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Author(s): Kermit Roosevelt, Jr.

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Propaganda Techniques of the English Civil Wars— and the Propaganda Psychosis of Today*

KERMIT ROOSEVELT, JR.

TWENTIETH CENTURY MAN is a painfully self-conscious creature, but he has lost that pride of consciousness which, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was so magnificent. Science and psychology have succeeded—where the grim doctrine of predestination conspicuously failed—in seriously undermining belief in essential human liberty. In the Renaissance, awareness of self was in terms of a complex but unified and independent ego capable of deliberate choice.¹ Today, while few people believe in religious determinism, scientific or social determinism is widely accepted; the result is, in Walter Lippmann's memorable phrase,²

the deepest malady of modern society . . . the loss by so many modern men of conviction that the human will is free and that, therefore, each man has a personal moral responsibility for his acts and that what is going to happen in the future is going to be determined by what men do in the present.

In humanity's effort to escape this moral responsibility there is one time-hallowed refuge which has passed under many names—Fate, Luck, Providence, Fortune, and so on. Just at present it is more fashionable to describe it in scientific jargon or sociological gibberish. In this escape the word "propaganda" has come to play an important part. One simple way to avoid responsibility is to label as propaganda those facts and arguments

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¹ For one of the noblest statements of human dignity and essential liberty, see *Joannis Pici Mirandulae Omnia Opera* (Venice, 1498), "Oratio Joannis Pici Miran. Concordia Comitit," quoted by E. A. Whitney in "Erastianism and Divine Right," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, II (July, 1939), 395–396.

Calvinists, while accepting the doctrine of predestination, did not arrive, as they logically might have done, at the fatalistic view that the soul can passively accept its fate. Rather, the soul must "run for election."

Bunyan, for example, pays lip-service to the strict letter of the doctrine (*Grace Abounding*, [London, 1666], pp. 16–17), but the idea that the individual can pass by the struggle for eternal life because his election or rejection is predetermined is an argument employed by Satan; elsewhere Bunyan indicates that the path to salvation is difficult but passable, and that "none could enter into life but those that were in down-right earnest . . ." (*ibid.*, 15). Grace must not only be given by God, but achieved by man.

² In his syndicated newspaper column, "Today and Tomorrow," December 4, 1940.

which one is unable or unwilling to face. More complex is the connection between propaganda and the general philosophy of determinism. Propaganda has been credited with overwhelming powers; by the exercise of certain mysterious techniques, it is, if we are to believe such writers as Professor Frederick Lumley, able to determine a man's attitude and opinions even against his will—even against his own best interests.³ For the resulting thought or action neither the individual, nor the society in which he lives, need be held responsible.⁴ Now propaganda⁵ is as old as human society, and although it has never received the attention it has had since the first World War, its importance did not pass unnoticed.⁶ During the English Civil Wars, opposition propaganda was keenly analyzed by each side,⁷ but there was no tendency to regard it with the superstitious awe that it frequently commands today. It was, in fact, often treated with disrespectful levity,⁸ not only because ridicule was effective counterpropaganda but because there was a healthy certainty that facts (which both parties felt supported their own assertions) were more im-

³ Paul Cram, in a recent article upon "Undergraduates and the War" (*The Atlantic*, CLXVI [October, 1940], 410 *sq.*), fully recognizes the part that unreasoning, unreasonable fear of propaganda has played in the formation of an apathetic, even defeatist, attitude all too common among the college youth of today:

"Perhaps the most startling symptom of malaise revealed in the letters [received by *The Atlantic* apropos of an article on youth's attitude toward the war] is an exaggerated fear of propaganda and emotional words. Since none of the writers had defined propaganda in his own mind or decided what he means by an emotional word, they cannot recognize a moral issue when they see one or differentiate moral indignation from hysteria. The result is an indiscriminate assumption that their elders are sentimentalists or propagandists" (*ibid.*, 412).

