I. Propaganda and the Manufacture of Consent

“The study of society (social theory) could be a tool by which a technocratic elite could establish social control and serve the interests of vested power.”

"Governments, whether they are monarchial, constitutional, democratic or commnunist depend upon acquiescent public opinion. . . in fact, government is government only by virtue of public acquiescence."

A. Edward Bernays: “Propaganda” “The Engineering of Consent”

1. Father of public relations

2. Influenced by

a. Le Bon's concept of the "crowd"

b. Freud's concept of the unconscious and the group mind

3. Also Walter Lippmann (Public Relations meets Social theory)

a. “democratic realist” = “democracy for the few, by the few, and of the few”

b. Mass democracy

i. average individual

thought process: common fictions

content: euphemisms, platitutes

ii. governance

scientific elite

“bureau of experts”

make policy decisions

iii. social control

“manufacture consent”

“understanding and controlling subjective life

of the public”

iv. means: mass media

3. Influence: advertising, marketing, politics, economy, fascism, neoliberalism

B. Bernays' Theory

1. Situation

a. modern society had become vastly more complex than society before it for

b. the average person is not able to understand and act in it either

as citizens, workers or consumers

c. social control is the primary problem in the modern world.

d. social control requires the:

"The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses . . .

By

"the active energy of the intelligent few . . .

i. mold our minds

ii. create our tastes

iii. shape our ideas

2. Argument

a. propaganda is the technique for controlling the masses

“The truth is not a thing to be discovered but a thing to be created through artful word choices and careful arrangement of appearances.”

i. universal

ii. continuous

iii. goals;

manufacture political consent

manufacture consumers

create passive workers

iv. targets the group mind aka public mind

v. shaped by experts

b. characteristics of the group mind

i. infantile

ii. not capable of real thought

iii. governed by impulses, habits, emotions, prejudices

iv. not conscious of real motivations

v. easily manipulated

authority figures

appeals to emotions

clichés

repetition

c. target the group mind: techniques

“Mass media as a mechanism could shape and control public discourse in ways that surpassed even the coercive powers of the state.”

i. technologies: film, radio, television

ii. television and the power of the image

advertising

political campaigns

iii. third person experts

iv. front groups

v. focus groups

vi. media “events”

vii. control discourse: words that stop thought

viii. fear/demonization

C. Application and Success: WWI and U.S. Committee on Public Safety

* 1. WWI: background
  2. U.S. Public Opinion

3. The House of Truth

1. Fear

i. spies

ii. defeat: Heineapolis, Denverburg, Gulf of Hate

1. good vs evil

i. demonization

ii. “they kill and eat children”

c. patriotism

d. Program for the Peace of the World

4. CPI or Creel Commission

* 1. Division of News

i. “Official War News”

ii. newspaper Official Bulletin

b. Division of Advertising

i. advertisements, billboards.

ii. graphic art: posters

c. Division of Films

1. power of film: Birth of a Nation

ii. Hollywood: Pershing’s Crusaders

d. Division of Four Minute Men

i. 75,000/ 150,000

ii. Four Minute Man Bulletin: “appeal to unconscious”

iii. Junior Four Minute Men, Colored Four Minute Men

iv. National School Service Bulletin

v. Why We Are Fighting, Unmasking German Propaganda