

FORUM

'Truth-bending'

I think it was about twenty years ago that I first noticed the subtle propaganda campaign being waged by overseas publications against ourselves. This was the type of propaganda where nothing is said very effectively. The example I offer is ' . . . and during WW2 the Commonwealth rallied to Britain's aid, Australians, Canadians etc and so forth' but no mention of South Africa. At first I thought it was ignorance but it became obvious later when similar historic occasions such as Remembrance Day were commemorated on BBC TV and the like that a bit of deliberate forgetting was on the go.

Another form of education which the BBC TV was, and is, remarkably good at is the use of the blatant lie. I remember a particular soap opera which went on for some time featuring at one stage a conscientious objector in WW1 being tied up in a position where he could be shot at by the enemy. The readers of the Times and Telegraph complained bitterly about this travesty of the truth. The trouble was that \pm 80% of the viewing population never read the Times or Telegraph. According to the BBC it was only a story after all.

They did it again in a serial called 'Wings'. Research into this was excellent and what better documented outfit is there than the RFC. But the BBC had a message. Officers were brave and

stupid public schoolboys while the NCOs were hard-working, dedicated and intelligent. Anyone with the ability to read knows well that apart from the Commonwealth pilots (or should I say Pilots from the Empire) some of the best British aviators had working-class backgrounds. My point is that the researchers must have known this and deliberately distorted the truth.

The last bit of truth-bending I came upon was in the remake of 'All Quiet on the Western Front'. The kindly veteran-type Sgt discovers one of the newly-arrived troops is armed with a saw-tooth bayonet. On questioning the man he is told that this is a bright idea back at Base. 'All the chaps are getting their bayonets treated thus'. I well remember a cousin of mine having a German saw-tooth bayonet as a WW1 souvenir, and that was how it was made and issued. Not, you understand, to make bigger and better holes in the enemy, but rather for sawing wood should the need arise. Hence the lack of trees in war torn France, no doubt. Was the film producer putting across his own little message that there were only a few bayonets like that? And, if so, why in 1981?

I throw these remarks into the ring to see if it generates any discussion.

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