Covert and Overt Propaganda

The British, the Empire, and Foreign Affairs since the 1870s

John M. MacKenzie

Propaganda is an elusive concept and a nebulous phenomenon. Like ozone and carbon dioxide, it is everywhere, yet curiously nowhere. But we know that propaganda can affect our intellects and affiliated values just as the absence or presence of those chemicals can affect our general health. This slipperiness is well represented in the meanings of propaganda. Obviously all words carry historical and cultural baggage, but propaganda does this more than most. It can mean dissemination, proselytisation, information, news, truth, or lies. Since in this relativist age we find it hard to think of anything that can be dubbed as either pure truth or clear lies, it equally obviously inhabits some kind of limbo world between the two. It has even been ascribed with tonal characteristics: we hear of white, black, and grey propaganda. Propaganda can also be more colourful. It may after all be disguised as an aesthetic object. It can take on the mantle of education and of entertainment. It can inhabit any number of media: text and images are obvious, but what about pageants and ceremony, dress and heraldry, coinage and philately, architecture and statuary, even the presentation of technological developments.

We can be clear of one thing: a phenomenon can exist without necessarily having a name attached to it. At a recent keynote lecture, Ludmilla Jordanova extolled the existence of 'public history' and its invention and practice in the United States[1]. The British, she seemed to suggest, have been exceptionally behind-hand in adopting this approach to memory and the past. The argument seemed to me to be somewhat flawed. The British, and no doubt the Germans, are just as much practitioners of 'public history'. The only difference is that, so far, they have chosen not to call it that, although like all American fashions it will no doubt catch on fairly soon. This story is relevant, for propaganda and public history are clearly intertwined. The word 'propaganda' was not much used before the twentieth century, but it would clearly be ludicrous to suggest that the phenomenon thereby did not exist. Philip Taylor has traced the history of propaganda back to the ancient world of Greece and Rome, but if, as I shall argue throughout this paper, we extend the media of propaganda from the purely verbal, we can go back much further.[2] Back indeed to those symbols of power that are everywhere emblematic of the formation of stratified social

systems from the Bronze Age onwards. One thinks of the great monoliths and other stone structures, of the armour, ornate weaponry, harnesses and chariot adornments which clearly pass beyond the purely practical and carry intimations of authority in order to overawe people both within and outside the social structure that produces them. And overawing people is clearly one of the basic functions of propaganda. By the creation of the awesome, people are given both intimations of the historical bases of power and of its present effects, a combination as you might say of public history and contemporary authority. The intention of course is to weld the people 'here' through a mixture of pride and fear, and hopefully disrupt the people 'there' through a sense that the symbols of power actually represent superior forms of governance readily translatable into more effective force. That surely constitutes a form of propaganda.

In the twentieth century we have come to concentrate too much on certain restricted aspects of propaganda. In the first place, we have seen propaganda as essentially a phenomenon of war. Since, as the over-used cliché puts it, truth is the first casualty, then propaganda comes to take its place. The curious implication of this seems to be that truth is a characteristic of peace, that systems in some kind of equilibrium deal in forms of truth, while conflict produces propaganda, which may very well be a form of lies or at the very least heavily slanted truth. In war, particularly twentieth-century wars, propaganda becomes a highly conscious activity. People are deployed specifically to spread it and it is credited, according to its efficacy, with having the capacity to extend or limit the life of the war. Such propaganda converts power into morale. It is of course designed to uphold the morale of the domestic population and, by reverse extension, destroy that of the enemy. It is also directed at maintaining the support of allies or neutrals. In wartime, the print media and images are bent towards the clearer definition and either shoring up or destruction of the imagined community. Print moves from Anderson's 'print capitalism,' identifying and confirming the nation, to 'print government' expressing the nation through the essential wartime combination of power and violence that we have already seen at work in ancient systems.[3] Images of course play an important part, just as they do in nation building. And as the twentieth century wears on, film, radio, and eventually television increasingly become the media for the conversion of violence into statements of national self-justification, the attempted destruction of inimical political orders, the search for international endorsement, and the creation of new worlds of alleged peace. And finally, systems define themselves according to whether they glory in or supposedly feel embarrassed about their own propaganda. Not the least effective of the British activities in this field was the suggestion that they, despite being consistent and able proponents of the arts of

propaganda, only adopted propagandist activity with reluctance, with diffidence, and with an eagerness to divest themselves with the ending of conflict. By this construction, authoritarian and fascist regimes precisely identified themselves by their willingness to glory in propaganda. Attitudes to propaganda thus became the markers of the qualities of the state. Perhaps this is why the British were so assiduous in destroying most of the records of their propagandist activity at the end of the First World War. [4]

