

MEDIA LITERACY?

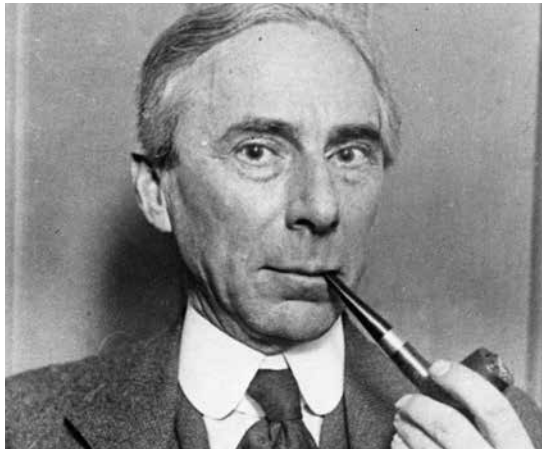
Are Your Children and Grandchildren Being Prebunked?

by Daniel Platt

Dec. 10—In the Brave New World of the Anglo-American Bloc, the oligarchy's social engineers are growing increasingly fearful that they are losing the battle of ideas. As their financial system comes undone at an accelerating pace and the citizenry is growing increasingly skeptical of the neocon wars that are on the agenda, they are scrambling to add new weapons to their arsenal of psychological control: "pre-bunking" and "inoculation research." It seems that it is no longer sufficient to use censorship and propaganda techniques to counter undesirable viewpoints: it has become necessary to condition the minds of young people to instinctively, reflexively reject any concepts or information which might cause them to question the absolute validity of the oligarchy's preferred "narrative."

As opposed to "debunking", which is ostensibly the refutation of a false idea that has gained currency among the public, "pre-bunking" is a technique for preventing an idea from receiving any critical examination at all, by "inoculating" the subject against it beforehand. These efforts are being directed already toward selected test laboratories, including the state of New Jersey, which recently passed a bill requiring its public schools K-12 to teach "media literacy," to combat "misinformation", and in Moldova, where a project called "Strengthening of Media and Information Literacy in the Republic of Moldova" is being funded by a consortium of think-tanks and NGOs along with the governments of the U.S., UK, and the Netherlands.

Techniques for ensuring conformity of thought have long been under discussion in oligarchical circles. Seventy years ago, in 1952, Lord Bertrand Russell wrote in *The Impact of Science on Society*:



Library of Congress

Lord Bertrand Russell: "The opinion that snow is white must be held to show a morbid taste for eccentricity."

The social psychologists of the future will have a number of classes of school children on whom they will try different methods of producing an unshakable conviction that snow is black. Various results will soon be arrived at. First, that the influence of home is obstructive. Second, that not much can be done unless indoctrination begins before the age of ten. Third, that verses set to music and repeatedly intoned are very effective. Fourth, that the opinion that snow is white must be held to show a morbid taste for eccentricity. But I anticipate. It is for future scientists to make these maxims precise and discover exactly how much it costs per head to make children believe that snow is black, and how much less it would cost to make them believe it is dark gray. Although this science will be diligently studied, it will be rigidly confined to the governing class.

The populace will not be allowed to know how its convictions were generated. When the technique has been perfected, every government that has been in charge of education for a generation will be able to control its subjects securely without the need of armies or policemen.

The social psychologists of today are working overtime to "make these maxims precise." The first step was to establish what the Nazis called *Gleichschaltung*, the forcible coordination of news media, entertainment, and educational institutions to ensure that all stayed "on message." This has involved the cartelization of news and entertainment media under the ownership of a handful of giant corporations. It also involves extensive

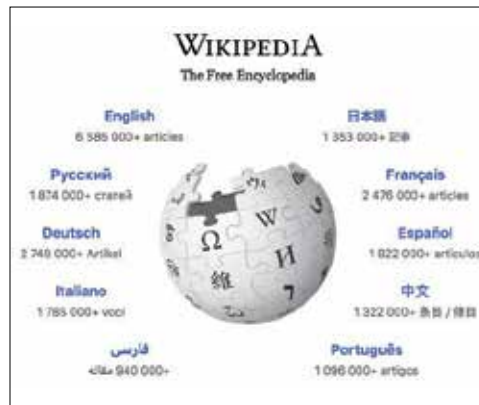
behind-the-scenes collusion to ensure that these media speak with one voice.

