

No propaganda – no war

“Cognitive Warfare” against one’s own population

by Robert Seidel

If you want to gain an orientation in today’s world, you must learn to distinguish and assess information more accurately. The debate about “fake news” has shown that not all information can be taken at face value. However, not every item of “fake news” is actually a fake. Since the Ukraine war, it has obviously been a question of the prerogative of interpretation in the minds of one’s own population. The people in the individual states are to be mobilised for this war – which has now taken on a global proportion.

People do not go to war voluntarily. War means dead or maimed people, flight, loss of homes, destruction, hunger, mental suffering etc. Already today, our European states are ruining themselves for the war between Russia and the NATO alliance, represented by Ukraine: on the one hand, through high debts to pay for arms deliveries from their own budgets or from US arms production and to provide for millions of refugees.

Already horrendous war costs

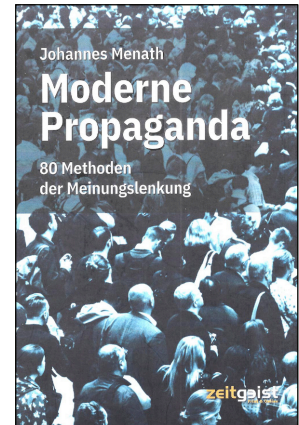
On the other hand, the increase in the cost of energy (destruction of the Nord-Stream pipeline, “energy turnaround”) with the simultaneous cutting of the cord from the Russian economic area, and in the future probably also from the Chinese economic area will lead to the lasting destruction of the German industrial location and its small and medium-sized businesses and thus to the loss of millions of jobs throughout Europe. And finally, and this is the greatest negative factor for every individual: there is the threat of a direct warlike exchange of attacks, be it with conventional or nuclear weapons.

War is “wanted”

A massive psychological influence on the population is necessary for entering or participating in a war. Albeit quite a bit has already been “achieved” in this field. The population must be “convinced” that it is “necessary” to accept material losses up to and including the death of relatives for “a good cause”. Just for fear of legal

ordinances, fines, or prison sentences, no one goes to war “voluntarily”. So, in addition to “hard power”, “soft power” comes into play.

Soft power like “advertising”, neo-German “public relations PR” or formerly “propaganda”, must be planned, used purposefully and well-dosed to generate readiness for war. Some techniques from the First and Second World Wars in the areas of print media, mass events or radio can still be clearly recognised today.



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From Goebbels to modern PR

However, more than 80 years have passed since *Josef Goebbels’* “Volksempfänger” (popular receivers). A period in which PR has developed rapidly. Methods and techniques that have been developed and refined over decades in the field of advertising for products or election campaigns are now used to change attitudes and habits of the population regarding war participation.

Thus, the techniques of mass influence today have increasingly become a topic of general interest. Several new publications have recently come onto the market on this subject. The need to look behind the scenes of state-directed opinion influencing is strong. Nobody likes to be “directed” unconsciously and without being asked.

No one wants to be unconsciously influenced

In the following, two highly interesting new publications should be pointed out. In his slim volume, “Moderne Propaganda. 80 Methoden der Meinunglenkung” (Modern Propaganda. 80 Methods of Directing Opinion), *Johannes Menath* briefly and succinctly presents common PR methods. He succeeds in introducing the subject and raising awareness of manipulation techniques. The reader is amazed at the multitude of

methods. In the process, Menath takes us through different centuries and different fields of science, such as sociology, psychology, etc.

How to protect yourself

In the first part, he presents individual methods, such as "division", as a method to weaken disagreeable opinion leaders. He often chooses appropriate quotes for this, for example, on the keyword "division" by *Niccolo Machiavelli*: "The Romans conducted their cause very well in the conquered provinces, sent colonies (settlements) there, supported the weak without making them strong, humiliated the powerful and did not allow the prestige of powerful strangers to arise" (from: *The Prince* (1513)).

In the back of the book, Menath deals with propaganda in general and offers personal reflections on how to protect yourself. A very readable book.

Cognitive Warfare

Jonas Tögel's account of NATO's "Kognitive Kriegsführung" (*Westend-Verlag, Frankfurt*) is very up-to-date. Tögel refers to the latest developments in NATO's "cognitive warfare" since 2020, also against its own population. All statements are substantiated in detail with sources. The author takes a differentiated and humane standpoint. Thus, he was able to show the extent of the misuse of psychological sciences for war purposes. Tögel leads historically and systematically through the history of "propaganda" to finally present today's excesses of a completely perverted warfare.

To love enslavement?

To characterise "Cognitive Warfare", Tögel quotes Aldous Huxley: "The dictatorships of the future will be very different from the dictatorships we have seen in the past. [...] They will rule by getting the consent of the people, they govern by bypassing the rational side of the people and appealing to their subconscious, their deeper emotions, so that the people will even love their enslavement. [...] The dictatorships will use scientific methods to manipulate people. [...] So the danger under the new regime is that people will even be happy in situations where they should not be happy at all!". In 1958, Aldous Huxley already pointed out the dangers of mass psychological manipulation.

Jonas Tögel does not leave the reader on one's own. He builds on human reason. By providing an overview of the techniques of cognitive warfare currently in use, the author helps to recognise these techniques and thus to neutralise them.

Bibliography

Johannes Menath. Moderne Propaganda. 80 Methoden der Meinungslenkung. Zeitgeist-Verlag, Höhr-Grenzhausen 2022 and
Jonas Tögel. Kognitive Kriegsführung. Westend-Verlag, Frankfurt 2023



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