Thus, the British proposed that it was a national characteristic to be suspicious of the propagandist arts. The worthy, upright state, to which its citizens offered a supposedly willing loyalty through a genuine sense of nationhood, had no need of them. Whatever you may think about that formulation, it clearly constituted a reference to governmental-inspired overt, wartime propaganda. In reality, propaganda's greatest achievement is to subvert its own existence. Propaganda is indeed the art that conceals art. To a certain extent, its emergence into its more transparent overt form in wartime represents a form of failure derived from the exigencies of conflict. It seems to me that historians have often been subverted into imagining that this overt form is the only propaganda worth studying. Indeed, so transparent seemed to be the need both during war and in the prospect of war that propaganda appeared progressively to emerge into the open in the years between two world wars of the twentieth century. However, what we now regard as cultural propaganda, such as that provided by the founding of the British Council in 1934, designed for overseas and imperial consumption, was itself regarded as a wholly different sort of beast from the many headed monster which war brought into being.[5]

In fact, the British were past masters of covert propaganda, a propaganda that did indeed often emanate from the state, but which also secured countless other agencies for its propagation. Such propaganda was of course portrayed as some form of national truth, but it tended towards the shoring-up of certain key aspects of the British state, its associated multi-ethnic nation, and an imagined community which intriguingly took on world-wide dimensions, a form of imagined community which lies outside Anderson's formulation which is wholly associated with nationalism. When he looks at empire, his examples are mainly drawn from the Spanish or sometimes the Dutch, where he identifies a severe disjuncture between metropolis and colonies, between the colonial-born and the metropolitan population. He seldom, if ever, uses British examples and where he does, he is not always accurate. It is simply not correct to say that, as in the Spanish Empire, the colonial-born could never aspire to high office within the imperial system.[6] Canadians, Australians, South Africans, and New Zealanders became high-ranking imperial officials, right up to the rank of governor. They also became politicians, businessmen, press proprietors, and

high-ranking scientists within the metropolitan system. There were also Indian members of parliament and peers and Maoris and Africans were knighted from the end of the nineteenth century. Although these penetrations of the upper ranks of the imperial hierarchy were of course solely the perquisite of whites, the fact is that the British Empire created a global imagined community in which the British identified themselves as a people with a worldwide destiny. This was neatly symbolised in the growing universality of their language, itself a potent expression of both cultural imperialism and cultural propaganda.

Such an over-extended imagined community inevitably needed the cement of cultural or political propaganda to maintain itself. And such propaganda could be transmitted in all sorts of forms. Let us pause for a definition. Philip Taylor has pithily suggested that 'propaganda is the deliberate attempt to induce opinions and actions desired by the source'.[7] In a rather more wordy formulation, I suggested in 1984 that propaganda 'can be defined as the transmission of ideas and values from one person, or group of persons, to another, with the specific intention of influencing the recipients' attitudes in such a way that the interests of its authors will be enhanced'.[8] These definitions are useful, I think, because they suggest that the agents of propaganda can be both governmental and private; that national interests can be promoted by supposedly independent as well as official sources; that instrumentality can be diffuse and varied as well as concentrated and clearly identifiable. Here, perhaps, we have precisely the difference between the propaganda of peace and that of war.

It seems to me that if any political system requires a propagandist base it is an imperial one. Empire involves a massive suspension of disbelief. As Francis Bacon put it in the early seventeenth century, empire is 'a miserable state of mind' in which there are 'few things to desire and many things to fear'.[9] He was of course referring to the extended kingdom of James VI and I, but the formulation works perfectly well for nineteenth and twentieth century empire. A system, which has apprehension at its core -and indeed the British Empire survived in a chronic state of apprehension, particularly as it became more self-conscious from the later nineteenth century -, needs the reassurance of forms of propaganda. The bolstering of confidence, the repeated reaffirmation that the global imagined community remained both effective and in being, not least ready to rush to the aid of an endangered mother country, was a prime requirement of the imperial condition. But, as we now well know, information is also the first necessity of empire. Yet again, it was Bacon who wrote that 'Nam et ipsa scientia potestas est' - 'for knowledge itself is power'.[10] The imperial system feeds not just on the acquisition of knowledge, but more importantly on its dissemination. And dissemination is the business of propaganda. And it is not just information,

ideas, and values that require to be propagated, but also the symbols through which they are conveyed. Monarchy supplies the largest symbol of all.

