

# What We Don't Know Is Killing Us: The Urgency of Propaganda Study Under COVID

By [Prof Mark Crispin Miller](#)

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In the words of **Professor Mark Crispin Miller**, founder of [Propaganda In Focus](#),

“And yet our goal must be not merely to instruct the public in those many truths blacked out by the propaganda over COVID, or Ukraine, but to urge the public toward a firmer grasp of propaganda overall; and so our larger goal must be to explain the factors that have ultimately helped turn the West’s “free press” into the propaganda juggernaut now keeping millions upon millions in ferocious ignorance.”

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*For those of us who study propaganda critically and seek to do this all-important work as public intellectuals, these last two years have been uniquely challenging, and even dangerous, forcing us into a painful double bind.*

*On the one hand, we have never had so much to work with, nor has there ever been a greater need for our peculiar expertise. Whereas, in the “democratic” West, propaganda used to be most evident as an intensive episodic practice, flaring up in wartime, in political campaigns and following immense state crimes like JFK’s assassination, 9/11 and the subsequent anthrax attacks (among other national traumas engineered by governments), the propaganda blasting all of us non-stop today is no longer national, or merely multinational, but global; and the former intermittency of those most awful crises, with decades going by between one trauma and the next, has given way to a mind-numbing strategy of serial bombardment — one cataclysmic fuss after another (with, sometimes, one within another), as under openly totalitarian rule.*

Thus, throughout 2020 — Year One of the now-endless COVID crisis — we were inescapably

suffused with terror of “the virus,” and thereby bullied into locking down (despite the scientific fact that lockdowns do more harm than good), while also masking all the time, and everywhere, and “social-distancing” as well (despite the scientific fact that neither practice “slows the spread” of any respiratory virus). While masking was imposed, ostensibly, to make us less afraid of COVID-19, it only made us more afraid of one another, and so compounded that disabling fear with a ferocious anger at all those not wearing masks (despite the scientific fact that masks would not prevent transmission of “the virus” even if the entire global population wore them all the time).

As propagated fiercely by the media — both corporate and “alternative” — throughout 2020, that sanctimonious division of ourselves into benevolent maskers and self-centered “anti-maskers” was just a pestilential variant of the “red”/“blue” divide that the media, with very few exceptions, had already fiercely propagated since the rise of Donald Trump; and that incapacitating tribalist division deepened, in mid-2020, with the George Floyd incident, and the emergent cult of BLM, whose blurry mission against “white supremacy” was suddenly and ostentatiously extolled throughout the media worldwide (George Floyd’s beatification being yet another stroke of global propaganda, the same big graphic of his quasi-tragic face popping up at rallies as far afield as France, Ghana and Japan), and anomalously hailed by **Jeff Bezos, Mitt Romney, Jaimie Dimon, Bill and Melinda Gates, Nancy Pelosi**, and other wealthy players not notable for their concern about black lives (on the contrary). Whereas the anti-lockdown protests flaring up (organically) that spring had been denounced throughout the government-and-media as lethal “super-spreader events” (despite the scientific fact that no respiratory virus ever has been known to spread asymptotically, as even Dr. Fauci publicly admitted at one point), the multitudes of BLM protesters were applauded for assembling, although many wore no masks, or had their masks below their chins (nor were the rioters who followed them condemned for “putting everyone at risk,” either by their masklessness, or by their vandalism, arson and/or physical assaults in cities nationwide — crimes pointedly denied throughout the media).

