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On substituting propaganda for facts, 1943.



ON SUBSTITUTING PROPAGANDA FOR FACTS

The Coal Miners -- "Mission to Moscow" -- Captain Rickenbacher

By  
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

At  
The Temple

On  
Sunday morning, May 16, 1943



I believe that civilization is a race between education and propaganda. Tyranny can be built only on propaganda, on its own exploitation. Education seeks the truth. Propaganda fears the truth. Propaganda has no standards, no scruples. It has no regard for facts. Everything that leads to the attainment of its goal is fixed upon and exploited, is grist to the Mill. The objective of propaganda is to seize and to hold power. Lies and half-truths and distortions of facts help in the attainment of their objective, and they employ it.

Propaganda is not interested in the moral progress of man, in his intellectual growth or his spiritual growth, or in providing him with accurate information so as to help him form clear judgments and make wise decisions. The propagandized man can have no judgments of his own. Others make the decisions for him. He is only to follow and obey, and the most subtle propaganda will move him to obey most unwillingly and unquestioningly.

Propaganda will most skillfully make half-truths and lies seem plausible by sprinkling them with truths, or by projecting such gross fantastic lies as the individual is unable to check them against his own experience.

Propaganda is aimed at destroying the intellectual and spiritual autonomy of the individual.

Education, on the other hand, aims at undergirding and developing the individual. Education aims to make man stand on his own feet, as it were, to make man think clearly, exactly, scientifically. It provides him with truth, exact data, facts on which to base sound, rational thinking. To maintain a free, progressive society there must be free, educated human beings who have access to dependable data and are capable of regulating their lives and relationships widely. The education of free men therefore must be scrupulously honest. Its standards and canons must be unimpeachable. To <sup>use</sup> ~~do~~ anything less than the whole truth in order to advance even



a worthy cause is to do violence to the purposes of education, as well as to the spirit and mind of man. It is to confuse and to confound individuals, standards and loyalties and ultimately to weaken and undermine free society. The Rabbis put it very wisely when they said: "The seed of God is truth."

Now we have seen in our generation how much mischief has been caused by propaganda, what a monstrous agency it has become in unscrupulous, how governments have been overthrown, how by its use peoples have been deprived of their liberties, how the world has become filled with hate, lies terror and war.

We, who are still free, who are in a war to destroy the forces which most cunningly and ruthlessly used Hitler to ride into power and wreck the peace of the world should guard ourselves against falling victims to it in our own country. There is the temptation, especially in the heat of war to serve immediate objectives, to do the thing which seems expedient at the moment to win some momentary advantage of our cause by being less scrupulous in facts, by pushing aside facts which for the moment do not seem to be helpful to the cause--in other words by substituting propaganda for facts. This is a dangerous practice and in the long run will do us much harm.

many incidents have occurred

In recent months/which smack so much of propaganda as to give us ground for concern. I take a few instances this morning to illustrate.

Take the case of Captain Edward Rickenbacker. Mr. Rickenbacker is an American hero. He served both in the first and second world wars. He distinguished himself as an aviator in the last war and had a perfectly amazing experience in this war - adrift for many days on a raft on the Pacific Ocean and miraculously was rescued from it. On his return to this country he decided to urge the American people to maximum exertion in order to win the war. He urged the American working man to increase production. That, of course was a most laudable undertaking. He toured cities, defense plants, meetings and State legislatures.



And yet from all his speeches, on reading them, there seemed to rise the bad smell of propaganda, and on listening to them one quickly realized that stimulating war production was only one of the objectives. The other for some reason was to undermine Union labor, weaken the organization of labor, to reduce the wages of the American workingman and to oppose what we have come to know as the New Deal and the championing of those things which his well to do friends wanted him to champion. Mr. Rickenbacker had every right to do that as every American has a right to express himself on controversial issues. But he spoke in the name of the men of the fox-holes who are fighting for their country. He ~~said~~ set himself up as their spokesman. It is very doubtful whether these soldiers in whose name he spoke would have underwritten his attack on over-time pay for the 48-hour week, the attacks of a man who in the same <sup>the</sup> breath expressed his opposition to President's order that salaries be limited to \$25,000. <sup>a year</sup> To that he was opposed. He claimed that the limitation of salaries to \$25,000/would limit initiative which is one of the great American cornerstones, but paying the working man a few dollars extra for his work is a crime against the boys in the fox-holes. That should stop.

