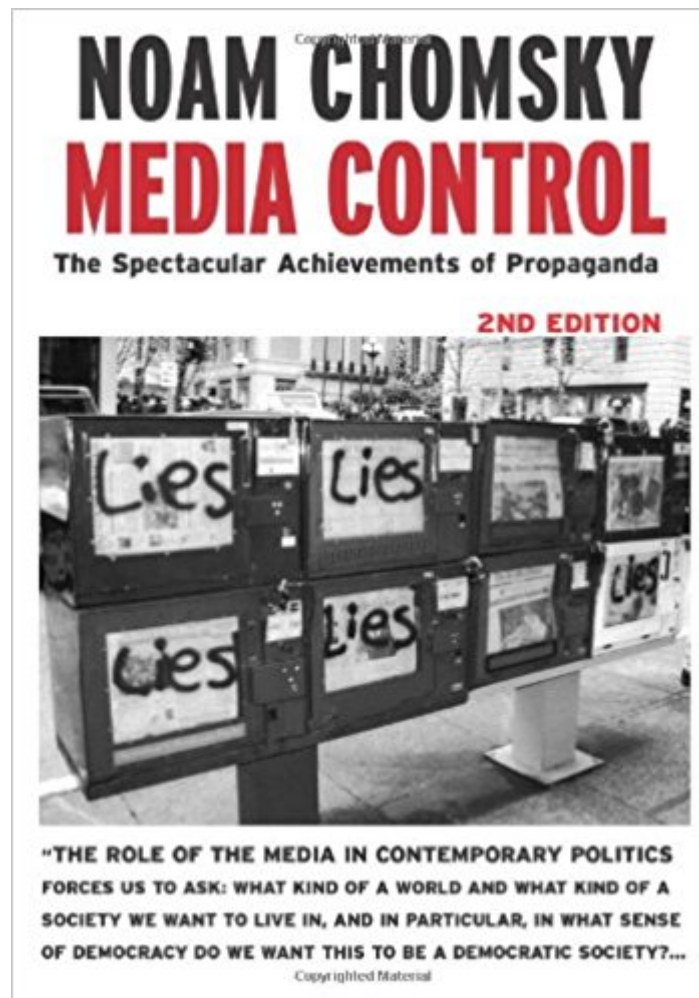




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Media Control, Second Edition: The Spectacular Achievements Of Propaganda (Open Media Series)



Synopsis

Noam Chomsky's backpocket classic on wartime propaganda and opinion control begins by asserting two models of democracy "one in which the public actively participates, and one in which the public is manipulated and controlled. According to Chomsky, "propaganda is to democracy as the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state," and the mass media is the primary vehicle for delivering propaganda in the United States. From an examination of how Woodrow Wilson's Creel Commission "succeeded, within six months, in turning a pacifist population into a hysterical, war-mongering population," to Bush Sr.'s war on Iraq, Chomsky examines how the mass media and public relations industries have been used as propaganda to generate public support for going to war. Chomsky further touches on how the modern public relations industry has been influenced by Walter Lippmann's theory of "spectator democracy," in which the public is seen as a "bewildered herd" that needs to be directed, not empowered; and how the public relations industry in the United States focuses on "controlling the public mind," and not on informing it. Media Control is an invaluable primer on the secret workings of disinformation in democratic societies. From the Audiobook Download edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Media Control is perhaps the best short introduction to Chomsky's thought on politics and propaganda around. Whereas books like 9-11 and "What Uncle Sam Really Wants" are choppy and

prone to misunderstood interpretations by readers not already accustomed to Chomsky, Media Control is coherent, in depth and very easy and quick to read. The essay is from the time after the U.S. invasion of Iraq known as "Desert Storm" and traces the uses of propaganda and misinformation from that era back to the Wilson era and Walter Lippmann's theory of media control. Chomsky perhaps displays his dry wit in this short volume more than anywhere else, with his comparison of the typical slogan "support our troops" to the absurd slogan "support the people in Iowa." What this makes clear, is the emptiness of the slogan. The question "do you support our troops?" cannot be answered with a "no" unless one is completely depraved. That question however masks the underlying question "do you support our policy?" which is something that elites in the govt. and media would prefer you not think about, because the answers would be more ambiguous and require real democratic discussion. The rulers and media heads would prefer to make those decisions for you, through what Lippmann dubbed "consent without consent". The mass media (now controlled largely by six major firms who all have holdings and enter into joint ventures with one another.

Those interested in better understanding the many ways on which the electronic media manipulates public opinion would profit mightily from reading this rather short essay from Noam Chomsky concerning the myriad of methods used by what sociologist C. Wright Mills would have referred to as the power elite to shape and reduce the scope of what we know and how we see the world around us. In a wonderful quote from this essay lifted nearly verbatim from a public speech made to a recent Town Meeting for citizens interested in media coverage of foreign policy, Chomsky states that "propaganda is to a democracy what a bludgeon is to a totalitarian state". In this sense, he posits that the use of propaganda, and in particular what some pundits now refer to as a political 'spin', is the single most useful device used by the power elite to keep the masses in line with their interests and world perspectives. As the many faithful peripatetic readers of Chomsky's essays would expect, he adopts an academic approach to the issue, tracing the history of the use of propaganda in this country from the erudite yet deceptively rabble-rousing pro-intervention speeches made by President Woodrow Wilson, the similarly back-staged endeavors of FDR to draw American support for the embattled British position prior to the attack at Pearl Harbor, and even the stage-managed and public-relations intensive efforts to portray the intervention in Kuwait in 1991 as an effort to free a brave democratic people, when the kingdom was in fact a petty fiefdom that was ruled with arrogance and imperious disregard for public comment.

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