

CONTROLLED BY PROPAGANDA AND THE MEDIA WHO CONTROLS WHOM

HOW POLITICIANS TURNED INTO
TV PRESENTERS AND
MEDIA MANAGERS MANIPULATE US.

Our world is constantly becoming a smaller place. Broadcasting stations brings us news from every part of the globe directly into our homes. The network of the media corporations has become ever so complex. Media tycoons, like Silvio Berlusconi and Rupert Murdoch, embody the global power of the media and the danger of it manipulating politics and public alike. The outcome of elections can be manipulated by swaying opinions and wars abroad seem to have become the instruments of political campaigning at home. Even terrorists make use of the modern tools of propaganda. All that remains to audiences is to participate as a silent zombie in front of the idiot box. What is propaganda? Are satellite-TV and Internet the last step to total control? Or is all of this nothing more than harmless entertainment?

To explain the meaning of propaganda to our generation seems unnecessary. After all, we have grown up under the influence of advertising boards and commercial breaks, TV spots and computer games. Their interference with our lives is omnipresent. Ever since the first bands of humans have had a chief, the struggle for power exist - and with it people, who want to keep and extend their personal power by trying to influence the thoughts and opinions of others. Since the beginning of time, political and religious leaders have tried to exert their influence. Be it through epic songs and with stories praising brave victories or noble dynasties. Every king used to employ his own storytellers, court jesters and playwrights for this purpose. The earliest media were traditional stories and songs, sculptures and paintings. A milestone in media history - the invention of the letter press in the 15th century - made it easier to multiply tales, ideas and thoughts and reach a wider audience, changing the face of Europe. In a time which accepted the supremacy of religious rulers, it doesn't amaze that the Bible was the first book ever printed. Still today, the Bible along with the works of Stalin, the Coran, and Mao's Little Red Cookbook belong to those tools of propaganda, which have influenced the public in uncountable print runs. A historical race has begun. To manipulate the public perception of history and of contemporary events has become the high game and philosophers, poets and unrecognised geniuses participate zealously in it. Teachers, priests, historians, and people of public interest became instruments in this game. Already back then, publishing houses, used to be the representatives of all different kinds of agendas, and the newspapers they produced, provided the daily battlefield for these interests. Nazis and Communists alike made use of the power of the billboards. Under them, the entire human existence became saturated with slogans. The Nazis attained a break-through when they

introduced the *Volksempfänger* to Germany - an inexpensive radio receiver affordable for every household at the time. The *Führer's* voice could now be sent directly into every home and penetrate each German brain. For people back then this must have had the same mesmerizing effect that listening to Wu-Tang RZA explaining the world via the earplugs of an iPod has to children's brains today. Then, after the radio, TV was invented. Cinema had already been around for a while, but a TV set in every living room of every family created the means for a non-stop connection with a grateful consumer. Putting a telly in front of our couches was like laying the foundation stone to total and global control. Almost everywhere and for almost all people, a world without TV is unthinkable. It has long since become part of our everyday lives, as well as our best friend, our favourite drug for distraction, a babysitter, and life coach. Media tycoons collect radio stations, newspapers, and TV channels around them. Today, with the proper friends in the right places you can manage to make a scumbag politician look like a saint or play down the odd scandal if elections are near.

We have become a gullible media society - in which money grants more power than political influence. The former Australian media magnate Rupert Murdoch controls thousands of publishing houses and radio stations worldwide and is the owner of the "News Corporation" and of "20th Century Fox". He produces movies, news, and rumours. He has a far-reaching influence that makes even the powerful quiver. One little "unintentional" false report is able to send the share prices to a plummeting fall. No wonder that George W. Bush employed Murdoch as a strategic advisor for his election campaign. But a question presents itself: Who is controlling whom?

After the end of World War II began the TV era. News writers and producers of TV shows eagerly supported the Cold War between East and West

with stories and news items. The TV stations quickly realised their public influence. TV commercials were invented and the telly started to dominate the lives and the opinions of a large number of people. The press in turn experienced a promotion in its public standing and gained the power to not only hold a sway on the masses but to actually inform them as well. A culmination point in media history is the Vietnam War. Free of censure, freelance journalists reported directly from the gruesome battlefields. They sent pictures and coverage of massacres and the cruelties of war, which eventually helped to end the Vietnam War. It seems that this relentless news coverage was simply too much reality for the American public, which was unable to endure it any longer. But American media experts learned from this. During the Gulf War there were almost no official TV images, which provided a real and objective view of the daily reality of war. A well-known example for this is the footage filmed from a Stealth bomber which can be seen dropping a bomb allegedly precisely on Saddam's bunker. Here, one image becomes representative for a whole war, although the whole thing looked like the secret production of CIA film students bombarding a shoebox with rotten eggs. Many people remember contemporary events in the form of TV images. This is a dangerous development. Our ideas of the Vietnam War or the Somalia conflict we take from movies such as "Black Hawk Down". To us, the Korea War was a TV series ("M.A.S.H.") that lasted even longer than the real war did. The whole thing leads up to people believing that "Star Wars" is real, too.

