuals, individuals and

*Edward L. Bernays, a world-renowned scholar and teacher considered by many to be the founder of professional courses in public relations, is the author of more than a dozen books, including *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923), *Propaganda* (1928), *Public Relations* (1952), and *The Engineering of Consent* (1955).

groups must be eliminated wherever they exist. Maladjustments may be due to ignorance, prejudice, or the apathy of those who carry out actions that affect others. Force, threat, and intimidation have no place in our society. Socially responsible action helps to bring about adjustment. So does the use of word symbols that bring about understanding. We may call such processes *communication, education, persuasion, propaganda, proselytism, teaching*. Whatever the name, we must try to avoid maladjustment and conflict. There are strategies and tactics of bringing about adjustment that have been found effective in wide areas of activity. We have called the process of bringing about such adjustment "the engineering of consent."

The network of communication in our society is extensive and complex. Obviously it does not come into play in matters that concern limited publics and limited areas. But where it does, the extensive and complex network of communications in this country needs to be taken into consideration. And this network is so extensive that it demands an engineering approach to cope with it; hence the term, "engineering of consent." We would waste time and effort and whatever else we put into the attempts at adjustment unless we adopted such an approach.

Here are some examples of the complex network of communication. The Federal Communication Commission figures show these television outlets in the United States: 513 VHF commercial television stations, 196 UHF commercial television stations, 95 VHF educational stations, and 155 UHF educational stations. 97.7% of the 73 million households in the United States have televisions. In addition, there are 4459 AM commercial radio stations, 2752 FM commercial stations, and 799 FM educational stations.

A breakdown of the print media indicates that 127 million Americans read magazines. There are 1762 daily newspapers in the country, 7530 weekly newspapers, 2400 trade publications. The circulation of morning daily newspapers is, according to latest figures, 25,858,386. Evening circulation is 35,118,625. There are college and university newspapers, foreign language newspapers, and special service newspapers on topics from agriculture to sports.

And this listing does not include the books, hardback and soft cover, published in a year. Nor the billboards, circulars, and other forms of advertising that seek public attention and support for what they espouse. Nor does it list the person-to-person, word-of-mouth contacts between people, or the uses of the lecture platform. One estimate places at over 400 impacts a day the attempt in one way or another to bring about a coincidence of attitude and action between projector of idea and public.

The process of engineering of consent, as we call it, is based on the Jeffersonian thesis that consent or adjustment is the basic underlying

concept on which the well being of the society rests. The individual member of the democratic society gives his consent to what goes on in the society and brings about an adjusted society. This holds for non-profit and for profit organizations, for products, ideas, and services that need public support for their viability.

In engineering of consent both actions and words play a role. But actions speak louder than words. Words occupy a secondary role. Unless actions are in the public interest, words in the long run fail. And adjustment fails. Historians after World War I, referring to President Woodrow Wilson, wrote that words won the war and lost the peace. This truth is universal and applies to all activity aimed at engineering the consent of the public at the highest level of adjustment.

The engineering of consent is marked by eight principles that apply to all problems of enlisting public interest and support to reach top adjustment goals. Here they are:

1. Define your goals.
2. Research your publics by public opinion and/or market research.
3. Reorient your goals if necessary, to ensure that they are realistic and attainable in the light of your research.
4. Determine your strategy—how and when you will use your four *M*'s—mindpower, manpower, mechanics, and money—to meet your goals of highest possible adjustment.
5. Reorient your goals to ensure that they are realistic and attainable, in the light of your research.
6. Determine the organization necessary to carry out your goals.
7. Time and plan your tactics.
8. Make up a budget.

Your goals need to be defined in three time periods. Determination of a longtime goal is an essential first step. This longtime goal may be defined in terms of the attitudes and actions expected of your publics in x number of years. They may also be defined in terms of the tangibles you expect in the same number of years: if you are a corporation, not only the percentage of business you expect to get in your particular field, but the number and type of customers, employees, outlets or whatever—even the number of stockholders, if you are publicly held. Naturally, goals will vary with the kind of activity being considered. So will the number of years for which goals are set. An educational institution of higher learning can set goals for a longer period than a business enterprise in the field of science and invention. The number of years varies with different conditions. The more specific your goals, the more valuable the public opinion and/or market research will be.

After the research has been completed, it will be possible to set the two other essential goals, the immediate and the intermediate goal. The immediate goal might be a year or so away, the intermediate goal several years.

Public opinion and/or market research, the next step, applies the findings of modern day social sciences to the problems at hand. Modern day research in this area defines and isolates areas of public interest and support, markets, and the like. It isolates and defines the motives and attitudes of the publics concerned towards the particular service, product, idea, or individual or group. It defines public areas of potential interest. It indicates accurately potentials of success. It enables the maker of the survey to identify present favorable attitudes as a basis for intensification, to convert attitudes on the fence to favorable attitudes and action, and tells him how to eliminate negative attitudes.

