

TOTUUS

KARJALAIS-SUOMALAINEN SNT:n KP(b)n KK:n ja PETROSKOIN KAUPUNKIKOMITEAN
SEKS KORKEIMMAN NEUVOSTON AÄNENKANNATTAJA

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Neuvostoliiton Korkeimman Neuvoston Puhemieslistän
ASETUS
TOV. V. M. MOLOTOVIN VAPAUTTAMISESTA NEUVOSTO-
LIITON KANSANKOMISSARIEN NEUVOSTON
PUHEENJOHTAJAN TEHTÄVISTÄ

Karjalais-Suomalaisen SNT:n Kansankomissaarien Neuvoston ja KP(b)n Keskuskomiteassa Tasavallan metsäteollisuuden kilpailun jatkamisesta

Hyväksytyt Metsä- ja viittotyö-
laitien ammattiliiton Aluekomi-
tean ja tasavallan Metsäteollis-
uuden kansankomissaariston
pyynnön, ovat tasavallan Kan-
sankomissaarien Neuvosto ja
KP(b)n Keskuskomitea päätti-
neet jatkaa tänä vuonna lop-
putta saksien lauvalla käsitel-
tyä kilpailua parhaasta metsä-
teollisuuspöytäkirjasta, parhaasta me-
kanisoidusta metsätyöväestöstä
parhaasta metsätyöväestöstä ja
ehotusten mukaisesti, jotka Kan-
sankomissaarien Neuvosto ja
KP(b)n KK vahvistivat joulukuun 10 päivänä v. 1940.

Tasavaltamme kirjallijat Leningradissa

LENINGRAD 6. (Kirjeenvaihto-
tallamme.)
Eilen Leningradin saapui ryhmä
Karjalais-Suomalaisen SNT:n
kirjallijoita, runoilijoita ja ru-
nosäilijöitä. Keskiyötyössä he-
leimme kirjjoenvaihtajia kaassa
kirjallija Viktor Tshchov tiedotti,
että tasavaltamme ja Leningra-
din kirjallijain välillä on jo
pitemmän aikaa vallinnut laaja
yhteyttä. Joukko Leningradin
kirjallijoita otti osaa tasavallan
me kirjallijain edustajakokouk-
sen työhön. Joku aika sitten Pet-
rokskissa vieraili ryhmä leningra-
dilaisia kirjallijoita ja runoilijoita.
Kirjallijain liittoa käsiteltiin
aikakausjulkaisujen ensimmäisen
numeroin ja kirjallijain suusta
luettiin. Leningradilaiset luettiin
arostelivat viiteksi ja antivat
ohjeita kirjallijain liittoa työlle.

Elokuva „Mashenkan“ filmaus

Tasavaltamme kirjallijat, runoilijat ja runosäilijät kävivät
eilen Majakovskin nimellä omis-
tettua kirjallijain Keskust. Tä-
män on siellä kirjallijain.

Sota-akat omistettu j

Toukokuun 5 päivänä
Kremlin saapui palatsin istun-
nassa julistettiin päätös
kaasun palatsin johtajien ja
saasen Armeijan akatemian
suojeluskokouksen 3 sessiön
dokannasta.
Kello 6 illanpuolella istun-
nassa aloitettiin akatemian
päättökäsi. Professori
opettaja sekä Punainen Ar-
meija ja sotaväestön yleinen
päättökokous edustajia.
Toukokuun 5 päivänä, V. M.
Molotov, K. J. Voroshilov,
M. I. Kalinin, L. N.
Kaganovitsh, A. Andrejev,
A. I. Mikojalin, A. A. Shdanov,
S. M. Shvernikov, S. A.
Vassercman, A. S. Shostakovin,
G. M. Malenkovin, S. K.
Tshchoukoun ja N. G. Kuznet-
sin ilmeisesti puheenvuoroon
ostettiin valittiin kansankomitean
valtuutetut kuusi henkilöä. La-
sioijat nousivat seisomaan ja
tervehdyivät toveri Stalinia ja
hänen työstönsä. Kukaan