There have of course been republican empires, including the French after 1871 and the Portuguese after 1910, but empire and monarchy have generally been closely related, whether in the Roman, the Holy Roman, the Chinese, the Ottoman, the Mughal, the Japanese, or the British. It is an interesting fact that, as David Cannadine has argued in his recent book *Ornamentalism*, the British monarchy found its worldwide influence growing as its political power at home waned.[11] And the British monarchy responded remarkably to the demands and opportunities of this global authority. Disraeli's Royal Style and Titles Bill of 1876 not only made Victoria Empress of India, it succeeded in pulling her out of her prolonged widowhood at Windsor after the death of Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha.[12]. The Queen was at the centre of imperial affairs from that moment onwards. Edward, Prince of Wales, as he realised to his shock in the middle of his tour, was a prime instrument of propaganda in forming a bridge to this new imperial monarchy during his visit to India in 1875-76. The tour was intended not only to influence India, but also Britain. It was closely followed in the press and in the illustrated journals like *The Sphere, The Graphic,* and *The Illustrated London News.*[13] The Viceroy Lord Lytton's massive, romantic durbar of 1877 represented the ceremonial propaganda of the proclamation of Victoria in her new role.[14] Although there had been one or two earlier precedents, from this moment onwards members of the royal family become almost ubiquitous in their touring of the empire. They represented in their persons and in the ceremonies, which they inevitably stimulated wherever, they went, the visual propaganda of an imperial system struggling to imagine itself globally. The presence of reproduced officialdom - governors (in many respects standing in for the lords lieutenants of the British counties), mayors, bishops of the established church, and, in the white dominions, politicians representing systems of devolved responsible government - indicated just such a global imagination. And these officials, together with residents at the courts of princes and kings, but minus the politicians until the twentieth century, could be replicated throughout India and the so-called dependent territories.

Even when the royal presence was absent, imperial territories still abounded in royal images. It was not just the coinage, that staple of imperial imaging for the Roman Empire, or the postage stamps of a world-wide despatch system which was itself one of the markers of imperial power, but also statuary. Surely, no monarch in history was memorialised so often as Queen Victoria. Not only was her name attached to innumerable geographical features, but stone and bronze representations of her appeared

everywhere from Barbados to Bombay, Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Hong Kong, Saskatchewan to Singapore and Sydney, Victoria, British Columbia, to Victoria, Australia. That these were propagandist rather than representational is apparent from the manner in which they so often depicted the Queen/Empress of a height far exceeding the exceptionally modest reality, or alternatively represented her seated, but in almost all cases wearing the open imperial crown, holding the orb and sceptre and dressed in robes of state.[15] Her son and grandson, even her great grandson continued to be so represented, sometimes in equestrian statues (as she never was) right up to the end of empire.

And that neatly demonstrates the alleged continuity that was one of the propagandist gifts to the British system and its history, not only of invented traditions, but also of a re-invented survival. The Mughal Emperor was deposed in 1858. A reinvented French imperial monarchy was destroyed in 1871. The Portuguese monarchy, so long associated with voyaging, exploration, and imperial power, passed away in 1910. The Romanov, Habsburg, Hohenzollern, and Ottoman imperial dynasties were all destroyed by the First World War and only the Russian Empire recreated itself in a new form. That the British survived and apparently prospered, despite the shock of the abdication of Edward VIII, was itself a major focus of propaganda as well as being an instrument of propaganda itself. When military, musical, chivalric and ceremonial traditions were forced to move on in Europe and elsewhere, the British continued to display and develop all the invented traditions of the nineteenth century. Thus, romantic monarchical forms, symbolising the global community, continued until at least the Coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953. The Commonwealth tours, which followed, the most extensive peregrinations undertaken by any monarch, and still accomplished largely by sea, gave a final boost to the propaganda symbolised in the Queen's very person and presence.

