






BRAINWASHING: How The British Use The Media for Mass Psychological Warfare

by L. Wolfe

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End of Page	Mass Brainwashing	Site Map	Overview Page
-----------------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------

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"I know the secret of making the average American believe anything I want him to. Just let me control television.... You put something on the television and it becomes reality. If the world outside the TV set contradicts the images, people start trying to change the world to make it like the TV set images...."

--Hal Becker, media "expert" and management consultant, the Futures Group, in an interview in 1981 [1]

In the 15 years since Becker's comment, Americans have become even more "wired" into a mass media network that now includes computer and video games, as well as the Internet--an all-surrounding network whose power is so pervasive that it is almost taken for granted. As the standup comic said, "We are really a media conscious people. I know a guy who was run over by a car in the street. He didn't want to go to the hospital. Instead, he dragged himself over to the nearest bar, to check out whether he made it onto the evening news. When it wasn't on, he said, "What does a guy have to do, get killed, to get on television?"

In the highest circles of the British monarchy and its Club of Isles, this great power is not taken for granted. Rather, it is carefully manipulated and directed, as Becker describes from a limited standpoint, to create and mold popular opinion. In a 1991 report published by the Malthusian Club of Rome, entitled "The First Global Revolution," Sir Alexander King, top adviser on science and education policy to the royal family and Prince Philip, wrote that new advances in communications technology will greatly expand the power of the media, both in the advanced and developing sectors. The media, he proclaimed, is the most powerful weapon and "agent of change" in the fight to establish a "one-worldist," neo-Malthusian order that will transcend and obliterate the concept of the nation-state.

"It is certainly necessary to engage in a broad debate with the journalists and the top media executives involved to study the conditions for them to be able to define this new role,"

King wrote.

In his project, King's Club of Rome can count on cooperation from the media cartel, which is a British asset, as documented in our report. It can also call on the capabilities of a mass psychological warfare machine, also run by the British and their assets, which extends into key phases of media production, and includes writers and psychiatrists who help shape the content, and the pollsters who fine-tune and analyze the impact on targetted populations. Beyond this interacting network, there are millions of participants involved in the production, distribution, and transmission of media messages, whose thinking, in turn, has been shaped by the content of the media product, and who are, effectively, self-brainwashed by the culture within which they live.

The Tavistock "Mother"

The historic center of this mass psywar apparatus is based outside London, in the Tavistock Center. [2] Established in the aftermath of World War I under the patronage of the Duke George of Kent (1902-42), the original Tavistock Clinic, led by

John Rawlings Rees, developed as the psychological warfare center for the royal family and British intelligence. Rees and a cadre group of Freudian and neo-Freudian psychiatrists, applied wartime experience of psychological collapse, to create theories about how such conditions of breakdown could be induced, absent the terror of war. The result was a theory of mass brainwashing, involving group experience, that could be used to alter the values of individuals, and through that, induce, over time, changes in the axiomatic assumptions that govern society.

In the 1930s, Tavistock's extended networks developed a symbiotic relationship with the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, created by European oligarchical networks, which focussed on the study and criticism of culture from a neo-Freudian standpoint. In the late 1930s, with its operations transferred from Germany to the New York area, the Frankfurt School coordinated the first analysis of the impact of a mass media phenomenon, i.e., radio, on culture--the Princeton-based "Radio Research Project." [3]

With the outbreak of World War II, Tavistock operatives took effective control of the Psychological Warfare Directorate of the British Army, while its allied network in the United States embedded itself in the American psychological warfare apparatus, including the Committee on National Morale and the Strategic Bombing Survey.

By war's end, the combined influence of Tavistock (which became the Tavistock Institute in 1947) and of the former Frankfurt School operatives, had created a cadre of "psychological shock troops," as Rees called them, and "cultural warriors" numbering in the several thousands. Today that network numbers in the several millions around the world, and it is the single most important factor in determining the design and content of mass media product.

The "Pictures in Your Head"

In 1922, Walter Lippmann defined the term "public opinion" as follows:

"The pictures inside the heads of human beings, the pictures of themselves, of others, of their needs and purposes, and relationship, are their public opinions. Those pictures which are acted upon by groups of people, or by individuals acting in the name of groups, are Public Opinion, with capital letters."