The research also indicates whether the original goal set is realistic or unrealistic and the extent to which it is either. If the research shows the unrealism of goals they can be reoriented.

Scientific surveys require that they be made by highly trained, skilled professional pollsters or market research professionals. The need for them has been met by the Gallups, Harrises, Ropers, and other experts. But their availability does not preclude the layman without the funds to retain them from going ahead. There are numerous good books on polling that should help the layman to plan and carry out a poll by himself. Any poll intelligently planned and carried out, as a basis for procedure, is sounder than proceeding without a poll of any kind.

Research will also reveal and identify the opinion molders and group leaders who play an important role in affecting public attitudes and public attitudes to the project at issue. Opinion molders are those who through the spoken and written word have built constituencies of their own, whose judgments and actions they affect. Opinion molders of course reflect their constituencies' attitudes. They also affect them. Opinion molders may often be the short cut to the publics you desire to adjust with.

Then there are the group leaders. They are the elected or selected leaders of the interest groups and group interests that make up our society. From the President of the United States to the president of the local union, from the president of the Federation of Women's Clubs to the bishop or cardinal, they play a role in affecting the attitudes and actions of their constituencies. They all play their parts in the engineering of consent.

Reorientation of goals will follow if the research indicates the original goals are unrealistic. Goals may have represented simply un-

fulfilled desires instead of realistic appraisal. Reorientation of goals makes it possible also to make a decision on immediate and intermediate goals. It should be kept in mind that research may reveal that, to meet the longtime goal, the sequence of events may not necessarily be logical. Illogical sequences may lead to ultimate goals.

Strategy determination indicates how you will use your resources to meet your objectives, *i.e.*, in what proportions and with what timing you will use the four *M's* available—mindpower, manpower, mechanics, and money.

Effectiveness of your strategy depends on your professional know-how, the application of art to a science. Strategy will decide whether your action will be a slow process of education, a blitzkrieg, whatever. Many strategies available offer a choice in determining a course of action. Research will aid in the formulation of strategy.

The themes and appeals you will use in bringing about top adjustment with your publics depend in great part on your research. The researcher will discover what aspects of your venture appeal to what publics. Your themes will appeal to basic motivations—a desire to be a leader or a follower, a desire for immortality or for parental love, and a host of others.

The timing and planning of tactics comprise all the actions you will undertake, from changing certain attitudes and actions to conform with the public interest to contacts with your publics through the media and opinion molders. This timing and planning of tactics will result in a blueprint for each of the three time periods (immediate, intermediate, and long term) and will indicate what you will do and when. It will show the action and attitude changes research indicated you should undertake.

The complexity of the network of communications has already been pointed out. Obviously an attempt should be made to use all that reach your publics.

In this connection, the overt act, the created circumstances built around your idea, may well be helpful in gaining visibility with your publics through relevant media. Celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the United States by our government was such an overt act. It was a conscious effort by our government to make the people realize the values of their system. To be sure it was poorly conceived and carried out, but still it reached many members of the public. Wilson's "Fourteen Points" demonstrates this concept, as do the "Four Freedoms" of Roosevelt. They are conscious efforts to bring about adjustment.

But words by themselves make little impact unless they reflect acceptable action or are associated with concepts that give them strength. Social scientists have found that people accept only what

they *a priori* are willing to accept. Unless words reflect factual evidence, authority, reason, tradition, or carry strong emotion they lose their impact on individuals who *a priori* do not believe what they convey.

It must also be remembered that in our society the meaning of words is as fragile as a soap bubble or lace. If we want to gain acceptance for our words, they must reflect acceptable concepts and be reinforced in their meaning by associating them with the elements of acceptance just referred to.

The last item is making a budget. Money is an essential element in any activity because mechanics cost money. Manpower and mindpower often are available to carry on activities. Planning for the expenditures necessary in any activity of this kind is essential. When mindpower and manpower are not available these expenditures must be taken into consideration and advance planning made for them. It should be kept in mind that for nonprofit activities that serve the public interest, mindpower and manpower can often be found on a basis of contribution to the effort.

Advance budgeting is indicated, in any case.

It should be added that, in our society, all human activities are subject to abuse. Antisocial individuals in old and respected professions deviate from professional codes of conduct, in law and medicine and other professions. But the integrity of the profession and its practice remain. Obviously, the actions described in this piece may be and sometimes are abused. There are demagogues not only in politics, but in all branches of endeavor. Truth and ethical conduct continue despite them.

In our complex society, an engineering approach to bring adjustment at the highest level is essential to the society's well being.