A man who can say two things in one breath has either a blind spot in his mentality, or under the cloak of a patriotic appeal he and his friends erroneously assumed that they could get away with an attack upon the rights of American labor. I mention this fact not in criticism of Captain Rickenbacker. One doesn't like to criticize a hero. From time to time such sallies are made, and a lather of righteous indignation is whipped up by the interested parties ostensibly as patriotic service to the American people, actually as a very coldly calculated device of economic barbarism. Against that the American people should guard themselves. Many thought the cry about the 48 hour week was correct. The impression people were given was that the workingman did not want to work 48 hours a week and that it was unpatriotic of him to argue the point when the American soldiers were fighting for their lives. That, of course, was not true. They actually worked 48, 54, 60 and 72 hours a week.



What was objected to was the over time pay. But the issue was cleverly presented as a patriotid effort to make American workers produce more! Flag waving was resorted to in an effort to make the American working man surrender part of his wages.

I take a second instance - the recent miners' strike which was also given the propaganda bias. Miners have been painted as black as the coal which they mine; as betraying their country in war-time. Their leader, John Lewis, became the most hated man in the world, next to Mr. Hitler. Few people really stop to ask themselves what were the miners' grievances, what they were responsible for in this strike, and the operators, and the government. Few sought for the facts. Most people were content with relieving their emotions. The cause of the miners was submerged in the nation's dislike of Mr. Lewis. Mr. Lewis is not a likeable person. The miners themselves do not like him. They rejected his political advice in 1940. Early this year 17,000 anthracite miners in E. Central Pennsylvania struck against the increase in their monthly union dues and refused to listen to Lewis when he asked them to return to the mines. It took the authority of President Roosevelt to accomplish that.

Mr. Lewis provoked an unfair strike in 1941, you will remember, when he demanded a closed shop in the captive mines ~~owned~~ owned by the steel companies, and flouted the authority of the National Defense Mediation Board, when all but 5 % of the men in these mines were already members of the Union.

All of that is true. But there still remain the grievances of some 600,000 miners many of whom have sons and brothers fighting in the war, which grievances should receive fair consideration. Mr. Lewis is still head and spokesmen of the miners, and it is he who is uttering their grievances today.

What is it these miners complain of? They complain that their wages are too low in view of the serious rise in the cost of living -- not so much the low wages, but the sharp rise in prices which had actually lowered their wages. The average wage in the soft coal mines, for the hard, specialized and hazaradous work is \$35 a week. And they can't live on that with prices climbing as they have been climbing.



They have asked for an adjustment of their wages to bring them into alignment.

They are demanding a \$2 a day increase. The operators refused to meet them even part of the way. The operators hoped the case would be certified to the War Labor Board.

What was wrong with leaving this to the War Labor Board? Why did Lewis refuse to do this? Because the miners know that their case was already prejudged by the War Labor Board for the latter had publicly committed itself to the "little steel formula" as its fixed wage adjustment policy - that is to say, no wage increases above 15% to cover the rise in living costs between January 1941 and May 1942.

This was the fixed policy of the War Labor Board. It was no longer in a position objectively to consider the merits of the miners' case.

But it is of course highly important to hold the line against inflation. But the line has not been held. It is important to freeze wages, but in order to freeze wages without doing injustice to wage-earner, we must also freeze prices. And prices have not been frozen. There has been no stabilization all along the line, in farm prices, in salaries, in profits, etc. The operators profits reached 195% the first 6 months of 1942. In 1941 the profits reached 95%. There have been excessive war-profits, so much so that the government in numerous instances has been compelled to re-negotiate contracts. The same congressman who vehemently denounced the miners for striking was one who opposed the measure for keeping salary limits at \$25,000 a year. There must be a certain equality sacrifice if you want all of our people to be content.

