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Political Warfare Executive

The Meaning, Techniques and Methods

of Political Warfare

CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	<u>1</u>	VI. REOCCUPATION	<u>9</u>
II. AIM AND INSTRUMENTS	<u>3</u>	VII. RECONSTRUCTION	<u>9</u>
III. TECHNIQUES AND METHODS	<u>5</u>	VIII. SECRECY	<u>10</u>
(a) The Spoken Word	<u>5</u>	IX. CONCLUSIONS	<u>11</u>
(b) The Printed Word	<u>6</u>	X. APPENDIX	<u>11</u>
IV. PRISONERS OF WAR	<u>7</u>	(a) Precepts of Political Warfare	<u>11</u>
V. FRONT LINE PROPAGANDA	<u>8</u>	(b) Precepts of Propaganda	<u>12</u>
		(c) Precepts in Practice	<u>13</u>

I. INTRODUCTION

(i) Political Warfare is referred to variously as “Psychological Warfare,” “Morale Warfare,” or “Ideological Warfare.” More often it is regarded merely as “propaganda.” Each of these is a partial definition which is inadequate if the real function of Political Warfare as an indispensable component of Total War is to be understood.

(ii) Political Warfare is not a new factor in war, but its importance has been greatly magnified by the conditions prevailing in modern war and by the new instruments lately made available.

(iii) Political action has accompanied all wars since wars began. Strength in battle has depended on the number of supporters whom, either as individuals, as tribes, or as allied nations, a leader won to his standard or seduced from support of his enemy. Political devices throughout the ages have been used to woo support, to isolate a potential enemy, to secure compliance by threats of military action, to precipitate military action when these devices have failed and, in wars themselves, diplomacy as the Foreign Secretary has said, must “act as the servant of higher strategy.”

(iv) In the past, when wars were fought by professional armies and consequently only small sections of each nation were involved, such political or diplomatic action had mainly to impress those who commanded the services of the armed forces, although that might, on occasion, be done by fomenting popular unrest.

(v) With the progressive development of Total War – with civilians in uniform replacing the professional armies, with the gradual and now final involvement of the entire economy and therefore the entire population in the prosecution of war – the emphasis of political action has now changed. The winning of Allies, or the disrupting of the enemy, is no longer confined principally to the reaction of the hierarchies of nations. These hierarchies, however, are necessarily a special target of political warfare, since through their reactions lies a short-

cut to the objectives. They are by the very nature of their responsibility and obsessions a special psychological case. If they can be stampeded (e.g. the despair of Leopold, or the demoralisation of the French Cabinet and generals in 1940) or if their confidence can be destroyed (e.g. the palpable effect on Hitler of Churchill's post-Dunkirk speech – that master-stroke of intuitive political warfare) the full objective may be directly achieved; Also, unless the hierarchies live in ivory towers they are subject to the psychological reactions of the rest of the population, especially when they are the storm-centre of mass-emotions. Therefore the propaganda and political warfare techniques directed against the civil populations ultimately involve the hierarchy. By exploiting the “psychology,” “morale,” or “ideologies” of the civil population who, whether in uniform or in the factories, are vital to the war machine, we are aiming at destroying not only the functions of that machine, but the political or military power-group who run that machine.

(vi) Nor is this “psychological warfare” a new device. It has been practised at every phase in history. The war-paint of barbarous tribes, the “Trojan Horse,” the Pyrrhic elephants, the “leaflets” and “whispers” employed by Richelieu to infiltrate and to destroy the morale of the besieged population at La Rochelle, are only a few instances of the historic practice of “psychological warfare.”

(vii) In military operations, the element of surprise, which is psychological warfare translated into field-tactics, is the Third Principle laid down in Field Service Regulations. Surprise is achieved by artifice and stratagem; by secrecy and rapidity of preparation; by mystifying and misleading the enemy as to the object (e.g. Allenby's 15,000 dummy cavalry horses in the Jordan Valley, September, 1918); by daring to do what is difficult and therefore unexpected; by mobility; and by sudden use of new weapons or new methods of using existing weapons (e.g., tanks in the last war; dive-bombers and 88 m.m. guns in this). “Surprise” might be summed up as “If three courses are open to you, take the fourth.”

(viii) Logically, “morale warfare” has always been a deciding factor because otherwise the only way an army could be defeated would be by its complete annihilation. The morale of those actually engaged in war has been a determining factor in the length of wars, the measure of resistance and in the final collapse.

(ix) In wars also there has always been an element of “ideological warfare.” However cynical his motives, every war leader has to present his case for war as a fundamental conflict of ideas; every war is a crusade, every war is a struggle to supplant or impose a rival form of government, of religion, of racial concept. It is the declared belief of the warring nation that its way of life deserves to be imposed, or that its inspired interests must be served. History shows us, of course, the frequent exploitation of such ideology for quite different motives than the ones proclaimed.

