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Why do the lambs remain silent? On democracy, psychology, and the ruling elite's methods for managing public opinion as well as public indignation

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Introduction

This presentation discusses methods employed by the ruling elites to make their grave violations of moral norms invisible to public morality and cognitive awareness.

Violations of moral norms can be made "morally invisible" even if all relevant facts are unobscured: This can be achieved by embedding these facts into a context that prevents eliciting widespread unease and indignation. One example is the structural violence associated with the implementation of neoliberal economical doctrine. While societal and humanitarian consequences of this violence have so far been mostly observed in so-called third-world countries, they also manifest themselves more and more often in western industrialized nations.

Violations of moral norms can also be made "cognitively invisible" even if all relevant facts are unobscured: This can be achieved by embedding these facts into a context such that no conclusions may be drawn on their basis. In particular, such facts remain isolated from similar events that the elites wish you to judge according to very different principles. One example is the practice of "targeted killings" of persons whom the government deems a risk to national security. These murders break international law and would not be accepted if carried out by states declared as "enemy" dictatorships.

Mass media play a pivotal role in making facts morally and cognitively visible: In addition to reporting simple facts, media typically also deliver the contextual frame necessary for interpreting the facts, thus shaping our political world view. The invisibility of some moral transgressions is thus part of our daily live and concerns us all. Reflections on this phenomenon provoke basic and elementary questions. No expert certification is required to

think about these questions, even if the ruling elites try their best to restrict discourse about them to a narrow group of "qualified experts". As "citoyens", well-informed and dutiful citizens trying to actively participate in forming our community, we possess what in the age of enlightenment came to be called "lumen naturale": We are endowed with a natural reasoning faculty that allows us to engage in debates and decisions about matters which directly affect us. We can therefore adequately discuss the essential core of the ways in which grave violations of law and morality are hidden from our awareness without having some specialist education. This point is at the heart of the following presentation.

Importantly, our natural reasoning faculty allows us to scrutinize and question the concepts used to describe, structure, and evaluate social and political phenomena. As a glaring example, we can look at the neoliberal jargon that tries to veil and hide what it is actually implying. It would be easy to fill an entire Orwellian dictionary with newspeak terms like structural reforms, willingness to reform, reducing bureaucracy, de-regulation, stability and growth pact, austerity, European financial stabilization mechanism (bailout fund), free market, lean government, liberalization, harmonization, market-conforming democracy, necessity without alternative, human capital, temporary employment, ancillary wage costs, social envy, top performer, etc. etc. Such seemingly innocent words come silently bundled with an ideology whose totalitarian character we need to uncover and point out explicitly. However, before we can do that, we need to become aware of and identify the hidden premises, prejudices, and ideological components which are engrained in the way in which we talk about social and political phenomena. Otherwise, we might unwittingly and involuntarily fall for the ideology bundled with the vocabulary. Again, we need not be experts for this task. We all already have the prerequisite cognitive skills, even if those skills may need to be trained and honed to be used effectively.

For the sake of staying in power, the ruling elites of democratic nations often hide important premises and ideological components of their choice of words when presenting social phenomena and their actions to the public. I will further on try to identify some of these components. But first, I would like to illustrate the problem of making facts invisible with a phenomenon in visual perception.

In figure [DW XXXX], we tend to perceive random fragments of objects without being able to figure out how they relate to each other. Why does this display make it hard to grasp the meaning of the visible fragments? The answer given by perceptual psychology basically argues that our visual system cannot apply its natural object-centered categories as it usually does since the cause of the fragmentation is missing from the depicted scene. Keeping everything in the scene unchanged except for allowing the cause of the fragmentation to be identified leads to a dramatic change: We now immediately perceive how the fragments combine to complete objects and effortlessly pick up their meaning. This phenomenon reflects a general principle in which our mind works. We will see how this principle operates in many other situations as well. Presenting several meaningfully related facts in a fragmented fashion can hide their deeper connections. We then perceive no more than isolated information fragments without relating them to each other - reading the daily newspaper typically has this very effect. However, once the cause which made the information become fragmented appears, we have no trouble to "connect the dots" and perceive how the pieces of information fit together.

The paradox of democracy

This presentation is about why it is possible to make facts invisible through fragmentation, and exactly how this can be done. In turn, these questions prompt us to ask who wants facts to be invisible, and who these facts should be invisible for. To understand these questions, we need to look at the so-called "paradox of democracy", really a problem in the relationship between the political leadership and the general population. The systematic analysis of this paradox goes back to antiquity. In political discussions, the general population is often compared to a herd of animals. Since the herd is said to sometimes exhibit irrational and unpredictable behavior, it is argued that it needs to be controlled. For the political leadership, it follows that it is important to interpret the silence of the herd and construe it to be in line with the leadership's own political actions. Recently, this idea has become popular through Richard Nixon who interpreted the "silent majority" of the American people as supporting his militant policy in Vietnam.

The greek historian Thucydides (454-399 BC) was the first to study these issues systematically. He was also the first to realize the deep connections between our ideas about different forms of government and our assumptions about the nature of mankind. Implicitly or explicitly, every form of government is linked to what we consider the essential nature of the human mind. Thucydides thought that the general population has a tendency for acting emotionally, being guided more by raw instinct than by rational consideration: "Public opinion is erratic and capricious, the general population blames others for its own failures." In contrast, Thucydides argues, political leadership is mainly motivated by its pursuit of power in order to satisfy its dictatorial ambitions. Thucydides realized that all adequate ways to organize institutional structures must take into account the psychological weak spots of human nature. He thought that democracy as a form of government was unfit to comply with this demand. Influenced by the reign of Pericles, Thucydides instead thought that a form of government would be ideal which on the surface bears the name of democracy, but really is autocracy, the rule of the first man as single head of state.

Aristotle's view was similar. He considered the "timocracy" to be an ideal form of government, the rule of the distinguished property owners. Aristotle suggested that democratic and oligarchic elements should be balanced such that neither the poor majority nor the rich elites would be able to dominate power. For Aristotle, democracy was a degenerate form of timocracy because the poor majority might decide to divide the capital of the rich minority among themselves - a possible course of action which Aristotle considered unjust.