But these miners' grievances will have to be met, not by threat, but either by guaranteeing them 6 days a week of work for 52 weeks of the year, or by paying them for the full time which they spend underground. They spend ten or eleven hours underground getting to their jobs and are paid for only seven hours - or the prices should be rolled back to the level of September, 1942. the matter of fixing commodity prices ~~xx~~ will someday soon have to be fixed by our government as Great Britain has fixed theirs, whereby the government buys up commodities and sells them directly ~~xx~~ to the retailer at a price controlled in relation to the wages, paid.



I should like to point to a third instance where propaganda is substituted for facts. Our former ambassador, Mr. Joseph E. Davies, wrote a very splendid book no so long ago called "Mission to Moscow". This book is now being put into a movie, and will be seen by millions. The book was intended to create better understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union. That was a laudable thing. It is highly important that we understand fully our Ally in a war. It is important that all prejudices be pushed aside, all misconceptions, all vicious propaganda. We need Russia not only as an Ally in war, but as an Ally in the reconstruction after the war. But all this does not mean that we are called upon to like all that is happening in Russia any more than it is necessary that they like all that is happening in America, or that we must rewrite history to justify our military allies.

in  
Unfortunately/this moving picture that is done to a large degree. Mr. Davies in his book tried and succeeded in being very fair in holding the balance in reporting facts to the best of his knowledge. In his book, for example he makes no attempt to mute the fact of the terror which dictatorships must inevitably resort to in order to keep themselves in power. So in his book he writes:

"The Terror here is a horrifying fact. There are many evidences here in and Moscow that there is a fear that reaches down into/~~the~~ haunts all sections of the community. No household, however humble, apparently but what lives in constant fear of a nocturnal raid by the secret police (usually between one and three in the early morning.) Once the person is taken away, nothing of him or her is known for months - and many times never -- thereafter."

The Terror is a horrifying fact. In the moving picture nothing of terror is visible, nothing of the condition which dictatorship inevitably creates. Now this terror is one of the worst indictments of all dictatorships right or left, just as the absence of it in democratic countries is the chief vindication of democratic life. But nothing is indicated of that terror in the picture...



A great deal of the book of Mr. Davies is devoted to the now famous Moscow trial. Mr. Davies was convinced that the State had established its case and that the men on trial were actually guilty of conspiring against the Soviet Government. But there still remained some reservations, and in the book the reservations are made: "There still remains in my mind, however," said Mr. Davies, "some reservation based upon the facts, that both the system of enforcement of penalties for the violation of law and the psychology of these people are so widely different from our own that perhaps the tests which I would apply would not be accurate if applied here." That is an important reservation. But no reservation is made in the picture. "The whole trial and surrounding circumstances would shock our mentality". That is what Mr. Davies wrote in his book, because all these facts were missing from the trial. But there is nothing of all this in the movie. There is nothing to point up the contrast between the laws which defend a man in a democracy and the law as exploited by dictatorship. Chances to extoll our democracy were neglected, and the opportunity of instilling in our youth pride in our great legal institutions was neglected. Nothing of the sort was done. The only thing <sup>that</sup> was done in the picture was to emphasize the guilt.

In the picture, too, the invasion of Finland by Russia was defended and justified, just as the Stalin-Hitler Pact of '39 which brought on the second world war. It was defended on the ground that France and Great Britain refused a defense alliance with the Soviet Union, although an Allied military mission was in Moscow at ~~the~~ the time the Pact was announced. In the picture it is completely overlooked that up to June 22, 1941, when the Soviet Union was invaded by the Nazis, the Soviet Union and its friends, its communist friends called this war in which we are now ~~engaged~~ engaged, an imperialist war, and the communists everywhere were opposed to rearmament in democracies and fomented strikes. All that is omitted. I regard this as most unfortunate, as unnecessary and harmful, because it is a distortion of



facts, and in a free democracy, facts are important, because education depends on facts, and free society depends on independence.