It might be more accurate to say that the writers of these letters to which Mr. Cram refers do not have to recognize a moral issue. The propaganda menace has supplied an all-embracing excuse. Perhaps this is too cruel, yet Mr. Cram observes that it is domestic (*i.e.* pro-war) rather than foreign propaganda that they fear. The idea that Nazi propagandists could weaken our will to resist is not seriously discussed in these letters. Devotees of the propaganda menace frequently show a logic remarkable more for its convenience than its consistency!

⁴ Californians should be well acquainted with this device. For example, migratory laborers—the "Okies"—have expressed, with occasional violence, their discontent. What was the general reaction of those responsible (immediately, at least) for that discontent? Communists and communist propaganda were, and according to that "gentleman farmer," Mr. Philip Bancroft, still are, to be blamed for the whole trouble. Therefore employers no longer need think of their own responsibilities. If labor is discontented, it is not to be explained by poor working conditions, or inadequate wages. Big business, like poor farmer Bancroft, is being persecuted by "every Communist, Nazi, Fascist, starry-eyed pink, goon-squad leader and labor racketeer..." (*Time* [quoting Bancroft], XXXVI, No. 25 [December 16, 1940], p. 23).

⁵ By propaganda I mean expressions of fact, opinion, or downright falsehood, disseminated by one or more individuals for the purpose of creating an attitude favorable to a given cause, or unfavorable to those opposing it.

⁶ An early-seventeenth-century pamphlet indicating fear of the propaganda menace is Barnabe Rich's *Opinion Diefied* (1613).

⁷ Cf. [James Howell], *The True Informer* (1643) and *Reasons Why the Kingdom ought to adhere to the Parliament* (1642).

⁸ Cf. John Taylor, *A Letter . . . From a Spie at Oxford* (1643).

portant in determining opinion than what the propagandists said about those facts, and because there was trust in the "sales-resistance" and skepticism of the average citizen.⁹

This trust is sadly lacking today. Is this because propaganda has become much more effective now than it was in the seventeenth century? The assertion is often made that modern propagandists, like modern scientists, have invented new techniques or have perfected old ones which make their work far more potent than was previously possible.¹⁰ Such a belief is implied in the preoccupation of so many writers with this particular aspect of the subject.¹¹ Apparently, according to current analyses, "It's not what you say, it's the way that you say it!"

What, we must ask, are these devastatingly efficient techniques? Certainly there is nothing new about those "exposed" by the indignant Cassandras of the Propaganda Menace.¹² Suppression, distortion, fabrication, and falsification are as old as language itself, and the ultimate in proficiency has long since been achieved. But the new psychology may be thought to have created new weapons or to have made the old ones more deadly.¹³ I propose here to discuss seventeenth-century propaganda in terms of what twentieth-century psychologists have written about "modern" techniques. This will provide a yardstick by which to measure the proficiency of Civil War propagandists; it may also suggest the need

⁹ This trust seems to have been well founded. See for example, the skepticism shown by John Rous over the constant parliamentary discoveries of "plots" (*Diary of John Rous*, edited by M. A. E. Green [Camden Society, 1856]). In *Plaine Truth* (1643) one of the characters taking part in the dialogue has disbelieved, cheerfully and consistently, all parliamentary propaganda since the beginning of the war. One thing he knows—that Parliament has taxed him heavily. So he is off to Oxford to join the King. Fortunately (this is a parliamentary pamphlet), he meets an ex-royalist who says that the King's taxes are even worse. Hearing this, he is more favorably disposed toward parliamentary propaganda. See also *An Answer To A Seditious Pamphlet, Intituled, Plain English* (1643), 3. The royalist author is shocked by the fact that it is not reason or loyalty, but heavy parliamentary taxation, that is winning the king new supporters.