(x) These various elements of political warfare have therefore always been part of the pattern of war. Today their importance is vastly greater than ever before, both because of the changed character of war and because of the technological devices which have created new instruments for political attack. In the past there was no science or conscious strategy of political warfare except in the sense of marshalling Power Politics on a basis of long-term strategy. With the advent of Total War, Political Warfare became a major instrument and demanded a deliberate strategy.

(xi) In the First World War, war approached totality; there was the combination of mass-mobilisation of men and materials, economic warfare and propaganda and counter-propaganda; there was the combination and integration of military, political and ideological, and economic tactics. The Allies were then the masters of Total War. They organised the gigantic military machine that waged war on three continents; they detached Italy from the Triple Alliance, won over the United States; secured the co-operation of Greece; enlisted 30 other Allies; and secured the support both of the Arabs and the Jews. They forced upon the world the blockade which produced the economic strangulation of the enemy. They used propaganda to accentuate racial, ethnic and class differences everywhere. They created distrust in the motives and methods of the enemy regimes. They destroyed the faith of the Central European powers in their fighting services, and produced peace overtures which weakened and finally disrupted the enemy.

(xii) Nor were the Germans backward: they made effective use of social and ideological warfare. They intervened in Ireland, provided the spark of communist revolution in Russia and stimulated the opposition to war among the ethnic minorities of the United States. To Clausewitz war was a continuation of policy by other means; for Hitler peace was the prologue to war by other means. What Hitler did was to change the timing of political warfare. As he, himself, said: "The place of the artillery barrage as a preparation for an infantry attack will in future be taken by revolutionary propaganda. Its task is to break down the enemy psychologically before the armies begin to function at all." The Germans, therefore, evolved between the two wars a deliberate science and strategy of political warfare. This was backed by displays of force calculated to give effect to the threats. The success of political warfare plus its "war of nerves" and "invincible blitzkrieg" threats was seen in the demoralisation of France and the isolation and disintegration of other European nations.

(xiii) The Democracies had not used Political Warfare in preparation for war – because they did not prepare for war, physically or morally. Therefore during the war the functions of political warfare as directed to enemy, or enemy-occupied territories are the more difficult; the results have to be secured not through large-scale peace-time infiltration by carefully coached and disciplined groups or "tourists," but by "remote control." Hitler's campaigns have shown the importance of timing, and integration of political warfare with economic pressure, and eventually direct military action.

(xiv) In terms of foreign policy, when the normal channels of diplomacy are blocked, political warfare becomes the instrument of appeal to the people within enemy or enemy-occupied countries. It is also the indispensable adjunct of Economic Warfare, since, when the limits of blockade and other direct economic action have been reached, one means (apart from air bombardment) of exacerbating that blockade, is through political warfare action. Political warfare is inseparable from the strategy of the three Fighting Services. Its primary object is to destroy the foundations of the enemy's war machine as an auxiliary to military action; it is in fact the *Fourth Fighting Arm*.

II. THE AIM – AND THE INSTRUMENTS

(i) Paradoxically, in this war of machines, the human element is, in the long run, more important than the machines themselves. When the civil population is mobilised, when output is being stretched to the limit, the individual and his reactions become magnified in proportion. There must be the *will* to make the machines, to man the machines and to pull the trigger. Political Warfare is directed against that *will*. Its object is to destroy the morale of the enemy and to sustain the morale of our allies within enemy and enemy-occupied countries.

(ii) The major instrument of Political Warfare is propaganda. In this war propaganda has at its disposal more plentiful and more powerful instruments than ever before in history. The radio makes it possible to reach the individual in the privacy and the secrecy of his own home. The bomber can drop leaflets on an unprecedented scale. Secret means of communication enables the spreading of reports with damaging effect inside the enemy's fortress.

(iii) Modern techniques of propaganda provide the means to destroy or build resistance; to issue instructions to our hidden allies; to impose discipline and to prepare for active intervention.

(iv) The Political Warfare expert, however, has an additional service to render to higher strategy; it is his duty to have, in terms of those regions in which he specialises, a thorough knowledge and complete intelligence as to the psychology of the people, the elements of resistance and the degree of co-operation which can be counted upon in the event of military intervention. Similarly, he must be the authority on the morale effects of air and other activity against his region. Political Warfare, therefore, not only prepares the ground, but mobilises co-operation for military action.

(v) As a corollary, Political Warfare must, of necessity, have the co-operation of the

Foreign Office, of the Fighting Services and of the Ministry of Economic Warfare in the creation of such operations, or the promotion of such action, as are needed to build or break morale.

(vi) By its mandate, Britain's Political Warfare Executive is concerned only with enemy and enemy-occupied countries as distinct from the Ministry of Information which deals with domestic and Neutral populations and with unoccupied Allied territories (i.e., China, Russia, U.S.A. and South American allies). This dispensation arose from practical experience and expediency, but the distinction is a logical one. The attitude to the enemy and to his subject peoples is belligerent; the attitude to friendly and still independent peoples is persuasive. One is disruptive behind the lines of the enemy; the other is conciliatory in the councils of our friends. One requires the mentality and techniques of subversion; the other, in open relationship, means frankness and information. The one seeks to destroy the confidence of the enemy; the other seeks to win the confidence of friends.

