

2

Propaganda Through the Ages

The use of propaganda has been an integral part of human history and can be traced back to ancient Greece for its philosophical and theoretical origins. Used effectively by Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire, and the early Christians, propaganda became an integral part of the religious conflicts of the Reformation. The invention of the printing press was quickly adopted by Martin Luther in his fight against the Catholic Church and provided the ideal medium for the widespread use of propagandistic materials. Each new medium of communication was quickly adopted for use by propagandists, especially during the American and French revolutions and later by Napoleon. By the end of the 19th century, improvements in the size and speed of the mass media had greatly increased the sophistication and effectiveness of propaganda.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, we have witnessed an unprecedented growth in the scope and speed of communication technologies, which has far outstripped the ability to control the continuous flow of information that emanates from a myriad of sources. This development has greatly enhanced the ability of a would-be propagandist to spread a message quickly, efficiently, and often without challenge from countervailing sources. The result has been a worldwide proliferation of propagandistic information on a wide range of subjects. In particular, since the dramatic events surrounding the

50 Propaganda and Persuasion

attack on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001, there has been a significant growth in satellite-based television news broadcasting vying for the attention of an international audience. The influence of these new global networks will undoubtedly play a major role in how propaganda is used on the international stage in the immediate future.

The use of propaganda as a means of controlling information flow, managing public opinion, or manipulating behavior is as old as recorded history. The concept of persuasion is an integral part of human nature, and the use of specific techniques to bring about large-scale shifts in ideas can be traced back to the ancient world. Many artifacts from prehistory and from earliest civilizations provide us with evidence that attempts were being made to use the equivalent of modern-day propaganda techniques to communicate the purported majesty and supernatural powers of rulers and priests. In a largely preliterate age, dazzling costumes, insignia, and monuments were deliberately created symbols designed to evoke a specific image of superiority and power that these early propagandists wished to convey to their audience.

As was noted in Chapter 1, the first systematic attempt to use and analyze propaganda was in ancient Greece. The use of deliberate forms of speech carefully calculated to deliver a persuasive message can also be found in the writings of Confucius in his *Analects*, where he suggests that the use of “good” rhetoric, together with the proper forms of speech and writing, could be used to persuade men to live meaningful lives. Bruce L. Smith pointed out in 1958 that this Platonic admonition was echoed in our modern world by the leaders of communist China, only it was called “brain-washing” (pp. 579–580). Although many changes have taken place in China during the past 30 years, the Chinese government still creates and promotes these systematic and deliberate propaganda messages aimed at creating a cohesive communist society among the diverse population.

The history of propaganda is based on three interweaving elements: first, the increasing need, with the growth of civilization and the rise of nation-states, to win what has been called “the battle for people’s minds”; second, the increasing sophistication of the means of communication available to deliver propagandistic messages; and third, the increasing understanding of the psychology of propaganda and the commensurate application of such behavioral findings. Throughout history, these three elements have been combined in various ways to enhance and encourage the use of propaganda as a means of altering attitudes and for the creation of new ideas or perspectives. Only in comparatively modern times, however, have scholars and scientists begun to understand and assess the role of such mass propaganda techniques as an aspect of the social process. The history of propaganda does not develop as a clear linear progression, but certain significant historical benchmarks

are worth examining as illustrations of how propaganda has been used at different times. In each case, those wishing to control or manage others (the propagandists) have made maximum and intelligent use of the forms of communication (the media) available to them while also accurately gauging the psychological susceptibility of their audiences so that their messages could be tailored to ensure the best possible reception. The successful propagandist is able to discern the basic beliefs, needs, or fears of the audience and to play upon those.

Ancient Greece and Alexander the Great

The ancient world, prior to 500 B.C.E., provides many examples of effective propaganda techniques being used by rulers, mostly in support of war or religious persuasion. As Philip M. Taylor (1990, p. 23) observed, a gradual shift occurred from war being fought in the name of a god to war being fought in the name of the king, often as the embodiment of “the living god.” Egyptian pharaohs best exemplified this trend, and they devised their own unique, personalized style of propaganda in the form of spectacular public monuments, such as the Sphinx and the pyramids. “The Pharaohs were among the first to recognize the power of public architecture on a grand scale to demonstrate prestige and dynastic legitimacy” (P. M. Taylor, 1990, p. 23).

Although the ancient kingdoms of Sumer, Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, and others all used techniques of propaganda, such applications were sporadic and lacked a philosophical (one could say “psychological”) base (see P. M. Taylor, 1990, pp. 13–23). Not until the emergence of Greek civilization after approximately 800 B.C.E. do we find the first systematic application of propaganda in both warfare and civil life. After 750 B.C.E., the Greek city-states became the basis of an increasingly structured society, albeit one in which each state had its own gods, culture, and social hierarchy. Given these differences, warfare between these city-states competing for cultural domination as much as for trade was inevitable. In such an atmosphere, the “iconography” of propaganda flourished, and great temples, monumental sculptures, and other edifices became significant symbols of the power of the state.

The long struggle between the two most powerful of these city-states—Athens and Sparta—yielded a host of legends that have become part of modern history and mythology. In their joint struggle against the Persians under King Darius and his son Xerxes (490–449 B.C.E.), we find one of the first deliberate uses of disinformation as a propaganda ploy. When Xerxes began

52 Propaganda and Persuasion

his expedition to conquer all of Greece in 480 B.C.E., he quickly achieved a notable series of victories, including the conquering of Athens. When the situation looked hopeless for the Greeks, the Athenian naval commander, Themistocles, instituted a classic disinformation campaign of deflection. Themistocles arranged to have a series of messages delivered to Xerxes, apparently from Xerxes's own sources, suggesting that the many Greek troops from the smaller city-states of Thessaly, Thebes, and Argos who had joined his army in the wake of his military successes were unreliable and on the verge of revolt. Xerxes chose not to deploy these troops. Themistocles continued his plan of disinformation when Xerxes was led to believe that his Greek troops at Salamis (in Cyprus) were planning to leave, and Xerxes subsequently deployed half of his fleet to try to trap them. Themistocles was able to use yet a third successful disinformation ploy to induce Xerxes to attack the Greek fleet under these unfavorable conditions. Thus, the Battle of Salamis (September 28, 480 B.C.E.) proved to be a turning point in human history, and the Greeks' victory decided the war in their favor. After the Persian army was defeated at Plataea in 479 B.C.E., the Persians, despite having captured Athens, were eventually forced to leave Greece. Why was Themistocles's disinformation propaganda ploy so successful? As P. M. Taylor (1990) pointed out, "The simple fact of the matter was that this type of defection was so common in ancient Greece that Xerxes had little reason not to believe [the disinformation of] Themistocles!" (p. 26). This is a very salient point because propaganda firmly grounded in the realm of "possibility" or "truth" is much more likely to be successful, and Themistocles certainly understood this.

Alexander the Great

Alexander III, known as "The Great" (356–323 B.C.E.), as King of Macedonia (336–323 B.C.E.) created a Greek empire that stretched from India in the east, to Scythia in the north, and to Egypt and the Persian Gulf in the south, thereby introducing a new period of history known as the Hellenistic Age. He was only 20 when he succeeded to the throne after the assassination of King Philip II, his father. This precocious young man fulfilled his father's destiny by uniting Greece against its external enemies and created the League of Corinth, which included all the Greek states except Sparta. From his earliest years, he had impressed distinguished men with his intelligence and astute political sense. By all accounts, he was virtuous and abstained from large quantities of food and drink, which was normal among his officers. For his time, he was extremely magnanimous to those whom he

defeated, understanding that more could be gained by incorporating these subjugated peoples into his empire than by destroying them.

Alexander never lost a battle, and when possible, he explored the territory alone or with a local guide. He was one of the first to study openly the “psychology” of his enemies, including their weapons and methods of warfare. His troops were well trained, and he was fair with them, never making a promise he did not intend to keep. He led by the example of his own courage and never lavished great riches on himself, giving gifts to others instead. His strategic military instincts were legendary, and no one was able to move armies as swiftly as Alexander. But he was also a master propagandist who knew the importance of significant events. As an example, in his attempt to unite the Macedonians and the Persians in his last years, he married Barsine, the eldest daughter of the late Persian King Darius. As well, he also arranged the marriages of 80 of his officers to Persian noblewomen and 10,000 of his troops to the Persian concubines who had followed his army through Asia. In this way, Alexander indicated his sincere desire to create a unified empire under his leadership and to underscore his belief that all his “subject” peoples were equal in his eyes. This symbolic act of propaganda reconciled the two cultures in a way that no political treaty ever could.

In 324 B.C.E., Alexander requested that he be deified so that he could carry out a scheme of repatriating 20,000 Greek exiles, which was contrary to the established laws of the League of Corinth. He became the son of Zeus, and his face soon appeared on coins, replacing that of Heracles, the real mythological son of Zeus. He commissioned, or allowed to be built, many statues and monuments in his honor, and representations of his portrait were to be found everywhere in his empire, adorning pottery, coins, buildings, and formal art (P. M. Taylor, 1990, p. 31). Alexander was the first to recognize that to maintain cohesion and control over his vast empire, such propaganda symbols could serve as a constant reminder of the various subjugated populations just where the center of power resided. These strategies are still widely used today.

Alexander died from fever at the age of 33, but he had been so successful in creating his own cult of personality and legends that they are as powerful today as they were 2,000 years ago. Even though we have very few contemporary accounts of his life and actions, the work of later historians ensured that his name has become synonymous with power and military might. He is, without doubt, one of the greatest figures in human history, and other notable individuals who followed him, such as Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, and even 20th-century military generals, have all expressed admiration for Alexander and his achievements.

Imperial Rome

The Imperial Roman Empire, between 50 B.C.E. and C.E. 50, applied systematic propaganda techniques that used all available forms of communication and symbology to create an extremely effective and extensive network of control. The resulting “image” of Imperial Rome remains strong and has become an integral part of our popular culture, as we can all identify with the trappings associated with this great empire. Roman emperors developed their propaganda strategies to meet a very real need. Following in the footsteps of Alexander the Great, the Romans quickly found that the geographic extent of their far-flung conquests had created a difficult problem of control over their empire and necessitated the development of a strong, highly visible, centralized government. The wealth and power that had come with the conquests were used to maximum advantage as vast sums of money were spent on symbolizing the might of Rome through architecture, art, literature, and even the coinage. Coordinated from Rome, the policy of the Caesars was to combine all these symbols into a form of “corporate symbolism” reminiscent of modern-day advertising plans, which projected the image of an all-powerful, omnipresent entity.

