

Propaganda

Indeed, if we were to choose a single word that would best describe what we see in our newspapers, on TV or digital news, that word would be *propaganda*.

Since the word's association with *Goebbels* and the Nazis in WW2, we have somewhat lost its true meaning. Originally, it was part of the Catholic church where cardinals entrusted with departing information to trainee missionary priests were part of the College of Propaganda in Rome (607). Today, we see *propaganda* as the spreading of information to support a specific cause.

Propaganda can be both positive and negative. Take the wearing of masks during the Covid-19 pandemic. A *propaganda* campaign was launched to help educate the public about the benefits of taking this basic precaution. For the most part, we will all agree that this type of *propaganda* had a positive outcome. Unfortunately, *propaganda* was also used in order to spread misinformation about mask wearing and this had the unfortunate result of increasing the spread of the virus. Most people would agree this had a negative outcome. In the billionaire or corporate media today, we are all submitted to daily *propaganda*, and this is sometimes very subtle and other times quite obvious.

In their book, *Propaganda Blitz: How the Corporate Media Distort Reality*, David Edwards and David Cromwell use the term “viewpapers” to describe the billionaire owned “newspapers”. They describe the corporate media acting as a giant filter that furthers the interests of the owners, managers and funders on topics as diverse as national party politics, geopolitics, the climate crisis and sixth extinction. Of course, we are told that opinions are acceptable in the editorials, but that news must be unbiased reporting of facts. However, who chooses which facts are more important than others? Who selected the stories we are supposed to consider most important? Why were the British population led to believe exiting the E.U. was of vital national importance when polls suggested this was a non-issue? Why does the corporate media to a large degree ignore the multiple existential crises we face, yet focuses intently on which celebrity is dating who? This is the invisible filter that stands between us and reality, and understanding its existence is paramount to being able to navigate safely through the intentionally deployed minefield of obfuscation and lies.

At its most observable, the media can enable what Edwards and Cromwell term a *Propaganda Blitz* with a massive campaign of manipulation aimed at discrediting an official enemy and leading the way to an action or intervention of some kind. Examples of propaganda blitzes include the Bay of Tonkin “incident” and the second Iraq war. In 1964, as the American government sought a *raison d’etre* for escalating the Vietnam war, they, along with the corporate media, misled the American public to believe that first, an American ship had been targeted and chased by North Vietnamese patrol boats, and then in a second attack, North Vietnamese patrol boats had attacked American destroyers. The job of the media is clearly to investigate the Navy’s claims, but they did no such thing and simply reported what they had been told. In 2008, after the release of 200 declassified documents, it became evident that there was no second attack at all and in the first attack, American aggression had led to them being pursued by the North Vietnamese patrol boats with the American navy all but sinking the patrol boats and in the process sustaining a single bullet hole (608). This incident, otherwise known as a false flag operation, ultimately led to the deaths of 1,700,000 Vietnamese and 46,000 Americans between 1965-1974 (608).

In 2002, another Propaganda Blitz was launched by the United States and this time, with depressing inevitability, her erstwhile partner in crime, the United Kingdom, was there to help. After the violent atrocities on September 11, 2001, America was hell bent on revenge for the killing of thousands in the first foreign attack on American soil since Pearl Harbour. Unfortunately, the two countries that were targeted for revenge had nothing to do with the attacks. Afghanistan, one of the planet’s poorest countries, which had already been devastated by foreign invasions and civil war, was bombed to the dark ages for having been used as a training base for the perpetrators, al Qaeda. This shadowy group had been supplied with weapons by none other than America when they were performing under the stage name, the Mujahadeen, and fighting against the Soviet Union. In Orwellian style, the ally was now the enemy and American coalition forces dropped tens of thousands of bombs on the country and killed an estimated 16,179 people, mostly civilians. The accompanying media frenzy has long since subsided, but the bombing has continued. More bombs were dropped on Afghanistan in 2018 and 2019 than any time since 2006. In 2019 alone, 7,423 bombs were dropped softly from the skies, to cause carnage on the ground (609).

Many of the survivors now suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or depression.