September 11th - the Twin Towers fall. Conspiracy theories run wild. While the Western world mourns the victims of the attack, TV broadcasts show that Arabs in the entire East were supposedly cheering. As we know now, the footage was filmed ...

**MAYBE IT IS
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THE MATRIX**

MEDIA MOGULES VS. SPAM CONSUMER

... years before at a Palestinian wedding and had nothing to do with the event. Why was the material used? The important thing for a TV station seems to be able to deliver as fast possible in order to satisfy the audience's expectations.

But not everything that smells of conspiracy has to do with a secret society like the infamous Illuminati. All in all, the media corporations of the world are connected in one way or other. An independent opinion is hard to finance and the manipulators mainly prefer to stay in the background. Still, there are very real princes of the media world with whole clans, who are quite aware of the magnitude of power they wield and who therefore occupy political offices themselves or at least remove those from them that stand in the way of their interest. The global network of the media tycoons is becoming

tighter every day. Today, a global player corporation is able to obtain acquisitions containing hundreds of TV and thousands of radio stations in the share packet. Once they have gone public, no publisher or broadcaster is really safe from being taken over anymore. In many countries monopolies and mergers commissions prevent the monopolisation of the media. But then, as in the case of Silvio Berlusconi, sons and daughters step onto the plan. Technologies keep improving. With it, ever more modern variations of manipulating and influencing users are developing. Many of the conspiracy websites today try to decode the global media without noticing that they have become a part of it. Maybe it is better after all to not know that we are already in the Matrix! ■

MEDIA - CLAN BERLUSCONI



Italian media prince Silvio Berlusconi embodies the new type of "the powerful". The TV stations he owns receive roughly 50 percent audience ratings in Italy. Berlusconi systematically used his economic power in the media market to get into politics. He managed to become premier of Italy and even changed media law to further extend his influence.

Silvio Berlusconi was born in Milan in 1936. He laid the financial base for his empire as a building contractor. Today he is the chairman of the right wing "Forza Italia" as well as president of the football club AC Milan. In the summer of 1978 Berlusconi founded "Tele Milano" a local TV station, which made a name for itself with American-style commercial breaks and relentless journalism. In the same year Berlusconi also founded the holding "Fininvest", which became the foundation for his further success. In 1980 "Tele Milano" changed name and became the first nationwide commercial TV station "Canale 5". Berlusconi followed this up in 1982 by purchasing the financially stricken TV station "Italia 1" and in 1984 bought "Rete 4". An expansion into the European media market was accomplished with the stations "La Cinq" in France in 1986, "Tele 5" in Germany in 1987, "Telecinco" in Spain in 1989, as well as a 45 percent share in the Munich-based TV corporation "Kabel Media und Programmgesellschaft". By acquiring the publishing house Mondadori in 1989 the group has become the Italy's leading book and newspaper corporation. With its subsidiary companies "Mediolanum" and "Programma Italia" the Fininvest group also operates in the fields of banking, insurance and financial services. After long years of struggle, Berlusconi managed to gain control of the Italian IT company Olivetti and also owns Italy's largest chain of department stores. This has gained him a power in both economy and the media in Italy and Europe that is exemplary. Berlusconi owns more than 75 percent of the private TV sector and holds 40 percent of the entire national TV market. TV channels obtain 60 percent of the gross commercial income in Italy. Because of this concentration of political and economic power, critics often accuse Berlusconi of abusing his influence to further his personal interests. According to a recent parliamentary Act the "Premier Padrone", as he has been dubbed in Italy, is not allowed to run his media businesses himself any longer. However, that's not really necessary anymore anyway, since his children have long since taken over from him.

WHO'S AFRAID OF RUPERT MURDOCH?

The media mogul Rupert Murdoch was born in 1931 in Melbourne/Australia but he is an American citizen today. He inherited a small Australian newspaper company at the tender age of 21 from his father, which was the starting point for his ongoing career. Since then, no publishing house, no radio or TV station has been safe from him.