Whereas the Greek city-states had already discovered that judicious use of sculpture, poetry, building, music, and theater could project the desired image of sophistication, the skill of the Caesars, as one historian noted, was in expanding and mass-producing this means of communication so that it was projected successfully over a long period to a very large area (Thomson, 1977, p. 56). Other factors contributed to the success of the Romans, for they were able to exploit a political and spiritual vacuum that made their imperial subjects much more susceptible to the sophisticated offerings of their conquerors. The Roman Empire was able to offer more than military protection: It provided both a moral philosophy and a cultural aesthetic that was adopted by the local peoples. In this way, the art and architecture of Rome was as much a symbol of imperial power as were the garrisons of armored legions, and the cultural legacy remained much longer.

Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.E.) was particularly adept at using sophisticated propaganda techniques throughout his rise to power and during his move to assert totalitarian power. Initially, he used stories of his military exploits abroad, combined with actual terror tactics at home, to put fear into the populace. One prime communication channel for conveying these messages was coins; they were widely used to boast of victories or to show the emperors in various guises such as warlord, god, or protector of the empire. Coins were the one social document that the Romans were certain would be seen by the widest possible range of subjects under their control. Caesar also



Figure 2.1 One of Julius Caesar's coins. Coins were the first genuine form of mass propaganda, in that they were widely circulated and clearly were intended to represent the power of the state with the symbology stamped on them.

made maximum use of the spectacle, spending lavishly on massive triumphal processions—more than four in 1 month at one point—each representing a victory in the civil war and each different from the other. The cumulative effect of all this pomp and show of power helped create an atmosphere that enhanced Julius Caesar's reputation and seemed to justify his careful hints that he was descended from the goddess Venus. It was no accident that he chose the phrase "I came, I saw, I conquered," which in Latin is reduced to the alliterating and rhyming words *veni, vidi, vici*.

Julius Caesar was a master propagandist, equaled only by Napoleon and Hitler in his understanding of meaningful symbols and in his ability to understand instinctively the psychological needs of his audience. He understood the need to use such symbols of power and sophistication as a means of converting subject populations to the Roman way of life. This was far less expensive than maintaining elaborate garrisons of legionnaires and induced obedience to the new regime through cooperation and identification, rather than subjugation. Significantly, subject peoples were often granted the right to become Roman citizens under certain circumstances, thus increasing personal identification with the conqueror.

Caesar created his own legends out of ordinary events, and by making himself seem supernatural, he was able to set in motion the psychological changes in the minds of the Roman people that would lead away from republicanism and toward the acceptance of monarchical rule and the imperial

goals. It is not surprising that, throughout history, evocations of the Caesarist image have been repeated by those who aspire to leave their mark on the world. Thus, not only Charlemagne, Napoleon, Mussolini, and Hitler have invested themselves in Caesarist trappings, but so has almost every parvenu monarchy in Europe. Whether the image of the eagle, the armored breastplate, the man-god on the white horse, or the powerful orator, the propagandistic legacy of the Roman Empire is still much in evidence in our own world.

Propaganda and Religion

When considering the effect of long-range propagandistic activities, no campaigns have been more successful than those waged by the great proselytizing religions of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. Although each of these great religions has used different strategies to achieve its purpose, they have all relied on the use of charismatic figures, heavy symbolism, a simple and incessant moral philosophy, and an understanding of their audience's needs. In each case, the new religion had to find a way to replace the existing religious beliefs and to win over the minds and hearts of the populace.

It should also be made clear that the propagandistic aspects of religions change over time and are subject to variations, depending on a variety of social and political factors at any point in time. The somewhat humane practices of proselytizing of the early Christians were not followed in the coercive techniques of the Spanish Inquisition in the 16th century, and even today quite wide differences are found in the use of propaganda in different Christian denominations, such as fundamentalist Southern Baptists or Methodists. In the case of Islam, in which religion permeates all aspects of life, including politics (Islam does not recognize the concept of "secular" authority), many shifts have occurred in the strict application of religious laws in various Islamic countries over the centuries. Today, we are witnessing a renewed propaganda effort by fundamentalist Muslims to use Islam as a means of achieving both the cultural and political goal of creating unity among the Arabic nations. The fundamentalists see strict adherence to the religious (and therefore political) laws of Islam as being the only way to counteract the inroads made by more materialistic Western influences (Patai, 1983).

This issue of Islamic fundamentalism has taken on a much greater significance in the wake of the events of 9/11 and is the source of a great deal of conflict and consternation in current international politics. In the effort to destroy the source of the terrible attack on the World Trade Center, the American military essentially removed an extreme form of Islamic

fundamentalism in Afghanistan, where the Taliban regime not only had severely restricted the education of females but also had gone so far as to forbid television viewing, radio listening, dancing, and the playing and singing of nonreligious music. A new government, supposedly more tolerant of religious and cultural practices, was eventually voted in by the citizens. As a result, it was hoped that the “new” Afghanistan would now become less of a threat to the region, and to world peace itself, than had the fundamentalist and terrorist-supportive Taliban government. However, history has constantly demonstrated that the long-term results of such imposed “regime shifts” are very difficult to predict, and the country continues to struggle with entrenched cultural practices, such as the unequal treatment of women and the continuation by large parts of the population to offer loyalty to local warlords, which threatens the power of the central government to control the country.

Religions can be used very effectively as propaganda vehicles for broader social or political purposes. Beginning with the Chinese-Japanese War (1894–1895), the Japanese military used the Shinto religion as one important element in providing public support for their expansionist policies. This was done by turning the previously benign practice of Shinto into a supra-religious national cult. This act allowed the cult of Shinto to be imposed on the entire nation while still giving lip service to the modernistic notion of freedom of religious belief that the Japanese were eager to convey to the outside world. In the name of this Shinto cult of supra-nationalism, the emperor cult (worshipping of the emperor as a living god) was artificially devised, and a course in *shushin* (moral teaching) was made the basis of compulsory education for all. In this way, Shinto was manipulated by the militarists and jingoistic nationalists as the spiritual weapon for mobilizing the entire nation to guard the safety and prosperity of the emperor’s throne. Japanese soldiers were sent into battle, propagandized in the belief that they were fighting “for the emperor!” After the defeat of Japan in 1945, the Allied powers prohibited the practice of State Shinto, although the pure religion was allowed to return, and today it continues to be an important part of Japanese life.

The use of religion continues to be a very important ingredient in modern propaganda practices. The Irish Republican Army—especially its military wing, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA)—in its efforts to force the British out of Northern Ireland, continues to emphasize the differences between the living conditions (e.g., housing, jobs, schooling) for the British-favored Protestants and its own followers in the Roman Catholic community (Wright, 1990). Even when a provisional settlement was reached between the warring factions in Northern Ireland in mid-1998, the uneasy peace was being threatened by the deep-seated cultural differences fostered by three



Figure 2.2 *The Leaflet Seller*, an etching by Amman from 1588. Illustrated leaflets have been a staple form of propaganda since the 16th century, and the leaflet seller was a common sight in town and cities. The combination of pictures and text was used for entertainment in the form of stories but also for propaganda purposes in religious and political conflicts.

centuries of religious confrontation. The Protestant Orange Order, an important cultural organization, insisted on its right to continue its marches through Catholic neighborhoods, symbolizing the victory of Protestant forces over Catholics at the Battle of the Boyne on July 12, 1690. These propagandistic marches, anachronistic as they may seem, have become an integral part of Protestant life and serve as a means of socialization for many young men into Protestant culture.

In South Africa, until the late 1980s, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) provided a religious justification for the establishment of the government's policies of apartheid. The DRC used its interpretation of certain biblical texts to propagandize actively in favor of racial separation. As Allister Sparks (1990) noted,

While the state has implemented the political philosophy, the church has supplied the theological justification for it. Thus has Afrikanerdom been largely relieved of what Leon Festinger [a psychologist] would call the “cognitive dissonance” of a devoutly religious people imposing a discriminatory, oppressive and manifestly unjust system on others of God’s children. More than that, the church’s endorsement gave a great impetus to the apartheid idea. It replaced the sense of guilt with a sense of mission, teaching not only that apartheid is not sinful but that it is in accordance with the laws of God. To implement it is therefore a sacred task which the Afrikaner people have been specially “called” to perform. (p. 153)

In one of the most dramatic shifts in South African history, the DRC eventually renounced its theological position in the late 1980s and apologized to those it had harmed by propagating these false interpretations of the Bible. This decision demolished the theological justification for political separation of the races and removed one major stumbling block in the dismantling of apartheid. In the period since 1991, after the release of the African leader and hero Nelson Mandela, the DRC has attempted to play a mediating role in bringing about racial and social harmony in the new “rainbow nation,” as postapartheid South Africa calls itself. Although this new role for the church has not succeeded in eliminating all remnants of racist ideology among its former adherents, those whites who have chosen to remain in the DRC have demonstrated a genuine desire to see the fledgling multiracial society succeed.

Religious ideology can also propagandize for the good of society. As an example, in the United States, we have witnessed a similar shift in attitude (essentially religious “beliefs”) in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormon Church). Until recently, Mormon credo was similar to that of the DRC in South Africa, interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures to link black skin color to curses from God. In 1978, the church decided to admit all worthy of priesthood, regardless of race or color. However, the church was also eager to retract certain statements without undermining the credibility of church figures who are revered as prophets and whose pronouncements Mormons believe were inspired by God. As the membership in the church grew in Africa and other foreign countries, it became a necessity to disavow these earlier “racist legacies.” The *Los Angeles Times* (May 18, 1998) reported that church leaders were secretly meeting to consider how to achieve this. Clearly, if the Mormons are to succeed in their overseas missions, they will have to find a way to erase this unacceptable part of their history.

In the United States, churches have traditionally played a significant role in furthering (or sometimes hindering) civil rights causes. Thus, in the battle for

60 Propaganda and Persuasion

“gay rights,” both sides have used religious interpretation to bolster their propagandistic campaigns. Those against claim that the Bible clearly condemns homosexuality; those in favor call attention to the most fundamental tenet of Christianity: “love thy neighbor.” In recent years, we have seen an increasing campaign by sectors of the “religious right” to try to convince homosexuals and lesbians that, through the use of specific Christian-based “counseling,” they could become “straight.” Backed by full-page advertisements in major newspapers, this campaign has become a controversial battleground for the question of whether homosexuality is genetic or behavioral in origin.