The other country chosen to be invaded and spoon fed Western “democracy” was Iraq. *George Bush Sr* had some unfinished business, and his son was more than willing to complete the job at hand. On 19th March 2003, America and the coalition of the willing, began an invasion of the country that would lead to the killing of the leader Saddam Hussein and 288,000 Iraqis, a majority of whom were civilians (610). In response to an atrocious attack that killed 2,977 people on American soil, two countries were all but obliterated and more than 300,000 people killed. America certainly had her revenge, but on the wrong countries. None of the terrorists who flew planes into the World Trade Center and Pentagon were Iraqi or Afghan, 15 were from Saudi Arabia, two from the United Arab Emirates, one from Lebanon and one from Egypt. While Iraq and Afghanistan were being devastated, Saudi Arabia, the source of the majority of the hijackers and the funding of the mission, was continuing to sell the U.S. around 1.5 million barrels of oil each and every day (611). Considering this fact was common knowledge at the time, how did the public get behind the attack on Iraq? This is where a nice little *Propaganda Blitz* comes in handy. Starting in September 2002, then British Prime minister *Tony Blair* began publicizing his new fictional novel, otherwise known as “the dossier”. In this fantastical dossier, Mr. Blair claimed that *Saddam Hussein* had Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and that these weapons were capable of being deployed against British citizens within 45 minutes. It later emerged that the 45-minute timeframe referred to the length of time it would take to fuel and fire a Scud missile. There was no mention of biological weapons capability in the original intelligence report. This was simply added to the dossier to “sex it up” and gain the support of the British public for a completely unnecessary and calamitous war. Millions saw through this fakery and protested around the world, sadly to no avail. As hundreds of thousands lost their lives and millions were dispossessed, there were few winners, but the winners that emerged, won big. British and American corporations were handed multi-billion-dollar contracts to re-construct what their security arm, the state military, had deconstructed. The oil corporations also got what they had long wanted, control over the nation’s rich natural resources. In essence, British and American workers financed the war through their taxes and

the corporations reaped the rewards as millions of desperate people suffered. The media not only turned a blind eye, but actively got in on the deception. In Murdoch's *Times* "newspaper", *Labour MP Ann Clwyd* claimed that *Saddam Hussein* was using a plastic shredding machine to shred humans and then feeding their minced meat to fish. The *Times* ran with the headline "See men shredded, then say you don't back war". Who wouldn't want to see the end of a tyrant who was shredding his own people and feeding them to fishes? The only problem with the story was that it was a complete fabrication. It was as baseless as *President Clinton's* assertion that he did not have sexual relations with that woman. In multiple investigations, *Human Rights Watch* and *Amnesty International* found no such evidence for human shredding activities and it seems this was the uncollaborated story of an individual from northern Iraq (608). Murdoch's other "newspaper" *The Sun* ran with this headline "Show them no pity... they have stains on their souls", in reference to Iraqi soldiers (609). Across the Atlantic, Murdoch's *Fox News* channel was pushing the war in the most enthusiastic manner, although most of the mainstream media was gushing in their praise for the troops who were "taking out" Saddam and "liberating" Iraqis. God help anyone who spoke out against the war. When the Liberal Democrat leader, *Charles Kennedy*, came out in opposition, *The Sun* splashed a photo of him on its front page with a photo of a snake and the caption, "Spot the difference. One is a spineless reptile. The other is a poisonous snake". The Iraq war was certainly good for Murdoch with *Fox News* boasting of 5.6 million prime time viewers by March 2003. As American flags fluttered fanatically on American TV screens, and her mighty militaristic prowess was displayed in all her glory, American servicemen and women started arriving back home draped in solemn flags. By this time, the cat was out of the bag, but it was all too late for the victims.

The corporate media was not new in their bombastic support of military conquest. In October 1990, as Bush Sr was attempting to rally support for an invasion of Iraq after *Saddam Hussein's* troops invaded Kuwait, the testimony of 15-year-old Kuwaiti girl, *Nayirah Al-Sabah* was broadcast across the media. She told of Iraqi soldiers entering a hospital in Kuwait, removing 312 babies from incubators and leaving them on the cold floor to die before walking off with the incubators. How could America not go to war after Saddam treated poor babies

in this way? The only problem with this story was the small inconvenient fact that it was not true. It never happened. In reality, *Nayirah Al-Sabah* was the daughter of Kuwait's Ambassador to the U.S., *Saud Nasir al-Sabah*. She had been coached by the vice president of PR firm *Hill & Knowlton* (608). By the time the truth had emerged though, the invasion had begun, and the seeds of the second Iraq war and a murderous decade long embargo had been sown. More military examples are provided in *Propaganda Blitz* than we have time for here and the next chapter will focus on the origins, but what of the much more ubiquitous but far more subtle forms of propaganda at play in the media.