The same idea can be found in the constitution of the United States: James Madison (1751-1836), one of the founding fathers of the constitution, proclaimed that every form of government should be designed "to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority". Madison tried to solve the tense relationship between the common people and the elites with a "representative democracy", a de-facto oligarchy. He thought this would guarantee that the interests of the rich minority be protected. These examples shall suffice to show that western school of thought is rife with doubt and even sometimes hostility towards democracy as a form of government. (1)

Nevertheless, the concept of democracy continues to gain in importance in political discourse and rhetoric in newer times. Not only is democracy one among several possible forms of government, it is the only form that allows for legitimate political power. At the same time, the ruling elites consider democracy a "necessary illusion". Behind all their soaring rhetoric of democracy, they are eager to establish the institutional oligarchic structures necessary to preserve their own interests. They therefore declare real democratic accomplishments as an "excess of democracy" and try to erode democratic structures in innocuous ways so as not to arouse public suspicion. This process is currently accelerating at a frighteningly fast pace. The EU legislative process, the actions of the world bank and the IMF, the TTIP trade agreement, and the so-called "Troika" are some of the many indications pointing to this direction.

Establishing oligarchic structures under the veil of democracy has been impressively successful as western democracies now bear close resemblance to oligarchies. This view is not only shared among critics of the ongoing process of tearing down democratic elements of government but also among the ruling elites themselves. In the U.S., Samuel Huntington contributed to a report on the "crisis of democracy", there referring to an "excess of democracy" as diagnosed by the editors. Huntington concluded that the management of "democracy" was relatively easy under president Truman who was able "to govern the country with the cooperation of a relatively small number of Wall Street lawyers and bankers". Ever since, this "excess of democracy" was diminished wherever possible, prompting the Washington Times from April 21, 2014 to state: America is no longer a democracy – never mind the democratic republic envisioned by our Founding Fathers. In an interview from July 28, 2015, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter called the U.S. an oligarchy with unlimited political bribery. Evidently, the elites regard the oligarchic character of the U.S. as an obvious fact. Those who do not place much weight on public statements of the elite may instead be convinced to recognize the obvious by supporting scientific evidence. Political scientists Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page (2014) recently analyzed how much influence the broad body of U.S. citizens exert on political decisions. Their results show that the actual impact is near zero, and for about 70% of the population, there is no influence on political decision making whatsoever.

The situation in Europe is very similar. In order to develop a somewhat realistic picture of the current state of affairs, it helps to take a look at media catering to the elites, such as the Wall Street Journal. As the financial and economic elites rely on accurate assessments that are undistorted by partisan political views, these media afford an unclouded view on political realities. Since these media cater only to the elite, they can dispense with any crude rhetoric and propaganda found in the mass media consumed by the general population. The Wall Street Journal from February 28, 2013 soberly states that a democratic process is no longer able to stop the neoliberal agenda, citing as evidence that the public has voted against it repeatedly and in several countries, but without consequence. In Europe, the conviction that the voter has any consequential impact on the results of an election is thus an illusion, just as it is in the U.S. By voting in an election, voters today cannot anymore exert influence on decisions that are relevant to the institutional structure of the political system.

For economic policy, this powerlessness is hardly surprising because neoliberalism and democracy are deeply incompatible. As Milton Friedman (1912-2006), one of the founding

fathers of neoliberalism, succinctly put: "A democratic society once established, destroys a free economy" (Newsletter of the Mont Pelérin Society)" - a development which the economic elite naturally opposes. They regard democracy only insofar as "permissible" as the economy is protected from any implications from democratic decision making processes. Which is to say as long as it is not a real democracy. It follows that international neoliberalism currently is democracy's worst enemy.

From the perspective of multinational business corporations, democracy mainly is a risk to their business model and to their revenue. The general population may not agree that society has to conform to economic constraints and corporate interests which view salaries and social benefits as negative factors for their accumulation of wealth. Ruling elites then may have to force adequate "restructuring measures" on the population in order to satisfy the interests of business organizations.

A society that is thoroughly democratic is thus incompatible with an organization of society favored by the ruling elites. Conceding that "democracy" is a necessary illusion in political life, elites prefer it to assume the shape of a "spectator democracy" steered by experts rather than be a participatory democracy that is a lot harder to control. A spectator democracy is much more suited to maintain the illusion of democracy while at the same time ensuring a stable continuity in the status of the political elite.

This very problem is at the heart of the influential report "The Crisis of Democracy" mentioned above. In 1975, this report was commissioned by the "Trilateral Commission". "Trilateral" here refers to the fact that the members of this elite discussion group were drawn from the main economic forces - North America, Europe and Japan. The Trilateral Commission has close ties to other elite social networks, especially to the Bilderberg conference and to the Atlantik-Brücke (Atlantic bridge). German members include Joseph Ackermann, Gerhard Schröder, Edelgard Buhlmahn and Theo Sommer.

The "Crisis of Democracy" report notes that there is only one possibility to solve the crisis caused by an "excess of democracy" and to manage democracy in the interests of the elite: "The effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy and noninvolvement on the part of some individuals and groups." It goes without saying that those whose apathy and noninvolvement is regarded beneficial for the effective management of democracy are part of the general population, not the members of the ruling elite. The elite's goal of achieving a spectator democracy can thus only be achieved by depleting the political interests and involvement of the broad body of citizens and instead foster their lethargy and moral apathy.

Reaching this goal requires employing suitable techniques, especially to induce apathy - be it through economic worries, fearmongering, consumerism, etc. Other important techniques are those for managing public opinion and outrage.

Democracy and propaganda

In pondering advantages and disadvantages of different forms of government, U.S. political scientist Harold Lasswell (1902-1978) came to the following conclusion which nicely aligned with widely held beliefs of the elite: Democracy should be preferred if it is possible

to make the citizens conform to the political system and agree with the decisions taken by a specialized political caste in their name. This could be achieved only using suitable propaganda techniques. Propaganda would thus be an essential and inevitable part of every "operational" democracy. Lasswell saw techniques to manage public opinion as advantageous over dictatorial measures of controlling the public because they were "cheaper than violence, bribery or other possible control techniques." In this sense, democracy is an optimal form of government provided that it is firmly guided with supporting management of public opinion.