¹⁰ Other arguments can be advanced to support the view that propaganda has become increasingly effective, but none are entirely satisfactory. For example, it is true that the propagandist has at his disposal *media* which make it possible for him to reach a far greater audience with far greater regularity than has been possible before. However, these same *media* can be, and are in a free country, used to create an awareness and fear of propaganda. (This may be done for propaganda purposes, to advance a cause, such as American Isolationism, but its long-range effect is to increase skepticism about all such campaigns.) Moreover, the danger of reaching a "saturation point," at which the public becomes excessively critical, is greatly increased.

¹¹ Cf. *Propaganda Techniques in the World War*, by Harold Lasswell, and *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Technique* (New York, 1935), by Leonard W. Doob.

¹² Cf. Frederick Lumley, *The Propaganda Menace*; or almost any isolationist senator.

¹³ See a review of E. A. Beller, *Propaganda in Germany during the Thirty Years War* (1940), in the *Times Literary Supplement*, October 26, 1940 (p. 548). The reviewer says there have been changes in the "psychological aspects" of propaganda.

for a new evaluation of the role played by so-called techniques in propaganda today.

Perhaps the most able psychological study on the subject is that by Professor Leonard Doob, which gives a convenient table of the "Principles of Propaganda."¹⁴ Among these is the fundamental "principle of perception"; in other words, the propagandist makes the "stimulus-situation" through which he is working stand out from its competing ground.¹⁵ There are three methods of doing this. First, the "perceptual principle of auxiliary attitudes": attention is drawn to the stimulus-situation by arousing attitudes which are not related to it. The advertiser, for example, uses the picture of a pretty girl to draw attention to the tomato juice he is trying to sell. The seventeenth century did not think in terms of "auxiliary attitudes," but the same result was deliberately or instinctively achieved. Sensational titles, quite irrelevant to the text, were used to entice unwary purchasers;¹⁶ pornographic satires, always certain of a good sale, served as vehicles for political or religious propaganda, which thus reached an audience unlikely to read such propaganda for its own sake.¹⁷ Professor Doob points out that "bait" of this sort may do more than draw attention to the propagandist's message; it may also induce people to accept it. The girl not only attracts notice to the poster, but may create a favorable attitude toward the product, and colorful stories of the immorality of the sectaries not only led readers to more weighty arguments but also tended to discredit the parliamentary cause, provided that the reader believed the stories (for he might enjoy reading them while yet withholding belief) and provided that he regarded the radical sects as an important element in the party opposing the King.

The second method of drawing attention to the stimulus-situation, through the "perceptual principle of repetition," needs no comment.¹⁸

¹⁴ Doob, *op. cit.*, 413 sq. Professor Doob does not claim that these principles are new discoveries.

¹⁵ Just as a man, when arguing, tends to raise his voice.

¹⁶ Cf. *The Definition of a King* (1643), the title page of which is apparently pro-Parliament, anti-Anglican, while the text is strongly royalist. Writers on both sides resorted to such tricks. For one of many instances of counterfeit imprints used for a similar purpose, see F. Madan, *Oxford Books* (1912) II, 219–220. The use of sensational titles was, as it always is, widespread; the titles of newspamphlets were as misleading as the headlines of tabloids are today.

¹⁷ Cf. The pamphlets of John Taylor.

¹⁸ Here again the modern propagandist has an apparent advantage, for there are increased facilities for repetition. In a free country he must, of course, share these with his opponents; moreover, repetition in itself is of very limited value, as the Republicans should have learned in the last eight years. If suspicions are aroused over a message, repetition of that message alone cannot dispel them. If people come to believe that everything they read in the papers