Enter Wikipedia

An important development in the attempt to standardize a “narrative” for public consumption was the founding of Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, in 2001. One of the two original founders, Jimmy Wales, soon gained control and was proclaimed the “god-king” of the project. Wales is an admirer of Ayn Rand and Friedrich von Hayek, and in 2012 he married Kate Garvey, Tony Blair’s former diary secretary.

Wikipedia, in its combined editions, now hosts over 60 million articles on every topic imaginable. It enjoys a symbiotic relationship with Google and other search engines, such that the Wikipedia article on a given search term will inevitably turn up at, or near, the top of any list of internet search results. In April 2018, Facebook and YouTube announced that they would help users detect fake news by suggesting fact-checking links to related Wikipedia articles.

Wikipedia has an enormous corpus of rules and regulations for editors, all of which are subject to highly inconsistent and subjective interpretation and enforcement by Wikipedia’s ruling elite (in this respect, Wikipedia mimics the “rules-based order” being promoted by the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office). Wikipedia’s voluminous “Reliable Sources” doctrine, as applied to politics, can be boiled down to one line: “News reporting from well-established news outlets is generally considered to be reliable for statements of fact.” In practice, “well-established” means “acceptable to the Anglophile elite.” Any news organization based in a nation on that elite’s “bad guys” list will inevitably be challenged and excluded from Wikipedia articles as a source for factual information. On the other hand, major U.S. news organizations which uncritically repeated the “weapons of mass destruction in Iraq” hoax or published false leaks from anonymous



CC/Zachary McCune

Jimmy D. Wales, founder of Wikipedia.

sources to promote “Russiagate,” and have never issued any subsequent apology or retractions, are nonetheless still regarded as fully “reliable” by Wikipedia. Wikipedia thus hosts a vast archive of frequently fraudulent, carefully vetted, and curated media propaganda.

The European Commission

The policy pronouncements issued by the European Commission (EC) under their “Guidelines for teachers and educators on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training” are similarly vague and open to a subjective interpretation, in keeping with Russell’s admonition that “the populace will not be allowed to know how its convictions were generated.” Although the EC is somewhat reticent about what they intend to tell children about the world, in other locations the European Union (EU) agencies helpfully proclaim what they would have you believe to be “disinformation.” In 2015, the European Council initiated the process which created the East

Stratcom Task Force, “to address Russia’s ongoing disinformation campaigns.” The Task Force maintains a website with a list of viewpoints that are branded “Russian disinformation,” despite the fact that a great many of the “false narratives” listed there are demonstrably true and have been widely covered by the non-corporate news media in the English-speaking world.

Here are some examples:

- NATO’s eastward expansion poses a serious threat to Russia.
- Missiles that fell on Poland are Ukrainian but the West blames Russia anyway.
- NATO is using Ukraine to fight Russia.
- Western sanctions lead to food crises and price hikes.
- EU sanctions hurt Europe more than Russia.
- The U.S. benefits from the Nord Stream sabotage.
- The Azov nationalists are ready to take up firing positions in residential buildings.

- The U.S. and Europe support Islamists in Syria.
- Western countries enforce censorship and silence dissenters.

EU member nations have moved to punish journalists who have filed professionally documented, on-the-ground reports that run contrary to the official NATO narrative, i.e., that Russia’s entry into the 8-year civil war in Ukraine was a capricious, “unprovoked” attack. German journalist Alina Lipp and French journalist Anne-Laure Bonnel have both spent time in the Donbass region of Ukraine and reported on the attacks on civilians by the Ukrainian regime. Both have had funds from their bank accounts back home blocked or seized, and in the case of Lipp, she was informed that she faces a sentence of up to three years in prison as the result of a curious court proceeding in which she was prohibited from participating, because her involvement would “disrupt the investigative process.”