Lippmann, who was the first to translate Sigmund Freud's works into English, was to become one of the most influential of political commentators. [4] He had spent World War I at the British psychological warfare and propaganda headquarters in Wellington House, outside of London, in a group that included Freud's nephew, Eduard Bernays. [5] Lippmann's book *Public Opinion*, published one year after Freud's *Mass Psychology*, which touched on similar themes, was a product of his tutelage by the Rees networks. It is through the media, Lippmann writes, that most people come to develop those "pictures in their heads," giving the media "an awesome power."

The Rees networks had spent World War I studying the effects of war psychosis, and its breakdown of individual personality. From their work, an evil thesis emerged: Through the use of terror, man can be reduced to a childlike and submissive state, in which his powers of reason are clouded, and in which his emotional response to various situations and stimuli can become predictable, or in Tavistockian terms, "profilable." By controlling the levels of anxiety, it is possible to induce a similar state in large groups of people, whose behavior can then be controlled and manipulated by the oligarchical forces for whom Tavistock worked. [6]

Mass media were capable of reaching large numbers of people with programmed or controlled messages, which is key to the creation of "controlled environments" for brainwashing purposes. As Tavistock's researches showed, it was important that the victims of mass brainwashing not be aware that their environment was being controlled; there should thus be a vast number of sources for information, whose messages could be varied slightly, so as to mask the sense of external control. Where possible, the messages should be offered and reinforced through "entertainments," which could be consumed, without apparent coercion, and with the victim perceiving himself as making a choice between various options and outlets.

Lippmann observes in his book that people are more than willing to reduce complex problems to simplistic formulas, to form their opinion by what they believe others around them believe; truth hardly enters into such considerations. Appearance of reports in the media confer the aura of reality upon those stories: If they weren't factual, then why would they be reported? Lippmann says the average person believes. People whose fame is in turn built up by the media, such as movie stars, can become "opinion leaders," with as much power to sway public opinion as political figures.

Were people to think about this process too much, it might break down; but, he writes,

"the mass of absolutely illiterate, of feeble minded, grossly neurotic, undernourished and frustrated individuals is very considerable, much more considerable, there is reason to think, than we generally suppose. Thus a wide popular appeal is circulated among persons who are mentally children or barbarians, whose lives are a morass of entanglements, people whose vitality is exhausted, shut-in people, and people whose experience has comprehended no factor in the problem under discussion."

Stating that he saw a progression to ever-less-thought-provoking forms of media, Lippmann marvels at the power of the nascent Hollywood movie industry to shape public opinion. Words, or even a still picture, require an effort for the person to form a "picture in the mind." But, with a movie,

"the whole process of observing, describing, reporting, and then imagining has been accomplished for you. Without more trouble than is needed to stay awake, the result which your imagination is always aiming at is reeled off on the screen."

Significantly, as an example of the power of movies, he uses the D.W. Griffith propaganda film for the Ku Klux Klan, "The Birth of a Nation"; no American, he writes, will ever hear the name of the Klan again, "without seeing those white horsemen."

Popular opinion, Lippmann observes, is ultimately determined by the desires and wishes of an elite "social set." That set, he states, is a

"powerful, socially superior, successful, rich urban social set [which] is fundamentally international throughout the Western Hemisphere and in many ways, London is its center. It counts among its membership the most influential people in the world, containing as it does the diplomatic sets, high finance, the upper circles of the army and navy, some princes of the church, the great newspaper proprietors, their wives, mothers, and daughters who wield the scepter of invitation. It is at once a great circle of talk and a real social set."

In a typical elitist fashion, Lippmann concludes that coordination of public opinion is lacking in precision. If the goal of a one-worldist "Great Society" is to be realized, then "public opinion must be organized for the press, not by the press." It is not sufficient to rely on the whims of a "super social set" to manipulate the "pictures in people's heads"; that job "can only be managed by a specialized class" which operates through "intelligence bureaus." [7]

The "Radio Research Project"

As Lippmann was writing, the radio, the first major mass media technology to invade the home, was coming into prominence. Unlike the movies, which were viewed in theaters by large groups of people, the radio provided an individualized experience within the home, and centered on the family. By 1937, out of 32 million American families, some 27.5 million had a radio set--a larger percentage than had cars, telephones, or even electricity.