Until at least the 1950s, then, the British could present themselves with a sense of propagandist imperial right derived from an apparently victorious continuity. This continuity could readily be mistaken for a victorious superiority. The disruptions and defeats of other systems conveyed precisely the negative propaganda, which underpinned the allegedly positive elements of the British. Royal and imperial ceremonial, still locked into its older chivalric and atavistic forms, complete with aristocracies and horses, seemed to demonstrate that the modern forms of dramatically disciplined and hi-tech ceremonial, so neatly encapsulated in Riefenstahl's 'Triumph of the Will' with its opening sequence of Hitler's arrival in Nuremberg by aircraft, were flashes in the modernist pan.

Yet, the British Empire was about modernism and technological globalisation. As Cannadine has put it, the British Empire was about 'innovation

disguised as antiquity'.[16] However, his book, already very influential, is, it seems to me, flawed by dealing in the externals of imperial rule and by extension imperial propaganda. He rightly argues, as I did in my book *Propaganda and Empire* in 1984, for a symbiotic relationship between Britain and her Empire, in a reciprocal exchange of social systems, political, economic, and cultural relations. He also argues for the importance of rank and status rather than race in understanding imperial hierarchies, which is right in one respect, but wrong in others. But the hierarchy, which he exposes, is the visible hierarchy of rulers and representatives, of aristocratic and administrative classes. He misses the hierarchies of labour, of technical services, of capitalism, of missions, and of the lower orders of the military that often stood outside the more bombastic ceremonials, honours systems, and other visual attributes of imperial propagandist rule.

But that is not to say that these less visible hierarchies were not themselves deeply implicated in the propagandist urges of empire. In preparing a keynote lecture for a conference on 'Maritime Empires' at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich in 2001, I was greatly struck by the opportunity that merchant, as well as fighting, navies, offered for propaganda underpinning monarchical imperialism through modernist technological forms.[17] Here, apparent atavisms are clothed in self-conscious innovation, both the definer and the symbol of success of the maritime empire.

The merchant navy was of course both the prime instrument of British commercial and imperial power and also offered a major set of icons. The facts that the British, having for so long resisted its construction, took control of the Suez Canal very swiftly and then came to dominate its narrow trench was one of the prime propagandist issues of the 1870s. The statistic that four out of every five ships passing through the Canal in the 1880s were British was an oft-repeated one. The Canal confirmed the shift from sail to steam and became the prime link for such British concerns as the P&O, the British India, the Orient Line, the Ben Line, the Clan Line, the Anchor Line, Ellerman, Blue Funnel, Henderson and many others. These lines constituted visual links with empire in their home ports of Leith, Glasgow, Liverpool, Southampton and London, and many of them issued guide books, handbooks and other publications which constituted not just commercial advertising, but also propaganda for the wider system of which they were a part.[18] A number of major works were written about Britain's shipping power in the late nineteenth century and a number of popular illustrated works were issued. By the inter-war years the first shipping company histories were beginning to appear. After the Second World War, a positive plethora of such company histories, often celebrating centenaries, were published. They are full of propaganda for British shipping and empire, invariably emphasising what were perceived to be the failures of

European competitors in the same technologies and trades. Again, the elements are the inter-connectedness of the economies of mother country and empire, capitalist continuity, wartime heroics, and the underpinning of the imperial project on which the sun never set. Clearly, wartime propaganda emphasised the capacity of British trade to get through even in the face of all-out U-boat campaigns, but this has to be set into the wider context of merchant shipping propaganda.[19]

A study of their related guide books and publications for emigrants reveals the manner in which commercial print capitalism was bent to the ends of both the historical justification for Britain's empire and its continuing trading and demographic success in the here and now.[20] As with all imperial propaganda, this material continues in the old moulds until the 1960s. In these respects, interlocking and mutually reinforcing elements of propaganda were established. Most of the colonies of white settlement issued immigrant guides, which attempted to frame in both text and pictures the particular qualities of the territory concerned. They tended to be celebrations of modernity, filled with descriptions and illustrations of advanced European-style cities, infrastructures, technologies, and the potential for settler success in business and farming. Together with the ubiquitous post card, they often stressed the manner in which Britain had been reproduced through the symbolic public buildings of empire - like legislative assemblies, town halls, law courts, railway stations and their associated hotels, general post offices, libraries, shipping offices in the ports, and so on. So often, these reflected the contest of styles, particularly between the Gothic and the classical, which was a characteristic of British public building in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet, the presence, grandeur, and function of such buildings acted as material and visual global propaganda for the values of empire. What is interesting about all the guides and handbooks is that they established consensual paradigms of imperial opportunity, often overlaying the problems of social conflict, political disruptions, and indigenous repression and resentment which constituted so much of the reality. The strength of British imperial propaganda was that it originated from so many sources, yet seems so often to have sung the same song. So powerful was this that I think there is evidence that it left impressions on the Continent of Europe.