Now reaffirmed as a distinctly racial melodrama, with BLM (and Antifa) facing off against the “white supremacists” supporting Trump and (just like him) not masking, the mass division between Us and Them so thunderously propagated — and exacerbated — by the media exploded one more time, on January 6, 2021, when, during the gigantic peaceful protest going on in Washington that day (to move the Supreme Court to look into the evidence that Joe Biden’s election victory had been stolen), an ebullient little horde of (unarmed) “white supremacists” — including over 20 FBI assets — “forced their way” into the US Capitol (having been urged in by Capitol police), their noisy antics universally and stridently misrepresented, by the Democrats-and-media, as an “attempted coup.” As a propaganda sideshow to the mammoth protest going on outside the Capitol that day — a protest as diverse as it was peaceable — this FBI-backed “insurrection” served the purpose of impugning that far larger gathering, intended to protest the likely theft of the election, as a “fascistic” mob intent on taking “our democracy” by force; and since the anti-Biden vote was driven mainly by resistance to the stringent “COVID measures” favored by the Democrats, the propaganda over “January 6” served to advance those measures, by demonizing their opponents as “extremists,” while making it now practically illegal to voice any doubts about Joe Biden’s inexplicable election “victory.”

Meanwhile, with millions now fixated on that raging “anti-fascist” propaganda drive (whether they believed it, or resisted it), Year Two of the COVID crisis started with the

rollout of the most fascistic “COVID measure” of them all — the long-awaited “vaccination” program, which Bill Gates, in a televised exchange with Stephen Colbert, had hyped, indiscreetly, as “the Final Solution.” Thus, the propaganda inescapably instructing everybody to mask up (“Wearing is caring”), on the lunatic collectivist presumption that your mask will not “protect” you unless everybody’s wearing them, was now suddenly and inescapably instructing everybody to “get vaccinated,” as if anyone not getting jabbed was thereby (somehow) putting all those jabbed “at risk.” Thus, “vaccination” was now not only certified as “safe and effective” — by governments at every level, and by all the media, both corporate and “alternative,” and by hundreds upon hundreds of celebrities, and by every pharmacy, and by the schools, from grade schools up to colleges and universities, and, of course, by the “vaccine” manufacturers, along with Dr. Fauci and Bill Gates — but one’s own “vaccination” was now urged weirdly as (to quote Pope Benedict) “an act of love.”

And having thundered on through 2021, and into 2022 — with all those blithe assurances of “safety” and “effectiveness” disproved ever more dramatically by data out of country after country, harrowing research by independent scientists and doctors the world over, Pfizer’s and Moderna’s own clinical trials, and the ever-rising global toll in “sudden deaths” and incapacitating “vaccine injuries” — all at once that propaganda seemed to stop (the “COVID measures” abruptly dropped or modified by states and cities all around the world), as we were suddenly and (yet) still inescapably confronted, and surrounded, and pervaded, by another propaganda drive entirely; or so it seems.

This propaganda drive is, or was, *not* about “the virus,” or the “measures” used (allegedly) to stop it, but, exclusively, about Ukraine — and yet this drive is (or was) essentially the same as what preceded it; for just as that one had us all obsessed with COVID, the benevolence of those who followed every rule for “fighting” it, and the evil of all those who disobeyed, this one has (or had) us all obsessed with Ukraine’s struggle to defend itself against the monster Putin, the benevolence of all those who “stand with” Ukraine, and the evil of all those who don’t. And just as COVID once had everyone applauding, every evening, those courageous “frontline workers” in the hospitals (all “overrun,” reportedly, by COVID), so are (or were) we now attending vigils for Ukraine, signing petitions for Ukraine, sending money to Ukraine, and wearing Ukraine’s blue-and-yellow on our backs, and in our hair, and on our nails and our lapels, and hanging Ukraine’s blue-and-yellow in doorways and/or windows, and marveling at public monuments now bathed in blue-and-yellow lights, to show our solidarity with that upright democracy against the Nazi Putin’s bloody effort to assassinate its noble leader, wipe out its brave soldiers, and exterminate its people, in his ruthless drive to conquer all the world.