In the presidential election of 2004, the issue of “gay marriage” (the legal right for homosexuals to marry) was a galvanizing one for many people, especially those who identified themselves as “born-again” or evangelical Christians. The issue became a focus of major propaganda campaigns on both sides of the argument and was ultimately credited with being a salient factor in the reelection of George W. Bush. To many political observers, this particular propaganda campaign was the forerunner of a much more systematic attempt on the part of conservative religious and political elements to make homosexuality a major issue in all local and national elections.

The Rise of Christianity

To examine the propagandistic strategies and techniques of a religion in no way demeans it; on the contrary, it provides a clear example that not all propagandistic messages are negative but are often aimed at some positive social or political purpose. The example of the rise of Christianity demonstrates how, by skill and understanding of the audience, a specific appeal was made that eventually altered the shape of the world. Christianity was aimed to a large extent at the defeated, the slaves, and the less successful part of the Roman Empire. It had to compete with literally hundreds of other similar religions for this audience at the time of the dissolution of the Roman Empire, and considering that Christ and his followers did not have control over the existing communications media at the time, the ultimate level of adoption of Christianity must be considered one of the great propaganda campaigns of all time.

When the strategy of Christian techniques is broken down, we find a masterful use of images and emotion. The legacy of the Jewish synagogue preacher was well established, but Christ and his followers took what were basically traditional messages and put them into a new form. The use of parables, dramatic gestures on the floor of the temple, graphic metaphors (e.g., the seeds on stony ground, the eye of the camel, the shepherd and his

flock), and the personal factor of singling out individuals as human metaphors (e.g., Peter “the Rock,” Simon “the Fisherman”) combined to provide a powerful, emotional, and easily understood message. The keynote was simplicity and a promise of humanity and dignity for those who had often been denied such treatment. Early organizers of the Christian religion also developed the concept of cellular proselytizing, later to be adopted and developed by Lenin in the Russian Revolution and other revolutionaries since then. This was exemplified by the choice of 12 disciples as the dedicated core who would carry the message to other groups, who in turn would spread the word through personal contact in a system resembling today’s pyramidal marketing schemes. Each cell would have its own leaders, and the loyalty and faith of cell members were solidified by the rituals of baptism and communion (Thomson, 1977). Nearly three centuries after the death of Christ, the cross became the symbol of Christianity, but during that time, the use of the two curved intersecting lines symbolizing a fish was widely used.

Not only was this symbol easy to draw, but it also had mystical overtones in that it derived from an acronym for the Greek words for “Jesus Christ, Son of God, savior,” *ichthus*, which means “fish.” The theme of the fish was particularly suited to a religion that relied on recruitment, and the metaphor of the apostles as “fishers of men,” which many of them were in real life, was most appropriate. Initially used as a secret sign during the time when Christians were persecuted by the Roman authorities, the fish symbolized the mission of the group it represented and did so simply and effectively; as a result, it was found scrawled on walls, trees, in the dust, and any place where Christians wished to leave their mark to communicate their increasing numbers and strength to others. Even graffiti have a powerful propaganda value (Dondis, 1981).

The early Christians persevered against great odds, not only in the form of persecution and competition from other religions but also from dangerous internal schisms and heresies from dissident groups. One factor that eventually allowed Christianity to flower was the rejection of attempts made to absorb it into a universal world-religion (Gnosticism) or to restrict it to the select few (Montanism). From the outset, Christianity had asserted that it was catholic, or universal, in its message and appeal long before it became Roman Catholic in fact. What helped Christianity was its syncretic nature; it absorbed and used aspects from both Greco-Roman classicism and the new Germanic culture, as well as elements from ancient Oriental religions. When combined with the dramatic gospel of a savior who had died to save the entire world, and told in the common Greek or “Koine” that was the universal literary language of the Roman Empire, the religion thus possessed identity as well as universality for its increasingly wider audience.

62 Propaganda and Persuasion

After Constantine I adopted Christianity for a mixture of personal and political motives about the year 313, Christianity became for all intents and purposes the official religion of the emperors and was eventually adopted by the Germanic tribes that inherited the remnants of the empire. It took several hundred years for the full panoply of Christian symbolism to develop, but aided by the resilience of the infrastructure and communication system developed during the Roman Empire, the religion spread remarkably quickly. Its theme of universal love and a promise that the humble and the meek would inherit the earth was a dramatic reversal of the established order, but it found a sympathetic ear and gained audience empathy. The success of Christianity must also be considered within the sociohistorical period of late antiquity. The period 100 to 300 was an extremely religious age, evidenced by an increasing interest in the “other world.” The material world, beset by barbaric invasions, plagues, disintegrating governments, and incessant warfare, was increasingly considered to be a place of evil, and humans were regarded as strangers in this world. Christianity, more than other religions, emphasized the mortification of the flesh and the spiritual separation from the material world and also promised a glorious afterlife to the faithful (Forman, 1979).

In succeeding centuries, the full symbolism of Christianity would be adopted—the cross, the lion and the lamb, the virgin and child, and even the horned and tailed figure (surely taken from pagan symbols) of the devil. These symbols have endured for nearly 1,500 years, and today Christianity is practiced by several billion people. The continued success of Christianity is a testament to the creative use of propaganda techniques applied to universal humanistic principles.

The Crusades

As was noted earlier, religious faith has been one of the most potent sources of propaganda in human history. Of all the wars that have been fought in the name of religious faith, none have been so bloody or more protracted than the Christian Crusades of the Middle Ages. For nearly 200 years, between 1095 and 1291, the forces of Christendom tried to wrest control of the Holy Land at the eastern end of the Mediterranean from the Islamic forces that controlled it. The origin of the Crusades can be traced directly to the exploitation of the almost mystical religious fervor of this period by a series of popes and monarchs seeking to consolidate their own power in the ongoing controversy between church and state. In fact, the basic concern that the holy places of Christendom were in the control of Moslem

“infidels” was not really a problem, for although Christian pilgrims were often taxed, the Moslems had seldom denied religious visitors access to these sacred sites.

More practical political and economic considerations fueled the crusading impulse. The Roman Catholic Church saw an opportunity to spread its influence eastward into the sphere of its archrival, the Eastern Orthodox Church, from which it had been separated since 1054 as a result of a dramatic quarrel over doctrine. Feudal monarchs and lords of Western Europe dreamed of the riches that could be obtained from new lands and subjects. Also involved were the promise of penance for all sins and the forgiveness of debts for those going on Crusades. All these factors were exploited in the church’s exhortations for people to take up arms to recover the soil where Jesus had trod.

The most significant propaganda events of the Crusades were the circumstances surrounding the original plea for the Crusades made by Pope Urban II in 1095. The Byzantine emperor Alexius Comnenus, responding to increasing inroads made by the Seljuk Turks on his territory, appealed to Pope Urban II for military assistance to protect “Christianity.” The pope carefully staged his response at the Council of Clermont, held in November 1095 in southeastern France. He had previously announced that he would make a great public speech, thus assuring a significant audience. The splendor of the convocation was impressive, with cardinals, bishops, and nobles resplendent in their robes while the common folk gathered outside the church. After the ecclesiastical business had concluded, Urban moved outside to mount a large platform specially built for this occasion. According to one version (Freemantle, 1965, p. 54), he began by saying,

It is the imminent peril threatening you and all the faithful which has brought us hither. From the confines of Jerusalem and from the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth . . . an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God . . . has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire.

Urban then enumerated the atrocities the Moslems had supposedly committed, including the ravaging of churches and their use in Islamic rites, the rape of Christian women, and the defiling of Christian altars.

He was graphic in his details, reporting that one technique used by the Turkish with their victims was to “perforate their navels, and dragging forth the extremity of the intestines, bind it to a stake; then with flogging they lead the victim around until the viscera having gushed forth the victim falls prostrate upon the ground.” As the crowd stirred with emotion, Pope Urban II

asked, "On whom, therefore, is the labor of avenging these wrongs and for recovering this territory incumbent, if not upon you? . . . Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulcher; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves" (Freemantle, 1965, p. 55). Urban skillfully balanced his appeal to the emotions with these atrocity stories, with a practical vision of what he was offering to those who would undertake this holy Crusade. He reminded his audience that the land to which he was urging them to go "floweth with milk and honey . . . like another paradise of delights," whereas the land they would be leaving was "too narrow for your population" and notably poor in food production.

Once Urban had announced the Crusade, and even before he had completed his speech, individuals in the crowd were calling out, "Deus Volt! Deus Volt!" (God wills it!). Whether this response was spontaneous or the result of deliberate planning we will never know, but Urban lost no opportunity and declared then and there that "Deus Volt!" would become the battle cry against the heathen foe and, furthermore, that each man embarking on the Crusade would wear the sign of the cross on his clothing. Next, the bishop of Puy, possibly briefed beforehand, stepped forward and shouted, "I confess!" Volunteers came forward, and before an emotionally charged crowd, the Christian crusade to liberate the holy city of Jerusalem was launched (Thomson, 1977, pp. 71–72).

Even before the crowds had dispersed, many had already ripped their clothing to make two strips forming a cross. This gesture was soon repeated by scores of thousands all across Europe. The cry for revenge on the infidels and in favor of a holy crusade was propagated by priests and preachers, and a significant number of written tracts were distributed describing the nature of Moslem atrocities on Christian people. Woodcuts of a monstrous Turk trampling the cross were circulated from village to village (Freemantle, 1965). All these propaganda strategies would not have been so effective if an underlying mood of piety had not been established a century earlier. Significant numbers of people had already experienced lengthy religious pilgrimages to such places as Rome, Venice, or even the Holy Land. The idea of undertaking such an arduous trip in the name of God for a clearly devout purpose officially sanctioned by the Church was not as far-fetched as might be imagined.

While Pope Urban II and the feudal monarchs were organizing official expeditions, the common people, roused to a fever pitch, surged forth on their own with little preparation. At this point, one of the most significant figures of the Crusades mythology appeared—Peter the Hermit. A priest of Amiens, a town in France, Peter was one preacher whose propagandistic eloquence attracted thousands of ordinary people to take part in what has been

called the People's Crusade of 1096. Peter was very much like one of the Old Testament prophets with his wild hair, rolling eyes, and torrential speech. He claimed to be carrying a personal letter from God and was frequently subject to visions. He was so revered that the hairs of his donkey's tail were plucked to be kept as holy relics by worshippers. He arrived in Constantinople in July 1096 with only a remnant of the original ragtag band of almost 50,000 pilgrim-crusaders who had left France and Germany. There, he joined the other band of commoners, led by Walter the Penniless, which had managed to make its way eastward. Despite the warnings of the Christians living in Byzantium, these unprepared pilgrims began hostilities against the Turks, and they were systematically cut to pieces. Peter eventually joined forces with the princes of the first official Crusade, but his moment of glory had vanished, and in the end he returned to France, where he died in 1151.

