

Building the Left

An essay by Ethan Taylor

It has long been a problem for us on the left to grow our ideologies. If there is anything that connects anarchists, marxists, social democrats, and the like, it is our inability to convince non-leftists to join us in our struggle. But how can we change this? Without the support of the masses, a revolution can not succeed. In this essay, I will explain how we can all help build the left.

Before we begin, it is important that we define "propaganda." To some, deception is a key component of propaganda. To others, propaganda is any form of media that promotes an ideology. For the purpose of this essay, propaganda will be defined as the latter.

Traditional Propaganda (Art)

This form of propaganda is considered to be the oldest. In recent years, historians have come to a consensus that the first instance of this was made during the rule of Darius I in the Achaemenid Empire. This piece, called the Behistun Inscription, depicts conspirators and rebels who were fighting the Achaemenids being punished under the approving eyes of Ahura Mazda.

Propaganda art is one of the most effective forms of propaganda. It appeals to emotion, which, according to Michael Gazzaniga, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, drives more than 80% of decision-making in humans.

Literature as propaganda

Literature is a common form of propaganda among leftists. The working class is largely uneducated. In the United States, 54% of adults are described as "lacking proficiency" in literature by the U.S. Department of Education, and 21% of adults are completely illiterate.

The majority of us do not have time to read long and complex books, and if we do, it is spent distracting ourselves with mindless entertainment. This is one of the worst ways to build our movement, and it is one of the main reasons why we are not gaining traction among other workers.

Propaganda of the Deed

This form of propaganda is most popular among anarchists. The idea behind it is to cause the spark that will engulf the world in revolution. This can range from showing the masses how things would work under our system, like mutual aid, to rioting. It depends on which we choose as a good form of propaganda.

The people have been brainwashed to believe that violence is bad, no matter the reason for it. We need to save the violence for the revolution. If we do it before then, we will only alienate ourselves from the masses.

Which form of propaganda should we utilize the most?

In order of best-to-worst:

1. Traditional Propaganda
2. Propaganda of the Deed
3. Literature