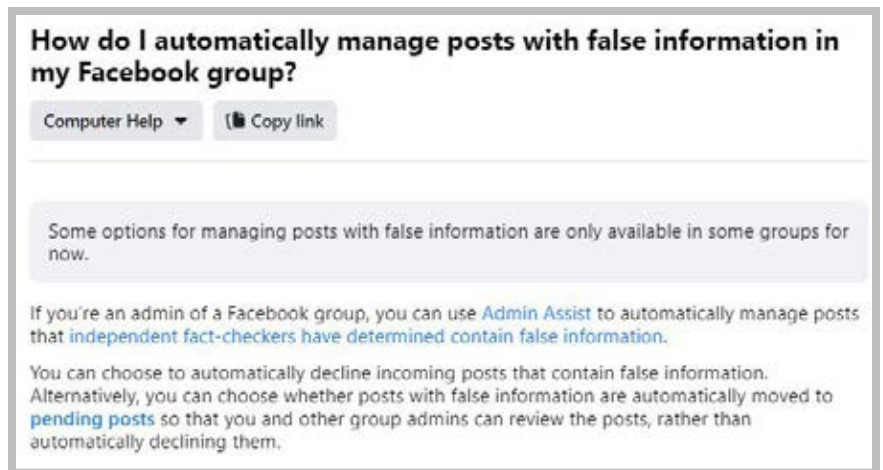
The European Commission is escalating its fascist-like, dictatorial powers, having drawn the conclusion that it is insufficient to simply label undesirable facts and concepts as “Russian disinformation” and to punish journalists who report on them. Why? Because by the time one has taken the step of labeling, one has essentially already lost the battle: although the “fact-checkers” may denounce the idea, it has already registered in the mind of the citizen, who may examine it critically and weigh it against the official narrative. The possibility that the official narrative may be found wanting, is viewed by the social engineers as too great a risk. In today’s environment of rapidly escalating financial and economic collapse, the West’s financial oligarchy is now careening forward, threatening the world with nuclear war, and aggressively pushing the shutdown of all free speech, acting to ensure that the threatening idea is never even entertained. This is where “pre-bunking” comes in.

On October 21, 2021, the European Commission held a “kick-off meeting of the expert group on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training.” One of the “key themes” ad-

vertised for this meeting was “pre-bunking, debunking and fact checking.”

The New Nazi Social Psychologists

Prof. Sander van der Linden is a Professor of Social Psychology in Society in the Department of Psychology, and the Director of the Cambridge Social Decision-Making Laboratory at the University of Cambridge, England. He has been a hyperactive proponent of pre-bunking and “inoculation research,” publishing pseudo-scholarly treatises such as his March 2022 article in *Nature Medicine* titled “Misinformation: Susceptibility, Spread, and Interventions to Immunize the Public”, in which he constructs an elaborate analogy



Facebook helpfully offers to automatically suppress “false information” from your Facebook page.

comparing misinformation to the propagation of viruses in an epidemic.

To apply his “inoculation” concept to the conditioning of children, van der Linden has devised games now being used in schools. One of them is titled “Bad News”, in which the players role-play as Twitter users who “use misleading tactics to build their own fake news empire.” The game is designed to introduce very young children to the idea that some people on social media may deceive them, which is, of course, true. But this will be presented to kids as a way to discredit wayward, “unauthorized” narratives only. The game does not “inoculate” against widely used propaganda techniques that come from “established” channels, such as the use of “anonymous sources in the intelligence community” in false reporting, or the suppression of cover-

age of unwelcome events such as the recent, large-scale anti-NATO demonstrations in Europe.

Van der Linden has also enjoyed a close relationship with the Google-owned social media site YouTube. He has collaborated with YouTube on a number of video projects designed to produce the desired “inoculation.” Like his games, van der Linden’s videos illustrate common propaganda techniques using simple, easy-to-understand cartoon formats. And like in his games, the problem lies in asserting as an axiomatic assumption that propaganda techniques are only used by the “bad guys.” In one video titled “Prebunking Manipulation Techniques: False Dichotomies”, the viewer is given examples of how manipulation techniques are used to undermine confidence in the “mainstream media,” as if the “mainstream media” were not itself a hotbed of lies and manipulative activity.

In October 2021, a 22-page document titled “Inoculation Theory and Misinformation,” authored by Van der Linden with Dr. Jon Roozenbeek, was published by the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. This is a remarkable piece. It reveals, perhaps somewhat inadvertently, much about the real motives and methodology of the “media literacy” project. For example, in the report’s section 1, “Defining the Problem,” the authors complain that:

...a common definition of “fake news” is “fabricated information that mimics news media content in form, but not in organizational process or intent”. According to this definition, the feature that sets “fake news” apart from “real news” is factual veracity: fake news is fake only when it is “fabricated”. However, some scholars disagree with this definition due to its relatively narrow scope: ...true information can be stripped of relevant context and presented in a misleading manner.