The People's Crusade may have failed, but the First Crusade of the Princes was a great success, and by 1097, four expeditionary forces converged on Constantinople by land and sea. The climax of a series of Crusader victories came on July 15, 1099, when, after a 5-week siege, the forces entered Jerusalem to kneel in prayer at the site of the Holy Sepulcher. The Crusader kingdoms maintained a strong presence in the Holy Land for nearly 200 years afterward.

The entire crusading ethos fostered a new element of propaganda—the rise of chivalry. In the 12th century, a series of epic poems, the *Chansons de Geste*, were widely spread along the pilgrim routes by wandering troubadours. These stories about the feats of valor of Roland and his friend Olivier, who sacrificed themselves in the service of their king, served to provide role models for the chivalric ideal of knighthood. These epic poems were a form of propaganda for the idea of combat in the noble cause and helped establish the romance of all the attendant pomp and ceremony associated with chivalry. In many ways, the romantic notion of chivalry was as dangerous as later beliefs in nationalism and race, in that it created a romantic ideal of knighthood in which young men were asked to prove themselves in war or combat.

The Crusades started with great religious fervor and ended in disillusionment and political disarray, but in the end the propaganda that created the Crusades served a positive end. Despite the eventual loss of both Jerusalem and Constantinople, the contact with the civilizations of Byzantium and Islam brought many new ideas into Europe, such as glass making, silk weaving, and the use of sugar and spices in cooking. But an even greater consequence of the Crusades was the changes in the structure of feudalism brought about by the decline in wealth of the great feudal families. Towns

now became wealthier and freemen more assertive in demanding their rights. Tradesmen and artisans prospered in this new climate of freedom, and the use of money began to replace the previous system of barter. Finally, the Roman Church, the moral and propagandistic force behind the Crusades, was able to solidify its power in the face of declining feudalism.

The Crusades continue to have a very special resonance in modern society as the battle between extremist elements of Moslem fundamentalism and the American government-sponsored “war against terrorism” has created deep divisions in the Arab world. It should be remembered that from the historical perspective, Arab culture has traditionally interpreted the Crusades in a very different light, essentially seeing the crusaders as rapacious foreign interlopers, whose main ambitions were not so much religiously motivated as they were seeking land, wealth, and power. These views, like those in the West that see only the religious and chivalrous aspects of the crusaders, have not changed for nearly a thousand years. Therefore, it was a very propagandistic faux pas when, a few days after the assault on the World Trade Center, president George W. Bush speaking spontaneously, without the aid of advisers or speechwriters, put a word on the new American effort to combat terrorism that both shaped it and gave it meaning. “This crusade,” he said, “this war on terrorism.” For George W. Bush, *crusade* was an offhand reference, no doubt colored by his strong Christian beliefs, but many, in both the Arab and Western worlds, saw it as an accidental probing of unintended but nevertheless real meaning. It was felt that while the president had used the word inadvertently, it nonetheless suggested his perspective on the nature of the conflict and was an unmasking of his most deeply held feelings. People, especially in the Arab nations, were outraged at the use of this term. Later, his embarrassed aides suggested that he had meant to use the word only as a synonym for struggle, but Bush’s own syntax suggested that he defined crusade as war. This seemingly small, albeit innocent, mistake has continued to provide a rationale for many in the Arab world to view the “war on terrorism” with anger and suspicion and as a 21st-century version of the Crusades of the Middle Ages.

The Reformation and Counter-Reformation

In the history of propaganda, Christianity figures prominently, as both proponents and adversaries of the various denominations have used every conceivable technique to maintain their power and spread their ideas. Development of the movable-type printing press in the mid-15th century created a totally new form of communication that was almost immediately put

to use as a major channel of propaganda in the titanic struggle for power between the Roman Catholic Church and Martin Luther.

An explanation of the causes of the struggle between the Roman Catholic Church and the “reformists” is beyond the scope of this book, but it essentially involved disagreements with increasingly corrupt practices in the established church (e.g., the sale of indulgences for vast sums of money) and a desire to establish direct contact with God without having to go through priests. This latter desire ultimately manifested itself in a call for the establishment of a simplified liturgy and Bible in the vernacular German language, rather than in Latin, which prevented full participation by the congregation. Martin Luther provided the first vernacular liturgies in 1526 (the “Deutsche Messe”), and his major literary achievement, the German-language Bible, was first printed in complete form in 1534. (A translation of the New Testament had appeared earlier in 1522.) The printed Bible, which went through many editions in Luther’s lifetime, was the highest achievement of the Reformation and the direct result of the application of a new technology to the furthering of a specific cause. As noted Reformation historian A. G. Dickens (1968) pointed out,

Between 1517 and 1520, Luther’s thirty publications probably sold well over 300,000 copies. . . . Altogether in relation to the spread of religious ideas it seems difficult to exaggerate the significance of the Press, without which a revolution of this magnitude could scarcely have been consummated. . . . For the first time in human history a great reading public judged the validity of revolutionary ideas through a mass-medium which used the vernacular languages together with the arts of the journalist and the cartoonist. (p. 51)

The development of the printing press was a quantum leap in the speed of communication, and in the 16th century, printing speeds increased from about 20 sheets per hour to more than 200; although this was slow in comparison with modern printing presses, it was nevertheless an important step toward the evolution of true mass media. Luther’s works were widely circulated by printers using aggressive sales tactics, but then their appeal for the increasingly literate population was enhanced by his vigorous, entertaining style, as well as the use of woodcut illustrations by leading artists of the time, such as Lucas Cranach. These early cartoons were able to convey in a simplified manner Luther’s attack on the papacy and Catholicism and greatly increased the effectiveness of his message.

As a study in propaganda, the Reformation, particularly the role played by Martin Luther and his followers, is a perfect example of how the channeling of the message, couched in an empathic emotional context and

68 Propaganda and Persuasion

provided with an effective means of delivery, can bring about mass changes in attitudes. Luther used plain German language laced with common idiomatic expressions of Northern Germany and Austria and based his sermons on metaphor and folk wisdom; these factors allowed effective communication over a wide area and with a heterogeneous audience of Germans of all social classes. Basing his operations in the small town of Wittenberg, he distributed his stirring pamphlets all over Northern Europe, taking advantage of the lack of effective censorship in the divided German states.

Using a novel and entertaining “dialogue” style in his printed sermons, Martin Luther was able to attack precisely those aspects of the established church practices, such as the sale of indulgences, the buying and selling of church offices, the open hypocrisy of clerical celibacy, and papal corruption, all of which had already received wide attention among the general public. Luther used the basic strategy of widely disseminating and emphasizing information that had previously been a part of what can be called the “general public paranoia,” thus confirming the public’s fears and increasing the potential for attitude change on a mass scale. But he was also able to offer a positive message of hope as a counter to this aggressive negativity; now the people could control their own religious destinies and, using a language they understood, could participate more meaningfully in the religious ceremony. What Luther encouraged, in essence, was the idea that individuals could communicate directly with God without the intervention of the church. Comparing the hold of the Catholic Church over the German population to that of the Hebrews held in captivity in Babylon, he struck a very sympathetic chord with his audience.

Luther made sure his religious activities were supported on the political front, once again demonstrating a masterful grasp of the elements of a successful propaganda campaign. Immediately after he had been condemned by the papacy in 1520, he penned a manifesto titled *The Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* (the first edition of 4,000 was sold out within a week), which was pointedly aimed at the rulers of Germany—the princes, the knights, and cities—that, under the young Emperor Charles V, had a series of grievances against Rome. Although the emperor was himself a devout Catholic, for political reasons (the Turkish menace was a constant problem) he seemed powerless to act against Luther, and Luther suddenly found himself swept along with the tide of national resentment against Rome. Luther was thus able to exploit the political disorganization in Germany at this time to serve his own purposes, pitting the German nobility, Protestant and Catholic, against each other.

Luther did not limit his propaganda strategies to the sermon or the pamphlet but rather used a range of other techniques. The dramatic public act of



Figure 2.3 The Dragon of Revelation Wearing the Papal Tiara. This illustration from the first edition of Gutenberg's *German New Testament* was printed in 1522. The depiction of the papacy in this manner was very controversial, and later editions often excised the two top crowns, which represented the role of the kings and nobility, because of pressure from German royalty. It is estimated that one quarter of all the editions of Luther's bible contained this clear visual identification of the pope with the antichrist.

nailing his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the church door in Wittenberg on the eve of All Saint's Day in 1517 was a major propagandistic gesture. Luther knew that simply sending a copy of his document to the leaders of the church would not have served his purpose. This very public act moved his action from one of persuasion to a deliberately planned propaganda strategy. Had



Figure 2.4 *The Devil With Bagpipes*, by Erhard Schön, 1535. This colored woodcut is an explicit criticism of the clergy, showing a monstrous devil sitting on the shoulders of a friar and playing his head as if it were a bagpipe. The meaning here is obvious: The clergy speaks the language of the devil. This is a particularly effective and direct form of visual propaganda, even for those who could not read the accompanying text.

it not been for the printing press, only a few copies of this protest may have circulated among the people of Wittenberg, but with the new technology, this gesture was turned overnight into a manifesto that swiftly circulated throughout Germany, attracting an ever-widening audience and eventually

becoming the precipitating factor in the greatest crisis in the history of the Western church.

In the 16th century, despite the inroads of the printing press, most information was still obtained and circulated orally. Luther, recognizing the continued importance of the oral tradition, used not only the sermon (which he then had printed) but also the emotional power of music in the form of the vernacular hymn. Of special importance was the poetic version of Lutheran doctrine put to verse by Hans Sachs, the most prolific German poet and dramatist of his age. Propagandistic activities in the form of theatrical presentation were also very influential in an age when most people could not read.

The work of artist and engraver Lucas Cranach (1472–1553) was of most assistance to Luther's propagandistic efforts. His portraits of the reformers and the Protestant princes were widely circulated, thus giving them greater personal identification with the audience and turning them into visual embodiments of heroic proportion; however, Cranach's engraved caricatures satirizing the pope or depicting the Catholic Church as the Babylonian woman of the Revelation had the greatest propaganda value. These were easily identifiable and provided a measure of entertainment, as well as underscoring political and religious tensions. From all accounts, these caricatures and portraits sold extremely well in the Protestant sections of Germany.