(vii) To clarify this distinction, it is necessary to define (a) Publicity, (b) Propaganda, (c) Political Warfare.

(a) PUBLICITY.

(viii) Publicity is the straightforward projection of a case; it is the build-up of a picture in the mind of the audience which will win their confidence and support. It is information which we want them to have, but also information which *they* want to have. It seeks to create the right impression and to remove the wrong impression. Its object is mutual goodwill. It is the presentation of the evidence, leaving the judgment to the audience. It is succinctly, as the Americans expressed it in their original information organisation: "Facts" and "Figures."

(b) PROPAGANDA.

(ix) Propaganda, on the other hand, is the deliberate direction, or even manipulation, of information to secure a definite objective. It is an attempt to direct the thinking of the recipient, without his conscious collaboration, into predetermined channels. It is the conditioning of the recipient by devious methods with an ulterior motive. Propaganda emphasises those facts which best serve its purpose. It creates the atmosphere in which the audience is most susceptible to suggestion. By power of suggestion, which in favourable circumstances becomes instruction, it secures positive action.

(c) POLITICAL WARFARE.

(x) Political Warfare employs both publicity and propaganda. That is to say, it can and must be as objective as possible in its projection of the British or Allied case. It, too, has to seek the good will of those in enemy and enemy-occupied countries who are already sympathetic to that case. It has to demonstrate and not merely claim the certainty of victory. It has to show by force of example that we have something better to offer than the Nazis. It has to establish the veracity of the news in order to win confidence for its propaganda and to build an audience through which it can achieve its eventual purpose.

(xi) There is, however, no intrinsic virtue in news; news is a device of Political Warfare; it is a necessity which we can make a virtue, since, as stated above, news is the most potent means of attracting and building up an audience. Experience shows that the ordinary man, particularly in enemy or enemy-occupied countries, thirsts for news. This impulse can be exploited in two ways. First, the news can, by its presentation and emphasis, make a propaganda point; for example, even frankness about defeats may convey by its very frankness the confidence of ultimate victory. Furthermore we must give our defeats honestly in order to establish credibility for successes. Secondly, news can be used as a carrier for propaganda. That is to say, propaganda can be mixed with the news in the form of commentary or added to it in the expectation that thirst for news will induce men to receive propaganda which they might otherwise be disposed to reject. A simple example is the device of broadcasting names of prisoners of war at the end of a broadcasting period.

(xii) If news is to be treated, as it should be, as a carrier for propaganda, it is of course of the utmost importance that machinery should be established for strict control. In the first place, a high standard of veracity should be achieved; secondly, the presentation of the news should, where possible, be linked with the main propaganda themes and campaigns, which

have been laid down; and lastly, great care should be taken to avoid discrepancies even of tone and presentation in the news given out to different countries.

(xiii) Propaganda must be directed according to carefully prepared plans. It must be “on the target.” It must have an individual or sectional appeal, since the audience consists of individuals and since it is only by sectional segregation – by aiming at the joints in the structure of the enemy – that the enemy can be broken up and disrupted. Similarly, if one is addressing hidden allies in occupied countries, the mass effect is produced by a confluence of emotions or ideas, generated in individuals or groups.

(xiv) Hitler has shown what a sharp-edged weapon propaganda can be; he dismembered populations as with a surgical knife; he showed that logic and reason is no defence against propaganda – he bedevilled the traditionally logical French people.

(xv) Political Warfare could be described as “Propaganda in battledress” in the sense that it has to convert propaganda into a striking force and to ensure that, at the right moment and under proper discipline, ideas and emotions are translated into action. It must, psychologically, disarm the enemy. It must instil into the hidden armies behind the Axis lines not only the spirit of resistance to the enemy, but the will to strike down that enemy. It is this emphasis on its fighting service function which makes it necessary to distinguish Political Warfare from the “propaganda” it employs. It is this characteristic of Political Warfare which is still not clearly understood and which, while it retains an identity distinct from the Fighting Services, makes its close association with these Services of paramount importance. It is its balanced relationship between the three Services, the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Economic Warfare and the other agencies which are operating against the enemy, which is the justification for the separate existence of the Political Warfare Executive.

III. TECHNIQUES AND METHODS

(i) Modern technology has placed at the disposal of political warfare new techniques not available, or available only to a limited extent, in previous wars. Notably it has created broadcasting which did not exist as an instrument in the First World War

BROADCASTING

(A) THE SPOKEN WORD.

(ii) The success of broadcasting as an instrument of political warfare depends upon the ingenuity of the propagandist, upon the art which so conceals art that it becomes a science.