That same year, the Rockefeller Foundation funded a project to study the effects of radio on the population. [8] Recruited to what became known as the "Radio Research Project," headquartered at Princeton University, were sections of the Frankfurt School, now transplanted from Germany to America, as well as individuals such as Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport, who were to become key components of Tavistock's American operations. Heading the project was the Frankfurt School's Paul Lazerfeld; his assistant directors were Cantril and Allport, along with Frank Stanton, who was to head the CBS News division, and later become its president, as well as chairman of the board of the RAND Corporation.

The project was presaged by theoretical work done earlier in the studies of war propaganda and psychosis, and the work of Frankfurt School operatives Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. This earlier work had converged on the thesis that mass media could be used to induce regressive mental states, atomizing individuals and producing increased lability. (These induced mental conditions were later dubbed by Tavistock itself as "brainwashed" states, and the process of inducing them called "brainwashing.")

In 1938, at the time he was head of the music section of the Radio Research Project, Adorno wrote that listeners to radio music programs:

"fluctuate between comprehensive forgetting and sudden dives into recognition. They listen atomistically and dissociate what they hear.... They are not childlike, but they are childish; their primitivism is not that of the undeveloped, but that of the forcibly retarded."

The Radio Research Project's findings, published in 1939, backed up Adorno's thesis of "enforced retardation," and serve as a brainwashers' handbook.

In studies on the serialized radio dramas, commonly known as "soap operas" (so named, because many were sponsored by soap manufacturers), Herta Hertzog found that their popularity could not be attributed to any socio-economic characteristics of listeners, but rather to the serialized format itself, which induced habituated listening. The brainwashing power of serialization was recognized by movie and television programmers; to this day, the afternoon "soaps" remain among the most addictive of television fare, with 70% of all American women over 18 watching at least two of these shows each day.

Another Radio Research Project study investigated the effects of the 1938 Orson Welles radio dramatization of H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, about an invasion from Mars. Some 25% of the listeners to the show, which was formatted as if it were a news broadcast, believed that an invasion was under way, creating a national panic--this, despite repeated and clear statements that the show was fictional. Radio Project researchers found that most people didn't believe that Martians had invaded, but rather that a German invasion was under way. This, the researchers reported, was because the show had followed the "news bulletin" format that had earlier accompanied accounts of the war crisis around the Munich conference. Listeners reacted to the format, not the content of the broadcast.

The project's researchers had proven that radio had already so conditioned the minds of its listeners, making them so fragmented and unthinking, that repetition of format was the key to popularity. [9]

The "One-Eyed Babysitter"

Television was beginning to make its entrance as the next mass media technology at the time the Radio Research Project's findings were published in 1939. First experimented with on a large scale in Nazi Germany during the 1936 Berlin Olympics, TV made its splashy public appearance at the 1939 New York World's Fair, where it attracted large crowds. Adorno and others immediately recognized its potential as a mass-brainwashing tool. In 1944, he wrote,

"Television aims at the synthesis of radio and film ... but its consequences are enormous and promise to intensify the impoverishment of aesthetic matter, so drastically that by tomorrow, the thinly veiled identity of all industrial culture products can come triumphantly out in the open, derisively fulfilling the Wagnerian dream of *Gesamtkunstwerk*--the fusion of all arts in one work."

As was obvious from even the earliest clinical studies of television (some of which were conducted in the late 1940s and early 1950s by Tavistock operatives), viewers, over a relatively short period of time, entered into a trance-like state of semi-awareness, characterized by a fixed stare. The longer one watched, the more pronounced the stare. In such a condition of twilight-like semi-awareness, they were susceptible to messages both contained in the programs themselves, and through transference, in the advertising. They were being brainwashed. [10]

Television moved from being a neighborhood oddity, to mass penetration of especially urban areas, during approximately 1947-52. As Lyndon LaRouche has observed, this coincided with a critical period in the nation's psychological life. The dreams of millions of World War II veterans, and their high hopes of building a better world, crashed to earth in the morally corrupt leadership of the Truman administration and ensuing economic depression. These veterans retreated into family life, their jobs, their homes, their living rooms. And, in the center of those living rooms was their new television set, whose banal images provided assurance that the corrupt moral choices they had made were correct.