Edward Bernays (1891-1995), the most influential propagandist of propaganda, was very frank in pointing out these issues, for obvious reasons much more so than what is common nowadays. In his book "Propaganda", published in 1928, he laid the foundations of modern propaganda and developed different propaganda techniques. We here regard as propaganda all systematic attempts at undermining the natural faculty of reasoning to create attitudes, convictions and opinions which facilitate disenfranchise the citizen at the benefit of the ruling elites. (4) In "Propaganda", Bernays states: "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. [...] We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of." What is relevant here is that Bernays is not formulating goals, he simply comments on the status quo of his time. The described situation has since developed much further and is even more serious now. Today, propaganda is an essential part of the indoctrination system in all western societies. The "invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country" consists of well-connected social networks of different elites that operate largely unnoticed and without public scrutiny. It is them who "manipulate our organized habits and opinions". They steer political decision making and, assisted by mass media's "embedded journalists", portray the results as following from inevitable constraints that ultimately benefit of all citizens. (5)

How could the elites accomplish this goal of a suitably lethargic population ruled by an invisible government? Evidently, mass media play a key role. A particularly lucid account of mass media's role is given by Paul Lazarsfeld (1901-1976), one of the most eminent scientists in communication studies and co-founder of modern empirical social science: The citizens need to be flooded with information to create the illusion of being well informed. For the average citizen, the illusion of being well informed has the effect that "his social conscience remains spotlessly clean. He is concerned. He is informed. And he has all sorts of ideas as to what should be done. But, after he has gotten through his dinner and after he has listened to his favored radio programs and after he has read his second newspaper of the day, it is really time for bed." For Lazarsfeld, mass media therefore are among the "most respectable and efficient of social narcotics". According to Lazarsfeld, mass media induce such a warm and fuzzy feeling of being well informed that, after having read the newspaper during breakfast, after having checked the online news portal in the afternoon, and after having watched TV news in the evening, citizens are so overwhelmed by information that they fail to recognize the root of their own malady. The well-educated social strata are especially susceptible to this illusion of being informed. Over their lifetime, intellectuals have obviously been particularly exposed to the doctrine of the currently ruling ideology -

just as they were in Nazi Germany. By silently condoning the actions of the elite, intellectuals are a major factor in stabilizing and perpetuating the ruling ideology of their times. There are many examples for narcotizing the general population through affective measures. (7)

Besides sedating the public, fearmongering techniques are particularly important in the political domain of exerting affective control over citizens. The rhetoric popularly employed for legitimizing military "interventions" often follows two strategies simultaneously: While the well-educated social strata often respond favorably to waging war under the banner of humanitarian intervention, the remaining parts of society are most easily won over by inducing fear of evil and violent enemies. A historically famous example with enormous consequences was Colin Powell who, in his presentation to the UN security council on February 5, 2003, held in his hand a plastic tube filled with powder. He was supposed to demonstrate "unambiguous and undeniable evidence" that Saddam Hussein had access to weapons of mass destruction. Presenting this "evidence" was mainly targeted at the U.S. population to scare them into supporting a U.S. invasion into Iraq that had long since been planned. Manipulating the affective state of the population like this proved to be quite effective, ultimately resulting in the "collateral damage" of killing more than 100000 Iraqi civilians. More recently, the gravest example of pursuing a hegemonial policy with the aid of fearmongering is mass media's coverage of Russia and Ukraine. (8)

In general, short-lived techniques of steering public opinion are inferior to those that have a lasting effect. In this sense, influencing public opinion is more important than manipulating the affective state since opinions are typically more stable than emotions. Techniques which allow manipulating public opinion therefore play a key role. Here, I restrict myself to discuss only a few relevant aspects. Using the following techniques does not require any advanced knowledge of psychology, they are routine business in mass media production:

1. Reduce facts to subjective opinions. Hannah Arendt remarked that masquerading facts as mere opinions is one of the most distressing aspects of totalitarian systems.
2. Present facts which are actually closely related in a fragmented way. This destroys all context required to understand their meaning and implications.
3. De-contextualize facts - remove facts from their proper context such that they appear to be isolated single events.
4. Re-contextualize facts - embed facts into a new context with positive connotations. Make facts lose their proper context which might carry the potential for instilling public indignation.

Beyond these fairly simple techniques, psychology has identified more subtle cognitive mechanisms of developing attitudes and taking decisions which can be exploited for effectively manipulating public opinion. These mechanisms are all the more relevant as they work pre-attentively and thus are beyond conscious cognitive control. Two examples may serve as illustration:

1. A number of experimental studies have shown that people rate statements as more valid or true merely because these statements have been repeatedly made as opposed to just once. [DW Subjectively more valid statements were also shown to be more persuasive.] This effect can even be obtained if the experimenter explicitly emphasizes

that the repeated statement is actually false. Processes like this are automatic and unconscious - we cannot resist them by sheer willpower. The effect remains unchanged even if the subjects participating in the experiment knows about it in advance: The more often the subject hears a statement, the more its subjective validity increases. Innumerable examples for this technique can be readily found in daily newspapers - writing about the "Greek aversion to economic reforms", or calling the recent crisis on the crimea an "annexation by the Russian federation". Merely re-iterating these statements over and over makes us believe them more. (9)

2. In areas where we have little expertise, we tend so seek truth in the center among a broad range of views. This means that a-priori, all opinions are equal to us, and we simply discard those on the fringes of the spectrum that we call "extreme" - even if those extreme views happen to be correct. Defining what makes up the acceptable, still-reasonable region on the spectrum of views is therefore an effective way to manipulate public opinion: [DW Shifting the perceived extremes also sways the perceived center among arguments in a debate.] Having the power to control what counts as the boundary between "still-reasonable fringe ideas" and "unacceptable extreme views" in the publicly visible range of opinions thus goes a long way in managing public attitudes. A neoliberal, market-driven conception of democracy makes it especially important to control how the left fringe of the "acceptable" spectrum of views is defined, of views that can still be acknowledged as "justifiable" and "responsible". For examples, the ruling elites of our "liberal democracy" might declare that what is expressed by Jürgen Habermas is right on the edge of what we are willing to accept as reasonable. Positions that are more radical than Habermas and are more obviously targeted at the heart of power will then be branded as "irresponsible" because they fall beyond the invisible demarcation of what constitutes "acceptable" views. Once designated as "irresponsible", such positions are then barred from mainstream public discussion.

How can we hide politically inconvenient truths from cognitive and moral awareness?

Once we have raised our awareness for the aforementioned techniques of manipulating public opinion, we can analyze an interesting paradox which history supports all too often - a paradox between our actions and our self perception. Action and self perception may also diverge on the level of states and nations. Counting on the support of the majority of the population, states may commit horrible atrocities like torture, mass-murder and genocide, and yet uphold the view that these actions are somehow morally justifiable. This troubling phenomenon raises important questions concerning the nature of the human mind. Because we undoubtedly do dispose of the necessary moral sensibility and capacity to judge what we consider unjust, at least insofar as it concerns the actions of other people. Said paradox can only be evoked when our natural moral judgment is sufficiently undermined or blocked, most easily by making the atrocities committed by our own society morally invisible.