(iii) During the defensive period of war, the function of broadcasting is to build the audience, to retain its confidence and to sustain its morale. This the B.B.C. did with notable success, it established the reliability of its news; it made itself the trusted friend of news-starved Europe. It must, however, always be borne in mind that that service was provided not as an act of philanthropy but with a deliberate purpose – as an instrument of war. The powerful instrument of European broadcasting is like a battle fleet in which millions have been invested, but which is useless unless we are prepared to risk it in battle.

(iv) In the offensive period which began as soon as the myth of the invincibility of the German military machine was challenged, i.e. when at the first sign of effective resistance both in the Battle of Britain and the Battle of Russia, broadcasting ceased to be passive and became belligerent; it became an instrument not of publicity but of propaganda. That is to say it took on a deliberate purpose; it began to prepare the audience to be not just grateful listeners, but active allies. To do this there had to be deliberate planning, a marshalling of facts to produce a given effect.

(v) Although every device must be used to embarrass the enemy, to damage his war machine and to sustain morale and fighting spirit by sporadic acts of violence and resistance, the ultimate transmutation of propaganda into battledress depends upon the higher strategy of the war, military intervention and the “propaganda of success.” The test of the instrument is whether at the moment of crisis it has created both the support and the discipline which, in combination with military action can stab the enemy in the back. This is a question of

timing, inseparable from the military planning of the war.

SECRET BROADCASTING

(i) The technique of radio has made it possible to create either: –

- (a) Actual freedom stations (where the resources are available, which is rarely the case within enemy or enemy-occupied countries) or
- (b) To produce the illusion of a freedom station operating within that country or
- (c) A freedom-of-action station which need not necessarily pretend to be within any given country.

(ii) In the case of (a) the function of political warfare would be, if it were possible, to stimulate or service any such indigenous station.

(iii) In the case of (b) the first requirement is that the pseudo-freedom station convinces its audience that it is actually amongst them; that it is sharing the common difficulties and conditions with them, and that it is operating at great risk. Since “eavesdropping” is an important factor in all propaganda, a pseudo-freedom station must also convince the authorities and the public of other countries that it is indubitably located in the country in which it professes to operate. Upon the illusion of locality and risk depends to a great extent the authority of such a station; it can stimulate emotions preparatory to action or discipline and can give instructions to its listeners to take risks – instructions which, except at a time when we are militarily sharing these risks, would be resented from voices speaking from this country.

(iv) In the case of (c) the illusion is one of authenticity rather than of locality. It must convey the authority of a powerful group or movement within the country or countries to which it is directed. The geographic origin of the station need never be specified, but it is a disability if the listener knows that it is in Britain and therefore is likely to be not the independent instrument of the group it professes to serve, but in the “pay” of H.M.G. If it speaks for an underground movement, it should ostensibly be underground, even in exile. The value of this type of station is that, unlike (b) it can know what is happening in the outside world; it can give the impression of complete independence of any interest except that of the group or movement it serves. Its object is to consolidate the group or movement, to detach it from any support of the enemy leaders and to shape it as an instrument of disaffection.

(v) A freedom or freedom-of-action station demands a highly sensitive and difficult technique, and a complete and intimate knowledge of the audience to which it is appealing. It requires imagination as well as virtuosity. The appeals must be “strong meat,” they can be either ideological, sectional, or merely disruptive and subversive. The range or numbers of stations must be sufficiently wide and varied to achieve in combination the common purpose of political warfare.

(vi) These freedom stations can be and are used for sabotage instruction and are among the most effective channels for the dissemination of rumours. They have a strong emotional content and purpose.

Since the beginning of the war, the techniques of “black radio” have been developed effectively and there has been confirmatory evidence from inside enemy and enemy-occupied territories, both in terms of the events they produce and of the reports received, that they achieve their object and are being widely listened to.

LEAFLETS

(B) THE PRINTED WORD.

(i) In the First World War, and on many notable occasions in this war, leaflets have been proved invaluable as a weapon against the enemy. Leaflets, like radio, are a means of making or breaking morale; they are used to discomfit the enemy and to sustain our friends. In the category of leaflets, come the news sheets disseminated by aircraft. These newspapers, as developed in this war, are technical achievements of high merit. By the use of modern

processes full-sized newspapers can be reproduced and mass-produced in miniature.

(ii) Another important use of the Printed Word is the distribution of “propaganda leaflets,” which are not concerned with “news,” but are designed to have an “impact” value of a demoralising nature on the enemy reader, or a vitalising effect on the reader in an Occupied Country.

(iii) Used in conjunction with military operations (e.g., front line propaganda) leaflets are “ammunition” of a particularly powerful nature.

(iv) Bulk distribution of leaflets or air newspapers depends upon the extent of the co-operation of the R.A.F. and to a considerable extent on how far the Air Force realises the power of the Printed Word in relation to bombs. One of the conditions of successful leaflet technique is sustained and regular distribution, particularly for newspapers.

“BLACK” LEAFLETS.

(i) Just as there is secret radio, there are secret leaflets. These do not carry the authority or the imprimatur of the British or Allied Governments. Like the Freedom Station, they must appear to originate in the country of distribution. Such leaflets are directed to specific ends; they are insinuated into the country through agents. They are not dropped by the R.A.F.