The earliest programming fell back on the tested models of radio, as described in the Radio Research Project: the situation comedy, or "sitcom," the game shows, the variety shows, sports, and the "soaps." Many were in serial form, with interlocking characters, if not stories. All were banal, deliberately designed so.

The children of these unhappy veterans, the so-called baby boomers, became the first generation to be weaned on what LaRouche calls "the one-eyed babysitter." Television viewing was encouraged by parents, often as a means of controlling the children, who would stare at whatever was on the screen for hours on end. The content of the first children's programs was banal (but no more so than the television programming in general), and mentally destructive; even more destructive was the replacement of real family interaction by television viewing, as the dinner table was replaced by the "TV dinner" in front of the tube. Not surprisingly, the children fixated obsessively on the items advertised by the media, demanding that they be given such items, lest they not be like their friends. [11]

In the mid-1970s, Eric Trist, who, until his death in 1993, headed Tavistock's operations in the United States, and Tavistock's main media "expert," Fred Emery, reported on their findings of the impact of 20 years of television on American society. In Emery's 1975 work, *Futures We Are In*, they reported that the content of programming was no longer as important as the sheer amount of television viewing. Average daily viewing time had risen steadily over the two decades since the introduction of the medium, such that by the mid-1970s, it ranked as a daily activity only behind sleep and work, at almost six hours a day (since then, it has risen still further, to more than seven hours, with the addition of video games, home videos, and so on); among school-age children, the time spent viewing television ranked just behind school attendance. These findings, Tavistock indicated, strongly suggested that television was like an addictive drug. Similarly, Emery reported on neurological studies which, he claimed, showed that repeated television viewing "shuts down the central nervous system of man."

Whether this claim holds up under scientific scrutiny, Emery and Trist present persuasive argument that general, extensive television viewing lowers the capacity for conceptual thinking about what is being presented on the screen. The studies show that the mere presence of images on television, especially within appropriate news or documentary format, but also within general viewing, tends to "validate" those images, and imbue them with a sense of "reality."

Trist and Emery find nothing wrong with such developments, which indicate that television is producing a brain-dead generation. Rather, they show how this development fits into a larger global plan for social control, implemented by Tavistock and its allied networks on behalf of its sponsors. Society, they state in *A Choice of Futures*, a book published in the same time period, has been plunging through progressively lowered states of mental awareness, to a point where even the Orwellian fascist state is not attainable. At this point, thanks to television and other mass media, mankind is in a state of *dissociation*, whose political outcome will be manifested in a "Clockwork Orange" society, named for the book by the late Anthony Burgess, in which roving youth gangs habitually commit acts of random violence, and then return home to watch the news about what they have done on the "tube."

The brainwashers point out that this development, for which they say the violence of Northern Ireland is a model, was not induced by the effects of television alone. Society has been put through "social turbulence" in a series of economic and political shocks, which included the war in Vietnam, the oil price shocks, and the assassination of political leaders. The psychological impact of those events, for whose responsibility they neglect to properly ascribe to the Anglo-American establishment, were magnified by their being brought into homes, in gory and terrifying detail, by television news broadcasts. Under the Trist-Emery scenario, one can imagine hearing the tag line for a future late news program: "The end of the world. Details at 11."

Consolidating the Paradigm

In a 1991 anthology of the work's of Tavistock which he edited, Trist wrote that all of the international "nodes" or centers of the institute's brainwashing apparatus were deployed for the central purpose of consolidating the paradigm-shift to a "post-industrial world order." Their goal, he stated, was to make the shift irreversible. In this work, and in other locations, Trist, like Alexander King, urges a mass "reeducational" campaign to break the last vestiges of national resistance, especially within the United States, to this new, one-world order.

Approximately ten years earlier, another of Tavistock's minions, Bertram Gross, in a paper delivered to a 1981 World Future Society conference attended by Al Gore, provided a glimpse of what this "new world order" might look like. Gross argued that in the period ahead, the world would be offered what Tavistock likes to call a "critical choice"--a set of options, all of which appear to be bad, but, because of applied terror and pressure of events, a choice is nonetheless forced and the "less bad" option taken. Western industrial society will break down into chaos; this chaos can, he said, either lead to a fascism of the authoritarian type that the British helped install in Nazi Germany, or to a more humane and benevolent form of fascism, which Gross called a "friendly fascism." The choice, Gross proclaimed, is to attempt to go back to the old industrial paradigm, under which there will be Nazi fascism; or, to embrace post-industrialism, where there will be a "friendly fascism." The latter, he said, is clearly preferable, since it is merely a transition to a new "global information world order," which will involve more personal choice and freedom, a true open and participatory mass democracy.