At first, it might seem difficult to let obvious facts become invisible, but magic performances tell us that hiding things in plain sight is not extremely hard when the audience's attention

is properly managed. Hieronymus Bosch's (1450-1516) painting "The Conjuror" skillfully and aptly illustrates the general principles: Some obviously well-to-do persons gather around a table to watch the fascinating performance of a conjurer. The conjurer commands some rather simple yet effective skills to capture the audience's attention for his own benefit. Some members of the audience are gawkers or voyeurs, others appear to be casual bystanders. One conspicuous person is dressed in the traditional costume of a religious order, wearing a pince-nez. This means that he obviously knows how to read, the definitive sign of an intellectual. The intellectual quickly realizes how the lack of alertness of the audience can be exploited for his own interests: He quickly steals the money purse of the man in front of him who seems to be hypnotized by the conjurer and who leans in to get a better view of the pearl in the conjurer's hand. The thief is what came to be known as a cut-purse in the middle ages. Bosch's painting illustrates how easy it is to use misdirection to manipulate human attention such that the obvious becomes undetectable, and striking facts become invisible. As I am going to show, this is also true in the political domain, with the same remarkable and worrying effectiveness. I will make use of some facts that directly bear on the paradox between our actions and our self perception, that is, on the serious moral transgressions of our own political communities. In doing so, I would like to reverse the conventional political perspective: Instead of inquiring about the alleged or true motives behind our governments' crimes, I would like to focus on the citizens, that is on ourselves. Why do we not react to these crimes with a moral outrage as it would be justified?

Since the facts themselves shall serve only as a background for examining this question, I will provide just a few examples. These examples are chosen according to the following three criteria: 1. They refer to actions where the responsibility lies with us - the political community which we belong to. 2. They refer to clear-cut crimes and severe violations of moral norms - actions which we would not hesitate to morally condemn and feel indignation about if committed by our enemies. 3. They are undisputed and well documented with extensive coverage by mainstream media - even though this coverage might often be fragmented and suitably re-contextualized.

Making minor facts invisible

"Minor" facts are especially easy to hide from moral evaluation because inherently, they have little "moral visibility" - be it because they have limited scope, little political weight, or because they concern relatively abstract issues. Mass media may cover these "minor" facts without concern, such facts may be visible in the literal sense yet are invisible to our moral faculty.

Serious transgressions of moral norms may still be made invisible without much effort if caused by abstract institutions. In contrast to tangible and visible violence, structural violence somehow circumvents our natural moral sensibilities. Examples include effects of globalized financial oligarchies which act beyond any democratic control. The human mind is not well equipped to perceive abstract causes, they often remain undetected even when their effects are massive. In 2012, Jean Ziegler, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, gave an interview to German newspaper "Junge Welt" in which he remarked: "It took German fascism six years of warfare to kill 56 million people - something which the

neoliberal economic system has no trouble accomplishing in about a year." Even when it is easy to directly point the finger at a cause, we still struggle to react with moral outrage if that cause is an abstract institution: The World Bank is tasked with providing loans for long-term projects serving the development and improvement of local economic structures. For years, international human rights organizations condemn violations of human rights committed by the World Bank. Sometimes, this issue even makes the news in our local mass media. Major German newspaper "Süddeutsche Zeitung" wrote on April 16, 2015: Many African infrastructure projects financed by the World Bank include bulldozing slums without advance warning, forcing residents to migrate or become homeless. On the same day major German weekly newspaper "ZEIT" ran the headline "World Bank violates human rights world wide" and reported: In the last decade alone, "3.4 million people have lost their homes or livelihoods as victims of more than 900 projects financed by the World Bank." Informing the public about these devastating facts poses no risk to public peace - as long they are not put in context, these crimes are difficult to understand and hence neither arouse much interest nor trouble the population.

It is something else entirely with tangible crimes like torture. Torture always has a human personal offender. If the cause of a crime is not abstract, but instead there is a real human perpetrator, our moral sensibility is activated much more easily, as is our natural capacity for moral indignation. Nevertheless, fragmentation and de-contextualization can make even these crimes morally invisible.

Uzbekistan serves as another example: Uzbekistan is one of the most repressive dictatorships in the world with a regime that routinely commits the most brutal violations of human rights like mass murder, torture, and forced child labor. However, since Germany operates an air force base in Uzbekistan and therefore has a strategic interest in maintaining friendly relations, tolerating torture and mass murder is among Germany's vital national interests. (10) We can easily find more such inconvenient facts which are hidden from our moral faculty.

Making substantial facts invisible

How about ways to make substantial facts invisible, which at first seem to be impossible to hide for their large scale alone? This feat requires big efforts, in politics as well as in stage magic. Still, David Copperfield has famously shown in 1983 that he can make the statue of liberty disappear in front of his audience. That kind of magic trick requires an involved and refined technical apparatus. Manipulating public opinion also requires the large apparatus of mass media to make facts disappear, and the process is in a sense costly, but it relies on psychological techniques which are not overly sophisticated.

One of such facts is the number of civilian casualties since World War II killed in U.S. military "interventions". Officially, the U.S. is often designated Germany's "closest ally", and Germany's Office of Foreign Affairs sees the transatlantic relationship as being based on a set of shared core values. Facts on human cost of lives in U.S. warfare therefore concern a policy domain for which "we" share responsibility.

Adding up the civilian casualties from U.S. military interventions leads to about 10 to 15 million from the wars in Vietnam and Korea alone with an additional 9 to 14 million from warfare in Afghanistan, Angola, Congo, East-Timor, Guatemala, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Sudan - partly fought by U.S. accomplices or "allies". In total, official estimates from human rights organizations put the number of civilians who died after World War II in U.S.-led attacks on other countries between 20 and 30 million.

These crimes are typically accompanied by a choir of self-congratulatory, self-aggrandizing western politicians, willing journalists and intellectuals who see these acts as "world's greatest force for peace and freedom, for democracy and security and prosperity", as U.S. president Bill Clinton claimed on April 28, 1996.

