
p. 9 Let me begin by counter-posing two different conceptions of democracy. One conception of democracy has it that a democratic society is one in which the public has the means to participate in some meaningful way in the management of their own affairs and the means of information are open and free. If you look up democracy in the dictionary you'll get a definition something like that.

p. 10 An alternative conception of democracy is that the public must be barred from managing of their own affairs and the means of information must be kept narrowly and rigidly controlled. That may sound like an odd conception of democracy, but it’s important to understand that it is the prevailing conception.

**Early History of Propaganda**

p. 11 Let’s begin with the first modern government propaganda operation. That was under the Woodrow Wilson Administration. Woodrow Wilson was elected President in 1916 on the platform “Peace Without Victory.” That was right in the middle of the World War I …… The Wilson administration was actually committed to war and had to do something about it. They established a government propaganda commission, called the Creel Commission, which succeeded, within six months, in turning a pacifist population into a hysterical, war-mongering population which wanted to destroy everything German. 

p. 12 Among those who participated actively and enthusiastically in Wilson’s war were the progressive intellectuals… who took great pride… in having shown that what they called the “more intelligent members of the community,” namely, themselves, were able to drive a reluctant population into a war by terrifying them and eliciting jingoist fanaticism.

p. 13 And it taught a lesson: State propaganda, when supported by the educated classes and when no deviation is permitted from it, can have a big effect. It was a lesson learned by Hitler and many others, and it has been pursued to this day.

**Spectator Democracy**

p. 14 Another group that was impressed by these successes was liberal democratic theorists and leading media figures, like, for example, Walter Lippmann, who was the dean of American journalists…. He argued that what he called a “revolution in the art of democracy,” could be used to “manufacture consent,” that is, to bring about agreement on the part of the public for things that they didn’t want by the new techniques of propaganda.

p. 15 [Lippmann also thought] It was necessary because, as he put it, “the common interests elude public opinion entirely” and can only be understood and managed by a “specialized class” of “responsible men” who are smart enough to figure things out….This is a view that goes back hundreds of years. It’s also a typical Leninist view.

p. 16 Now there are two “functions” in a democracy: The specialized class, the responsible men, carry out the executive function, which means they do the thinking and planning and understand the common interests. Then, there is the bewildered herd, and they have a function in democracy too. Their function in a democracy, he [Walter Lippmann] said, is to be “spectators,” not participants in action.

p. 18 So we need something to tame the bewildered herd, and that something is this new revolution in the art of democracy: the manufacture of consent.

p. 20 Propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state.

**Public Relations**

p. 23 In the 1930s, big problems arose again, as they had during the First World War. There was a huge depression and substantial labor organizing. … The bewildered herd was actually winning legislative victories, and it's not supposed to work that way. The other problem was that it was becoming possible for people to organize. People have to be atomized and segregated and alone.
p. 24 There was a major strike, the Steel strike in western Pennsylvania at Johnstown. Business tried out a new technique of labor destruction.... The idea was to figure out ways to turn the public against the strikers, to present the strikers as disruptive, harmful to the public and against the common interests.

p. 25 And it worked, very effectively. It was later called the "Mohawk Valley formula" and applied over and over again to break strikes. They were called "scientific methods of strike-breaking," and worked very effectively by mobilizing the community opinion in favor of vapid, empty concepts like Americanism. Who can be against that?

p. 26 The point of public relations slogans like "Support our troops" is that they don't mean anything.... Nobody knows what it means, because it doesn't mean anything. Its crucial value is that it diverts your attention from a question that does mean something: Do you support our policy? That's the one you're not allowed to talk about.

**Engineering Opinion**
p. 32 The bewildered herd never gets properly tamed, so this is a constant battle... In the 1960s there was another wave of dissidence.... It was called by the specialized class “the crisis of democracy.”

p. 33 One aspect of the malady actually got a technical name. It was called the “Vietnam Syndrome.”.... The Reaganite intellectual Norman Podhoretz defined it as “the sickly inhibitions against the use of military force.” p. 34 If you want to have a violent society that uses force around the world to achieve the ends of its own domestic elite, it’s necessary to have a proper appreciation of the martial virtues and none of these sickly inhibitions about using violence. So that’s the Vietnam Syndrome. It’s necessary to overcome that one.

**Representation as Reality**
p. 35 It’s also necessary to completely falsify history. That’s another way to overcome these sickly inhibitions, to make it look as if when we attack and destroy somebody we’re really protecting and defending ourselves against major aggressors and monsters and so on. There has been a huge effort since the Vietnam war to reconstruct the history of that.

