

Choose one example
of clearly
propagandistic
communication and
analyze it in hist...



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The paper “ Propaganda and World War One” is an affecting example of a term paper on journalism & communication. Propaganda is an effective tool of communication to influence the perception of a particular audience. It has the capacity to alter a group’s position with regard to an issue by appealing first to their emotions rather than mental faculties. This is accomplished by utilizing the different forms of media such as print and film. In its basic sense, propaganda can easily be judged as bias, as its purpose is to change the behavior of people in whatever way possible. This means that an author of propaganda has the tendency to actually publish false information to the public just to achieve its end. At most, governments of the world are guilty of this fact. This is clearly illustrated in the newspaper articles respectively released by opposing states during World War One.

The Propaganda

During the intense battle of Germans and the Allied Forces in 1914, the British government published a written report about its accomplishments in the war. The following is an excerpt from the British newspaper:

To the north of Ypres, our progress has been continued, especially on our left. We have taken six quick-firers, two bomb-throwers, and much material; and made several hundred prisoners, including several officers. The losses of the enemy were extremely high. At a single point on the front, in the proximity of the canal, we counted more than six hundred German dead. On the heights of the Meuse, on the front Les Eparges-St Remy-Calonne trench, we have continued to gain ground, about one kilometer and have inflicted on the enemy very severe losses. (Trueman “ Propaganda”)

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Analysis

There are actually three types of propaganda namely, the white, grey and black propaganda (Levinson). The use of these propagandas depends on the facts surrounding an issue. However, a barrier should always be present so that a particular type of propaganda can be conducted. The barrier serves as the point where the media can set the agenda to be taken by the public.

Through this way, the media can actually limit the information that can reach its targeted audience. Mass media then is the instrument that links the view of an individual to the real fact (Rogers). On the other hand, for Harold Lasswell, propaganda is “synonymous with democracy since” it is a practical way to get immediate support from the masses (qt. in A. Mattelart and M. Mattelart 26).

In the above-cited excerpt, the facts provided are all in favor of the British government. There are no statements with regard to British casualties. It only emphasizes the success of the British soldiers without considering their failures. It does not describe “the scenes at Victoria Station” where “carriages of wounded soldiers arrived back in London” (Trueman “Propaganda”). Also, “the successful poison gas attack by the Germans” is not included (Trueman “The Battle”). The historical record shows that the Allies actually had sixty thousand casualties while “the Germans had a total” of thirty-five thousand casualties during the second battle in Ypres (“Battle”).

Notably, it is almost impossible that parties in a war do not incur deaths and injuries on its troops. The statements in the excerpt are exaggerated to an extent. A rational individual may somehow doubt its truthfulness.

Nevertheless, during wars, citizens do not have the luxury of time to really investigate any pronouncements given by its government.

The aforementioned work is giving the impression that the Germans are losing the battle in Ypres. It is clear propaganda, a white type—the acknowledged source is the British government. The circumstances given are hiding the real events that transpired during the length of the battle.

Basically, the aim of which can either be grounded on the two following points: (1) to increase the trust and confidence of the British citizens to its government and (2) to bolster the ego of its soldiers to continue the war.

Both grounds are behavioral in nature.

The British government may have believed that it can control the behavior of its citizens and soldiers by using propagandas especially in times of war. In a sense, this is in line with Lippmann's theory of propaganda. The barrier in the above instance is the British government. During that time, the British administration is making sure that the media will only publish articles that are in favor of the government. To an extent, what the media people can write are only those matters that their government wants them to write.

Needless to state, the British state is manipulating its mass media to control the flow of information. The real author of all the disseminated information is the British government itself.

Amongst all the forms of communication, propaganda can be considered as

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the most practical and effective. It has a strong influence on the individuals affected. In some instances, the corollary effect of propaganda endures for a long time and is actually passed on from generation to generation. As such, governments should always be reminded about equity and justice in employing this communication technique.