In the past 15 years alone, 4 million muslims died at the hands of the western community of values, killed to rid the world of terrorism. Their deaths mark the most recent of many chapters in the history of the western "community of values". The historical continuity spans from European colonialism with its "civilizing mission", over the Vietnam war where 1 to 2 million civilians were murdered to "liberate" them from communism, to today's "humanitarian interventions" and "civilizing missions for promoting democracy and human rights". To hide facts on that enormous scale and conceal their historical continuity from the public, it takes considerable effort on the part of mass media. Media fragment and radically de-contextualize their presentation of these crimes as a "fight for democracy and human rights". The documentation of all these crimes is extensive and easily accessible, yet conspicuously absent from public consciousness.

In his acceptance speech for the 2005 Nobel Prize for literature, Harold Pinter asked "How many people do you have to kill before you qualify to be described as a mass murderer and a war criminal?" He reminded us that for politicians to maintain their "power it is essential that people remain in ignorance, that they live in ignorance of the truth, even the truth of their own lives. What surrounds us therefore is a vast tapestry of lies, upon which we feed. [...] It never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn't happening. It didn't matter. It was of no interest."

This brings up an alarming question: How can somebody induce a moral apathy of that extent? "What has happened to our moral sensibility? Did we ever have any? What do these words mean?" The answer brings us back to magic tricks because nurturing such moral apathy is "a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis." Evidently, the most important medium for this collective hypnosis is language. Whoever is in control of language, of the concepts, notions and categories that make up the building blocks which we use to think and talk about social and political issues, will have little difficulty in controlling us as well. "Language is actually employed to keep thought at bay." (11)

Exploiting the relatively simple psychological mechanisms illustrated in figure [DW XXXX], it is possible to morally obscure even extensive facts. We almost cannot recognize anymore such techniques as being consciously employed - since they became so deeply rooted in how mass media work, they may be regarded as one of their most vital characteristics. The manipulation mechanisms do not necessarily have to be actively implemented on behalf of a central power. Instead, they may simply unfold in a process that can be summarized as "He who pays the piper calls the tune". [DW hier lohnt m.E. eine Fußnote analog zur Diskussion nach dem Vortrag: Among those who create media content for a living, the

incentive system of media outlets as well as selection and socialization forces may act to the same effect as centrally imposed censorship. Newspaper writers who openly express dissent with neoliberal economic doctrine act counter to the interests of the corporations who buy newspaper ads and thus keep the press financially afloat. TV journalists who criticize members of the ruling elites too much will cease to be invited to their meetings and will thus be cut off from news-worthy privileged information. Such journalists will not find it easy to maintain their employment, much less so to rise to the top of their respective media outlet. When Springer, who, among others, publishes Germany's most important tabloid "Bild", sued AdblockPlus in September 2015 over lost revenue for their online business, their corporate lawyer explained the "balance" between journalistic content and influence from marketers as follows: "The core business model of [Springer] is selling advertisements. Journalistic content is merely a vehicle to attract the audience's attention for promotional website content." From knowing the politically desired "tune" for "informing" the public, the techniques ensue almost automatically.

The necessity to manage public indignation

From the point of view of the ruling elites, some situations may be especially dangerous to the stability of the system because they carry the potential for a social chain reaction. These situations are typically triggered by events that affect the moral sentiments so forcefully that the public responds with outrage. The elites then have to react quickly and must effectively defuse the tense situation. Techniques that are targeted more towards long-term manipulation of public opinion here may prove ineffectual and thus have to be supported by specialized techniques to control and manipulate the imminent outrage. The publication of images depicting torture in U.S. operated Iraqi prison in Abu Ghraib provides a typical example: This "unfortunate incident" was able to affect public moral sentiment so strongly that it created public indignation. (12)

If the population shows outrage that reaches the level of becoming a threat to the stability of the political system, e.g., over torture or revelations of mass surveillance, the elites want to quickly fence in the protest and re-direct the moral outcry towards decoy targets. Sometimes, public outrage in allied nations can start to threaten political "stability" as well, with "stability" being newspeak for the elite's hegemonial interests. Such outrage in other countries needs to be suitably suppressed just like domestic reactions. This is particularly true if the outrage manifests itself as organized collective action. In that case, methods to control the public's menacing reaction become "counterinsurgency measures". An entirely different situation ensues when the public shows outrage against the government of non-allied nations where western powers have a strategic interest in subverting the current political leadership. The insurgency then needs to be kindled instead of suppressed, and managing the outrage is aimed at directing it towards suitable targets which block western interests. We then call such protests "color revolutions" and guide them in order to "promote democracy and human rights".

Counterinsurgency

Over the last years, "counterinsurgency measures" or "low intensity conflict" have become the most important and most widespread kind of military intervention, surpassing the impact of conventional warfare by far. According to official definitions of "terrorism", many counterinsurgency measures are just that - terrorism: "calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear. It is intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies [...] [to attain] political, religious, or ideological goals." (13) Despite clearly meeting this definition, terrorism in the form of "counterinsurgency" is called "counter-terrorism".

Whether the same act of violence is declared counter-terrorism or terrorism therefore is chiefly a matter of who commits the violence - us or our enemies. The notion of "terrorism" is thus deeply ideological. The same holds true for the concept of "counterinsurgency". It is based on silent premises which are important to spell out explicitly: The word "insurgent" implies taking the perspective of those who are in power. We call "insurgents" those who threaten to de-stabilize a regime which we support. In contrast, we call "freedom fighters" those who endanger the stability of an enemy regime.

Counterinsurgency techniques are drawn from a wide range of methods which are continuously updated and refined - with contributions from the academic community as well. These methods cover "information operations", i.e., methods to manipulate public opinion, as well as "population-control measures" and rapid domination or "shock and awe"-tactics. The bloody aspects of counterinsurgency are the business of specialized military and intelligence units like the CIA's "Special Operations Division" or the many special operations forces under control of the Joint Special Operations Command. Under the headline "A Secret History of Quiet Killings and Blurred Lines", the New York Times on June 7, 2015 gave a detailed and extensive account of the specialized units tasked with "counterinsurgency" and called them a "global manhunting machine". What little has come to light includes a long list of "killing fests" with civilian victims. According to Jeremy Scahill, the specialized units have funds of about 8 billion dollars annually at their disposal.