For Gross, the choice is clear: In any case, there will be pain and suffering; but only the "friendly fascism" of the global information order, of a society wired together by cable television, satellites, and computer lines, offers hope for a better "future."

Who shall administer this "friendly fascist" world order? Gross explained that there now truly exists a "Golden International," a term that he credited to the late Communist International (Comintern) leader Nikolai Bukharin. It is an enlightened international elite, based within the powerful European-centered oligarchy that controls the global multinational communications industry, as well as other critical resources and global finance. This elite must be instructed and informed by the intelligence of the Tavistock networks; they must be shown that the great masses of television-fixated mental zombies can be won easily to this brave new world, through inducements of entertainments and the endless supply of "information." Once the masses are won over, through "education," then the resistance within national sectors will collapse.

In 1989, under the initiative of Trist, Tavistock convened a seminar at Case Western Reserve University to discuss the means to bring about a "stateless" international fascism--a new global information world order. In 1991, Tavistock devoted its journal, *Human Relations*, to the publication of the papers from that conference. In several of the papers, the call went out for the deployment of the mass media on behalf of this project.

In addition, since 1981, there was now a new technology at the disposal of the brainwashers--the Internet. According to Harold Perlmutter, one of the participants at the Case Western seminar, the Internet represented a subversive means to penetrate national borders with "information" about this new world order; it also serves as a glue for a network of non-governmental organizations, all circulating propaganda for the new world order. These NGOs are to be the superstructure upon which the new world order is to be built. Perlmutter, and other conference participants, argued that their movement cannot be beaten, because it doesn't exist, in a formal sense. It resides in the minds of its conspirators, minds informed by Tavistock's mass-media brainwashing machine. As television was the information drug during the last half of this millennium, so the Internet, with its glut of mostly useless chatter and "information," with its subversive, programmed messages, is to be the new "drug" of the next millennium, Tavistock boasts. [\[12\]](#)

“Americans don't really think--they have opinions, feelings,” said the Futures Group's Hal Becker in a 1981 interview. “Television creates opinion, then validates it. Are they brainwashed by the tube? It is really more than that. I think that people have lost their ability to relate the images of their own lives without television intervening. This really is what we mean when we say we have a wired society. We are headed for an Orwellian society, but Orwell made a mistake in 1984. Big Brother doesn't need to watch you, as long as you watch it. And who can say that this is really so bad?”

The Fly in the Ointment

But, even within the elitist circles of Tavistock's international networks, there is a faint glimmer that something might be seriously awry in their plan. It was expressed by an author quoted by Emery back in 1973, who wondered aloud what might happen when the television-addicted baby-boomer generation fully takes over the reins of leadership. Have we really prepared them to lead? Can they think and solve problems? Emery dismisses the problem, indicating that there is enough time yet to train such leadership cadre.

But the questions linger. In 1981, at the World Future Society event at which Gross delivered his paean to the “friendly fascist” “global information order,” Tony Lentz, an assistant professor of speech at the Pennsylvania State University, observed that he had witnessed destruction of oral and written skills, by the mass media and television; not only could most students not write coherently, but they could not even speak intelligently. This was not merely a function of miseducation, he stated in his paper, “The Medium Is Madness,” but also because they had no desire to think. Arguing that Plato states that our knowledge of the world must be based on knowing the mind of someone who knows something about it, Lentz said that television has left people with the idea that mere images represent knowledge. There is no questioning, no effort to get inside the mind of someone, merely dialogue and image, sound and fury, that certainly signify nothing. [13]

“Allowing ourselves to be influenced by the subtle but powerful illusions presented by television,” wrote Lentz, “leads to a kind of mass madness that can have rather frightening implications for the future of the nation ... We will have begun to see things that aren't there, giving someone else the power to make up our illusions for us. The prospect is frightening, and given our cultural heritage we should know better.”

