

Public Diplomacy, Propaganda and PSYOPS



Lecture 3

What is propaganda?

What is Propaganda?

- Original meaning – to propagate the ‘faith’ - (Congregatio de Propaganda Fide – 17th Century)
- Sowing seeds of thought to translate into action (or inaction)
- Acquired pejorative meaning 1914-18

'A Good Word Gone Wrong'

- Atrocity propaganda
- Lies and half-truths
- A 'black art' 'defiling the human soul' at a time when the mind was only just becoming understood (psychology)
- Better to persuade than perish?

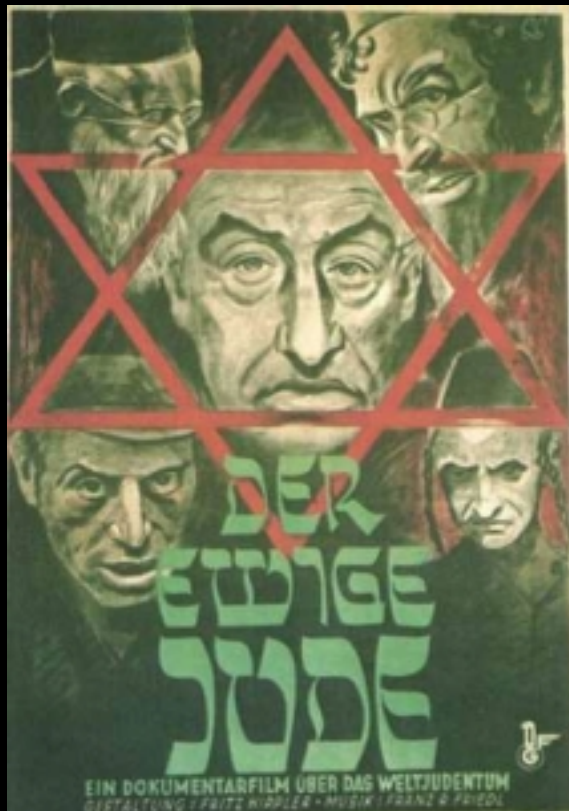
What is propaganda?

- It is a process of persuasion
- It is on the spectrum of communication from who says what to whom, when, how and with what effect
- It injects the question ‘why?’ into that spectrum
- Therefore it is about intent

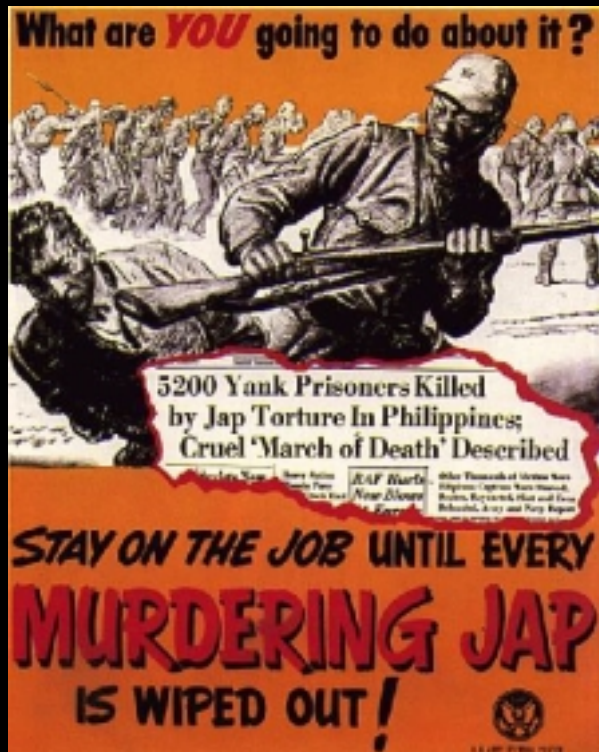
Intentions

- As a process, propaganda is value-neutral
- As such, it is neither a ‘good’ nor a ‘bad’ thing
- Value judgements like this are more appropriately directed as the intentions behind doing it
- More useful to speak of ‘effective’ and ‘ineffective’ propaganda (results)

'Good' or 'Bad' Intentions?



Propaganda is something someone else does!!



- ‘Democracies only resort to propaganda in wartime’
- ‘Totalitarian regimes do it all the time’
- We tell the ‘truth’; they tell lies
- In fact we tell our ‘truth’ and they tell their ‘truth’
- Whose ‘truth’ is right?
- Better to talk about credibility



Propaganda – NATO definition

*ANY INFORMATION, IDEAS, DOCTRINES
OR SPECIAL APPEALS,
DISSEMINATED TO INFLUENCE THE
OPINIONS, EMOTIONS, ATTITUDES OR
BEHAVIOUR OF ANY SPECIFIED
GROUP
IN ORDER TO BENEFIT THE SPONSOR,
EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY*

PROPAGANDA CATEGORIES

- **WHITE** - overt, attributable to a definite source
- **BLACK** - covert, deliberate deception where a false source is definitely implied
- **GREY** - where a source is concealed and not acknowledged by the originator

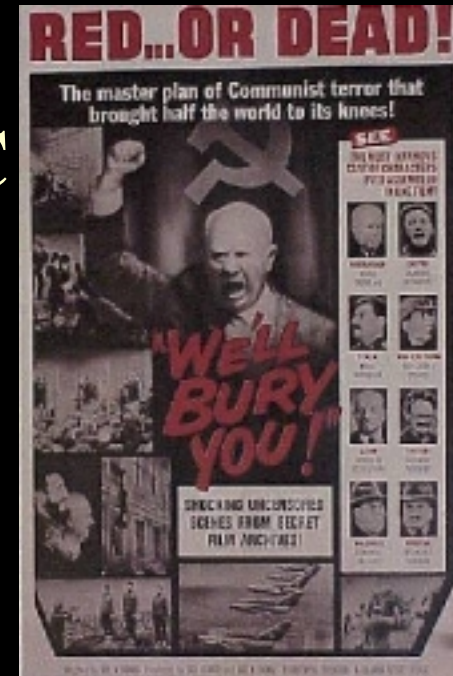
COHESIVE PROPAGANDA

- CREATE GOODWILL
- PROMOTE FRIENDSHIP
- RAISE MORALE
- STRESS COMMON INTERESTS
- GAIN CO-OPERATION



DIVISIVE PROPAGANDA

- LOWER MORALE
- CREATE APATHY, DEFEATISM & DISCORD
- PROMOTE DISSENTION, PANIC SUBVERSION, RESISTANCE, DESERTION, SURRENDER & DEFECTION



PROPAGANDA VARIANTS

- INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC INFORMATION
(Public Diplomacy/Cultural Diplomacy)
- PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE/OPERATIONS
- INFORMATION WARFARE/OPERATIONS
- PUBLIC RELATIONS/SPIN DOCTORING
- ADVERTISING/MARKETING (?)
- PUBLICITY
- NEWS? ('the shocktroops of propaganda')

PROPAGANDA PRINCIPLES

IS MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN

- IT IS BASED UPON CREDIBLE TRUTH
- PRESENTED IN AN ATTRACTIVE FORM
- IT AROUSES A NEED
- IT SUGGESTS SATISFACTION

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES

- REFRAIN FROM RIGID DOGMATISM
- AVOID ANTAGONISM
- IDENTIFIES ITSELF WITH THE TARGET
- EXPLOITS, WHEN OPPORTUNE, WEAKNESSES IN HOSTILE PROPAGANDA TO THE MAXIMUM