Today he is the CEO and chairman of "News Corporation" and can look back on a career in international press and TV business that is without equal. With his financial influence, Rupert Murdoch controls a major part of the private media market in the USA and Europe, which has made him one of the richest men in the world today. To Murdoch's "News Corporation" belong, among others, the British daily newspapers "The Sun" and "The Times", the film studio "20th Century Fox" and the US TV station "Fox Television". "News Corporation" operates worldwide and is involved in film and TV companies, publishing houses and even owns baseball, basketball and football teams. In 1989 it established its base in the European market with "Sky Television" - the largest pay-TV network in the world. Murdoch has published a favourable biography of the Chinese dictator Deng, but refused to print a China-critical book by the former governor of Hong Kong. This way, Murdoch managed to obtain broadcasting rights for China. He also used his 175 newspapers worldwide to roll the drums for the Iraq war and the downthrow of Saddam Hussein employing every means of propaganda, however, with amazingly little success. Critics have repeatedly blamed the network "Fox TV" of being overly patriotic and giving one-sided news coverage in favour of the Bush administration. This fails to amaze, since Murdoch has been one of George W. Bush's strategic advisors for his election campaign. Murdoch's empire is estimated to be worth about 50 billion Euros. He is represented almost everywhere in the world already. In Australia he owns nearly all newspapers, in China the large Asian TV stations "Star TV" and "Phoenix TV". In the UK Murdoch dominates 40 percent of the newspaper market as well as owning 40 percent of the satellite TV station "BskyB". Murdoch currently plans his retirement from the active management of his businesses and prepares to hand his empire over to his children.

TV TURNOFF WEEK

Every Year from April 25 to May 1, thousands of jammers are escaping the couch and hit the streets to celebrate TV Turnoff Week - the year's biggest cleanup of our mental environment. www.adbusters.org www.tvturnoff.org www.turnoffyourtv.com www.tvbgone.com
- Blank Screen. Watch TV for half an hour without turning it on. You are not allowed to distract yourself with any other activity besides looking at the blank TV screen.
- Sight and Sound. Watch 15 minutes with the volume turned off. Then turn the volume on and listen to the last 15 minutes with your back to the screen.
- Watch the Watcher. watch someone else watch TV for half an hour. If you don't want to watch someone else, you can videotape yourself watching TV and then watch that.



WHO CONTROLS WHOM



THE SOVIET FLAG ON TOP OF THE REICHSTAG

It's one of the most well-known photographs of the victors of WWII: An unknown Soviet soldier raises a red flag on top of the Reichstag in the ruins of Berlin.

On April 30th 1945 at 9:50 pm the Russian Sergeant Egorov and the Georgian Soldier Kantarija hoisted the symbol of the

Soviet victory on the Reichstag in Berlin. Ukrainian cinematographer Yevgeni Khaldei accompanied both of them to the roof of the destroyed building but due to little light at this late hour it was technically impossible to take a proper picture. On the next morning, the 1st of May, the flag was finally photographed out of an airplane. Only later did Stalin have Khaldei, who, as a war reporter produced material for propaganda and the news agency TASS, stage the historical event. The scene was re-enacted and although manipulated for propaganda's sake, found its way into the archives of history as an original document. The dramatic pose in which the soldier hoists the red flag is supposed to portray the victor's pride and could only be properly directed in a film studio. It is said that Stalin was very pleased. The actual flag on top of the Reichstag was made of a simple red sheet - later this banner of victory became the official pennant of the Soviet Union.

THE FIRST LANDING ON THE MOON

media fake or reality?

Allegedly the US administration assigned the filmmaker Stanley Kubrik (Space Odyssey, Clockwork Orange, Full Metal Jacket) with staging the first landing on the moon in a Texan filmstudio. There are countless hints that supposedly support this theory. For example, no stars can be seen in the background, the US flag is moving, although there's no wind on the moon, and one of the lunar rocks shows the number 3, which indicates that it might just be a prop.

However, conspiracy theories and counterevidence have long since been countered in return! These and other stories can be found in the satirical film "Dark Side of the Moon".



"BUT IT WAS ON TV..."

Film tip: "Wag the Dog" (1997) - directed by Barry Levinson, with Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman, based on the novel

"American Hero" by Larry Beinhart.

When the US president is caught in a sex scandal shortly before the elections, spin-doctor Conrad Brean (Robert De Niro) is charged to save his image. He teams up with a Hollywood movie producer to develop a media campaign. Together they fabricate film material that shows the USA going to war against Albania. Almost overnight a war-related hit single comes out and forged TV images of Albanian war refugees are broadcast daily causing a wave of patriotism. The public of course believe that what they see is the reality since it is on TV! Alongside all this, other events of the recent American history are revisited which supposedly have also been media inventions.

"Wag the Dog" is a satire about how the powers that be treat media and the public and is a take on the theory that the US may have started wars before in order to aid political campaigns at home. Wag the Dog anticipates the Lewinsky affair of former president Bill Clinton, who during the hearings about the affair ordered the bombardment of Afghanistan and Sudan in order to distract the American public, as some believe.