Propaganda Blitzes are especially effective at drumming up support for war, but they also have a sinister hand in protecting the status quo at all costs. Since the neoliberal free market ideology was hoisted on the world in the late 1970s, there has really only been one political show in town. Whether you turn up every four or five years to vote red or blue, you are essentially voting for the same system, albeit the red version in the U.K. and the blue version in the U.S. are slightly more compassionate. *Bill Clinton* was first to take the Democrats into the center ground in 1992, in order to win power, but in the process lose their principals and sell out the working class. *Tony Blair* watched closely what happened in the U.S. and took the Labour party into the center to win the support of the Murdoch press and also the election, by a landslide in 1997. Since then, the traditional left wing of politics, now operating as New Labour, has in fact been subscribing to a right-wing ideology of trickle-down economics. This has had terrible impacts on both sides of the Atlantic with a rise in right wing populism embraced by both Trump and his cheap knock-off sidekick, *Boris Johnson*. While both portray themselves as men of the people, the opposite is true with both being part of the social elite, having been born into wealth and educated at the best schools money can buy, with varying educational outcomes. One has an elaborate vernacular, while the other has the "best words". Regardless of their ability to string coherent sentences together, both men care nothing for working people and simply use their frustrations and anger to further entrench their power and divide the population. In America, this has ultimately led to the possibility of civil war and in Britain to rising xenophobia and an economically disastrous decision to leave the E.U. However, on both sides of the pond, in the past five years, there has been a resurgence of socialist interest which came close to putting both the

socialist democrat *Bernie Sanders* and the socialist *Jeremy Corbyn* in power in America and Britain respectively. Unfortunately, while we are told we live in democratic nations, we are gently “encouraged” not to venture outside the neoliberal paradigm we inhabit. We can vote for either of the two parties in both countries, but only if the candidate is a sworn neoliberal. The billionaire owned media corporations make sure of that. Enter again, the *Propaganda Blitz*.

Jeremy Corbyn, a lifelong supporter of the working class and defender of minorities, slipped onto the 2015 ballot for leader of the Labour party with the bare minimum of 35 nominations. On a ticket of nationalizing rail and utility companies, making all education free, and most of all opposing wars on foreign soil, for the first time in decades, *Corbyn* offered the public a real choice at the ballot box. MPs who nominated him said they wanted all voices within the party to be on the ballot so a fair discussion could be had. However, they didn’t really think he stood any chance of winning the leadership contest. Unfortunately, for them, they weren’t quite in touch with how desperate many people were for real change in the U.K. after the hollowing out of state services and the erosion of communities. *Corbyn* was elected leader of the Labour party with the largest mandate ever won by a party leader with 250,000 votes. The neoliberal press had wasted no time in attacking *Corbyn’s* reputation but no sooner had *Corbyn* been elected leader, they went into overtime to discredit him. Murdoch’s *Sun* went with a smear campaign, labelling him a Marxist who wanted to take Labour back to the Russian revolution in 1917. The supposedly left leaning *Daily Mirror* also displayed their true neoliberal position by likening *Corbyn’s* chances of winning the leadership contest to those of Elvis being found on Pluto. Murdoch’s posh version of *the Sun*, *the Times*, compared his possibility of election as as deadly to Labour, as was the destruction of their environments to the Mayan and Viking civilizations. The former KGB operative and billionaire Lebedev’s Independent said the most important thing was to ensure that *Corbyn* was excluded and that a credible non fantasist leader chosen. Even the most left leaning *Guardian* showed their true colours by getting in on the act. *Jonathan Freedland* likened *Corbyn* supporters to kids and the war criminal, *Tony Blair*, in contrast was the adult in the room. With *Corbyn* as leader, the party was doomed to remain in opposition according to *Freedland*. *Polly Toynbee* was similarly critical, referring to the centrist years of *Blair*, *Brown* and *Miliband* as “friendly