It is no service to America, and I am wondering wherein it is rendering a service to the Soviet Union because our relationship with the Soviet Union must be based on our recognition of each other's mutual and significant differences and not on any spurious correspondence. We can cooperate though we are different. We must not confuse our own people, especially our youth ~~if~~ as to what we in this country regard as right, as just, as legal, as free. This picture, "Mission to Moscow" is not an <sup>al</sup>historic picture, an embellished innocuous picture... This has to do with today, with most vital real things in the world today and tomorrow. These are things we are fighting for in this war. I am afraid that such a picture which so grossly manipulates facts of history to serve even a laudable and commendable purpose is to be deprecated. The substitution of propaganda for facts has been the curse of our age. It is very important if we want to safeguard, retain our free society that we reject all forms of propaganda. Propaganda ~~per se~~ is evil and must be destroyed. We must build our future society with truth represented by facts. We must make our adjustments to facts, to realities. We are not asked to substitute every fiction for facts. The sacred duty that American citizen has to perform almost everyday when he reads the paper, listens to the radio, is to ask himself: "Is this truth?" If he has any doubt, he must seek for the truth behind the statement for there are so many forces in the world today bent upon confusing and confounding our minds and substituting propaganda for facts.



II There still remains in my mind, however, some reservation based upon the facts, that both the system of enforcement of penalties for the violation of law and the psychology of these people are so widely different from our own that perhaps the tests which I would apply would not be accurate if applied here.

III In conclusion, I wish to say that this whole trial and surrounding circumstances shock our mentality. It is, however, a most powerful demonstration of the blessings which real constitutional protection of personal liberty affords. The right of the accused to have counsel before trial, the right to refuse to testify against oneself, and, above all, the presumption of innocence and the application of the old common-law principle that better a thousand guilty men escape rather than that one innocent man should be unjustly condemned -- all these take on a very real meaning when faced with a trial such as this.

I The Terror here is a horrifying fact. There are many evidences here in Moscow that there is a fear that reaches down into and haunts all sections of the community. No household, however humble, apparently but what lives in constant fear of a nocturnal raid by the secret police (usually between one and three in the early morning). Once the person is taken away, nothing of him or her is known for months -- and many times never -- thereafter.



Freedom from Fear - all the biggest - lovely vices - (7)

(2) Moscow Trials - <sup>state had established its case and that was</sup> Davies convicted guilty & confessing  
ag. Soviet govt. There still remained some reservations  
in her mind (43). was reflected in movie.

(3) "The whole trial + surrounding circumstances shock  
our mentality" (46). Nothing, this in picture!  
Nothing to point up the contrast bet. the law  
which defends a man in a denunc. - & the law as  
exploited by dictators - change to or tell on Jones.

(4) Iranian / Finland is defended & justified.

(5) Stalin - Hitler Pact <sup>-39- not in Am</sup> defended as proved that France 1945  
refused a defense alliance with Soviet Union, altho an  
allied military mission was in Moscow at time Pact was  
announced.

(6) Picture over looks that up to Jun 22-1941 -  
"Japhenabit ha". Communist offered rearrangement  
- prevented strikes

This is a up to date, unnecessary, shameless dilution  
of history. No sense to America. Justice is  
losing sense to Soviet.

Our relationships must be set as regards / on  
mutual & bigger differences - <sup>not an opinion</sup> we can cooperate <sup>conditions</sup> the  
we are different!

Must not confuse our own people - on 2nd  
as to what Amer. regards as right, just, legit  
and free - This is not an established universal historical principle  
on Freedom must be based on Truth!



1. Civilization is a Race bet. Education + Propaganda.

Tyranny can only be built <sup>on</sup> upon Prop.

Freedom <sup>must</sup> on Education.

Ed. seeks the Truth. - Prop. fears the Truth!