WHISPERS.

(i) All through history rumour-mongering has been used as a method of sowing unrest and spreading mischief within the enemy lines. The Germans in this war used rumours with devastating effect in France and in other countries. We have had abundant evidence in this country of widespread rumours originated by the enemy, spread by their agents and innocently disseminated by the population.

(ii) The essence of rumouring is that you know what nobody else knows and that you want everybody else to know that you know what they don't know. It is this human weakness which has to be exploited by the professional rumour-monger.

(iii) For political warfare purposes, rumours are not created for the edification or titivation of the gossips; the strategy and techniques of effective whispering have to be closely related to military requirements. Political warfare has developed a “strategy of rumours.”

OTHER METHODS.

(i) While the Political Warfare Executive does not, at present, directly control propaganda agents in the field, it trains, for infiltration purposes, such agents in the techniques and methods of political warfare and integrates their work with the wider activities.

(ii) P.W.E, also helps to provide a service for the innumerable clandestine newspapers, which, either spontaneously or by deliberate initiation from here, are printed throughout enemy and enemy-occupied territories.

IV. PRISONERS OF WAR

(i) Under the Geneva Convention, the captor is not supposed to interfere with the loyalties and beliefs of his prisoners. That regulation was devised when warfare was still being waged between professional armies and in a gentlemanly way. Since the advent of Total War, however, the validity of this regulation no longer holds.

(ii) In Total War, ideas themselves are weapons of which the prisoner ought to be disarmed. The object should be to neutralise the force of their ideas and make them realize that there can be two sides to every question. This is important from a post-war point of view, if we are to reduce the possibility of future wars and help to bring about international understanding.

(iii) Prisoners must be helped to form their own favourable impression of our way of life and of our ideas, so that they return as “sub-ambassadors.”

(iv) There is no attempt made to indoctrinate our ideas but rather to establish natural debating societies in which such major issues as (1) Herrenvolk, (2) regimentation of the individual, (3) the policy of Force, form the basis of discussion as a means to mind-broadening.

(v) Although there is an overwhelming case for the thorough permeation of the camps, Political Warfare has so far been restricted in its activities. Visitors have been able to make contact with prisoners to discuss ideas with them, to examine the recalcitrant and violent ideologists among the Germans and Italians and to exercise some slight influence on the lines above. Camp newspapers have been produced; these are objective, with only a small amount of propaganda. Wirelasses are being installed and the prisoners are being encouraged to listen to Allied and Axis broadcasts. There is a great dearth of printed matter for the prisoners.

(vi) As essential condition in the handling of prisoners, with Political Warfare objects in mind, is not to pander to them, but to create a satisfactory environment in which they are in a frame of mind to listen. Physical environment is important.

(vii) A corollary to the treatment of prisoners, is the propaganda value of demonstrable proofs of that treatment which can, during war-time, be given to the civilian populations of enemy countries.

(viii) The Russians have gone much further in their exploitation of prisoners in their prisoners-of-war conferences.

V. FRONT LINE PROPAGANDA

(i) The object of Front Line Propaganda is to prepare the enemy by psychological “barrage” so that the spirit of resistance and the will to fight are damaged or destroyed.

(ii) This preparation should precede action, for in the heat of battle quite different instincts and emotions operate. Even under stress of the battle, however, effective and well-timed propaganda may administer the coup de grâce.

(iii) In the war of movement, Front Line Propaganda takes on a different character from that employed when two armies are confronting each other from defensive positions (e.g., the tactics used on both sides of the Rhine during the “Sitz Krieg”). There is less opportunity for the leisurely permeation of ideas and for psychological “fencing.” In the lull of the campaign or to garrison troops, long-range propaganda can be effective as a demoralising factor, but when armies are in direct contact with each other, different techniques have to be employed.

(iv) Technology has given us loud-speakers and the aerial dissemination of leaflets. Front Line Propaganda requires not only imaginative and consistent direction, it requires also a high adaptability, the power to improvise, psychological opportunism, and technical proficiency.

(v) It has been recognised that Front line Propaganda units must be Service units, part of the lighting machine; but it is essential that the Fourth Fighting Arm should thus be represented – in uniform – in the Front Line by specialists who have been trained in the techniques and methods of political warfare. These specialists should be competent not only to lay down the “barrage,” but also, if necessary, to work behind the enemy lines. They must be mobile, in the sense that in a war of movement they can readily exploit a situation.

(vi) It has also to be borne in mind that in the rapidly changing fortunes of a battle, soldiers can be taken prisoner and may be recovered. Axis prisoners, while in the battle area, might be handled by propaganda specialists and should the battle go into reverse and they are released, they may then take back the impressions which political warfare would like them to spread.

(vii) It is also important that our troops should be trained as to how to talk and act while in enemy hands. In suitable circumstances, men taken prisoner can act as political warfare agents within enemy ranks.

