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J. Michael Sproule

San Jose State University



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To Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee

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0521022002 - Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion

J. Michael Sproule

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**CONTENTS**

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page ix</i>
1 Prologue: Discovering Propaganda	1
Debs v. the United States	2
Wartime Persuasions	6
“It’s All Propaganda, Anyway”	16
2 The Progressive Propaganda Critics	22
Muckrakers and Mass Persuasion	22
The Influence of Rationalism	26
The Eclipse of Rationalism	29
The Juggernaut of Big Communication	33
Progressive Propaganda Critics	37
Academic Critics	47
3 Different Lessons I: Managed Democracy	53
The Practitioners Respond	54
The Audience as Target	59
The Measured and Managed Public	62
Foundations for Science	74
The Fragmentation of Humanistic Communication Study	78
4 Different Lessons II: Protecting the Public	92
Lippmann and Dewey	92
Thinking as Science	97
Progressive Polemics	104
Big Progressivism	110
The Right’s Polemical Response	117
Antipropaganda Polemics from Congress	120

Cambridge University Press

0521022002 - Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion

J. Michael Sproule

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents	viii
5 Propaganda Analysis, Incorporated	129
Founding	129
Flourishing	132
Vicissitudes of Critical Praxis	137
Extremists and Extremism	143
Foreign Connections	150
Theory versus Praxis	154
Defections	162
Off to War	167
6 Propaganda for Democracy	178
This Is the Enemy	178
Tools of Democracy	183
Social Science and Promotional Democracy	193
Are We Losing the Propaganda War?	208
The Engineering of Consent	213
From Propaganda to Communication	217
7 The New Communication – Or the Old Propaganda?	224
A Paradigmatic Interlocking Directorate	224
Magic Bullets and Administrative Reformers	234
The Red Propaganda Menace	241
Survival on the Periphery	249
8 Epilogue: Rediscovering Propaganda	262
<i>Notes</i>	272
<i>Name Index</i>	311
<i>Subject Index</i>	318

Illustrations follow page 164

Cambridge University Press

0521022002 - Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I first became interested in the topic of this book when, as an undergraduate student entirely innocent of the term *propaganda*, I was puzzled by the ability of perfectly absurd ideas to garner enthusiastic support. A history major adrift on a large Midwestern campus during the “years of hope, days of rage” (to borrow Todd Gitlin’s phrase), I gravitated to the debate team and, as often happens, to associated study in speech communication.

Browsing about the curriculum, I discovered that works on rhetoric, more than anything else I had encountered, salved my curiosity about why and how ideas circulated with consequences. My first mentor in this regard was James L. Golden, whose work amply demonstrated that rhetorical study and contemporary politics made for an interesting mix. Later, in a seminar on international broadcasting, Walter B. Emery encouraged my explorations into matters of propaganda. In the course of researching this subject, I came across a number of intriguing publications from something called the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA). I filed these away for later reference.

After several years of publishing small studies on facets of rhetorical theory and practice, I was casting about for a larger project. Returning to my notes on the IPA, I resolved that if I received a summer stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), I would set up to begin work on an article about the Institute. That first small grant from the NEH allowed me to make my early, tentative contacts with the people and the publications of the IPA. After thoroughly (I thought) preparing to interview Alfred McClung Lee, I discovered in my first ten minutes with Al that he could, without intending to overwhelm me, name several score of people and ideas that I never had heard of – but that were absolutely essential for my research. For the next dozen years, the Lees, Al and Betty, extended to me every possible help and encouragement.

My study would have been smothered had not the NEH rewarded

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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