Nothing perhaps better reflects that curious combination between the old and the new, the atavistic and the technologically advanced, than the military. British regiments, so often supported by local auxiliaries, were to be found throughout the Empire, participating in ceremonial and maintaining public order when required. Colonial wars were seen as 'small wars,' opportunities to indulge in older forms of less mechanised warfare. Indeed, it may well have been the stress on these small wars, both in the lore of the

army and in the handbook of the techniques of colonial campaigns issued by Colonel Sir Charles Callwell between the 1890s and 1914, which helped to make the British so unprepared for the European wars of the twentieth century.[21] Yet, they remained a prime propagandist source, celebrated to this day in battle colours, regimental histories and insignia (for example, the Egyptian sphinx turns up on many badges because of regimental involvement in the campaign of 1882), and in the military museums of today, which seem to be legion around Britain. Intriguingly, the first statue erected in the Scottish Highland town of Inverness was of a Cameron Highlander soldier, commemorating the Egyptian campaign of 1882. It represented not just the 'martial race' of the Scots, not just imperial power, but also the binding of the Highlands into the British state through its foreign adventures.

The military were, of course, used to underpin diplomacy wherever required and often became its proverbial extension by other means. But what is also intriguing is that propaganda could often be bent to collaborative as well as conflictual situations. In this case, propaganda can sometimes be fully overt; in others, it operates not so much in a covert fashion as through sheer silence. Good examples are to be found in relation to the Partition of Africa in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. There was an extraordinary increase in the publication of official materials at this time, noticeably the parliamentary command papers that were issued to chart the progress of events in Africa. These contained despatches, telegrams, treaties, reports, all material that would not normally have been made available in the Public Record Office for at least fifty years. To be sure, these materials were carefully edited, but some of them have quite a sensitive feel about them. It is intriguing to note the manner in which their tone moves from discontent with the German arrival in West, South-West and East Africa in the mid-1880s to an anxiety to create systems of collaboration. 'Men-on-the-spot' like Sir John Kirk, the consul-general in Zanzibar who sought to protect the Sultan's authority under British tutelage, were reigned in, and the British set about collaborating with the Germans in East Africa. When the Germans confronted the revolt of Abushiri, a Swahili plantation and slave owner, in 1888, the British cheerfully collaborated in a blockade of the coast in order to prevent further supplies of arms reaching the rebels. Once the revolt had, in effect, destroyed the Deutsche Ost-Afrika Gesellschaft, the direct imperial administration of Hermann von Wissmann again collaborated with the British in various respects, for example in the provision of game law, an area in which the Germans were seen as being specially competent.[22] Command papers were published, it is true, for the benefit of parliament, but they also informed the press and non-governmental agencies like missions, geographical societies and other pres-

sure groups, as well as entering libraries throughout the land. There would therefore have been a 'trickle-down' effect, at least among the people now often referred to as the 'chattering classes'. Although such materials are not normally regarded as propaganda, there can be little doubt that that is precisely what they were. They justified the actions of both metropolitan government and local officialdom, and they laid out the diplomatic conditions under which the imperial conquest of Africa could be achieved.

Some of these collaborative effects were destroyed by the tensions surrounding the Jameson Raid into the Transvaal of 1896, major revolts in Southern Rhodesia, and the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899. Once again, the British indulged in the publication of extensive propaganda materials, even though, unlike during the two world wars of the twentieth century, there was no specific office charged with such work.

For example, there was a considerable degree of collusion between Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary and Alfred Milner, High Commissioner in South Africa, on the preparation of despatches for publication, though they were not always edited in ways that he wanted.[23] But they did offer the British anti-Boer case and the spurious support for the civil rights of the 'uitlanders' on the Witwatersrand, as well as the even more spurious concerns about black rights, so cheerfully repudiated at the end of the Boer War. Such materials, and the effect they had on parliamentary committees (such as the South Africa Committee of 1896) and opinion formers in the press and elsewhere, were vital in the maintenance of a degree of public support for these exploits, even if they did not entirely suppress opposition and certainly did nothing to encourage Continental European support for British actions.