coalition” while under *Corbyn* the party was a poisonous place. I’m not sure the people of Iraq, Afghanistan or Libya would use the word “friendly” to describe *the foreign policy of New Labour*. Another *Guardian* writer, *Suzanne Moore*, described *Corbyn* as a slightly less feral version of *Ken Livingstone*. Now, you might be thinking at this stage, well, these were the views of the journalists and they are free to express their views. Well, how about this example. When *Jeremy Corbyn* gave a speech at *London Gay Pride* in June 2016, he was heckled by a “*Labour activist*”, supposedly angry about *Corbyn’s* inability to get the traditional vote out for the Brexit remain campaign. The incident was covered by *ITN* and *Sky News* and made *the front page of the Guardian*. It later emerged that the activist, a *Tom Mauchline*, was a public relations professional working for *Portland Communications*. The strategic counsel for *this PR firm* was none other than *Tony Blair’s former media chief, Alistair Campbell*. This was another disciplined effort to undermine *Corbyn*. If any evidence of bias at the BBC is necessary, take this example from the *Andrew Neil* show. Mr. Neil, a lifelong Tory and former editor of the *Sunday Times* was making his *Daily Politics* show on BBC2 when he heard from a colleague that Labour’s Shadow Foreign Minister *Stephen Doughty* was considering resigning. Mr. Neil then hurriedly arranged for Mr. Doughty to resign live on air just five minutes prior to Prime Minister’s Questions in the House of *Commons*. *Word of the resignation* was sent to prime Minister David Cameron who used the resignation to attack *Corbyn*. Clearly, this is a case of the BBC making the news, rather than reporting it. In case any readers think criticism of the BBC is unfair, maybe the words of former BBC Trust chairman, *Sir Michael Lyons*, will help. Speaking about the BBC’s coverage of *Corbyn*, he had this to say, “*I can understand why people are worried about whether some of the most senior editorial voices in the BBC have lost their impartiality on this*” (609). *Jeremy Corbyn* was the victim of a relentless two-year campaign aimed at repelling the British public away from meaningful change. Fortunately, many people had seen through these attacks and on 8th June, 2017, he increased Labour’s share of the vote more than any other leader since 1945. In 2016, *Tony Blair* said handing power to *Corbyn* would be a dangerous experiment, but that didn’t stop more people voting for *Corbyn* in 2017 than they did Blair in 2005. Murdoch’s *Sun* had used its headline to urge Britons not to “*chuck Britain in the Cor-bin,*” and apparently when the election results were flashed across the screen, *Murdoch* stormed out of the room in what

was surely a huge setback for his corporation. Cue the centrist and right leaning humble pie eating contest with journalists all over Britain realizing they had completely misread the affection for which Corbyn and his compassionate policies were held. Unfortunately, not enough people were media savvy enough to realize a Corbyn government, but it was clear that many Brits had had enough of the non sensical trickle-down theory that never actually trickled down so much as was sucked up.

It hardly requires mentioning that in America, whichever Democratic candidate is chosen, they are going to face a hostile reception from the right-wing media, with *FOX News* at the bulwark. Democrats are communist loving snowflakes coming for your guns and intent on giving you socialised healthcare. This is propaganda at its most blatant. Everyone but FOX News viewers dismiss the channel as outright bias. CNN, MSNBC and the other centrist stations, to a lesser extent will offer their support for a Democratic candidate although the bias is slightly less fervent. However, again, when someone from outside the established two-party system threatens the status quo, even the supposed leftist MSNBC comes to the rescue of neoliberalism. Mr. Sanders, like Corbyn in the U.K. has been a lifelong supporter of minorities and working people. In 2019, in his second run at the presidency and running on a ticket of free healthcare, scrapping college tuition debt and taxing the countries' billionaires, he garnered huge grassroots support as people "Felt the burn". Sadly, these policies were not aligned with free markets, small government, low taxes and deregulation, which both red and blue parties adhere to. Enter the mainstream media to make sure no real change is forthcoming. *MSNBC's Chuck Todd* this time likened Sander's supporters to "brown shirts" for their online activism. The irony wasn't lost on Sanders, whose family were victims of the holocaust. It comes to something that just at the moment people begin organizing a grassroots campaign aimed at putting a man into the White house whose campaign isn't sanctioned and funded by corporate interests, that the supposed leftist MSNBC likens these grassroots campaigners pushing for real participatory democracy as fascist bullies. Sanders was able to amass \$34.5 million in individual funding with the average donation being just \$18.53. *Hardball* host *Chris Matthews* went even further by saying there would be executions in Central Park if Sanders was elected (615). Sanders is an ardent democratic socialist who wants America to follow the Danish and