I put that rough description of this latest propaganda drive in both the past and present tense lest this one soon end, or seem to end, as suddenly as it upstaged the COVID propaganda; and since it too, in turn, will surely give way to some other inescapable campaign, it is appropriate to note the several further crises that the media, and heads of state, have variously floated, on and off, these past two years. (Such terroristic forecasts of imminent ordeals are in themselves a way to keep the widespread fear and anger simmering.) The possible next acts include a cyber-attack (“by Russia”); a breakdown of the world supply chain, and consequent food shortages, or famine (likely to be blamed on Russia); a heightened “climate crisis,” necessitating further lockdowns; “terrorist” attacks, by “white supremacists” and angry blacks (portending war between the races); an “alien attack” on Planet Earth, as in *The War of the Worlds* or Independence Day; and — of course

— another plague or two, or three, caused by some further COVID “variant,” smallpox (Bill Gates’s favorite), the Marburg virus, and/or whatever other pathogen, real or imaginary, might serve the same old purpose (though this next pestilence is likely to be blamed on Putin, not the CCP). Such looming sequels to the COVID propaganda, which has arguably killed or injured millions through the mass injection program, and the Ukraine propaganda, which could bring on a nuclear war (and whose origins in 2014 led indirectly to the current bloodshed in that country), would also each inflict a vast amount of further suffering on humanity — and so those of us who study propaganda critically, as public intellectuals, must speak out loud and clear, to set things right.

This means, first of all, doing what the “fact-checkers” claim to do, and doing it far more conscientiously, and thoroughly, than they “debunk” whatever facts or theories contradict, or complicate, the narrative pumped out by governments and media. Whereas the “fact-checkers” do quick and sloppy work, and then move on, we work in depth, in scholarly commitment to the truth, which may take decades to discover — as with JFK’s murder, and the other key assassinations at that time, and 9/11; and just as we persist in careful refutation of the propaganda still obscuring those historic crimes, and others, so, throughout these last two years, have we been digging for, and trying to tell, the widely buried truth about the COVID crisis, its true origins, the actual lethality of SARS-CoV-2 (whatever that may really be), the PCR tests used to measure “cases,” the “COVID measures” hatched (allegedly) to “slow the spread,” the absolute futility of lockdowns, and their catastrophic harms, the homicidal impact of the standard COVID “treatment,” and the actual availability of valid remedies, the cynical redefinition of such key terms as “pandemic,” “cases,” “herd immunity,” “vaccine” and, “fully vaccinated,” the likely motives driving this whole crisis (and those still to come), the actual low number of those killed worldwide by COVID, and — above all — the ever-growing global toll of the experimental “vaccination” program; and now that COVID, and its “variants,” and “vaccination” have been pushed out of the spotlight by “Ukraine” (though governments-and-media continue warning us hysterically of “COVID” and its “variants,” and shouting at us to “get vaccinated”), we strive to find, and tell, the buried truths about that conflict — how and why it started, how it’s being fought on either side, and the fact that dozens of “atrocities” ascribed to Russia have turned out to be as bogus as those crimes charged to “the Hun” in World War One, the Iraqi army in Kuwait in 1990, and Bashar al-Assad, president of Syria, from 2011 until his imaginary barbarism was eclipsed by “the coronavirus,” and then Putin’s barbarism in Ukraine.

And yet our goal must be not merely to instruct the public in those many truths blacked out by the propaganda over COVID, or Ukraine, but to urge the public toward a firmer grasp of propaganda overall; and so our larger goal must be to explain the factors that have ultimately helped turn the West’s “free press” into the propaganda juggernaut now keeping millions upon millions in ferocious ignorance. That real-life Ministry of Truth was not set up *ex nihilo* by some iron faction of totalitarian oligarchs, but gradually took shape out of a corporate media cartel with interlocking boards, heavily dependent on the advertising revenues of Amazon, Big Pharma (especially Pfizer) and the media’s own parent companies (among other giant players), and with its assets closely managed by BlackRock, Vanguard and UBS; and as that vast commercial system has become more unified, it also has maintained, or even tightened, its covert relations with the military and “intelligence community” — essentially the same caste of untouchables that engineered JFK’s murder, and the media’s long cover-up thereof. And while the commercial media system has been thus corrupted top to bottom, through and through, the “public” media and “alternative” press — from NPR, PBS, the BBC and CBC (et al.) to nearly every single outlet on “the left”

— have also been absorbed into the juggernaut primarily by their funding through such sturdy CIA pass-throughs as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Open Society Institute.

