

Controlling the Narrative

Independent, decentralized, participatory media

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(Presented at History of Contemporary Art, Woodbury University. This document is online at www.agitdrop.com/controlling_the_narrative.pdf)

Propaganda Model and Social Movements, Organizing Frameworks, Analysis, Conclusion

“It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it”

Propaganda Model:

- ✦ Filters: Ownership, Funding, Sourcing, Flak, Anti-communism and Fear (now anti-terrorism).
- ✦ 30 years ago, 50 corporations owned over 90% of media. Today, 6 corporations own over 90%
- ✦ Concentrated ownership means concentrated power.
- ✦ A majority of the US population gets its news and information from Television, with a computer (i.e. the internet) now in second.
- ✦ Social movements, those involved in campaigns, etc, are very concerned about major media bias and how issues are represented

Social Movements:

- ✦ BURN! Collective out of UCSD: a radical media collective dedicated to free speech. Starts 1993. Hosted mailing lists, websites for community organizations and armed resistance movements around the world.
- ✦ Zapatista movement in Chiapas, MX (1994) was a major influence on social movements all over the world, including BURN!, Indymedia - a rebellion against Neo-liberalism
- ✦ Global Justice Movement: Resistance against IMF/World Bank. Indigenous solidarity a key component. Late 90's, early 2000's.
- ✦ Indymedia comes out of Seattle during the 1999 WTO protests in context of Global Justice Movement/Zapatistas
- ✦ RegenerationTV - A worker owned media collective

Social Movements cont.:

- ✦ Kill Radio.org: Los Angeles based collective radio station
- ✦ Decisions by workers/communities, not privatized

Organizing Frameworks:

- ✦ Networks of mutual aid: Indymedia, Global Justice Movement
- ✦ Collectives: worker owned, participatory, democratic
- ✦ Decision Making: directly democratic consensus model
- ✦ Principles of Unity (Indymedia):
 - ✦ Equality, decentralization, autonomy
 - ✦ Free speech and open access a pre-requisite for a free society, information not a commodity
 - ✦ Anonymous publishing
 - ✦ Not-for-profit
 - ✦ Consensus decision making

Organizing Frameworks cont

- ✦ Pre-requisite for participation in decision-making is the contribution of one's labor to the group.
- ✦ Committed to the development of non-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian relationships. Leaders ok, but no bosses.
- ✦ Open source code always.
- ✦ Non-discrimination based upon race, gender, age, or sexual orientation. Racist, sexist or discriminatory content will be removed
- ✦ Committed to developing diversity upon race and class lines.

Organizing Frameworks cont

- ✦ Criteria for membership:
 - ✦ Agree to mission and principles of the group
 - ✦ Have 5 members
 - ✦ Have a mission statement
 - ✦ Develop editorial policy
 - ✦ No affiliation with political party, state or candidate for office
 - ✦ No commercialism
 - ✦ Decision-making in line with consensus principles.
- ✦ Working Groups to facilitate participation in the network

Analysis:

- ✦ We are all susceptible to propaganda. Repetition of messages is a powerful social force. That's why advertising is a billion dollar industry.
- ✦ Reinhold Niebuhr - foreign affairs adviser during early 20th century: the common person follows not reason but faith. He referred to "the stupidity of the average man" who needs "necessary illusions" and "emotionally potent oversimplifications". Only the elite are qualified to rule, so propaganda is an essential tool to keep the rabble in line.
- ✦ Critical analysis is essential to understanding and contextualizing all news stories and cultural products (i.e. movies, tv, etc). Understand the source, the funding and the framework.
- ✦ How we organize effects how we think.
- ✦ Control the medium and you control the message.

Conclusion:

- ✦ Own the media
- ✦ Networks based on solidarity are more powerful than individuals
- ✦ How you decide determines how you succeed
- ✦ Directly democratic, decentralized, non-hierarchical movements spread like wildfire
- ✦ Empowerment through experimentation in self-expression
- ✦ Question everything

(a few) Resources:

- Indymedia: www.indymedia.org and <http://la.indymedia.org>
- Cooperatives and Community: community-wealth.org
- Kill Radio: www.killradio.org
- Original Indymedia draft charter: http://la.indymedia.org/CNIMC_Draft_01.pdf
- Propaganda Model: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propaganda_model
- Consensus Decision Making:
 - <http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Global/DecisionMakingGuide>
 - http://killradio.org/Kill_Radio_Docs.pdf