(viii) In this war we have seen the effectiveness of such devices as “prisoners' passes”

which are “safe conduct” for those who surrender.

VI. REOCCUPATION

(i) Political Warfare cannot be dissociated from the problems of Reoccupation.

(ii) Through research and intelligence, it must be a function of P.W.E. regional specialists to estimate the degree of sympathy and active support which an Army of Reoccupation could count upon in any particular area. They must help to prepare the ground in advance of such a Reoccupation, both through the demoralisation of any elements of resistance and by organising and disciplining the supporters behind the enemy lines.

(iii) This long-range preparation is of course intensified by direct contacts in the form of Front Line Propaganda accompanying an expedition itself.

(iv) In conjunction with these military aspects, Political Warfare has a special responsibility with regard to the administration and relief measures provided for the Reoccupied Territories. Contact with reoccupying troops will be the first impact of the Allied New Order upon peoples who, for over two years, have experienced Hitler's New Order. The exultation which would be the immediate reflex to Reoccupation will be succeeded by a reaction.

(v) Upon the handling of the situation by the army's Reoccupation Forces, or those who accompany them (e.g., representatives of the émigré governments, the relief workers, etc.) will depend the creation, or loss, of goodwill towards later developments.

(vi) Furthermore, in this pre-Armistice period, the possibility of factions being formed behind the lines means the necessity for continued use of Political Warfare methods in the Reoccupied Area to ensure the proper psychological “conditioning” of the population.

(vii) Also involved, are questions of taking over radio stations, handling of the press, for psychological rather than security reasons, and in general the methods of undoing the enemy's psychological warfare effects upon the civil population.

VII. RECONSTRUCTION

(i) To Political Warfare, Reconstruction is not something which can be deferred until the end of the war. It has an immediate application. *It is a weapon of war* which is essential to the winning of the war.

(ii) That is true of the “Shooting War.” Political Warfare cannot be of real service to the other three Fighting Services unless it is supplied with ammunition. Its ammunition, as has been stressed before, consists of ideas more powerful than those used by the enemy. These ideas have to be conveyed to our potential supporters in Europe hour by hour and day by day. Our hidden allies in Europe will go into action, will co-operate with our forces, will actively destroy the Axis and help us to end the war if they believe that what the United Nations have to offer will justify the risk.

(iii) This may appear to be an over-statement, since there has been ample evidence of the emotional rather than ideological resistance in Europe; patriotism, hatred of brutalities, and the physical presence of the Nazis provoke action amongst the more daring spirits. We would, however, be deluding ourselves if we did not recognise that by habit and by hunger the Nazis have produced in Europe a large measure of acquiescence – grudging acquiescence – but acquiescence that grows as months and years drag by and there are successive disappointments, and above all through the imperatives of sheer existence.

(iv) We have to combat that with the certainty of Allied victory; we have to counter the Nazi “New Order,” which, however bogus, has a present appearance of reality. It is not something which can be dissipated with sneers, nor answered by “pie in the sky.” The peoples of Europe have reason to know that a social revolution has taken place and that there is no retreat to 1939. They know that the old systems have been broken; they want to know – after the Nazis what? Aspirations, like patriotism, are not enough.

(v) What we have to offer must be concrete; it must be translatable into individual

experience; it must meet the urgent self-interest of the listener in Europe. The people of Europe must be able to foresee some pattern of existence after the war, into which they and their families fit.

(vi) All this, Political Warfare must insist, is a question for today and tomorrow, and not of an indefinite future, because we have to arm the people of Europe with the conviction that our cause is worth risking everything for, including life itself. For that is “morale” and morale is indispensable to the winning of the “shooting” war.

(vii) Moreover, it must now be realized that at the end of the shooting, there is no drop-curtain that descends on armistice night; this is a war of ideas in which the ideas-struggle will go on until a solution is found. Hence “political warfare” will go on until it becomes “political welfare.”

(viii) The requirements of Political Warfare, in terms of reconstruction cover: (1) reoccupation (see above); (2) relief measures; (3) long-term reconstruction. The three are, in fact, a continuum, since the impact of the first two must effect the third.

(ix) Political Warfare asks not for blue prints, but for practical evidence of what is being done or projected; it asks not for a complete picture, but for the pieces of mosaic which the listener can see as part of a comprehensible and practicable pattern. Abstractions are not enough. For example, to have reality, the high intentions of the Atlantic Charter must be translated into tangible examples.

(x) Indeed the war aims which have a reality in Political Warfare are: –

- (1) Get the Nazis off my neck.
- (2) Give me tomorrow's breakfast.
- (3) Give me the work or the outlet for my work which will make sure of next week's breakfast.
- (4) May I go round the corner now, please, and talk to my friends?

(xi) Long-term war aims are an extension of these:

- (1) How are you going to make sure the Nazis will never sit on my neck again?
- (2) How are you going to guarantee that I shall never go hungry again?
- (3) How are you going to guarantee that I won't feel insecure again?
- (4) How are you going to guarantee the freedom of association, by which I will always be able to talk to, or worship with, my friends?