Many other publications, particularly the rapidly published accounts of the suppression of African resistance and of the events of the Boer War, underpinned the sense of imperial rectitude. So too did the annually published Union-Castle Line guides to South and East Africa which seem to have had very high sales. It seems to me, as I have already suggested, that the handbooks, pamphlets, and guides issued by imperial print capitalism should be added to the propagandist litany of the census, the map, and the museum.[24] Early colonial annual reports, published as parliamentary papers, were anxious to offer censuses of colonial population within a year or two of the acquisition of the territory. They were also eager to lay out the geographical characteristics and arrangement of administrative divisions of such colonies. Maps are of course prime instruments of propaganda: no map is an objective representation of geographical features. They all contain ideological and cultural superstructures inseparable from the objectives of imperial globalisation. Imperial mapping, widely disseminated through atlases and school textbooks, offered up imperial values, often underpinned

by text or by images around their borders. At its most simple, the dominant depiction of the British Empire in red was to continue to be a geographical icon down to the 1960s. Scale and continuity were again the prime characteristics of a successful propagandist venture. Meanwhile, what Bennett has called the 'exhibitionary complex,' in which we can include the imperial exhibitions, which went down to 1938, and the museums, which came to contain ethnographic materials from around the world, became major organs of propaganda.[25] In these cases, the government often had a very considerable input, as at the Wembley Empire Exhibition of 1924-5.[26]

Susan Carruthers, in her book *Winning Hearts and Minds,* has demonstrated the extent to which imperial ideologies, propaganda mechanisms, and even press willingness to be complicit and pliant in government views were all still very much in evidence during post-Second World War crises and campaigns in Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus.[27] But interestingly, she concentrates very much on the print media with only a sideways glance at newsreel and a few visuals. Other media, such as radio, television, photographic images (now recognised as being heavily laden with ideology) and popular culture, together with oral evidence and historical polling techniques, might have helped. But, as with the Boer War, the British reputation, imperial and military, was influenced on a global scale by these campaigns, often in very different ways. Palestine appeared to be a case of ignominious scuttle. Mau Mau, though apparently defeated, nonetheless pressed forward the processes of decolonisation in East and Central Africa. Cyprus saw a major reversal of policy, ultimately leading to invasion and partition. But Malaya provided the British with an inflated reputation in counter-insurgency. Their own propaganda seemed to succeed too well and their techniques were repeatedly used as models. But we remain hazy about the extent to which these campaigns kept a sense of imperial rectitude alive while also utterly shattering it.

As I indicated in *Propaganda and Empire* and edited volumes such as *Imperialism and Popular Culture, Popular Imperialism and the Military,* and *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*, we must escape from conventional print and image materials in order to understand the manner in which imperial ideologies were conveyed to the British public. Such ideas were transmitted through a whole range of media and it is sometimes possible to distinguish a heavy official involvement, as with the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee before the First World War or the Empire Marketing Board between 1926 and 1933.[28] But in all cases, official and unofficial, there was certainly a conscious effort to influence a target audience with the ideas and values of the originators of the materials. And such material invariably promoted the British imperial cause by drawing unflattering comparisons between it and its European rivals. Such com-

parisons, transmitted through so many different aspects of media, cannot have failed to influence the jingoism and xenophobia, which broke out among sectors of the British public at key moments. Some might see the continuing anti-Europeanism of today as having some connections with that British sense of an extra-European English-speaking community.

There are of course more conventional approaches to British propaganda than mine, and I am not wholly rejecting them. What I am saying is that the propaganda machines, which were created in the First and Second World Wars, and more recently in the campaigns of the 1950s and the Falklands, Gulf, and Afghan wars, can only be fully understood when they are placed into these wider contexts. The British world-view, and consequently the positioning of the states of continental Europe within it, was heavily influenced by the constant drip-drip effect of an imperial propaganda that was so pervasive that it was often not even recognised to be propaganda at all. This kind of covert propaganda, which creates and coheres with a dominant ideology, is much more effective than the overt variety. Nicholas Reeves has questioned the effectiveness of twentieth-century film propaganda, viewing it as doing little to convert audiences from the ideologies already in place.[29] There may be problems with such a formulation, but where the situation is one of continuity, consensus, and coherence, no such effort at conversion was necessary.