Sota-akat

Toukokuun 5 päivän itana
NK(b)n Keskuskomitea ja
Neuvostoliiton hallitus järjesti
Kremlissä, Kremlin suursessa
palatsissa valittuun sotaväes-
tönsä päätökseen. Kello 7
mennessä Yrjö sai, Vladimirin
sali, Pion ja Uoi sali lähtivät
virasta. Päätti sota-akatomin
päättökäsi istunton saapui
NK(b)n KK:n jäseni, kan-
sankomissaarija. Neuvostoliiton
Korkeimman Neuvoston edusta-
ja Punaisen Armeijan ja Sotavä-
estönsä yleinen päättökokous
Neuvostoliiton
Sankareita, Sosialistien Työn
Sankareita, sotakollegojen johtajia,
professorieja ja opettajia.
Tilaisuudessa olivat istun-
vostoliiton määrälkä Budjonni
ja Kullk armeijan kenraali
Shkurov, Mereshkov ja Tshchov,
amiraali Isakov ja Galler, tove-
ri Shkharinov, Dmitrov, Mehlin,
Vyshinski, Bulgovin, Semiatshka,
Perevkin, Malyshov, Kossigin,
Vakhrushin, Shamarin, Badajev,
Jaroslavski, Popov, Mitin,
Tevojan, Vannikov, Jefremov,
Dekannov, Luarski, Gorkin,
Nikolajev, Proin, Popov, ja
Tsherousov, Hollov, Masalski,
Kaftanov, Sosialistien Työn
Sankari Nikolin, Polikarpov, ja
Shpitshyni ja Isakov, Neuvostoli-
iton Sankari Dushkin.

Punaisen A

Toukokuun 5 päivänä Punai-
sien Armeijan sotaväestön ja
sotaväestökoulujen erikois- ja
sotaväestökoulun lakitien auden
lausausten monipuolisesti kuultet-
kaja, ammattilaisia konserte-
ka-

The Finnish Pravda: How to spot the red flags of propaganda

Text and photo — Mirka Lindgren née Laakso

In this day and age, we have more information available to us than ever before. Some of it is correct, some of it is incorrect, and some of it is outright malicious. How do we cope with this modern trend of information overflow, and why does it need to be coped with?

Of course, the problem is not the information itself but what people decide to do with it – or because of it. Information affects everything from politics and economy to relationships, culture and more. It is therefore extremely important that the information we base our decisions on is correct. This leads us to the problem at hand – how do we differentiate between correct, incorrect and even malicious information? The solution is multifaceted to say the least, so allow me to do my part in tackling this problem by teaching you how to spot malicious information, also known as propaganda.

When modern times lead us to confusing dead-ends with seemingly no solutions, it is always a good idea to study history. The past can often offer

us guidance, advice and directions, and at the very least, empathy. Yes, humanity has messed up before, and yet we are still standing.

Propaganda, as we usually understand it, can be traced back to the First World War, where it reached its first pinnacle. Its use spread like wildfire once the means to transport it had been developed. By the time of the Second World War, propaganda had levelled up: it became not only a crucial part of warfare, but an essential part of the political culture of the great powers of the time, most notably Germany and the Soviet Union.

Propaganda can be briefly defined as false or twisted information, that is spread with the purpose of influencing the receiver of the message. It is an antagonist to the theme of this Gazeta: truth. In this article, I will do my best to reveal to you some secrets of malicious information. I believe in the power of case studies, so allow me to introduce you to Totuus, or “Truth”!

First lesson

If someone especially exclaims that they are telling the truth, it's usually a red flag, implying signs of propaganda. *Totuus*, or "Truth" was a Soviet Karelian newspaper published in the area of Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic from 1940 until 1955. As some of you might guess, it was, simply put, the Finnish-language equivalent of the newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, *Pravda*.

Totuus announced in its first issue that "the newspaper is the sharpest weapon of the Party." Indeed, it was vital for the Communist Party to control the media – and therefore the narrative – not only of communist ideology, but also of other ideologies, such as imperialism. Nowadays, the Soviet communist propaganda is probably one of the most recognizable historical examples of propaganda, and *Totuus* was no exception. To get its message across, different methods and means of propaganda were put to use in the paper. With the help of *Totuus*, I will teach you to detect more red flags in media, which will help you evaluate whether something is propaganda or not.