However, the third, described as the "perceptual principle of simplification," deserves attention. Now simplification is one of the most important services that language performs; it provides symbols to represent the most complicated object or concept. In communication of any kind simplification is inescapable—not only is it a "propaganda technique" but a concomitant of language itself. In personal arguments, political campaigns, and textbooks, to name a few examples, the "perceptual principle of simplification" is employed to a greater or lesser extent, whether from necessity, by mistake, or on purpose.¹⁰ Thus, in the Civil Wars, those who supported Charles Stuart did so for a number of widely differing reasons; yet their opponents charged them, as a group, with fighting to establish tyranny and popery—a charge which applied only to a small fraction of the group. On the other hand, the parliamentarians were represented as holding objectionably radical views in politics (egalitarianism and regicide) and religion (Anabaptism or Antinomianism). Both sides were hideously immoral, the Puritan concealing his lust behind a sly hypocrisy, the Cavalier boasting of his libidinous conquests. Both were irreligious, the one profaning churches and sacraments, the other idolatrously bowing down to altars while disregarding God's holy commandments. Both were utterly lawless, both burned and plundered the defenseless countryside, both held most reprehensible opinions on every conceivable subject. It is not easy to hate for his principles a man whose principles differ very little from your own; let him be regarded, however, as a member of a party, and his individual beliefs are swallowed up by the larger body, which contains in fact a hundred shades of opinion, but which can, by judicious simplification, be represented by the most extreme. By election day all Republicans may be Fascists, all Democrats Communists; by 1642 all royalists were papists, their opponents factious sectaries. Both sides credited their enemy collectively and individually with the sins and excesses of only a few. It is obvious that a simplified stimulus-situation is easier to perceive, even if the expression "stimulus-situation" is mercifully beyond one's ken.

is propaganda, and as such to be distrusted, the propagandist can (and does) repeat his message over and over again, in morning, evening, and five-star final editions, without making a single convert.

¹⁰ Complex relationships of cause and effect, for instance, cannot usually be treated in complete detail (often it is not humanly possible); some simplification is necessary to make perception possible. In many cases, where issues are treated in a manner calculated to make comprehension (of a sort) possible to even the lowest form of intellect, it is impossible to determine whether the distortion resulting from simplification is deliberate or unconscious. In politics one would assume one answer, in education one prefers to assume another. At any rate, the purpose behind simplification may be a legitimate one—to make the idea more comprehensible, or an illegitimate one—to make it more attractive by misrepresentation.

One could continue through the long list—the “principle of concealed propaganda,” the “principle of the desired integration,” and so on—finding that in any long, sustained struggle for public backing such as that between the Puritans and Parliamentarians on the one hand and the Anglicans and Royalists on the other, the fundamental principles of all propaganda were followed with subtlety and with consistency long before the psychologists had formulated them or given them specific appellations. Let us consider, for example, the “principle of related attitudes” as practiced in the seventeenth century.

In accordance with this principle, preëxisting attitudes not intimately related to the propagandist’s aim must be associated with that aim in the public mind. Now this cannot be accomplished overnight; well-directed and continuous effort is required. It is, of all the techniques described, one of the most complicated, and one which seems to demand the greatest technical proficiency. One may well be surprised, therefore, to find that in the seventeenth century it was widely and effectively employed, not by an organized propaganda machine but by numerous individuals working independently, although for the same purpose.²⁰ Even before the assembling of the Long Parliament, which gave Puritan propagandists freedom, official backing, and some degree of official coördination,²¹ there had been remarkable collaboration (which must have been for the most part spontaneous and unorganized) in an attempt to establish in the popular mind an “association” including all the enemies of the Puritans in one large, conveniently hateful, group. The links by which the separate elements were to be united were many, and the process of association seems, when regarded as a whole, an extremely complicated one. Yet I do not believe that any single writer, among the many involved in this task, thought of it as a whole. Their methods and their results were determined by the nature of the program they advocated and by the opposition to that program.

In the first place, any open attack upon the authorities of church or

²⁰ This is really not as surprising as it sounds. An “association,” to be effective, must have discernible if not obvious factual justification. Particularly when dealing with dominant attitudes, which are limited both in number and application, it is more than likely that propagandists, although acting independently, will hit upon the same line of attack. Moreover, once one of them has started, others, who had not thought out the idea for themselves, would see the advantages of it, and join their efforts to the cause.