One aspect of Luther's propaganda strategies was particularly effective: He succeeded in convincing his defenders that the papacy was, in fact, the Antichrist. This allowed Luther to assume a special position within the sacred history and legends of the Christian church. As Edwards (1994) pointed out in his detailed study of Luther's propaganda techniques,

He was spoken of in biblical terms, taking the attributes of the prophesied opponents of the Antichrist. He was not just any monk, doctor, or man of the Bible, however learned. Fitted to the role of revealer of the papal Antichrist, he possessed an authority and inspired a deference that no other man of his age could claim, at least in the religious realm. (p. 92)

The Protestant movement was not limited to the activities of Martin Luther in Germany. Other Protestant reformers, such as John Calvin in Switzerland and John Knox in Scotland, also used sophisticated propaganda techniques, extending the mere persuasive aspects of the pulpit by the judicious use of the printing press to refine their particular theological philosophies. In fact, one significant feature of the Protestant Reformation was the many different Protestant sects that came into existence. Although there were differences in the theological interpretations of these groups, their propaganda strategies were almost identical. First, their propaganda efforts had two main objectives: a negative one to emphasize and exploit the wide discontent with the practices

72 Propaganda and Persuasion

of the old church and a positive one to associate themselves with the aspirations and expectations of a new religious order. Second, their propaganda was as much secular (especially political) as it was spiritual (Roelker, 1979). This latter strategy was especially effective in areas in which new political allegiances based on territorial or cultural identifications were being formed. The end result of the Protestant Reformation was a fundamental restructuring of both secular and religious power in Western society.

The Counter-Reformation

The established Roman Catholic Church did not quietly acquiesce to the demands and actions of the Protestant reformers. The Catholic Church soon began its own propaganda campaigns to prevent further inroads on its powers. One of the most important figures of the Counter-Reformation was Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, who developed his own highly effective and instinctual propaganda techniques. The Society of Jesus, which was the official name of the Jesuits, was organized into a cellular structure, and Loyola created in his followers a highly emotional, almost mystical fanaticism. He understood the significant power of education as a means of altering and then fixing attitudes in the young, and he insisted on total obedience from those in his order.

The Jesuits became the major force in the church's attempt to counter the Protestant Reformation, and under Loyola, they achieved some remarkable successes. Austria was restored completely to the Catholic position, and the Polish peasantry were converted to Catholicism in the face of strong opposition from the reformers (Thomson, 1977). Later, through the use of Jesuits, the Catholic Church began to expand its missionary efforts in other continents, most notably South America and Asia (China in particular). For his efforts, Ignatius Loyola was made a saint by Pope Gregory XV in 1622. The Society of Jesus continues as a major teaching arm of the Roman Catholic Church today, a fitting tribute to the power of propaganda.

Also in 1622, Pope Gregory XV, after examining the state of the church in Europe, decided to establish on June 22 of that year the *Sacra Congregatio Christiano Nomini Propaganda* or, as it was more commonly known, the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith), which was charged with carrying "the faith" to the New World and with reviving and strengthening it in Europe as a means of countering the Protestant revolution. This unified and centralized Roman Catholic Church missionary activities, and within a few years, in 1627, Pope Urban VII founded the *Collegium Urbanum*, the seminary that served as the training ground for the Propaganda.

It is interesting that the methods and strategies to be used by the missionaries of the Propaganda were left to the discretion of those in the field. The object was to bring women and men to a voluntary, not coerced, acceptance of the church's doctrines. Pope Gregory's plan laid the foundation for modern propaganda techniques in that it stressed the control of opinions and, through them, the actions of people in the mass. It also provided a convenient term for the description of the practice of public opinion control. At first, the word *propaganda* was applied to any organization that set out to propagate a doctrine; then it was used to describe the doctrine itself; and finally it came to mean the techniques employed to change opinions and spread the doctrine. Thus was born the modern-day usage of *propaganda* (Qualter, 1962).

In his study of propaganda, Qualter (1962) pointed out that the Catholic origins of the word gave it a sinister connotation in the northern Protestant countries that it does not have in the southern Catholic countries. He cited an English encyclopedist of the mid-19th century, W. T. Brande, as saying of Gregory's organization: "Derived from this celebrated society the name propaganda is applied in modern political language as a term of reproach to secret associations for the spread of opinions and principles which are viewed by most governments with horror and aversion" (pp. 4-5). This largely negative connotation, as we saw in Chapter 1, continues to cloud the discussion of propaganda.

After the development of the printing press and its judicious use in the Reformation, the adoption of propaganda techniques became a normal part of the strategies devised by those seeking to control or manipulate others. Now, all major conflicts in society, whether religious or territorial, provided an opportunity for the contesting forces to use whatever techniques they could find for disseminating propagandistic information. As an example, both sides in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), that titanic struggle waged all over Germany and Northern Europe by competing religious forces, turned out massive quantities of leaflets, pamphlets, and line drawings, including vicious caricatures of the religious and secular leaders. A new development of some importance in this conflict was the printing of posters from copper plates, which made possible a much wider distribution than was possible from woodcuts. Both sides engaged in writing about the atrocities the other had committed (a technique widely used even today), and roving bands of uncontrolled soldiers produced printed materials warning towns of starvation if they resisted and promising booty to those who joined with them. Historians have noted about the Thirty Years' War that, despite the low level of literacy, all classes of the population were reached by one or more of the various propaganda techniques (Davison, 1971; Taylor, 1990; Thomson, 1977, 1999).

The Emergence of Propaganda

The 18th century was one of revolution, and much of the increasing political agitation as subject populations sought to march toward a greater degree of political freedom was fueled by developments in printing and improvements in transportation. As the century progressed, so did the technology of printing and paper making, and with improved efficiency and speed in transportation, it was possible to disseminate messages to increasingly wider audiences. The availability of printed materials provided an impetus for the increase in the rates of literacy among the general population of most countries, and written propaganda messages became quite sophisticated in their appeal to the reader.

The path to literacy has not always been a smooth progression, for at various times there have been political, economic, or social reasons for discouraging literacy in a society. Those in power may wish to prevent literacy as a means of controlling the flow of information, or people may have no real economic incentive to devote the time to acquiring literacy skills. Also, the internal values of the society itself may not encourage the need to read and write in the majority of the population. As an example of the danger of generalizing about literacy, in certain countries, women were not encouraged to become literate, whereas in others, far more women than men were literate (Graff, 1981).

The use of political cartoons and other visual material that established direct communication with the audience became quite common, and satirical prints were a staple of most 18th-century propaganda campaigns, creating a new visual “language.” In his detailed historical study of the use of print in propaganda, Robert Philippe (1980) noted,

Caricature is the most usual and familiar mode of this language. It was by means of such distortion that prints appealed to a wider public and gained universal popularity. The metamorphosis of the political print was linked, as indeed was its first appearance, to the developments in printing techniques. The spirit and general tendency of this form of visual expression have remained steadfastly the same for five hundred years. The print is a mass medium—universal, direct, immediate, and pithy. (p. 9)

But how do such cartoons and satirical drawings work, and why do they have such strong propagandistic potential? Philippe (1980) suggested a possible answer when he noted,

Prints are partisan. They espouse causes. Exaggeration is second nature to them. Their methodology is accumulation and synthesis—and hence events, places, moments and people acquire an extraordinary intensity and power. A print is neither historic evocation nor narrative, but rather a conjunction of

symbols and allusions. It enlarges, shrinks, or disguises people, to reveal their many facets at a glance. The synthesizing power of the print expresses both what is visible and what is concealed. To what is, it adds what has been and what will be. The image is thus liberated from the grammar of space and time and the print remains dynamic, aggressive, fertile and creative. (p. 9)

This was the age of the great English graphic satirists and propagandists William Hogarth (1697–1764), James Gillray (1757–1815), and Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827), whose drawings were sold to bolster rival political activities or to make telling moral points for their eager audiences. Gillray became the most obvious propagandist, devoting his entire output to creations of social or political satire, many of which were circulated widely throughout Europe and even in North America. King George III—“Farmer George”—and his family suffered widely at Gillray’s hands, and after Gillray’s conversion to conservatism as a result of his dismay at the French Revolution, he launched a long series of political attacks ridiculing Napoleon and the French while glorifying John Bull and the common Englishman.

Gillray’s work was very influential on 19th-century political satirists such as the American Thomas Nast (1840–1902). Nast was most famous for his crusade against the political machine of William Marcy Tweed in New York City. Tweed was reported to have said, “Stop them damn pictures. I don’t care so much about what the papers write about me. My constituents can’t read. But, damn it, they can see pictures” (Hess & Kaplan, 1975, p. 13). The members of the Tweed Ring were eventually driven from office, and many of them were tried and sentenced to prison. Tweed himself escaped to Spain, where he was recognized 5 years later, thanks to a Nast cartoon showing him in prison garb with two young urchins in tow. Nast had drawn the cartoon as an indication that Tweed was apprehending minor criminals while major criminals went unmolested. The Spanish police, however, interpreted it to mean that Tweed was wanted for kidnapping, and the word *Reward* also caught their eye. Tweed was promptly extradited to the United States, where he died in the New York City jail in 1878 (St. Hill, 1974). This propaganda campaign has now become a historical legend and constitutes the most dramatic instance of deliberate propagandistic cartooning in American politics. Nast, however, was only one of several American cartoonists whose work was influential in shaping political opinions in an age when journalism was not required to be objective and politically biased reporting was normal.