(xii) The requisites of Political Warfare are, therefore, constant, genuine and present proofs of how we propose to help the peoples of Europe, and how we mean to translate into terms of their everyday lives, the high intentions we proclaim. Political Warfare has to weave in wartime the pattern of a post-war order.

VIII. SECRECY

(i) Political Warfare, in much of its work, operates secretly. Some of its most effective operations would be worthless except for that secrecy.

(ii) On the other hand, it has to rely on the secret intelligence of other Departments. That intelligence is meat and drink to Political Warfare. Without that flow of intelligence, without access to secret reports and without the strictest security measures, Political Warfare would be valueless as an instrument of war.

(iii) There is, however, an even more important condition of secrecy. In connection with actual military operations of which Political Warfare must form a part, there must be a mutual disclosure of plans. Political Warfare, since its experts specialise in the assembly and analysis of information regarding the attitudes, the morale, the sympathies, the activism of the people in the regions, countries and localities within its mandate, must make this knowledge equally available to the Military Planners. Consequently there should be the closest working relationship.

(iv) No such relationship, either in terms of access to intelligence or of access to plans, is possible without the confidence of those who have that secret intelligence or those who prepare those plans. One of the essentials, therefore, of Political Warfare administration is security; there have to be bulkheads throughout the organisation which ensure such security.

N.B. It is necessary to distinguish between “intelligence” and “information.” Intelligence is what is necessary to form plans for future action; information is the disclosure only of such intelligence as should be generally known either with reference to past or future events.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

(i) In British practice, we have distinguished between Political Warfare activities against the enemy and the technique employed towards Allies or Neutrals.

(ii) Political Warfare Executive took over such services as related to enemy and enemy-occupied territories; the Ministry of Information continued to deal with unoccupied Allied and Neutral countries, as well as with the Home and Empire. That is to say, Political Warfare is concerned with those territories where diplomatic and open relationships have broken down and where the objectives are entirely belligerent or subversive. Where diplomatic and open relationships continue, where the emphasis is upon goodwill and upon securing or maintaining co-operation, as in unoccupied Allied and Neutral countries, the M.O.I. continues to provide publicity.

(iii) At what stage that publicity becomes propaganda – and P.W.E. has no monopoly of propaganda – depends upon the degree to which the country involved is antagonistic or its doubts have to be corrected, or the prevailing mentality “reconditioned.”

(iv) Since in Neutral countries the enemy has equal interests and freedom of action, counter-propaganda is also necessary, but in all such dealings, the British Information Services are openly avowing H.M.G. policy.

(v) It is obvious, since the Neutral may at any time become an enemy-occupied country, there must be planning, as between P.W.E. and M.O.I. for such a contingency and that in this regard the distinction between P.W.E. and M.O.I. is less a question of geography than of timing.

X. APPENDIX A

I. PRECEPTS OF POLITICAL WARFARE.

Definition. (1) POLITICAL WARFARE is the systematic process of influencing the will and so directing the *actions* of peoples in enemy and enemy-occupied territories, according to the needs of higher strategy.

Function. (2) POLITICAL WARFARE is the Fourth Fighting Arm an instrument of which is PROPAGANDA and its forces are the dissident elements, potentially or actually existing within the ranks of the enemy and the sympathisers potentially or actually militant in enemy-occupied countries.

(3) POLITICAL WARFARE'S primary aim is to assist the destruction of the foundations of the enemy's war machine in conjunction with military action, in order to break the will to war of the enemy nation. It promotes disaffection, resistance and active co-operation amongst the enemy's military, civil and industrial population, and amongst the subject peoples.

Aims. (4) POLITICAL WARFARE'S further aim is to ensure that, in conjunction with Allied military intervention, organised elements of resistance and disruption will hasten the collapse of the enemy's forces.

(5) POLITICAL WARFARE'S ultimate aim is to win the “War of Ideas” which is not conterminous with hostilities.

(6) POLITICAL WARFARE requires for the fulfilment of those aims

the co-operation of the three Fighting Services, aggressive diplomacy, economic warfare and the subversive field-agencies, in the promotion of such policies, measures or actions needed to break or build morale.

- Requirements.* (7) POLITICAL WARFARE requires for the fulfilment of those aims, the mutual confidence of the Foreign Office, the Fighting Services, the Ministry of Economic Warfare and other agencies and, with due regard for security, the disclosure of such secret plans, intelligence or policies as are necessary for its operations.
- General Operations.* (8) POLITICAL WARFARE operates overtly (i.e., through “open” broadcasting) and covertly (through “black” agencies) but its strategy and tactics must be as secret as those of the other Fighting Services, requiring therefore the same protection and security.
- Specific Operations.* (9) POLITICAL WARFARE has a further service to render to the higher strategy, through its experts who, by thorough knowledge of the population and conditions in the regions in which they specialise, can assist in the preparation for specific military operations.
- (10) POLITICAL WARFARE must be geared to strategy, continually linked to, and in consultation on, the day to day conduct of the war.
- United Operations.* (11) POLITICAL WARFARE in the totality of war must combine with all similar activities of the United Nations.