²¹ The Parliament committees for printing, for information, and for other matters, or either House as a whole, did suppress objectionable pamphlets and direct the publication of favorable ones. But what with clashes between the Lords and the Commons and the different committees, and the great number of unofficial propagandists who remained unsupervised, no great degree of coördination was achieved.

state was extremely dangerous. The Puritans were thus, in a way, forced into a process of association because they could attack only through associated objects—persons or institutions. That the associations they were obliged to establish were of great propaganda value in themselves was, I believe, an incidental rather than a central motive. In the second place, the nature of the Puritans' own attitudes and prejudices, influencing and influenced by their objective, made inevitable to their minds the associations which they sought to establish in the minds of others. Although many of them seem far-fetched to us, we must not therefore assume that the Puritans were insincere in advancing them.²² Another factor encouraging the use of such a device is the natural human impulse to gather all one's dislikes together in a single, easily hated group.

The manner in which the "associations" were developed is well worth greater space than is here available. As I have said, it was not safe to attack authority directly; but it was reasonably safe to attack, for instance, the stage, especially since it was bitterly assailed by many orthodox Anglicans. So the Puritans, who had in any case been reviling it for years, found that it provided an opening wedge for the discreet development of more dangerous topics.²³ Not only was the stage, it appears, immoral, but idolatrous and popish as well. With all its vices, it had the patronage and hearty support of the bishops and the court, who thus shared in those vices. With skilful handling, all this could be implied without betraying too obviously any seditious purpose. After all, immorality is bad, and every minister must preach against it. Idolatry is a deadly sin which cannot be tolerated. And certainly no loyal Englishman could dare defend popery. It was difficult to imprison a Puritan for accusing the stage of these offenses when orthodox Anglicans made the same charges. Nor could one object to a simple statement of fact, such as one to the effect that plays were performed frequently and with great applause at court, provided it was not followed too closely by a less factual but painfully blunt announcement that all who attended or approved plays were moral lepers

²² A good deal of the emphasis upon techniques, I believe, comes because we now tend to regard propagandists as emotionally and intellectually aloof from the cause for which they work, or else as the disseminators of deliberate falsehoods. Not thinking in terms of personal conviction, they must, we assume, concentrate upon techniques. The zealous believer in the cause, made uncritical, perhaps, by his zeal, may hit upon the same associations without consciously employing techniques; yet later generations may credit him with Machiavellian subtlety, when his real strength lay in strong convictions!

²³ On one aspect of antiroyalist propaganda through criticism of the stage, see G. F. Sensabaugh, "Platonic Love and the Puritan Rebellion," in *Studies in Philology*, XXXVII (July, 1940), 457-481. I hope soon to publish an article containing a more detailed analysis of the influence of the stage, and related criticism, on Civil War propaganda.

and image-worshipping Romanists. One could, of course, easily go too far, as Prynne did in impugning the characters of all actresses just at the time that the Queen herself was playing in court masques. But this indirect approach was far less risky than an open charge that the bishops were papists, and although there were those who preferred the straightforward manner of doing things, there were more who, bold enough to indulge in innuendo, lacked the spirit which welcomes martyrdom as the supreme ending, if not as an end in itself.

So, little by little—a hint here, a sly allusion there, with only an occasional outright accusation implicating the ecclesiastical or civil government—the nucleus of an association was established: the immoral, idolatrous, popish stage; the idolatrous, popish prelate, who delighted in nothing so much as in profaning the church with lascivious music (like that of the stage) and elaborate mummary performed in copes and lawn sleeves (like the players' costumes);²⁴ the immoral, popish theater- and prelate-loving courtier, who took his manners to church with him and bowed at the name of Jesus as he bowed to his mistress, knelt at a saint's shrine as he knelt before her thoroughly questionable chastity²⁵—all these were joined together in a group to which new additions, such as corrupt judges, patentees, projectors, and evil counselors, were easily and frequently made. And, to those who had been persuaded to accept this association as fact, the hatred felt against *each* one of these individual classes would be aroused by a reference to *any* one of them. Not only were diffused hatreds focused and intensified but, from the propagandist's point of view, they were made more maneuverable. In other words, the feeling against papists, most despised and feared of any of these classes, could be mobilized against bishops or courtiers. For many people, indeed, "papist" and "royalist" or "cavalier" became synonymous, and the propagandist had thus proceeded from association to simplification.²⁶