Swedish models. When was the last time either of these countries executed anyone? The answer is 1910 for Sweden and 1950 for Denmark. In comparison, America is one of the only democratic countries to still execute their own citizens and in 2020 alone, seventeen people were put to death. In January 2021, three more people were executed in America than had been in the past seventy years in Denmark and 110 years in Sweden. But, let's not stop facts getting in the way of a nice little bit of propaganda. *The New York Times* compared Sanders to Trump by saying they see no need to change one divisive figure for another. Again, the fact that Trump is compared to Sanders and not Biden who shares the same ideology is hard to ignore. Bezos's personal newspaper, the *Washington Post*, ran an astonishing sixteen negative stories on Bernie Sanders in sixteen hours in March 2016, according to the media watchdog Fair (615). It's not hard to understand why as Sanders was promising to raise taxes on the wealthy and make the tech giants pay their fair share. It is estimated that under Sander's tax plan, Bezos would have paid \$9 billion in 2019. A guest on MSNBC said that Sanders made her skin crawl but when questioned why, could not provide a reason. A CNN host compared him to the Corona virus with the on-screen caption, "*Can Either Coronavirus or Bernie Sanders Be Stopped?*" Why would the apparently left leaning media be so desperate to stop the election of a democratic socialist? The Economist made no bones with their cover page headline equating both Sanders and Trump as the, "*American nightmare*". If the mainstream media weren't attacking Sanders, they were doing the next best thing of ignoring him. In the 2016 campaign, Trump received 32% of overall campaign coverage on ABC, CBS and NBC, Hillary Clinton got 23%, and Sander's campaign was the focus of less than 2% (617). With almost half of Americans, 43%, believing that socialism would be good for the country, it is clear as day that the media do not reflect the feelings of the population as much as they do the owners themselves (618). In 2013, then President *Barrack Obama* was candid about the nature of American politics when he said the Democrats and Republicans were playing within the 40-yard line, an American football reference to the narrow parameters acceptable (620). To highlight how restricted the playing field has become, it is worth noting that both *Friedrich Engels* and *Karl Marx* were regular contracted contributors to the *New York Tribune* in the 1860s. The Tribune had the largest circulation of any newspaper on the planet (623). Today, if you mention the word "sharing", you are labelled a communist

and shunted into obscurity. Noam Chomsky sums up the political theater succinctly:

“The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum... (623)”

Essentially, our two parties are the same party with different branding and slogans, but their aims are the same; make the rich richer and pretend they believe that will trickle down to the rest of us. We’ve been doing this for forty years and clearly, as we’ve seen, it doesn’t work. As Einstein once noted, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Propaganda Blitzes aren’t just reserved for politicians and are routinely launched on individuals upsetting the apple cart, so to speak. Two examples in the past decade include *Julian Assange*, guilty of providing the world with evidence of American war crimes in Iraq and the comedian and activist *Russell Brand*, guilty of trying to turn young minds on to politics.

Assange is currently trapped in Belmarsh prison after the U.S. government lost an extradition case to the United States where, according to journalist *Glenn Greenwald*, the intention is that he spend the rest of his days incarcerated. This is on top of a seven year stay in a converted office in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London where he was attempting to protect himself from American extradition attempts. *Assange* found notoriety after devising a safe encrypted drop box on the internet, called Wikileaks. This confidential delivery method was used by individuals who wished to expose wrongdoing in their workplaces. The American soldier *Chelsea Manning* delivered a treasure trove of documents to Wikileaks that identified American war crimes in Iraq, especially pertinent was the video of an American Apache helicopter crew slaughtering innocent civilians, including a Reuters journalist and child, then laughing about the killings live on camera as they were gunning people down. The story made headlines around the world and *Assange* became a wanted man overnight. The leaks provided by *Chelsea Manning* included cables sent between Washington

and its foreign Embassies around the world. They are included in the enlightening book, *The Wikileaks Files: The World According to US Empire*. These cables, which were considered confidential, highlighted the role that the U.S. plays around the world and were highly embarrassing for the U.S. Government. Enter at stage right, Mr. Propaganda and Mrs. Blitz. The Guardian's *Suzanne Moore* referred to him as "the most massive turd," while others across the media reserved scorn for a man who was doing their jobs for them, by exposing war crimes. His personality flaws are hardly important in the grand scheme of things, but this is what seems more important to journalists than the information he provided them. He was compared to *Mike Tyson* and *Chris Brown*, who were both found guilty of rape, even though he was never actually charged with any crime relating to allegations of sexual misconduct in Sweden. Since being removed from the Ecuadorian Embassy in London by British police, the international media have stayed largely silent on Assange's predicament which is both odd and concerning. Assange was acting as a journalist in publishing materials on his site. If he can be convicted for this crime and spend the rest of his days behind bars, then what of the other journalists who dare publish stories that are deemed embarrassing to the state?