APPENDIX B

II. PRECEPTS OF PROPAGANDA

- Definition.* (1) PROPAGANDA is an instrument of POLITICAL WARFARE.
- (2) PROPAGANDA is the deliberate attempt to direct the thinking of the recipient, without his conscious collaboration, into pre-determined channels; it seeks by power of suggestion, which, at the proper time, becomes instruction, to secure positive action.
- Function.*
- (3) PROPAGANDA is to be distinguished from PUBLICITY. PUBLICITY is (a) the projection of a case, leaving the judgment to the recipient; (b) assumes mutual goodwill; (c) provides information which we want the recipient to have and which he also wants to have; which creates right impressions and removes wrong ones. It is strictly “Information.”
- (4) PROPAGANDA and PUBLICITY have a common frontier in “PSEUDO-PUBLICITY.” This, in conditions hostile to our case, is propaganda presented as “information,” as demanded by diplomatic relationships, but designed to secure our concealed purpose or as counter-propaganda.
- (5) PROPAGANDA can be overt and apparently (but never actually) objective; or it can be covert and by every possible device, subversive. Overt propagandists must conform to the policy or intentions of the Government or Governments for which they speak; covert propagandists are *the franc tireurs* in the “War of Ideas,” disowned and where necessary, disreputable, conforming only to pre-determined Political Warfare plans.
- Overt and Covert.*
- (6) PROPAGANDA is disseminated through the spoken and written word. It employs radio, the printing press, aviation, the whisperer and, where possible, the film.
- Dissemination.*

- Authority.* (7) PROPAGANDA, when it is overt, either through broadcasting or leaflets, establishes its authority by veracity, though truth may be selective. When it commands its audience its task, in the major strategy, is to secure action.
- (8) PROPAGANDA, when it is covert, either through secret broadcasting, “Black” leaflets, rumouring or underground movements aims (a) at the disruption, deception or intimidation of the enemy, (b) at the organisation of factions within the ranks of the enemy, or of disciplined movements amongst his subject peoples.
- Black activities.*
- Propaganda of Events.* (9) PROPAGANDA needs events but it can create or assist these events. The most powerful propaganda is the “Propaganda of Success,” which hastens the making or breaking of morale.

APPENDIX C

III. PRECEPTS IN PRACTICE

- Definition.* (1) POLITICAL WARFARE, in British practice, is directed against enemy and towards enemy-occupied territories.
- Direction.* (2) POLITICAL WARFARE is directed by an Executive, under the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Information, but distinct from the Ministry of Information, which is concerned with the Home Public, “unoccupied” Allied peoples and Neutrals.
- Distinction from M.O.I.* (3) POLITICAL WARFARE with its inevitable implication of subversion, is thus administratively separated from the functions of the Ministry of Information, the operations of which are subject to scrutiny and must be above suspicion of “contaminating” our friends.
- Collaboration with M.O.I.* (4) POLITICAL WARFARE, while thus divorced in principle, must in practice work closely with the Ministry of Information in the common field of morale, of information and planning. It relies especially upon mutual collaboration in “contingency planning” for those countries which may become by choice or invasion “enemy” or “enemy-occupied” or which may, by consent, be the base for political warfare operations against the enemy.
- Political Warfare (Japan) Committee.* (5) POLITICAL WARFARE in the Far East is directed for purposes of policy and intelligence by the Political Warfare (Japan) Committee on which is represented the Foreign Office, the Political Warfare Executive, the Ministry of Information and other bodies.
- Far Eastern Field Work.* (6) POLITICAL WARFARE (Japan) Committee operates in the Far East through the agencies and agents of the Ministry of Information and other bodies. In so far as they are directed against the enemy or to subject peoples, the activities of the Ministry of Information are, in practice, “political warfare” as already defined.
- Relation to Higher Strategy.* (7) POLITICAL WARFARE in all its functions, in its planning, its intelligence service and its operations, works in collaboration and conformity with the policies, requirements and strategy of the higher direction of the war.

The Meaning, Techniques and Methods of Political Warfare

In 1942 the British Government's secret Political Warfare Executive compiled a short manual titled, *The Meaning, Techniques and Methods of Political Warfare* which defined fundamental concepts relating to psychological warfare.

Two versions were produced, a confidential version and a longer secret version. The secret manual, reproduced here, additionally discussed clandestine broadcasting, printed black propaganda and rumours, and propaganda aimed at re-educating enemy Prisoners of War. Only around one hundred copies of each of the versions were distributed to select government and military personnel.

The definitions may have changed and other forms of media are now available to the modern Psywarrior but the concepts in this manual are as relevant today as they were during the Second World War.

The original of this document is held in the British [National Archives](#), file ref. FO 898/101

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