**Dissident Culture**
p. 39 Nevertheless, people are acquiring an ability and a willingness to think things through. Skepticism about power has grown, and attitudes have changed on many, many issues. It’s kind of slow, maybe even glacial, but perceptible and important.

**Parade of Enemies**
p. 42 There are growing domestic social and economic problems, in fact, maybe catastrophes. Nobody in power has any intention of doing anything about them. p. 43 Over the last ten years, every year or two, some major monster is constructed that we have to defend ourselves against. p. 44 That’s one of the ways in which you can keep the bewildered herd from paying attention to what’s really going on around them, keep them diverted and controlled.

**Selective Perception**
p. 46 In May 1986, the memoirs of the released Cuban prisoner, Armando Valladares, came out. They quickly became a media sensation. p. 47 The same month, the surviving members of the Human Rights Group of El Salvador... were arrested and tortured.... p. 48 While they were in prison they continued their human rights work. They were lawyers, they continued taking affidavits.... This 160-page report of the prisoners’ sworn testimony was sneaked out of prison, along with a videotape which was taken showing people testifying in prison about their torture.... The national press refused to cover it.

p. 49 In the study [by Univ. of Massachusetts] people were asked whether they thought that the United States should intervene with force to reverse illegal occupation or serious human rights abuses. By about two to one, people in the United States thought we should.... If the United States was to follow that

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Book summary courtesy of the Progressive Women's Alliance of West Michigan.
advice, we would bomb El Salvador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Damascus, Tel Aviv, Capetown, Turkey, Washington, and a whole list of other states.

**The Gulf War**
p. 53 That tells you how a well-functioning propaganda system works. People can believe that when we use force against Iraq and Kuwait it’s because we really observe the principle that illegal occupation and human rights abuses should be met by force. They don’t see what it would mean if those principles were applied to U.S. behavior. That’s a success of propaganda of quite a spectacular type.

p. 54 Take a look at the national media and see how much you can find about the Iraqi democratic opposition [in exile] from August through March [1991]. You can’t find a word. It’s not that they’re inarticulate. They have statements, proposals, calls and demands. If you look at them, you find that they’re indistinguishable from those of the American peace movement. They’re against Saddam Hussein and they’re against the war against Iraq. They don’t want their country destroyed. What they want is a peaceful resolution, and they knew perfectly well that it might have been achievable. That’s the wrong view and therefore they’re out. We don’t hear a word about the Iraqi democratic opposition.

p. 64 I think the issue, to come back to my original comment, is not simply disinformation and the Gulf crisis. The issue is much broader. It’s whether we want to live in a free society or whether we want to live under what amounts to a form of self-imposed totalitarianism….

**Appendix – The Journalist From Mars: How the “War on Terror” Should Be Reported** [text from a talk on 1/22/02]

p. 70 One factual observation is that the war on terrorism was not declared on September 11; rather, it was redeclared, using the same rhetoric as the first declaration twenty years earlier. p. 71 Furthermore, there’s a striking continuity; the same people are in leading positions. [Donald Rumsfeld, John Negroponte]

p. 77 [[I]n order to rise to the absolutely minimal moral level we have to agree, in fact insist, that if some act is right for us then it’s right for others, and if it’s wrong when others do it then it’s wrong when we do it…. [A journalist from Mars] would be unlikely to find a phrase, a single phrase in the vast coverage and commentary about the war on terrorism that even begins to approach this minimal standard.

p. 79 [T]here is an official definition in the U.S. code and Army manuals, and elsewhere…. Terrorism, as I’m quoting, is defined as “the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious or ideological in nature…through intimidation, coercion or instilling fear.” Well, that sounds simple; as far as I can see, it’s appropriate….

p. 80 The official definition is unusable…. First of all, it’s a very close paraphrase of official government policy – very close, in fact. When it's government policy, it's called low-intensity conflict or counterterror.

p. 81 The solution is to define terrorism as the terrorism that they carry out against us, whoever we happen to be…. [W]ith this useful characterization of terrorism, we can draw the standard conclusions that you read all the time: namely, that we and our allies are the main victims of terrorism, and that terrorism is a weapon of the weak.

p. 98 Suppose, finally, that we join the Martian observer and we depart from convention radically. We accept moral truisms. If we can rise to that level, we can then, and only then, honestly raise the question of how to respond to terrorist crimes.

p. 100 So honesty leaves us with a dilemma. The easy answer is conventional hypocrisy. The other option [holding all countries including the U.S. accountable for their behavior]… is harder to consider, but imperative if the world is to be spared still worse disasters.