In other words, “don’t confuse us with the facts.” The standard is not “veracity,” but rather, whether the point of view presented is consistent with the approved narrative. The “scholars who disagree” are the authors

themselves. To underscore the point, the authors say, further on in this section:

For the purpose of this report, which primarily covers inoculation theory as a tool for mitigating misinformation, we will focus on whether online content is *manipulative*, rather than true or false.

It should be emphasized here that the top-level oligarchical sponsors of “media literacy” are in no way opposed to manipulation in and of itself; it is only bad when the “bad guys” do it. Van der Linden and Roozenbeek list these examples of manipulative techniques:

...conspiracy theories (i.e., blaming a small, secretive group of people with ill intentions for societal problems), the use of emotionally manipu-



CC/Mstyslav Chernov

Top-level oligarchical sponsors of “media literacy” are not opposed to manipulation in and of itself; it is only bad when “bad guys” do it. Here a tank near the ruins of the Donetsk International Airport in 2015—in 8 years of war that went unreported.

lative language to evoke strong emotions such as outrage or fear, using language intended to fuel intergroup tensions and polarization, or artificially amplifying the reach of one’s content through bots or fake likes.

Manipulation With Your Morning Coffee

These techniques may be seen in daily use in any English-language corporate media coverage of the Ukraine war, which is blamed on a small, secretive grouping around the person of Vladimir Putin, whose alleged evil deeds are proclaimed with emotionally manipulative language to evoke strong emotions such as outrage or fear. As for using bots to artificially amplify

one's content, a recent study at the University of Adelaide found that as many as 80 percent of the millions of Twitter posts about Russia's entry into the Ukraine war in February 2022 were part of a covert propaganda campaign originating from automated fake bot accounts. and the vast majority of these accounts were pro-Ukraine.

According to Van der Linden and Roozenbeek's Oct. 2021, NATO document, "The idea of developing a psychological 'vaccine' against misinformation derives from a framework from the 1960s called inoculation theory. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. government became concerned about the prospect of its troops becoming brainwashed (or persuaded) by foreign propaganda."

Using the "virus" analogy, the idea of submitting people to a "weakened version" of the arguments that had to be resisted was proposed. By providing a flimsy version that could be more easily refuted than a more developed version, it was hoped that the opposing "narrative" would be discredited without having to address that thorny "veracity" problem. It is an approach akin to the famous "straw man fallacy", where one discredits one's opponent by attributing to him an easily refuted viewpoint which he does not, in fact, hold.

This approach is still in use today. For example, a recent "fact-checking" article appeared in *Deutsche Welle's* English-language *DW News*, titled "Is There Any Truth to Russia's 'Ukrainian Nazis' propaganda?" The title gives the reader a subtle hint as to what to expect in the way of a conclusion. In the article, a number of trivial examples are presented in which clumsily photo-shopped images of Ukrainians and Nazi insignia are presented. In this way, the intention is to cast doubt on the reports of a Nazi resurgence in Ukraine, which in reality is easily demonstrated by the abundance of real, un-photoshopped images of Nazi insignia worn by Ukrainian personnel, or by official government actions such as erecting monuments, naming streets, or making national holidays of the birthdates of leading Nazi collaborators such as Stepan Bandera.

Since the 1950s, when Bertrand Russell was eagerly anticipating new technologies for controlling thought, many have come to fruition. The EU is very upbeat about "eXtended Reality Learning," described as "the use of extended reality in education and training," which is able to combine "human-machine interactions with real, mix, augmented and virtual environments." In short, the self-appointed gendarmes who are protecting young people against "disinformation" are employing technologies which intentionally blur the distinction between fantasy and reality.

Meanwhile, in New Jersey, the "media literacy" project is now gathering steam with the passage on November 21 of Senate Bill 588, which "Directs DOE [the



UZUNIVERSAL

Swastikas, satan and Hitler tattoos cover the torso and right arm of an "Azov" soldier who surrendered to Russian Armed Forces at Azovstal in Mariupol, Ukraine, May 21, 2022.