The case of *Russell Brand*, while not as disturbing as that of Assange, does though, highlight the role of the media in protecting the beloved status quo. Russell's crime it seems, is of turning over a new leaf and trying to turn on young minds, not to drugs, but to politics. The man from Gravesend had achieved what most young men from Gravesend are supposed to aspire to in becoming a Hollywood movie star and marrying a rich and famous pop singer. In our current system, he had it made, he had won. He was at the top with the big house, fast cars and beautiful girls. Russell though, had other ideas. After a realization that life was about more than money and brief sexual encounters, he started to delve a little deeper into the systems that control our lives. He didn't much like what he found. Now, according to the status quo, at this point, because of his accumulated wealth, he should have just shut up and enjoyed his privilege. Instead, he decided to use his celebrity to underline that the current neoliberal order was destroying the planet and doesn't represent the working people, but the corporations, who we have seen, are bankrolling our political parties. This was a grave error of judgement according to the *Guardian* columnist *Nick Cohen*, who compared him to fascist dictator *Benito Mussolini*, while the billionaire owned

media called, him a champagne socialist, the most common trope attached to anyone with money who speaks out about injustice or ecocidal behaviour. When someone without money speaks out, they are labelled as jealous, and when someone with money raises their voice, they are slandered as *champagne socialists* or *limousine liberals*. Had *Mr. Karl Marx* been alive today, he too would have been labelled a *bourgeois bohemian*. It's no coincidence that Marx himself was from an upper-middle class family and Engels from a rich textile producing family. Their wealth allowed them the time to think critically about political systems and offer an alternative. Had they been born into a working family; would they have had the time to write a *Communist Manifesto*? The media seemingly enjoys playing this vital role of attack dog with aplomb.

Thus far, we have seen clear, direct, examples of propaganda at play, but there is much more ubiquitous and subtle propaganda at work. As former President Bush Jr stood in front of the cameras after September 11th, he had some advice for Americans. In an attempt to show the terrorists that life in America will go on as normal, he didn't tell people to get together with friends and family and play in the park. Instead, his advice was to go shopping and visit Disneyland. A couple of decades later, during the deadliest pandemic to grip the globe in 100 years, as people were encouraged to avoid meeting with family and friends, they were instead encouraged to "*shop, and shop with confidence,*" by British Prime minister *Boris Johnson*. This message was delivered just a day after the total number of COVID-19 deaths had risen to 41,698 (614). I'm sure there will be some guffawing at this, and the argument will be that this is what the economy needs, and peoples' livelihoods are at stake. There can be little disagreement with that. This is what the economy needs, and people's livelihoods are at stake. What should perhaps trouble us is that our economy is based on us buying stuff that we don't need even if it threatens our health and the future of life as we know it on this planet. We must keep buying little plastic trinkets and clothes that we will discard after one use. Shop, shop, shop. This is our existence now. We are consumers. This kind of thinking has become so entrenched that we no longer even question it. From business news presenters energetically advising us to buy, buy, buy or sell, sell, sell to Hollywood and everything in between, we are gently "persuaded" to purchase and accumulate as much stuff as we possibly can. According to marketing firm Yankelovich, Inc, the average person is

exposed to around 5,000 advertisements a day. Humans today would have more success in identifying brand logos than they would trees or birds. We have been gently removed from nature and most of us haven't even noticed. If the people who care so deeply about livelihoods being destroyed by the restrictions in place to stem the spread of Covid-19 could reserve just an ounce of that concern for the people losing their homes and lives right now from the climate emergency, we might be able to actually stop the worst from happening. Our current system, which is reliant on constant growth on a planet with quite obvious limits, is responsible for the sixth extinction and watching the news, you'd be forgiven for thinking that declining spending is a bad thing, while it is quite literally the best thing for our survival chances. For obvious reasons though, our media cannot discuss this fact, they are in the pockets of the powerful elite currently profiting from the destruction. Again, I'm sure there will be those who claim this is hyperbole, and in response to those, I will end this section with the words of *Rupert Murdoch's* son, James, and his good wife *Kathryn Murdoch*

"Spreading disinformation — whether about the election, public health or climate change — has real world consequences, many media property owners have as much responsibility for this as the elected officials who know the truth but choose instead to propagate lies. We hope the awful scenes we have all been seeing will finally convince those enablers to repudiate the toxic politics they have promoted once and forever (620)."



"Julian Assange Wikileaks named Man of the Year by Le Monde" by Abode of Chaos is licensed with CC BY 2.0.