While the New York Times report led to some short-lived public indignation, it also corroborated the belief of many citizens that in our democracy, every misdeed will eventually come to light. As such, there was essentially nothing to worry too much about. In addition, the report also framed the cruelties yet again as "regrettable, yet isolated incidents" thus adding to the historical fragmentation that hides the long-standing tradition of violence of these military units. Bloody methods of counterinsurgency were mainly explored in Vietnam, the Tiger Force being a prime example. Notwithstanding these facts, the methods are practically invisible to public awareness. (14)

Sparking an insurgency

A radically different strategy is pursued when insurgencies overthrow regimes that are unpopular in the "western community of values". If these insurgencies promise to achieve a system change that is in our strategic interests, we portray the actions as the outburst of a

deep longing for freedom on the side of the population. We then strive to support the insurgents' actions as part of our campaigns for "democracy promotion".

After attaching the label "color revolution" to it, such a system change has many advantages over the traditional approach of CIA-supported military coups which the U.S. has practiced extensively in the last decades: The "color revolution" seems to be rooted in the middle of society without overt military support from foreign countries. Moreover, covertly staged system changes are cheaper, they also have vastly higher acceptance rates among western nations and international governments. A regime that has come to power by seemingly peaceful means with the will of the people allegedly behind it is already considered to possess democratic legitimacy.

There is a large network of private non-profit organizations with powerful financial backing which prepare and support covertly staged system change. The official agenda of these organization is to support "democracy and human rights" in countries that are hostile to western values and forms of government. The National Endowment for Democracy is one of the most influential of these organizations, it supports a number of private NGOs like Freedom House and George Soros' Open Society Institute. Thankfully, NED president Allen Weinstein was bluntly honest in emphasizing the continuity between the coups organized by the CIA and his organization's activity around current insurrections. "A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA." Indeed, there is a long list of authoritarian, yet U.S.-friendly regimes in Central and South America that seized power non-violently thanks to support from NED. Today, NED's main focus is more on "democracy promotion" and "leading the struggle for freedom" in Eastern Europe.

All these activities serving western hegemonic interests are supported by highly specialized global corporations that call themselves PR firms but essentially create propaganda. All U.S. interventions over the last decades were prepared for and accompanied by propaganda these firms sell. Even though these firms have a powerful impact on mass media, they largely go unnoticed in public. Examples include Hill & Knowlton Strategies - infamous for their incubator baby hoax of 1990 in preparation of invading Iraq, and Burson-Marsteller or Rendon Group. They have been very successful not only in selling the public on wars, but also in having the public belief in a specific, politically-desired "reality".

The larger political context and historical continuity of the actions surrounding U.S.-backed system change around the globe over the last decades remain hidden to the public because mass media has been so successful in their fragmentation mission: Each single case is portrayed as if the military intervention is all about bringing freedom, democracy and human rights. Each insurrection in Eastern Europe and primarily Islamic States is made to appear as expressing the will of the people longing for a system change that happens to be aligned with "our" global strategic interests.

The art of deception

Both, public opinion and the public's potential for moral rebellion can be seen as resources that are too precious to be left to chance or to society as a whole. To overcome our natural moral sensibilities and achieve control over the potential for moral rebellion, it is necessary

to first create a sufficient level of moral apathy in the general public. Furthermore, our elite has to dispose of techniques to morally cover up all those facts that may endanger the process of narcotizing the general public. Important facts that need to be taken care of in this way are systematic and brutal human rights violations because they afford to affect our natural moral sensibilities.

Realpolitik implies that all references to democracy, human rights and moral norms are only considered as rhetoric shells with the only value being their utility to effectively manipulate the general population. Such manipulation relies on suitable techniques to deceive the public about the factual discrepancy between political rhetoric and political reality. Its goal is maintaining the stability of the current political system. The more it takes into account psychological principles of human information processing, the more effective the deception becomes.

Over the last decades, psychology has amassed new results and deepened our insights in understanding how our mind works. Many of these insights can be abused to refine political propaganda and deception techniques.

In light of the historical evidence, it is not surprising that many psychologists are willing to put their science to work for such deceitful programs, thus earning recognition and praise of powerful political circles. One example is given by the American Psychological Association (APA), world's largest professional organization for academic psychology. In 2003, the APA co-organized a workshop together with the CIA on the science of deception. The workshop's goal was stated as discussing the most recent psychological findings on effective ways to deceive the public in the interest of national security, and put those experimental findings to use. (15)

Other state's intelligence agencies are also interested in results from psychology that may allow them to develop more sophisticated techniques for public manipulation and deception. The documents leaked by Edward Snowden revealed a manual written by the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) entitled "The Art of Deception" (The Intercept, February 25, 2014). This manual discusses how the GCHQ may exploit current psychological knowledge about the mechanisms of cognitive processing in order to deceive the public and hide facts from their awareness. Quite fittingly, the manual's title page shows Hieronymus Bosch's image "The Conjurer" (Figure [DW XXXX]).

The GCHQ manual meticulously lists relevant domains of cognitive processing and some of their main characteristics that may be useful for achieving deception.

Can we protect ourselves against attempts to systematically manipulate our attitudes, beliefs and opinions?

The development of more efficient manipulation techniques rests on identifying psychological "weak spots" - those intrinsic design aspects of our mind and principles of human information processing that can be exploited for manipulation purposes. Most importantly, such principles are, by the very nature of our cognitive architecture, beyond conscious control. Once we have been targeted by techniques that are based on

psychological weak spots, we almost automatically fall for them - unwillingly, unconsciously, and without noticing that we are being manipulated. Unfortunately, even knowing precisely how these manipulation techniques work, and what principles of the human mind they exploit does not offer protection against falling for them. The techniques trigger internal processes that proceed automatically without reaching the level of conscious awareness and thus without being subjected to conscious control. Once activated, it is futile to try to avoid their consequences.

In principle, these aspects of cognitive processing share their essential characteristics with those of perceptual processing: So-called visual illusions illustrate cases where there is no way for conscious control to modify and correct visual impressions that are knowingly "wrong". Motion perception provides a particular example that can be experienced after coming to a halt in a train station, and remaining seated in the stopping train. When looking out of the window onto a departing train, it often seems like one's own train is actually moving backwards. Such effects unfold unconsciously and do not disappear even if one is well aware of how they work. Avoiding situations that trigger such illusory psychological processing is the only way to avoid being affected by them.

The same holds true for specific characteristics of human information processing that are exploited for their potential in deceiving and manipulating the public. Once triggered in a certain situation, they also unfold without our awareness and without conscious control. Again, the only way to avoid being manipulated by these psychological mechanisms is to avoid as best as we can the situations where they are activated. This means that in order to maintain whatever cognitive autonomy we have left, we need to recognize manipulative contexts and must actively dodge media that carry manipulative content.