The American Revolution

Historians agree that the philosophical underpinnings of the revolution of the American colonists against their British rulers can be found in a variety

76 Propaganda and Persuasion

of sources. The most notable is the series of political writings beginning during the 17th century, including the work of John Locke (1632–1704), especially his *Treatises on Government* (1690), in which he refuted the divine right of kings and the absolutist theory of government. Written in defense of the coming to the British throne of King William III in 1689, as an aftermath of the beheading of King Charles I earlier in 1649, these documents had a significant effect on subsequent political action in the American colonies. Essentially, Locke suggested that the people are the ultimate sovereign and that they always have the right to withdraw their support and overthrow the government if it fails to fulfill its trust. (During the Vietnam War period of the 1960s and 1970s, many opposed to the war espoused a similar philosophy.) Such ideas had a profound influence on the writers and pamphleteers whose propagandistic work was so instrumental in helping foment and sustain the energy of the American Revolution. Bernard Bailyn (1967), in his important book *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, noted,

The American Revolution was above all else an ideological, constitutional, political struggle and not primarily a controversy between social groups undertaken to force changes in the organization of the society or the economy. . . . [I]ntellectual developments in the decade before Independence led to a radical idealization and conceptualization of the previous century and a half of American experience, and it was this intimate relationship between Revolutionary thought and the circumstances of life in 18th-century America that endowed the Revolution with its peculiar force and made it so profoundly a transforming event. (pp. vi–vii)

The American colonists were remarkably literate and well informed on political matters; therefore, the spread of ideas through the printed word was a major factor in the development of a revolutionary ideology. In particular, the ideas contained in Richard Price's *On Civil Liberty* (1776), which sold 60,000 copies in hardback and 120,000 unbound, and Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776), which sold nearly as well, were widely distributed throughout the colonies (Wish, 1950). Thomas Paine (1737–1809) can be considered the first great propagandist of the American Revolution, and George Washington claimed that *Common Sense*, an emotional pamphlet that contained persuasive arguments for independence from England, had been a powerful influence on the minds of many men prior to the war. The son of a Quaker corset maker from Norfolk, England, Paine came to America in 1774 and worked for Benjamin Franklin, editing the *Pennsylvania Journal*. Paine used a simple, forthright writing style, not unlike Luther's, and shocked his readers by his boldness while also using wit and

satire to bring opposing ideas into sharp ridicule. His appeals were equally balanced between the head and the heart, and he noted that his aim was to “fit the powers of thinking and the turn of the language to the subject, so as to bring out a clear conclusion that shall hit the point in question and nothing else.”

The newspaper provided the major vehicle for the dissemination of propagandistic information, and the development of these had been steady after 1740 despite various attempts by the British to tax such periodicals. When the war began on April 19, 1775, with the battles of Lexington and Concord, 37 newspapers were being published in the colonies. At the highest point, however, 70 newspapers were being published during the Revolutionary War. When the war concluded 6½ years later, 35 newspapers were in business. The war had taken its toll on some newspapers, but others had been established in their place. No sooner did a newspaper close down than it would reappear under another name, and precisely because of this, newspaper editors were willing to print inflammatory material, knowing that they could restart anytime they wished. Also, printing attacks on the colonial powers was sure to increase circulation among an audience primed to accept such information.

The demand for news during the war increased newspaper readership to 40,000 households, but this did not include multiple readers for each copy and the extent to which such information was then further disseminated by word of mouth. One problem editors faced was that they had no way to organize systematic news gathering. The principal means of obtaining news was through exchanges with other newspapers or chance letters and official messages. Even when reports of major events were picked up, they often constituted little more than short paragraphs. Worst of all was the slowness of message dissemination during this crucial period. It took more than 6 weeks for the news of Lexington and Concord to reach Savannah in Georgia (Emery & Emery, 1984). In the absence of fast, hard news, it was no wonder that false information and rumors spread quickly and widely. Printing materials were also in short supply, and fearing that the patriotic newspapers would not be able to continue their important role, printers made special pleas to contribute rags for paper making.

A classic example of newspaper propaganda was the so-called Boston Massacre, which took place in 1770. British troops had been quartered in Boston for a year and a half, against the wishes of the citizens, and they were forced to face continuous harassment, a situation not helped by the historical aloofness of British troops toward the colonists. On March 5, 1770, a crowd looking for trouble started pelting snowballs, sticks, and oyster shells at 10 soldiers outside the Boston customhouse, daring the soldiers to fire.

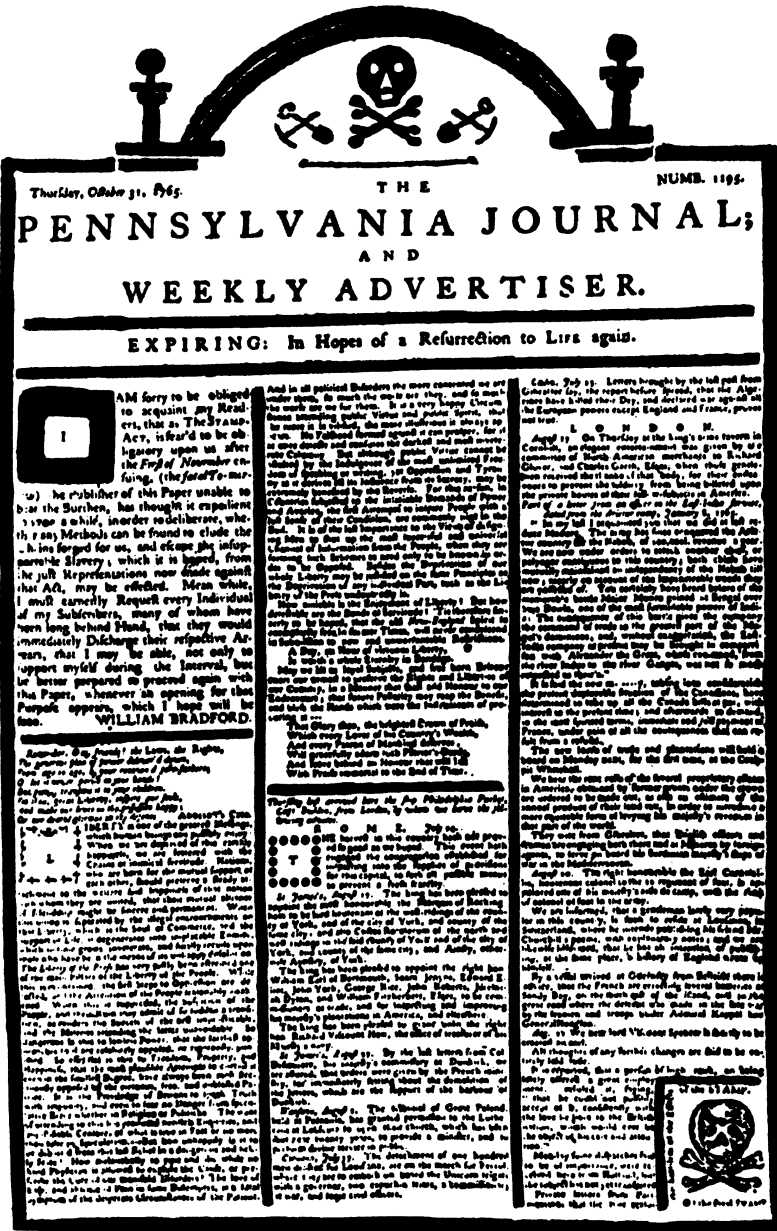


Figure 2.5 A facsimile of the front page of *The Pennsylvania Journal* of October 31, 1765, showing the black mourning and other emblems of death symbolizing the death of freedom of the press as a result of the imposition of the Stamp Act.

Eventually they did fire, and 11 of the unarmed rioters were injured, 4 of them fatally (a fifth died later). This event provided the impetus for numerous propaganda attacks on the British in which the facts of the event were blown out of proportion or exaggerated to emphasize British tyranny. The most famous of these attacks was Paul Revere's engraving, which, masquerading as a realistic portrayal of the event, was in fact a political cartoon deliberately created as propaganda for the anti-British forces. Revere's engraving included a sign "Butcher's Hall" above the British customhouse, and interestingly, he also changed the race of one of the victims, Crispus Attucks, who was, in reality, a towering black man. The cartoon was considered to be so inflammatory that when the soldiers were brought to trial, their lawyer warned the jury not to be swayed by drawings that add "wings to fancy" (Hess & Kaplan, 1975). This cartoon was widely reprinted in the colonial press and was followed by other Revere efforts, including an engraving of four coffins above which were the initials of the American dead.

The political cartoon proved to be a potent propaganda weapon throughout the Revolutionary period. As early as 1754, Benjamin Franklin had drawn his famous snake, severed into eight pieces to symbolize the separate colonies, with the legend "Join, or Die." This was the first cartoon to appear in an American newspaper. Published first on May 9, within a month it had been reprinted by virtually every newspaper on the continent. Although the snake was ridiculed by those loyal to the British side, the serpent won out in the end, and in his equally famous cartoon, James Gillray, the British satirist sympathetic to the American side, drew the defeated British camp completely surrounded by a large rattlesnake.

People had a macabre fascination with the symbology of death in American political cartoons, as we noted with Paul Revere's work. The most obvious example took place on October 31, 1765, when eight newspapers, being shut down as a result of the imposition of the notorious Stamp Act, used black mourning border and symbols from tombstones on their front pages to symbolize their death. William Bradford's *Pennsylvania Journal* included the masthead motto "EXPIRING: In hopes of a Resurrection to Life again." The association of death with the lack of freedom was a simple one for the colonials to grasp, and as individual freedoms were restricted by the British powers, these were symbolized as "deaths." The restriction of the freedom of the press was a particularly galling one for the Americans, as this was the chief means of disseminating both political and commercial information and binding the colonists together into a cohesive opposition to British tyranny.

Samuel Adams was considered to be the chief architect of the anti-British propaganda activities, and he based all his plans on the achievement of five

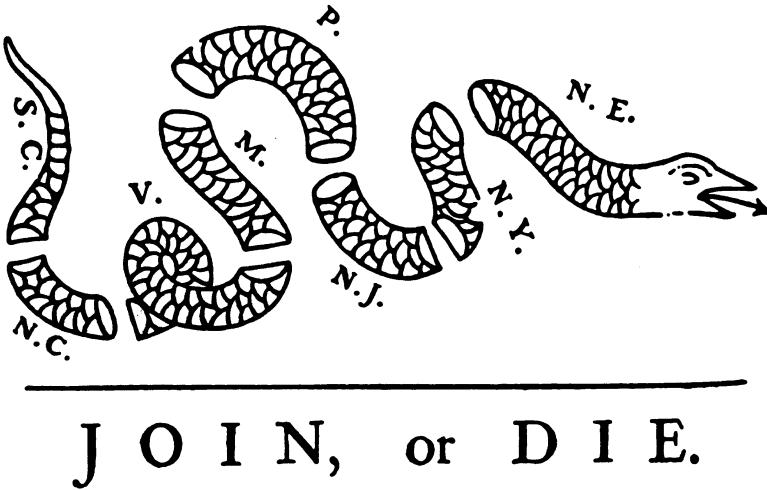


Figure 2.6 Benjamin Franklin's famous cartoon in support of a "Plan of Union" for the colonies. It first appeared in *The Pennsylvania Journal* on May 9, 1754, and was based on the superstition that a snake that had been severed would come back to life if the pieces were put together before sunset. Each segment represents one colony. This cartoon was revived at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis in 1765 and again at the start of the American Revolution in 1774.

main objectives: (a) The aims of the revolution needed to be justified, (b) the advantages of the victory needed to be advertised, (c) the masses needed to be roused to action by creating hatred for the enemy, (d) logical arguments from the opposition needed to be neutralized, and (e) all issues needed to be stated in clear black-and-white terms to ensure that even the common laborer could understand (Emery & Emery, 1984). Adams devoted his life to the Revolutionary cause and became known as "Master of the Puppets" because of his ability to orchestrate and manipulate others. Nor was he the most scrupulous individual, and many of his numerous attacks on the British, printed under a variety of names, painted the actions of governors, customs men, and judges in the darkest possible colors.