Department of Education] to develop New Jersey Student Learning Standards in information literacy." One of the prime movers of the project is Olga Polites, leader of the New Jersey chapter of the nonprofit advocacy group Media Literacy Now. Bemoaning the fact that due to plummeting public confidence in corporate news sources, many younger people are turning to social media for alternative sources of information, Polites was quoted in the education newsletter *K-12 Dive*, saying:

Given the kind of world we're living in right now, think of the way social media has co-opted news services.... What this [bill] will do is level things out a bit and perhaps, perhaps today's students will be tomorrow's subscribers to journalism and to sources of information that need to be paid for... and they will implicitly understand and be able to question and vet the kind of information that comes over our social media feeds.

Proponents of Nuclear War

Not surprisingly, the entire neocon "regime change" apparatus is closely engaged in the "media literacy" project. The mothership of this apparatus is USAID, the United States Agency for International Development, under the leadership of neocon high priestess Samantha

Power. USAID is the parent agency for the notorious National Endowment for Democracy (NED). USAID has its own “media literacy” program called “YouThink”, and is running a special program in North Macedonia, which they complain “has been ranked among the European countries which are least resilient to malign influence from disinformation campaigns.” USAID promises to help “empower youth to take an active role in the country’s development.”



U.S. Embassy, Vienna/A. Slabihoud

Discredited U.S. “disinformation specialist” Nina Jankowicz registered on Nov. 18 as the agent of a foreign power—the UK.

Nina Jankowicz, the disinformation specialist, and social media buffoon who had been appointed by the U.S. government to head its short-lived Disinformation Governance Board, registered officially on November 18 as an agent of a foreign nation, the United Kingdom. Jankowicz, whose Twitter name is @wiczipedia,, is now affiliated with the Centre for Information Resilience (CIR) in the UK. She wrote in the May 2021 edition of *BBC Science Focus*:

I used to use the term “media literacy”, but now I talk about “information literacy.” Being information literate is broader than understanding how social media platforms work and how they target you. It’s about the whole ecosystem that a consumer of information online needs to understand to have the full context, like why am I being targeted with this?

In a 2018 article in *The Wilson Quarterly* titled “The Disinformation Vaccination,” Jankowicz was full of praise for “Learn to Discern,” a media literacy project being implemented by an American NGO called IREX in Ukraine, where the Ministry of Education had signed a decree prioritizing media literacy in the national curriculum. IREX features on its Board of Governors such luminaries as David Gross, who was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as the U.S. coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy at the U.S. Department of State, and Vipul Amin, a managing director at the Carlyle Group in its U.S. buyout division. Of course, four years later, Ukraine has advanced beyond “media literacy” to simply banning opposition media altogether.

The European Union has also threatened to ban

Twitter, under new management after being acquired by Elon Musk. Thierry Breton, who is in charge of enforcing the EU’s digital laws, told Musk on November 30 that Twitter risks being in violation of the Digital Services Act, warning that the platform will be banned unless it tightens its moderation policies and eliminates its “arbitrary” approach to reinstating banned users, according to the *Financial Times*. Breton also said that Musk must agree to an “extensive independent audit”

of the platform.

On October 3, several weeks before concluding his purchase of Twitter, Musk had tweeted, in the form of a poll, the following proposal for a negotiated peace in Ukraine:

Ukraine-Russia Peace:

- Redo elections of annexed regions under UN supervision. Russia leaves if that is will of the people.
- Crimea formally part of Russia, as it has been since 1783 (until Khrushchev’s mistake).
- Water supply to Crimea assured.
- Ukraine remains neutral.

This sort of proposal, most unwelcome by the U.S.-UK-NATO nuclear war proponents, is a likely example of why it is being demanded that Musk “tighten moderation policies.” The supposedly “arbitrary” approach to reinstating banned users refers to a decision by Musk to declare a general amnesty for suspended users, who did not violate any laws or engage in “egregious spam.” An example of a banned user who could be reinstated would be former United States Marine Corps intelligence officer and UN Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter, who was banned on April 6 of this year. He was oddly accused of violating a Twitter rule against “harassment and abuse” for the following tweet:

The Ukrainian National Police committed numerous crimes against humanity in Bucha. Biden, in seeking to shift blame for the Bucha murders onto Russia, is guilty of aiding and abetting these crimes. Congratulations America... we’ve created yet another Presidential war criminal!

True to form, Wikipedia editors hastened to update Wikipedia’s biography of Ritter, in order to label this tweet a “false claim.” Is this “media literacy” in action?