By deliberately exposing ourselves to manipulative contexts because we hold the mistaken belief that, by and large, we are competent enough to distinguish between factual content of mass media and deception attempts, we actually set the stage for successfully being manipulated.

In conclusion, our mind has many hard-wired weaknesses that can be exploited for manipulative purposes, that facilitate our utilitarian abuse by the political and economic elites for maintaining and expanding their power. However, we also innately dispose of a rich repertoire of ways to use our reasoning capabilities to recognize manipulative contexts and to actively avoid them. This repertoire is akin to a natural cognitive immune system against being manipulated, but we have to take the deliberate decision to actually use it.

The central tenet of the age of Enlightenment was "sapere aude" - dare to be wise, dare to recognize. Or, as Kant famously put in 1784, show the resolution and courage to use your own reason and intellect without the guidance of others. To stand a chance of evading the sophisticated manipulation attempts we must summon the courage to use our own intellect, we must overcome our induced moral apathy, and we must stop contenting ourselves with the mere illusion of being well-informed, with the illusion of democracy, and with the illusion of freedom. This will not be easy, but ultimately, it is this decision we have to take. It is our decision, and ours only.

About the author

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Notes

- (1) The Athens democracy during the reign of Pericles was characterized by far-ranging powers of the general population. For this reason alone, this kind of democracy is not what the current elites aspire to - contrary to frequent claims in political rhetoric. "In Athens' democracy, the general population held full powers over legislation, government, and courts of law. Therefore, the Athens democracy was a regime with direct and unmitigated rule of the people, based on widespread participation of all citizens without economic discrimination. [...] The people of Athens thus possessed an unrivaled amount of power concentrated in their hands. Legislative, judicial, and executive powers originated from the general population and stayed with it. Ruling and being ruled were one and the same thing, or, according to Aristotle, 'alternated'." (Vorländer, 2004, p. 10-11)
- (2) Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page (2014) note: "The preferences of the average American appear to have only a miniscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy. When a majority of citizens disagrees with economic elites and/or with organized interests, they generally lose. [...] even when fairly large majorities of Americans favor policy change, they generally do not get it." Based on their findings, Gilens and Page state that "It is no longer possible [...] to believe in the original dogma of democracy." This conclusively summarizes the current discrepancy between political rhetoric and political reality.
- (3) The Wall Street Journal from February 28, 2013: "That is democracy in today's euro zone. The French, Spanish, Irish, Dutch, Portuguese, Greeks, Slovenians, Slovaks and Cypriots have to varying degrees voted against the currency bloc's economic model since the crisis began three years ago. Yet economic policies have changed little in response to one electoral defeat after another."
- (4) In numerous political and economic propaganda campaigns, Bernays himself later proved just how effective these techniques are. In 1954, he was instrumental in creating successful propaganda in support of a CIA operation which Washington used to topple the first democratic government of Guatemala. This coup cost more than 250000 civilian lives and was orchestrated because with its land reform and far-ranging social welfare programs, Guatemala was deemed "increasingly threatening" to the "stability" in Central America. Bernays' book "Propaganda" is still considered a classic in political circles and marketing. Since Goebbels was also fond of the book, Bernays later considered the term "propaganda" tainted and preferred to call it "public relations".

- (5) Attempts to lift the veil on this "true ruling power of our country" are quickly discredited as mere "conspiracy theories" - one of the most successful strategies in political propaganda cultivated by the CIA. "The CIA's campaign to popularize the term 'conspiracy theory' and make conspiracy belief a target of ridicule and hostility must be credited, unfortunately, with being one of the most successful propaganda initiatives of all time." deHaven-Smith (2014, p. 25) Allegations of promoting "conspiracy theories" are an excellent instrument to maintain the secrecy of those who actually do conspire against the public's interest. Another important tenet of propaganda is to never obviously appear as propaganda. This insight was explicitly expressed many times, by Bernays, Goebbels, and U.S. president Eisenhower. The efforts to obscure propaganda have been so comprehensive and successful that Alex Carey concludes in his book "Taking the Risk out of Democracy": "[...] that we are free from propaganda is one of the most significant propaganda achievements of the twentieth century."

[DW Ad embedded journalists könnte man m.E. einen Satz ergänzen zu Uwe Krügers Studie "Meinungsmacht. Der Einfluss von Eliten auf Leitmedien und Alpha-Journalisten", "Die Anstalt" vom Mai 2014 -> SZ Stefan Kornelius und ZEIT Theo Sommer Verwobenheit mit Elite-Netzwerken und Think Tanks <http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/41/41841/1.html>]

- (6) "Exposure to this flood of information may serve to narcotize rather than to energize the average reader [...] His social conscience remains spotlessly clean. He is concerned. He is informed. And he has all sorts of ideas as to what should be done. But, after he has gotten through his dinner and after he has listened to his favored radio programs and after he has read his second newspaper of the day, it is really time for bed." Paul F. Lazarsfeld & Robert K. Merton (1948). Mass communication, popular taste, and organized social action. In: L. Bryson (ed.), The Communication of Ideas. New York: Harper, S. 95-118.
- (7) A random example for the narcotizing effect is a photo chosen for Reuters' "picture of the day" that was taken on June 8, 2015 during the G7 summit at Schloss Elmau (Germany). It was highly publicized by German mass media and was featured on the title page of major daily newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung. With a beautiful mountain range as a romantic backdrop, the picture shows visibly relaxed German Chancellor Merkel together with U.S. president Obama in casual pose with his back to the camera, both taking in the idyllic scenery. With a sweeping gesture, Angela Merkel conveys the impression that things are under control. This picture has no informational value, but on an emotional level, its narcotizing effect could not be stronger. We can rest assured that world's most pressing problems are in good hands, and besides, "it's really time for bed".
- (8) Mass media's systematic fearmongering is more than just a journalistic sin or a simple attempt at increasing the newspapers' circulation. Fear induction is an essential component of affective manipulation of the public by the ruling elites. In his 1927 classic "Propaganda Technique in the World War", Lasswell concisely concludes that "There must be no ambiguity about who the public is to hate." If engendering hatred is met with obstacles, emphasizing enemy atrocities can stoke public anger. Hatred can be bred especially well when persons are declared targets. Comparisons to Hitler may

serve as a popular and flexible instrument. Breeding and directing hatred against abstract targets like communism or "radical islam" is more difficult. It requires continuous and concerted propaganda efforts, ideally including educational institutions. However, the benefit of this approach is the possibility to induce fear that is much more sustained.