Adams was also a master of organization, helping elect men sympathetic to his cause and procuring the passage of resolutions he favored. Operating from his base as a journalist with the *Boston Gazette*, Adams put together his Committee of Correspondence in 1772, and this group became the propaganda organization for the Revolution. He had his agents covering every

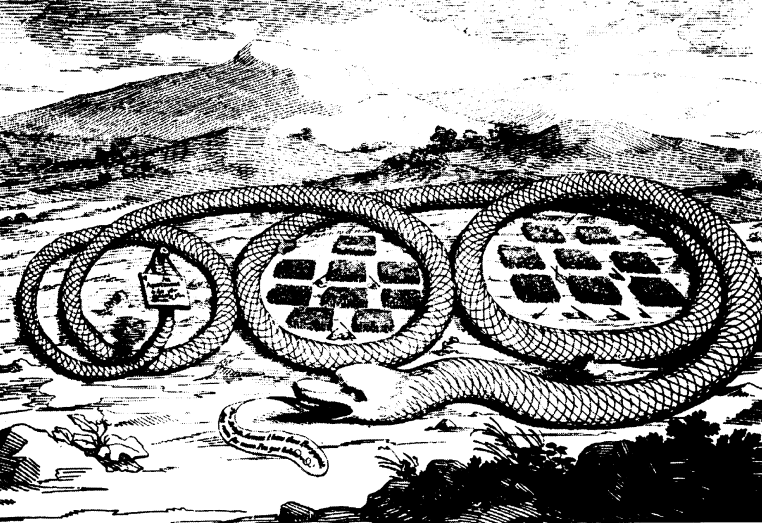


Figure 2.7 Benjamin Franklin’s “snake” cartoon had been widely ridiculed and parodied in the British press. However, in October 1776, when General Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, the famous English caricaturist, James Gillray, who opposed British policies in the American colonies, drew this cartoon that showed the defeated British camp completely encircled by a rattlesnake. Franklin’s snake had the last laugh.

important meeting and gathering to collect “news” that was immediately relayed back to Adams’s central committee, where the information was processed and disseminated to the appropriate areas.

Perhaps Adams’s greatest individual propaganda coup was the organization of the Boston Tea Party, which symbolized the opposition to the Tea Act of 1773, although he took no personal part in the dumping of tea into Boston Harbor. The incident is a classic example of provocation that was turned into a major item of propaganda when the British predictably retaliated, as Adams knew they would, by the passing of the Boston Port Bill, which closed the harbor and ruined trade. This action just served to increase the hostility of the colonists, particularly after more troops were dispatched to the city; the stage for open revolt was being carefully set. Eventually, it would come at Concord in 1775, when British troops sent to confiscate weapons and ammunition stored by the skeleton colonial army engaged in a skirmish that eventually led to a full-scale war. This incident also served as the background to another important, albeit inaccurate, American legend—Paul Revere’s famous ride to warn the inhabitants of Concord, “The British

82 Propaganda and Persuasion

are coming! The British are coming!” In fact, Paul Revere’s famous ride only took on its legendary status after the publication of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem “Paul Revere’s Ride” in 1861. Even then, Longfellow, basing his poem on Revere’s account, got some facts wrong: Revere never waited for signals from lanterns, and he carried the news to Lexington, not Concord (Hart, 1965, p. 639).

During the Revolutionary War itself, relatively minor incidents, such as the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord, were turned into major victories; Washington’s crossing of the Delaware River in the dead of winter and the misery endured by the tattered troops at Valley Forge took on an almost mythical status. Many events and personalities associated with the Revolution were embellished over the years and have now been enshrined as an integral part of the nation’s mythology. The propaganda value of such “foundation myths” is an essential part of nation building and is found in every country. These myths form the “core of culture” and are revived when needed to remind the population “what this society and its values are all about.”

Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and even George Washington wanted to instill into the colonists a belief that not only was their cause just but that their “native” skills were also more than a match for the trained soldiers and mercenaries of the British army. To this end, they became skillful propagandists by manipulating (and even creating) information to their advantage or making appeals to the emotions. George Washington had Tom Paine’s *American Crisis* read to his troops, words written on a drumhead that have survived through the centuries as inspiration in the darkest times in a nation’s history:

These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country. . . . Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly. (Emery & Emery, 1984, p. 82)

Written on December 19, 1776, these words were broadcast widely during the difficult period in the early days of World War II. It is also to Washington’s and Paine’s credit that, a week after hearing those inspirational words, the frozen and tattered colonial forces won a solid victory in Trenton.

Thomas Jefferson was a master propaganda strategist, with his draft of the Declaration of Independence one of the great propaganda statements in all of history. Based on a combination of the ancient Greek and Roman philosophy of the rationalist “laws of nature” earlier expounded by Locke

and the modern philosophy of a secular natural law derived from Isaac Newton's scientific work, Jefferson was able to write a document in which he emphatically declared, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." Dropping all pretense at the fiction that a good king had been misled by evil advisers, Jefferson listed a long series of charges against King George III and suggested that because all appeals for redress had been rebuffed, there was now no alternative but to "alter or abolish" a government destructive of the principles of freedom. The Declaration thus became the legal and philosophical justification for the Revolution sought by Adams as one of his objectives.

Benjamin Franklin also proved to be an instinctual master of propaganda, using his talents as journalist, scientist, and diplomat to great advantage. In his role as diplomat, he was assigned to the French court to plead the colonists' case. Dressing in a fur hat and openly wearing spectacles, he became a living symbol of the unsophisticated nobility of the New World seeking to free itself from its feudal masters. His portrait began to appear on a wide range of popular culture objects, from snuff boxes to chamber pots, and his company was eagerly sought by scientists, politicians, and fashionable ladies, in whose company he reveled. Going out of his way to promote his new status as a cult figure, he used these contacts to enormous advantage, pleading for both financial and military assistance in the fight against the British; he was so successful that his personal popularity endured in France for many generations.

In his role as a journalist, Franklin had, of course, many years of experience both as an editor and as what we would today call a publicist, having promoted a wide variety of schemes and ideas during his lifetime. He was particularly famous for his series of *Poor Richard's Almanacs*, which contained a collection of maxims and proverbs culled from the world's literature and given a pragmatic American flavor—"Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise." He became a master of both white and black propaganda during the Revolutionary War. He published *The Sale of the Hessians*, which dealt with the British press gangs in Germany forcibly recruiting mercenaries, and later was responsible for a fake issue of the *Boston Independent*, in which the British appeared to be boasting of scalp hunting, a practice that was particularly repugnant to the American colonists (Thomson, 1977). In many respects, Franklin was a man ahead of his time, including his clear grasp of the rudiments of the psychology of modern propaganda techniques.

With the end of the Revolutionary War, the press had proved itself an indispensable factor in the creation of the public opinion leading up to the war and an important rallying point during the fighting. (As an example,

84 Propaganda and Persuasion

the Declaration of Independence appeared in print in colonial newspapers before it was issued as an official manifesto. It was included in its entirety in the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* on July 6, 1776, just 2 days before it was adopted by the Continental Congress. As soon as it was ratified, it appeared in most other newspapers in the colonies.) Now that the colonists had won their freedom from Britain, it would be necessary to implement the new democratic political philosophy. Although the press had won its own freedom from the restraints of the British Crown, how this freedom would be institutionalized by the new government that had not yet taken shape was uncertain.

Once the Revolutionary War was over, the young nation was faced with developing its own propaganda campaigns to ensure its commercial and political survival in the face of a skeptical world. All the trappings of rampant patriotic nationalism were required to give the new nation a clear identity of its own, separate from the mother country, and thus were created the military uniforms, the flags, the patriotic songs and slogans, and the diplomatic stances such as the Monroe Doctrine, which proclaimed the sphere of interest of the United States in the New World. The development and international publicity attendant on the framing of the “democratic” Constitution was perhaps the greatest propaganda vehicle of all for gaining the attention of the rest of the world. Eventually, the image of the United States would be most successfully propagandized through its industrial and commercial achievements, together with the enormous output of material from its developing mass communication industries.

The French Revolution and Napoleon

The French Revolution was a complex political event that has had wide political and philosophical implications for the course of modern Western history. Taking their inspiration from the American patriots’ revolution against their colonial masters, the French overthrew their despotic monarchy in an attempt to establish an entirely new form of government. Such action meant denying the concept of the divine right of kings and overturning the “natural order” and required a major shift in the philosophical underpinnings of French society. To accomplish this change, leaders of the Revolution resorted to a massive propaganda campaign, the purpose of which was to “sell” these new ideas and the resulting alterations in the structure of French society and culture.

By 1788, newspaper readership in France was well developed, and pamphlets were appearing at the rate of 25 a week; this reached a climax of

information in 1789, when more than 60 new newspapers were started. Although much of the information offered was contradictory, the tone was becoming steadily more radical and critical of the monarchy and government. Many of the critics were the skilled propagandists known as the Encyclopedists, who had worked on Diderot's famous compendium of human knowledge. Key events of the eventual revolution were themselves all carefully orchestrated pageants of propaganda. The storming of the Bastille—the dreaded symbol of oppression full of tortured prisoners—has remained with us as an archetypal image when, in fact, the prison was almost empty, containing only seven individuals. Furthermore, the destruction of the building (which took place 2 days after the “storming”) has assumed mythical proportions. Total demolition was still incomplete in 1792. Destruction of the physical edifice, however, was symbolic of the overthrow of the old regime.