Such is the “free press” that has been turned into a bio-fascist fear machine, its propaganda services assured by Bill Gates’ “strategic media partnerships,” and the concomitant “fact-checking” operation that he also largely funds. The propaganda gushing daily, hourly, from that system also has depended on the wisdom of such global PR firms as Weber Shandwick, Edelman and Hill+Knowlton Strategies, the keen participation of innumerable celebrities, and, within the Fourth Estate, the rise to managerial authority of “journalists” prepared, in university, to be far less concerned with honest journalism than with (somehow) serving “social justice.” And all the false and hateful “content” pumped out by this wholly owned “free press” is, every minute, amplified enormously on “social media,” where millions serve (for free!) as avid vectors of the propaganda, while those who contradict it, or just question it, are censored and defamed.

This brings us to that double bind in which we propaganda analysts have found ourselves these past two years; for, while there has never been so great a need for our analyses, there having never been so much disinformation, or so much highly poisonous disinformation, to correct, nor has there ever been so huge and powerful a propaganda system to explain, neither has it ever been more difficult, or dangerous, to contradict its claims, or show exactly how it works. Today, we recognize in Julian Assange a ravaged brother to us all, his long, brutal punishment on Airstrip One having anticipated the abuse now threatening anyone who dares to cast a shadow on the propaganda narrative roared everywhere by governments-and-media, as he, or Wikileaks, did with “Collateral Murder,” the gunship footage that lit up the dark side of the heroic “war on terror” propaganda. His long ordeal for that unpardonable sin foretold the (mostly lesser) punishments now undergone by doctors, scientists, journalists, and academics who have variously gone off-script, especially these past two years (although such heretics were also punished long before the rollout of “the virus”).

All such dissidents are doing what we do, in one way or another; and so — since every winning propaganda drive depends on censorship — all dissidents have been blacked out on “social media,” kept off the air by “our free press,” and/or variously canceled by “woke” activists. Since they can’t argue with the dissidents, whose claims are either indisputable or largely true, the propaganda managers have heaped us all with slime, without (of course) allowing us to answer it; nor is that all, as those countering the propaganda also have been fired, delicensed, jailed, involuntarily consigned to psychiatric wards, and, evidently, even killed, to shield the narrative. Most of those thus punished have been COVID dissidents; though those now speaking out against the “Ukraine” propaganda also are at risk, especially those living in Ukraine, where the Nazi forces have been seizing, torturing and murdering dissident reporters, and where American-Chilean commentator Gonzalo Lira disappeared on April 15, re-emerging six days later, having been detained by the SBU.

What, then, are we to do, as analysts of propaganda? For now, under this ever-rolling thunder of Big Lies, all we can do is keep on doing what we’re doing, while maintaining a thick skin, and taking due precautions, as it is ever more important that we tell the truths we know to those still capable of hearing them, and then of looking for them on their own. (This is especially true of younger people who are largely more receptive than their elders.) In the longer term, however, we must re-conceive and rebuild all our democratic institutions, whose absolute collapse has brought this whole world to the brink. Specifically, we need to

rebuild journalism, so that it actually reports the news, just as we need a whole new medical establishment — one that will reclaim its Hippocratic duty to make people well instead of very profitably sick (or dead). And, of course, we need a new Academy, to educate its students, not indoctrinate them, teaching them not what to think but how to think, while introducing them to all the arts and sciences that better us as fully human beings; and, as we have learned so painfully these past two years, what these new schools must finally do — and not only our colleges and universities, but all our lower schools as well — is teach our students about propaganda: how to recognize it when it's everywhere they look, and even (or especially) when they find themselves agreeing with it.

Only when We the People finally know what propaganda is, and how it works, will we be free at last to live our lives and rule ourselves.

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