

BIG LIES

BY MONICA TAYLOR

When I was young, my father wanted to know what we were thinking on a myriad of subjects. He encouraged us to talk, especially at the dinner table. I was not brought up in an authoritarian family or country. Issues were discussed to give fuller understanding before I was spanked, and the discussion was more impressive and effective than the "punishment." I am also thankful for my provocative, fully credentialed 19 year old 9th grade English teacher, who encourage critical thinking.

It disturbs me deeply when someone "browbeats" to suppress someone else's expression on issues, especially issues that affect a lot of others. It obstructs the greater clarity and the greater good that comes from open discussion. It disturbs me when someone tries to take someone's power and equally when that power is too freely given to another. It disturbs me when someone attempts to suppress the right to dissent. This is undemocratic and unpatriotic as it usurps another's right to think and express, and in the process loses what could be valuable input.

In 1961, at age 15, it disturbed me when my German host "father" asked me, "Why didn't you Americans come to our rescue sooner?" Now I am an American reared German-Scottish-English/Catholic-Episcopalian with possible German/Jewish ancestry on my father's side. The German people of the pre-and-Nazi era gave up so much power little by little that they had to pray that there was a rescuer.

It has disturbed me that the Hitler atrocities were not dissented against or exposed at every — sometimes subtle — step of the way. Some say that those generations of German people were accustomed to an authoritarian government and culture, and government-owned media propaganda, i.e., "blind patriotism," and had already given up their person-power to dissent. This is why Nazi abductions in the middle of the night, mass murders and torture and pervasive fear flourished.

Some leaders in America today feel that they have the right to our power and the right to tell "Noble" "Big Lies" in the Leo Strauss tradition. These are the neoconservatives, or "neocons," who include Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Cheney, et al. This following has moved to deregulate media ownership.

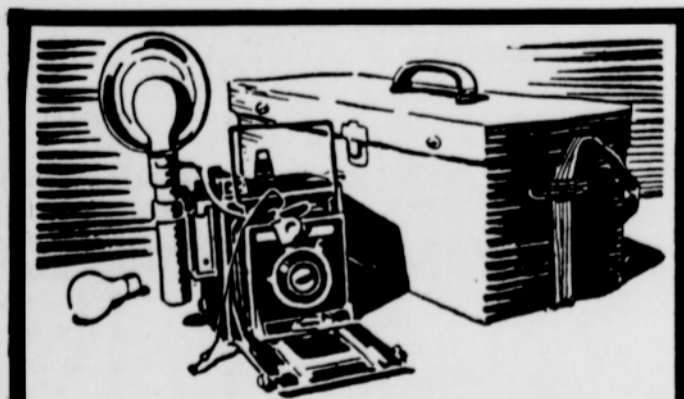
The "Big Lie Technique" was one of 12 to 15 propaganda techniques presented by my 9th grade English teacher. It was a military audio-tape which the military presents to recruits who might be captured in enemy territory to arm them against brainwashing techniques. It could also help critical thinking to see through propaganda and advertising. It was such a powerful tape that I have often wished I could hear it again and share.

When you have "Big Lies" told by "leaders" and government affiliated media ownership, and suppression of the open press and public discussion, you have "The Big Sell" that is propaganda.

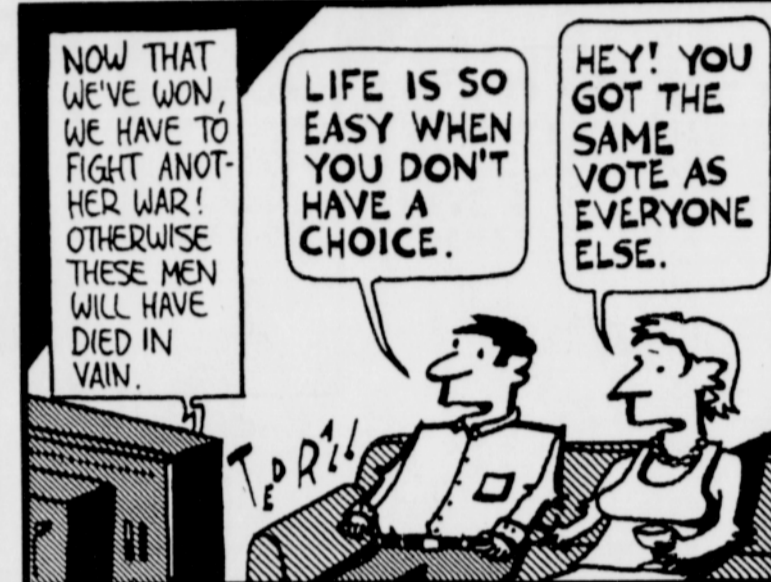
These neocon leaders have their own agenda: "The Project for a New American Century." They have a right to their own opinion, but not to their own facts, i.e., lies. They have no right to suppress discussion in a democracy, or disrupt the research into the real facts. They have no right to lead us falsely into war. This is not world leadership, this is world tyranny, and we as a nation have suffered much because of it. In essence, they have terrorized our nation and the world.