²⁴ The similarities between stage plays and the church service as "corrupted" by the Anglicans were pointed out with dangerous explicitness. Cf. *The Vanitie & Downe-Fall Of Superstitious Popish Ceremonies* (Edinburgh, 1628), by Peter Smart, who paid for his boldness.

²⁵ For the parallel drawn between stage and court immorality and manners, see Sensabaugh, *op. cit.*, and "Love Ethics in Platonic Court Drama," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, I (April, 1938), 277-304.

²⁶ It must be observed here that it would be misleading to give the impression that there were a number of individuals, apart from the rest of the people, who accomplished this "manoeuvring of hatreds" with deliberate intent, and that they alone were responsible for, let us say, the very loose and convenient usage of the word "papist." Certainly there were men who played with malice aforethought upon this popular prejudice. Selden remarked, "Wee charge the prelaticall Clergie with popery to make y^m odious tho' we know they are guiltye of no such thing" (*Table Talk*, ed. Pollock, 1927, p. 99), but Selden was an exceptional man; the greater number, I am sure, sincerely believed the charges they made, and instinctively focused their own as well as others' hatred where it would do the most good.

In this manner the Puritans employed against the Stuart Church and State a complicated, highly technical, method of attack. Yet it was not an artificially created propaganda device, nor were those who used it unusually skilful technicians. They followed the line of least resistance, which promised the best results, which conformed to their own highly partisan beliefs, and which satisfied an impulse possessed by every man. This "terrible psychological weapon," regarded as both difficult and fearful today,²⁷ was used naturally and inevitably by men who, unembarrassed by their lack of psychological training, had a job to do—and set out to do it in the best way they could find.

The royalists recognized the use that their enemies were making of "associations," and especially of the popular fear of popery,²⁸ but they did not, like so many of the early opponents of Mussolini and Hitler (the Bolshevik Menace as used by the dictators was no more reasonable, no more skilfully used), become frightened into inactivity or disunity, or content themselves with cries of "Unfair! Propaganda!" They replied in the only effective way, by counterattacking with their own "simplification"—the Sectarian Menace—with ridicule of exaggerated and unreasoning fear of popery,²⁹ and with an attempt to "associate" the Puritans themselves with popery—with Jesuitical practices and political theory.³⁰ The latter device, although every bit as "technical" as that of the Puritans, failed for the prosaic reason that there was not sufficient evidence to support the charge. But their other arguments, equally colorful and more believable, had a correspondingly greater appeal. Neither side had a monopoly of reason, or of techniques, however innocently used,³¹ to exploit that reason.

²⁷ Professor Doob, of course, does not attribute to such methods any semimiraculous powers, but others are far less restrained.

²⁸ Cf. *A Letter Without Any Superscription* (1643), 4, 6.

²⁹ Such ridicule was very common, and although there is no satisfactory way to judge of its success, it seems safe to assume that it was effective. The frequency of its appearance is enough to suggest this. Typical examples are *The Speech Of A Warden* (1642), and *Accommodation Discommended* (1643). The former suggests that everyone who disagrees with "us" be formally denounced as papistical, the latter argues that peace is unthinkable because accommodation is a "popish" word.

³⁰ Cf. [David Owen], *A Perswasion to Loyalty* (1642), sig. A2, pp. 24 sq.