The adoption of specific forms of dress was a major propaganda device during the ebb and flow of the French Revolution, as were other symbolic devices. The national colors of red, white, and blue were seen everywhere, as was the Phrygian stocking cap and the tricolor sash. Crowds were manipulated by fireworks displays, the burning of effigies of hated politicians and aristocrats, and especially patriotic music, in which the great theme of *La Marseillaise* remains even today a stirring tribute to the power of musical propaganda. The Revolution even had its own official propagandistic artist, the great Jacques Louis David (1748–1825), whose works had been an incitement to revolution before 1789 and who served in this capacity through the reign of Napoleon. David was far more than a painter, directing the artistic affairs of the new Republic until he, too, fell out of favor at the time of the downfall of Robespierre in 1794. He was later restored to his former glory by Napoleon, for whom he created a very specific imperial image. David's style used a sense of realism that sought to create art for the middle classes and was entirely appropriate to the revolutionary context of the times. His work continues to serve as an inspiration to later political regimes seeking to glorify their exploits through works of art.

The French revolutionaries used a wide variety of media to export their doctrines throughout the world at the end of the 18th century. W. Phillips Davison (1971) pointed out that even their style of dress was worn by revolutionary sympathizers throughout Europe. This form of symbolic propaganda was countered when a conservative German prince, the Langraf of Kassel, seeking to combat these subversive styles, ordered that all prisoners be dressed in them and sent out to sweep the streets. This provides an excellent example of counterpropaganda. Despite small victories of this sort, the French Revolution was so devastating to the existing social and political

86 Propaganda and Persuasion

structure of Europe that entirely new forms emerged, and these required that new myths and heroes be created to provide the necessary social and cultural cohesion.

Out of the chaos of the destruction of the old French society, the “man on the white horse” emerged—Napoleon Bonaparte—who must be considered one of the greatest masters of the use of propaganda in history. He recognized the power of manipulation of symbols early in his career as an army officer, and throughout his life, he learned to glory in his victories while placing the blame for his failures at the feet of others. Like Caesar before him, he wrote self-congratulatory accounts of his military exploits and created for himself a swashbuckling image of the dashing commander. Napoleon was among the first of the modern propagandists to understand the need to convince the population that the rights of the individual were less important than the willingness to sacrifice one’s life for emperor and nation. In this way, he was able to gather large, populist armies even in the worst of times.

The visual image of the romantic hero was created with the assistance of the artist Jacques Louis David, who helped design the clothes, hairstyle, and other accoutrements that have come down to us today as an unmistakable symbol of the diminutive French leader. Napoleon’s portrait appeared everywhere, accompanied by his ubiquitous eagles, and he took the lead in designing a specific form of imperial architecture that was a mixture of Roman, Etruscan, and Egyptian styles, all great empires of the past. Triumphal arches and massive victory columns were erected, again evoking images of the Roman Caesars.

At his coronation at Notre Dame Cathedral on December 2, 1804, Napoleon achieved one of his great propaganda triumphs when he took the imperial crown from the hands of Pope Pius VII and placed it on his own head, symbolizing that he owed allegiance to no one and that he was a self-made emperor. The imperial regime that followed his coronation had its own symbols, with the Roman eagle figuring prominently above the tricolor flag, and the use of princely titles was brought back for members of Napoleon’s family.

Napoleon quickly learned to exploit the power of the press to his advantage as a political weapon, devising new propaganda techniques that caught his opponents by surprise. Like most other European governments of the time, he maintained domestic censorship, but he went out of his way to plant pro-French items in foreign-language newspapers on the continent. Several newspapers were even founded by the French in occupied German territories, and in Paris a newspaper called the *Argus of London* appeared, allegedly edited by an Englishman but, in actuality, produced by

the French Foreign Office. Supposedly written from an English viewpoint, the newspaper attacked the “war-mongering journals” back in London and was widely distributed throughout the West Indies and to British prisoners of war in places such as Verdun (Thomson, 1977). Napoleon also made wide use of leaflets distributed before his invading armies; he projected a promise of French “liberty” to countries such as Italy, where oppression had been the normal political way of life and a hint of freedom was bound to create widespread excitement. Even the *Napoleonic Code*, an easily translated volume of law, was an impressive demonstration of revolutionary imperial power that could be readily transported to other European countries. One of his major internal propaganda weapons was the use of the plebiscite, in which the population was asked to vote on an issue, the outcome of which was already clearly decided, and then the results published as an unequivocal indication of his popularity. As an example, in May 1802, the French people were asked to vote on the following question: “Shall Napoleon Bonaparte be consul for life?” The result was an overwhelming majority of 3,500,000 votes in favor over fewer than 10,000 opposed. Two years later, he became emperor when another plebiscite approved the change.

The use of such predetermined plebiscites has been a favorite technique of modern dictators and political regimes such as Hitler and the former Soviet Union, who were eager to give international recognition to the apparent popularity of their internal programs. This type of staged plebiscite was also used by the Baltic nations of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia to demonstrate clearly the level of internal cohesion and support in their attempts to win their independence back from the Soviet Union.

So successful were Napoleon’s propaganda techniques in creating his imperial image that his legend became even stronger after his death in 1821. Hundreds of books appeared, some attacking him but most praising him, and finally in December 1840, his body, accompanied by the king’s son François, Prince de Joinville, was returned from the remote island of St. Helena to a magnificent funeral in Paris. Nearly a million people watched as his remains were conveyed through the Arc de Triomphe in the Place de l’Etoile to his specially built tomb in the Hotel Des Invalides. Napoleon left behind an enormous legacy of important institutions, such as his legal code, the French internal administrative system, the national banking system, the military academies and universities, and, most important, a dramatic symbol of French might and glory so deeply ingrained into Western popular culture that it continues to have useful propaganda value even today.



Figure 2.8 At an early stage in his career, Napoleon is shown as the heroic leader. Note the stormy setting in the background with the implication that Napoleon, pointing forward, would lead the country through this troubled period. The romantic imagery was consistent with the general public mood in France at this time.

Propaganda in the 19th Century: The American Civil War

The main development in propaganda techniques during the 19th century was the increase in the speed with which messages could be conveyed to increasingly urban-based audiences. The importance of printing, especially



Figure 2.9 Napoleon shown as the “Emperor of Europe.” Once Napoleon had consolidated his power in France and begun his conquests, his propagandistic image changed to that of a near-Greek God. This fanciful engraving shows him astride the world, with the light of the Gods shining down on him, as he leads the way forward to further conquest.

after the introduction of steam-driven and later electricity-driven printing presses, created new opportunities for refining propaganda as a political and economic weapon. Although few major international conflicts occurred during the 19th century, the American Civil War (1860–1865) proved to be a

90 Propaganda and Persuasion



Figure 2.10 Voyage to the island of Elba; anonymous print from the period of Napoleon's imprisonment. This print uses the same symbols of grandeur but in a satirical vein; the imperial eagle was now merely a vehicle for transporting the emperor to his exile, and his now useless crowns dangling from its claws. Surrounded by the bees from his coat of arms, Napoleon is carrying his pronouncements on military conscription and mass enlistment.

devastating conflict, when the technology and effectiveness of armaments had far outstripped the medical assistance for wounded soldiers, and the resulting death toll was extremely high. The Civil War also provided an opportunity to test the efficacy of the new communications infrastructure, based on the telegraph in combination with increases in printing speed. At the start of the conflict, more than 500 war correspondents were attached to the Northern armies. The full promise of these new technologies was not to be realized, however, because war correspondents were not always allowed near the battlefields; military censorship was also considerable, with the result that many erroneous reports were dispatched to newspapers. To

maintain home front morale, readers were often deliberately given false reports about the outcome of battles. (The Battle of Bull Run was initially reported as a victory for the North, when it was, in fact, a devastating defeat.) This was particularly true in the South, where telegraph lines were destroyed and communication had to rely on letters and dispatches from the battlefronts. The Southern press was far more partisan than the more contentious Northern newspapers and magazines, and this left a legacy that hampered the North-South relationship for many years afterward. In terms of propaganda, both sides used atrocity stories, and fictitious engravings (photographs were still not printable in newspapers at this time) of brutalizations by soldiers were published. Despite the problems associated with getting prompt and accurate reports from the war, Americans, particularly those in the North, became a nation of newspaper readers eager to gain the latest information.

At the conclusion of the American Civil War, the two sides were left to try to reunite themselves into one nation. These efforts at reconciliation took a long time but were aided enormously by the extensive communication infrastructure left in the war's aftermath. The telegraph had been extended all across the country, and many of the magazines and newspapers that had been established to supply war news now became staple reading matter for the growing population. By 1870, about 4,500 newspapers were active in the United States, with the major growth coming from daily newspapers. The possibilities for propagandistic activities increased enormously. As one English writer, looking at the phenomenon of this growth of newspapers, observed,

America is a classic soil of newspapers; everybody is reading; literature is permeating everywhere; publicity is sought for every interest and every order; no political party, no religious sect, no theological school, no literary or benevolent association, is without its particular organ; there is a universality of print. (Emery & Emery, 1984, p. 405)

In 1866, the transatlantic cable was successfully completed, and now the United States was directly connected to the news flow from Europe, thus greatly extending the possibilities of propaganda activities, this time on a more international scale. The ability to print engravings and, after 1880, photographs added further impact to the printed word. As each new form of mass communication found an audience, it was immediately seized on as a vehicle for conveying propaganda. Thus, newspapers, then magazines, and later motion pictures were each used by propagandists in their attempts to capture the public's attention.

92 Propaganda and Persuasion

The development of democratic political institutions was the most important impetus to the growth of the use of propaganda in the 19th and 20th centuries. As Qualter (1962) so eloquently stated,

Even those whose attitude toward the role of public opinion in politics did not change found that of necessity they had to learn the mechanics of peaceful persuasion by propaganda. With an extended franchise and an increasing population it was becoming too expensive to do anything else. Where at one time voters could be bought, they now had to be persuaded. Politicians had, therefore, to become interested in propaganda. (p. 33)

The combination of the demands created by democratic political institutions and the increasing sophistication of propaganda techniques used in warfare marked the emergence of an awareness of propaganda as an ubiquitous force in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We must also not overlook the increasing importance of advertising as an integral part of economic development and the emergence of consumerism, for many techniques developed to persuade customers to purchase products were later adopted by other propagandists. One significant aspect of 20th-century propaganda is the symbiotic relationship between advertising and other forms of propaganda, particularly as techniques for reaching audiences become more sophisticated and reliable. Propaganda began to emerge as a modern force in the 19th century; it became an integral part of the social, political, and economic life of the 20th century. As was noted earlier, the development of a wide range of new communication technologies—from cell phones to iPods, from communication satellites to wi-fi networks for computers, and from digital cameras (often in cell phones) to PDAs (personal digital assistants)—offers the potential for ingenious new methods of spreading propaganda messages in the 21st century.