It disturbs me deeply that we inherited democracy and many think we can take it for granted. We need to realize that, as evidenced by history, only the courageous are able to maintain freedom and democracy for all from the powerful pressures for absolute power within a nation or society. We were and can still be the Land of the Free — and thinking — who stand for democracy against any who would take our democracy and person power away.

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TED RALL

UNIMPEACHABLE BUSH

CRACKS APPEAR IN THE CONSTITUTION

BY TED RALL

The phone rings with a blocked caller ID but I know who it is. My friend the film critic has just put down the same article I've just finished reading, a front-page blockbuster in the *New York Daily News*. It says that George W. Bush knew about Karl Rove's scheme to blow CIA agent Valerie Plame's cover for years, that he was Rove's partner in treason from the start, that his claims of ignorance were lies. The *News* article is anonymously sourced but we know it's 100% true because the White House won't deny that Bush is a traitor.

"So they'll impeach him now, right?"

My friend asked the same thing in 2001 when recounts proved Bush lost Florida, when the 9/11 fetishist admitted that he'd never even tried to catch Osama, when WMDs failed to turn up in Iraq, and when his malignant neglect killed hundreds of Americans in post-Katrina New Orleans.

"This means impeachment, right?" Wrong.

Any one of Bush's crimes towers over the combined wickedness of Nixon and Clinton. And there are so many to choose from! How many times has Bush "made false or misleading public statements for the purpose of deceiving the people of the United States" (a key count in the Nixon impeachment)?

Stop laughing, you.

Unfortunately for my friend and the United States, impeachment is a political process, not a legal one. Nixon and Clinton faced Congresses controlled by the other Party. Because Bush belongs to the same Party as the majorities in the House and Senate, nothing he does can get him impeached.

Our failed Constitutional system means we're stuck with this disastrous demagogue for three more years. Gloat now, Republican readers, but Party loyalty's stranglehold on impeachment can easily take the form of a complacent Democratic Congress overlooking the misdeeds of a batty Democratic President.

Any safe can be cracked; every system of safeguards breaks down eventually. We can't get rid of Bush because the Founding Fathers, who were smart enough to think of just about everything, dropped the ball when they drafted the article that provides for Presidential impeachment. Because there were no national political parties back in 1787, their otherwise ingenious system of checks and balances failed to account for the possibility that a Congress might choose to overlook a President's crimes.

Small Parties were active on the state and local level during the late 18th century, but James Madison, George Washington and most of the other Founders despised these organizations as harbingers of petty "factionalism" that ought to be banned or severely limited. Washington used the occasion

of his 1796 farewell address to decry "the baneful effects of the spirit of Party generally. It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration," he warned. "It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foments occasionally riot and insurrection...In governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged." Voting blocs were the enemy of good government.

In the new republic, Madison wrote in his seminal Federalist No. 10, political arguments should be considered on their own merits. Since candidates and holders of political office would be judged solely as individuals, Congressmen would focus on the greater good rather than political alliances when weighing whether to impeach a President. Even when Parties began to emerge as a national force in 1800, few politicians would have argued that a Democratic/Republican President should be safe from impeachment unless the Federalist Party happened to control Congress.

Another Constitutional breakdown, concerning the separation of powers, occurred in June 2004. More than a year after the Supreme Court decided in *Rasul v. Bush* that the nearly 600 Muslim men and young boys being held incommunicado at Guantanamo Bay were entitled to have their cases heard by U.S. courts. They remain in cold storage—no lawyers, no court dates. The Bush administration simply ignored the ruling.

"(Bush's) Justice Department," Dahlia Lithwick wrote in *Slate*, sees (the ruling) through the sophisticated legal prism known as the Toddler Worldview: Anything one doesn't wish to accept simply isn't true." Because the Founding Fathers never anticipated the possibility that the nation's chief executive would treat its final judgments with the respect of an out-of-state parking ticket issued to a rental car, the Supreme Court has been rendered as toothless as a gummy bear.

The more you look, the more you will find that our Constitution has been subverted to the point of virtual irrelevance. The legislative branch has abdicated its exclusive right to declare war to the President, who was appointed by a federal court that undermined the states' constitutional right to manage and settle election disputes. Individuals' protection against unreasonable searches have been trashed, *habeas corpus* is a joke, and double jeopardy has become routine as those exonerated by criminal court face second trials in civil court. Our system of checks and balances has collapsed, the victim of a citizenry more interested in entertaining distraction than eternal vigilance.

Where evil men rule, law cannot protect those who sleep.

Ted Rall is a nationally syndicated political cartoonist as well as a writer whose latest book is *Wake Up, You're Liberal! How We Can Take America Back from the Right*.

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