- Pr. has no scruples - no standards - no regard for facts -
- Everything that leads to the attainment of its goal - is seized upon and exploited - is grist to its mill.
- Its objective is to seize and hold power.
- If lies, half-truths, <sup>a</sup> distortions can help towards its objective - they are employed without hes. tations.
- Pro. is not interested in the progress, <sup>man</sup> in his intell. & sp. growth - in providing him with accurate information - so as to help him to form clear judgments, and make wise decisions.
- The <sup>organized</sup> prop. man is to have no judgments of his own. Others are to make the decisions for him:
  - He is only to follow and obey - and the most subtle prop. will move him to obey most willingly & unquestioningly.
- Pr. will, with great skill, make its lies seem plausible by sprinkling them with truth - or by projecting such gross, fantastic lies that the indiv. is unable to check ~~on~~ them <sup>with</sup> out of his own experience.
- Pr. is aimed at destroying the intell. & sp. autonomy of the individual.



2/ Education aims at understanding, supporting the ~~best~~ and developing the individ.

Make him stand on his own feet, as it were.

Train his mind to think clearly, exactly, scientifically -  
And provide him with true information, exact data, facts -  
upon which to base sound, rational conclusions

To maintain a Free <sup>person</sup> Society - there must be free, educated  
human beings, who have access to dependable data  
and are capable of regulating their lives, & relationships with

Education, Free men must be scrupulously honest.  
4th standards & canons must be unimpeachable.

- To use any thing less than the whole truth to advance even  
a worthy cause - is to do violence to the mind & spirit  
of man - ultimately to confuse and confound his  
standards, his loyalties - and ultimately to weaken and  
undermine the Free Society.  
- 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th

3/ We have seen how much mischief has been <sup>wrought</sup> ~~done~~ in our generation  
by Per - what a monstrous agency it has become in unscrupulous  
hands - over these parts - discharged liberties / peoples - weakened  
white races - and filled our world with hate, lies, and terror.  
and war.

4/ We, who are still Free, who are in a war to destroy the forces  
which most cruelly & authoritarily used h. to ride into power  
and wreck the peace, the world - should guard ourselves  
against falling victims to it in our own country.



would underwrite his attack on over-time pay for 48 hr week <sup>(y)</sup>  
and in same breath express his affection to her. His order  
that net salaries be limited to \$25,000 a year.

"Limitation of salaries to \$25,000 a year would limit  
inflation, which is one of the great Amer. <sup>headland</sup> ~~concerns~~ <sup>is a</sup>  
but paying a <sup>millionaires</sup> ~~man~~ an extra few dollars a week <sup>is a</sup>  
crime against our boys in the fox-holes. — and  
should be stopped!

There is either a blind-spot in the mentality of such  
a man, or under the cloak of a patriotic appeal he and  
his friends deliberately assumed that they could get  
away with an attack upon the right of Amer. labor.

From time to time <sup>and a pattern of repetition is what it is</sup> such salaries are made, intentionally ~~to~~  
~~serve~~ America in a patriotic fury to serve Amer. — actually  
as a very coldly calculated device of econ. manipulation  
the 48 hr. week! As if Amer. workers — actually — 48-54-  
60-72. It was the over-time pay that was objected to —  
that the crime was deliberately presented as a patriotic effort  
to make Amer. workers produce more! — Flag-waved  
into murder of part, their boys —

7/. The recent Miners' Strike <sup>has</sup> also <sup>been</sup> given the prop.  
bias. Miners were painted as black as coal while they  
dig; betraying their country in war-time. Their leader, John  
Lewis, became the most hated man in the world, next to Hitler.  
Few people stop to ask what were the miners' grievances?  
What was the degree their resp. for the strike? And the  
operators? And the government? Few concern for the facts.



There is the temptation, esp. in heat / war, to seize immediate objections by to do the expedient, to gain momentary advantages by being less scrupulous abt. facts, and by ~~omitting~~ brushing aside data which for the moment are not helpful to our <sup>partisan</sup> cause, by subverting truth to Policy. This is a dangerous practice - and in the long run will do as much harm

5. In recent months many incidents have occurred in our nat. life, which swathe so much of Pub. - as to put us ground for concern. Take a few instances!

6. The Case of Capt. Edward Rickenbacker. - He is an aviator of both First & Second World War. He distinguished himself as an aviator in the First war - and had a perfectly amazing exper. in this war - adrift for many days on a raft in the Pacific and almost miraculously rescued from death.