Notes

1. [\[return to text\]](#)
The Futures Group, a private think-tank, was one of the first organizations to specialize in the use of computer interfaces in psychological manipulations of corporate executives and political leaders. In 1981, it pioneered the RAPID program for the U.S. State Department, which used computer-driven graphics to brainwash select developing sector leaders into supporting International Monetary Fund conditionalities and population control programs. It was also involved in extensive profiling of the U.S. population for major multinationals.
2. [\[return to text\]](#)
The LaRouche movement undertook groundbreaking work on the Tavistock network in 1973-74, and published the results of its investigations in *Campaigner* magazine (Winter 1973, Spring 1974 issues). Additional work has been published in *EIR*, most recently in the May 24, 1996 issue, a *Special Report* entitled “The Sun Never Sets on the British Empire.”
3. [\[return to text\]](#)
For a comprehensive report on the Frankfurt School and its network, including its role in shaping mass media policy and cultural warfare, see Michael Minnicino, “The New Dark Age: The Frankfurt School and `Political Correctness,’” *Fidelio*, Winter 1992.
4. [\[return to text\]](#)
Lippmann, who migrated from Fabian Socialist networks to the circles of the Thomas Dewey and the Dulles brothers, became the spokesman for an American imperialist faction that was controlled by the British, and deployed against the anti-imperial policy outlook of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. See Lyndon LaRouche, *The Case of Walter Lippmann* (New York: Campaigner Publications Inc., 1977).
5. [\[return to text\]](#)
Bernays is important in his own right, as the person who created “Madison Ave.” advertising, based on the tricks of Freudian psychological manipulation.
6. [\[return to text\]](#)
All Tavistock psychology (as well as Freudian psychology) proceeds from the image of man as a sensate beast. It

explicitly rejects, with great malice, the Judeo-Christian view of man as created in the image of God, meaning that man, and man alone, is endowed by his Creator with creativity. Tavistock, which claims that all creativity derives solely from sublimated neurotic or erotic impulses, sees the human mind merely as a slate on which it can draw and redraw its "pictures."

7. [\[return to text\]](#)

This is similar to the notion, put forward by Rees in his book *The Shaping of Psychiatry by War*, of the creation of an elite group of psychiatrists who will, on behalf of the ruling oligarchy, ensure the "mental health" of the world.

8. [\[return to text\]](#)

The Nazis had already extensively used radio propaganda for brainwashing, as an integral element of the fascist state. This was observed and studied by the Tavistock networks.

9. [\[return to text\]](#)

It is important to note that there is nothing inherently evil with radio, television, or any form of technology. What makes them dangerous is the control of their use and content by the Club of Isles networks for evil purposes, to create habituated, and even fixated listeners and viewers, whose critical capacities are thus seriously impaired.

10. [\[return to text\]](#)

For a more comprehensive discussion of television, its programming, and its brainwashing of the American population, see the 16-part series "Turn Off Your Television," by this author in the *New Federalist*, 1990-93. It is available in reprint from *EIR*.

11. [\[return to text\]](#)

One of Tavistock's specialties is the study of the psychological manipulation of children, and the impact of advertising on young minds. Such advertising is carefully crafted to lure children into desiring the advertised product.

12. [\[return to text\]](#)

There has been a massive investment in the infrastructure of the Internet, disproportionate to available near-term, or even intermediate-term return. This leads one to speculate that such investment is in fact a "loss leader," for the intended psychological impacts of the new technology.

13. [\[return to text\]](#)

While such expressions are an echo of Platonic thinking, they are merely that--an echo. For a better understanding of the problem of education, see Lyndon LaRouche, "On the Subject of Metaphor," *Fidelio*, Fall 1992.

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- [The Media Cartel That Controls What You Think](#), by L. Wolfe, *The American Almanac*, May 5, 1997.
 - [The Cartelization of the Media](#), by Jeffrey Steinberg, *The American Almanac*, May 5, 1997.
 - [Direct British Control of the U.S. Media](#), *The American Almanac*, May 5, 1997.
 - [British "Fellow Travellers" Control Major U.S. Media](#), by Jeffrey Steinberg, *The American Almanac*, May 5, 1997.
 - [Tavistock's Language Project: The Origin of "Newspeak"](#), *The American Almanac*, May 5, 1997.
 - [For Whom The Polls Toll](#), by L. Wolfe, *The American Almanac*, May 5, 1997.

Top of Page	Mass Brainwashing	Site Map	Overview Page
-----------------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------

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