- (9) Informal daily observations support the psychological evidence for this cognitive predisposition. Joseph Goebbels, head of Nazi Germany's Reich Ministry of "Public Enlightenment and Propaganda" once stated that sooner or later, people will believe every lie if you repeat it frequently enough.
- (10) Uzbekistan is regarded as one of the world's most repressive dictatorships, an assessment shared, e.g., by German daily newspaper Tagesspiegel on January 15, 2015. Year in, year out, human rights organizations report that systematic torture is deeply entrenched in Uzbekistan's legal system. In addition, there is widespread forced labor and child labor organized by Uzbekistan's government, especially in the cotton industry where Uzbekistan is among world's biggest export nations. In 2005, the regime under president Islam Karimov carried out a massacre killing protesting citizens in Andijan. In June 2015, Amnesty International wrote: "A decade ago, the Uzbek city of Andijan was home to spontaneous mass uprising against Uzbekistan's authoritarian regime. The military shot several hundred protesters, most of them unarmed: Children, women, men were killed. There has never been an independent investigation into this massacre." Obviously, this called for international sanctions against Uzbekistan. The European Union indeed did impose sanctions against Uzbekistan in 2005. Additionally, the EU put a travel ban on then interior minister Sokir Almatov who was one of those responsible for the Andijan massacre. Even though the travel ban also covered Germany, Almatov traveled to Hannover for medical treatment without interference from the German border police. Germany has strategic interests in Uzbekistan because it is operating an air force base in Termez that played an important role in the logistics for the war fought in Afganistan. Germany therefore pushed for EU sanctions to be eased. Then Secretary of State, Frank-Walter Steinmeier was the first of western Secretaries of State to visit Uzbekistan after the massacre. He disapproved of sanctions which he considered not an end in itself and argued that they would only serve to alienate Tashkent (ZEIT, May 13, 2015). Steinmeier has repeatedly shown that he disposes of the right amount of moral elasticity in judging human rights abuses that someone doing Realpolitik would need, at least if the cruelties are carried out by the "good" side. All this was reported in German media outlets, but the facts remain cognitively and morally invisible: Cognitively, because no relationships are drawn to cases where sanctions following severe human rights violations are considered absolutely necessary. Morally, because reports of systematic torture and of the Andijan massacre were put into a context which made it seem like having little political importance, and furthermore not touching our administrative responsibility. In conclusion, tolerating torture and mass murder in Uzbekistan is in Germany's national interest because of the strategic importance of the country.
- (11) Evidently, it was not difficult to morally hide Pinter's Nobel Prize acceptance speech either. It is little wonder that mass media reported next to nothing about its content,

and when it did, condescendingly so. For example, major German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) on December 8, 2005 accused Pinter of being "extremely one-sided". Although nothing is more one-sided than torturing and killing fellow human beings, mass media and intellectuals will readily argue that pointing out such atrocities is one-sided, but not actually committing them.

- (12) This example is instructive for the role of mass media in similar situations. After Amnesty International on July 23, 2003 and on March 18, 2004 published extensive reports on torture and prisoner abuse in U.S. prisons including electric shocks, sleep deprivation, beatings, and tying up genitals, major German media outlets decided to not report on these crimes and let them remain invisible to the general population. Even though state-operated TV stations ARD and ZDF gave an account of the crimes on their internet website, their TV news shows "Tagesthemen" and "heute" kept quiet about them. Only after the first pictures showing acts of torture had surfaced on April 28, it was no longer possible for media outlets to keep their silence. On April 30, 2004, daily newspaper FAZ ran the headline "No scandal without pictures" and explained how these crimes had been systematically concealed by leading newspapers and TV channels. The article also reported on the purported reasons later given for not covering the torture and prisoner abuse before April 28, 2004. Major German weekly news magazine "SPIEGEL" argued that there was "insufficient evidence" despite the clear and extensive reports by Amnesty International. Daily newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung was convinced that the Amnesty report about electric shocks, beatings, and tying up genitals did not provide "specific information". Weekly yellow press magazine STERN thought that official U.S. denials of the accusations were sufficient to discredit the Amnesty report. Since flat out denial of what happened in Abu Ghraib was no option after publication of the photographic evidence, media outlets decided to make a virtue of necessity and hurried up to portray the earlier systematic lack of news coverage as an unfortunate exception in their journalistic practice. FAZ described the behavior of the media as a "chronicle of collective failure" and thus mis-characterized as an ostensible exception what is really mass media's business as usual.
- (13) The 2001 U.S. Army Field Manual gives this definition: "calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear. It is intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies [...] [to attain] political, religious, or ideological goals."
- (14) In the Phoenix program coordinated by the CIA during the Vietnam war, more than 40000 civilians were murdered, most of them women and children. Details about this program were published in leading German media outlets, e.g., in weekly news magazine SPIEGEL on April 16, 2004. In his book "War without front lines. The U.S. in Vietnam", Bernd Greiner writes: Over seven months, the Tiger Force left behind a trail of blood and destruction in Qang Tin and the Song-Ve valley. Unprovoked, they killed peasants in the field and randomly murdered people on their way. They tortured detainees and led them to be executed alone or in groups. Late at night or early in the morning, they attacked villages, killing everybody in sight with gunfire from automatic weapons - peasants who had set down for dinner or who slept, children playing, elderly villagers taking a walk. [...] They looted and pillaged, clubbing their victims to death or raping them to the point of unconsciousness. They shot villagers who

complied with the request to evacuate made by the fliers they were still holding in their hands. They organized "target shootings" on persons who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Neither wounded nor ill people were spared. From short distances, they used their M-16 assault rifles like handguns." Like everything, fighting people who are unwilling to subject themselves to our ideals has its price. No member of the military units responsible for this brutality was ever brought to trial. The historical continuity of past and present methods for "counterinsurgency" warfare is obscured in the coverage of mass media, e.g., in the NYT article. The media's fragmentation and de-contextualizing hides the historical continuity from the public's eye.

- (15) The APA has a long history of cooperation with the CIA. The APA was also involved in the development and implementation of methods for torturing detainees in Guantanamo which it publicly justified as serving legitimate national security purposes.