He returned to Amer. to urge the Am. people to Mexican exertions to win war - and Am. workmen to increased production. A most laudable undertaking! He toured cities & <sup>defense</sup> plants, addressed meetings, & State Legislatures.

And yet from all his speeches there arose the dark shadow of Pub. ~~the~~ as one listened to him one quickly realized that stump speaking was Prod. was only one of his objectives. The others were to undermine <sup>weaken the org.</sup> union labor to reduce the wages of Amer. workmen - to open the New Deal - & to champion what his well-to-do friends wanted him to champion.

He spoke in the name of Palestine - & in the name of the men in the fox-holes, swamps & desert - as if he were their authorized spokesman. Very doubtful whether these soldiers -



Must were content with effects!

The cause, the miners were submerged in the nation's dis-  
like, Lewis. Lewis is not a likeable person. The miners  
themselves don't like him. They rejected his pol. advice in  
1940. They ~~struck~~ <sup>stood</sup> against him early this year ~~1941~~  
12,000 anthracite miners in E. Central Penn. <sup>struck</sup> against the incursion in  
their monthly union dues, and refused to listen to Lewis when  
he asked them to return to the mines. It took the authority  
/ Pres. R. to accomplish that.

Lewis provoked an unfair strike in Nov. 1941. when  
he demanded a closed shop. in the captive mines owned  
by the steel companies, and flouted the authority, the Nat.  
Defense Mediation Board, when all but 5% were  
in these mines were friendly members, the union.

All, which is true. but there still remain the prisoners.  
the 7 or 600,000 miners - part Americans - sons - brothers  
in armed services - which should <sup>Lewis is to-day voicing that protest</sup> receive fair consideration.

What is it they complain of? Their wages are  
too low in view of sharp rise in the cost of living!  
The average wage - in soft coal fields - for this hard,  
specialized & hazardous work. is \$35 - a week.

They cannot live on it! with the prices <sup>of all things</sup> so high!

They asked for an adjustment - their demand was for \$2-  
a day increase! The operators refused, hoping that the  
case would be referred to War Labor Board.

The miners knew that their case was already  
prejudged by the War Labor Board - for the latter had



publicly, come under the story to the "little steel formula" (6)  
as its <sup>first</sup> wage adjustment policy. That is to say no  
wage increases above 15% to cover the rise in living  
costs bet. Jan. 1941 - and May 1942

Clearly a Board bound by such a formula, is no  
longer in position objectively to consider the <sup>merits</sup> ~~case~~ of the  
miners' case.

It is of course highly important to hold the line "against  
inflation". <sup>But if you have got your head</sup> But to freeze wages, you must also freeze  
prices - and that has not been done! There has been  
no stabilization all along the line. - in farm prices <sup>metals</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in 1941</sup>  
salaries, in <sup>operating</sup> ~~profits~~ <sup>profits</sup> ~~1950~~ <sup>per 6 months 1942</sup> ~~1950~~ <sup>in 1941</sup>  
There have been excessive war-profits,  
so much so that just in numerous instances has been  
compelled to re-negotiate contracts. (Same Congressmen)  
There must be a certain equality in sacrifice.

Miners' grievances will have to be met - threat-play.  
Either by renegotiating them 6 day, a week work - 52 weeks  
a year - <sup>annual</sup> ~~or~~ <sup>or</sup> by paying them for the full time which they  
spend under ground - portal to portal - 10 or 11 hrs  
and are paid for 7 only. Or roll back prices to level of  
Sep. 1942. <sup>Some day when we will come to G. B's way: fact</sup>  
<sup>buy all commodities & sell them directly to the retailers at a</sup>  
<sup>price controlled in relation to wages -</sup>

5). Mission to Moscow - Joseph E. Davies - Movie.

We all want better understanding with Soviet Union - ally

Does not call for whistle-work - myan - coasting the Dictator.

Re-writing history to justify our alliance

① Terror (302) - nothing if it is conveyed = one of chief  
in dictatorial of Dict. By a Left. Comm. Vindict. Power