³¹ An example of the way in which unorganized, amateurish, unselfconscious propaganda campaigns conform to the principles set down by Doob may be seen also in the "principle of variation," a subheading under that of related attitudes. The skilful propagandist, who really knows his business (or should we call it a science?), "varies the content of his stimulus-situation, in order to arouse related attitudes in different people and, by changing the stereotypes, to construct new attitudes in others through positive suggestion." What must be done, by the single propagandist, with conscious effort, is automatically done by a large group of enthusiasts who, coming from different sections of the country, different social strata, possessing different attitudes and interests, range from the almost illiterate to the best educated, from dishonest rogue to conscientious clergyman, and will without conscious effort appeal to all of these categories.

There are, of course, other approaches to the subject of propaganda techniques which would be equally fruitful when applied to the seventeenth century. I have followed that of psychology because it is distinctively modern, and provides, therefore, a most striking comparison. Certainly it is true that the language now used to describe propaganda techniques would have been incomprehensible to the seventeenth-century writer, who thought neither in terms of techniques nor of psychology. It is also true that knowledge of one's weapons should increase proficiency in their use. But to dress up one's knowledge in elaborate phraseology does not necessarily indicate an increase of knowledge; it may merely mean a change from instinctive to self-conscious use of that knowledge. Pains-taking analysis of the patterns of courtship—aside from elementary physiological ones—may be of interest to the student, but is surely of little use to the lover. The practicing propagandist would gain far more from a course in rhetoric, the “physiology” of propaganda, from a close study of the cause he is to advocate and of the people at whom he will direct his message, than from intensive study of the so-called techniques; to him, the present-day approach to such study, fascinating as it may be to the psychologist and sociologist, is of little importance except as it affects the public's attitude toward his work. And it is upon the public, and upon those who should guide the public, that the preoccupation with propaganda techniques has had a dangerous effect. As I hope I have shown, these techniques are not new, nor are they in themselves effective. They are not peculiar to propaganda, but natural to human forms of thought and expression, some inevitably resulting from the use of language for any purpose, others from the adaption, for use in a larger field, of devices instinctively used in individual argument. This does not mean that they are not important. A good debater may manage to convince his audience even if his less skilful opponent has the stronger case. But this debater cannot accomplish miracles; he must have acceptable arguments, and some evidence upon which to base his oratory.³² So it is with propagandists.

From this preoccupation that I have mentioned, there has been one most serious result; attention has been distracted from what is said to how it is said. In justification of this approach it has been argued that a fuller understanding of the way propaganda works will decrease susceptibility to the more objectionable forms of propaganda.³³ However, I

³² This becomes more necessary as the subject debated draws closer to the vital interests of the listeners, or as the speaker expects his audience to take action on the strength of what he says.

³³ Doob, *op. cit.*, 5.

believe that the emphasis here has been misplaced; we should stop worrying about propaganda and concentrate instead upon the development of sound and logical habits of thought, and careful weighing of evidence before reaching a conclusion. As it is, blind, unreasoning fear of propaganda has become so acute that it has destroyed in many just that balanced outlook which alone can guide one through the maze of conflicting ideas and arguments. This fear must be dissipated before sane thinking can be restored.

Here is a task for which the historian should be ready and eager. The warped attitude toward propaganda can best be corrected by examining its role in past centuries. For most people, to approach this problem against the background of the first World War with objectivity is difficult, but the English Civil Wars, for example, present no such complication and do offer the opportunity of observing a large-scale campaign which is both sufficiently close to, and far removed from, present conditions. There and elsewhere in the past we can see propaganda in its relation to the other forces of war, and of peace, which influence the formation of public opinion; we can see where lies its strength, and where its weakness, for in spite of the addition of new *media* such as the radio and motion picture, propaganda is today as it was then—a force for evil, but for good as well, as dangerous as ignorance and prejudice, but as strong as wisdom and truth can make it. Seen in proper perspective, it can indeed be fearful—just as human nature can be fearful; but it can also inspire us—to the same extent that human nature can—with hope and courage.

KERMIT ROOSEVELT, JR.