Moreover, the ideas which the multiple British elites disseminated to the British public were seen as representing some kind of Anglo-Saxon historical truth reflected in those continuities of monarchy, militarism, commercial and shipping success that were projected in so many images, ceremonies and publications. To a certain extent, the British continue to find it difficult to free themselves from the effects of these continuities, a phenomenon well represented in the Falklands War of 1982, which so rapidly became a consensual colonial war offering significant political rewards for its victors. A tiny population of 2,000 people in the South Atlantic, no larger than a sizeable village, again gave the British a sense of their uniqueness and separation from their European neighbours.

And finally, reference to the Falklands, to General Galtieri, and to Margaret Thatcher leads me to yet another quotation from that wonderful quarry of wisdom, Francis Bacon. He also remarked that 'every rod or staff of empire is truly crooked at the top'.[30]

Notes

[1] This was at a conference entitled 'Exhibiting Empire' at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, October, 1999. The theme of 'public history' and much else was elaborated in Ludmilla Jordanova's excellent book, L. J. Jordanova, *History in Practice* (London: Arnold, 2000).

[2] Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: War Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Nuclear Age* (Wellingborough: Stephens, 1990).

[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), chapter 3.

[4] Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century: Selling Democracy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 59 and 67-68.

[5] Philip M. Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: British Overseas Publicity and Propaganda, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[6] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 93.

[7] Taylor, *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century*, 247.

[8] John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 3.

[9] Francis Bacon, Of Empire, quoted in: *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 2nd [rev.] ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 26.

[10] Francis Bacon, Religious Meditations: Of Heresies, ibid., 28.

[11] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2001), 101.

[12] For a more extended discussion of these matters, see John M. MacKenzie, 'India's Role in the Victorian Concept of Empire,' in *Imperium Empire Reich: ein Konzept politischer Herrschaft im deutsch-britischen Vergleich*, ed. by Franz Bosbach (München: K.G. Saur, 1999), 119-132.

[13] *The Illustrated London News* issued a special supplement to commemorate the tour of the Prince of Wales. The Prince eventually realised that he was there as an act of propaganda to convey the new title of his mother as Empress.

[14] B.S. Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India,' in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 165-210.

[15] A good example of a statue representing the Queen standing (with imperial crown and holding the orb and sceptre) and indicating a height far exceeding the reality is that in front of the provincial legislature in Victoria, British Columbia.

[16] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 148.

[17] John M. MacKenzie, 'Lakes and Oceans: Technology and the Shipping of Empire in the Late Nineteenth Century' (paper presented at the 'Maritime Empires' - Conference, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, July 2001).

[18] John M. MacKenzie, 'Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries' (paper presented at the Cultural Imperialism - Conference, Buenos Aires, August 2000). The paper was also delivered at a conference on tourism at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston in June 2001, and will be published in Spanish in a volume edited by Ricardo Salvatore and in English in a volume edited by John K. Walton.

[19] Many of these works are cited in the paper mentioned in footnote 17, but what is interesting about this material is that shipping company histories are so prominent when the histories of many other capitalist sectors are lacking. The reason is clear: shipping was highly visible, a significant national asset, and also a romantic attachment for a maritime nation. It is clear that they secured a degree of popular as well as specialist readership.

[20] See footnote 18. Shipping companies such as the Union-Castle Line, the Royal Mail, the Orient and others issued guide books. Guide books were also issued by prominent publishers such as John Murray and Macmillan, as well as by travel firms such as Thomas Cook. There was a conscious British attempt to challenge such famous Continental European exemplars such as Baedeker.

[21] John M. MacKenzie, *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992); Jaap de Moor and H. L. Wesseling, *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1988); David Killingray and David E. Omissi, *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c. 1700-1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

[22] John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 205-207.

[23] See, for example, A. N. Porter, *The Origins of the South African War: Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1895-99* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), pp. 144, 148, 186, 198-202, 216. Some of Milner's despatches in relation to the Rhodesia crisis were also published in command papers.

[24] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapter 10.

[25] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[26] MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, chapter 4.

[27] Susan L. Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency, 1944-1960* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995). See also Tony Shaw, *Eden, Suez and the Mass Media: Propaganda and Persuasion during the Suez Crisis* (London: Tauris, 1996).

[28] James Robert Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997); Stephen Constantine, Great Britain. Empire Marketing Board., and Great Britain. Public Record Office., *Buy & Build: The Advertising Posters of the Empire Marketing Board* (London: H.M.S.O, 1986).

[29] Nicholas Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda during the First World War* (London; Wolfeboro, N.H: C. Helm, 1986).

[30] Francis Bacon, *De Sapientia Veterum*, 6.