Second lesson

"Kansan kaikki voimat murskaamaan vihollista!"
"All the might of the people to crush the enemy!"
Totuus, July 5th 1941

Does the text urge you to act in a certain way? There's the next red flag. During the Second World War, *Totuus* aimed to engage every single reader in war efforts, either by fighting at the front, working hard in the industry or agriculture or contributing in some other way. The call for action can sometimes be less direct. In *Totuus*, for example, big headlines were devoted to various kinds of competitions in which citizens at least seemingly participated. Factories would compete on who can produce most goods in the shortest time, and the editorial board of *Totuus* was even challenged to a marching competition. The purpose of these kinds of texts was to encourage citizens to join in the same efforts.

According to this lesson, most advertisements are propaganda as well, since their purpose is usually to make you buy something. **Joonas Pörsti** has argued that the aim of propaganda is to change how people behave – not how people think. It makes sense after a short scrutinization – your thoughts exist only in your head, but what shows outside and therefore matters to others, to communities, societies, and businesses, is how you act. Both **Lenin** and **Hitler** emphasized political action over ideological doctrines.

Third lesson

"Stalinin nimi huulillaan sankarilliset punaiset soturit murskasivat Karjalan kannaksen rautabetoniset linnoitukset –"

"With Stalin's name on their lips, the heroic red warriors crushed the iron concrete fortresses on the Karelian Isthmus –"

Totuus, September 29th 1940

Is the text grandiose, loud, absolute, perhaps even irritating? If the style leaves little room for other voices, that is another red flag. *Totuus* accepted only one version of the story: the communist one. For example, the Winter War was painted as a threat from Finland that had materialised, while the opposite – the Finnish side of the story – was never heard.

The language used in *Totuus* was indeed often grandiose, loud and absolute, definitely something one could also find irritating. For example, when comparing the Finnish society with the Soviet one, the opposites were truly polar. The Finnish society was not only bad, it was horrible and hopeless and on its way to the worse, while the Soviet society was idealised as dreamy, excellent, and on its way to take over the world.

Sometimes propaganda may slip from absolutes and begins to contradict itself. This happened in *Totuus* as well. For example, the state of Finland was sometimes presented as evil itself, but at other times as a mere vessel for the Western imperialists such as Great Britain. Pörsti introduces an idea

famous in propaganda studies: propagandists themselves should not believe in the propaganda they spread, since doing so would make it difficult to change the message when needed. Propaganda is, by nature, an instrument to achieve a goal, and it does not have to follow any ideals, such as consistency.

Fourth lesson

”– – valkosuomalaisten lentokoneet pakenivat heti, kun Punaisen Armeijan lentokoneet lähestyivät niitä.”

”– – the airplanes of the White Finns fled immediately when the airplanes of the Red Army came closer.”

Totuus, October 5th 1940

Is something too good – or too awful – to be true? There is no denying that horrible events have taken place around the world lately, and therefore the news have been truly awful as well. However, if a media outlet thrives on shock value of either extreme positives or extreme negatives, you might want to consider that a red flag.

Totuus published many war reports as well as industrial statistics, both of which tended to exceed all expectations and celebrate Soviet success. It has been proven that the Soviet media grossly exaggerated their victories and hid their losses, which is very obvious in *Totuus* as well. In its pages, Finnish soldiers are always losing, and the Red Army is always winning. The stories make war seem easy and sometimes even amusing, since according to *Totuus*, the White Finns are hilarious with their bad skills and even worse habits.

The purpose of such texts was likely to calm families on the home front. Enemy images had to be carefully balanced – they needed to be frightening enough to evoke hatred, but not so scary as to cause worry and fear. Balancing is probably one of the big challenges of modern media as well. Consider, for instance, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russo-Ukrainian war, and the atrocities committed by Israel in Gaza. How to

report on these events without wreaking more havoc and causing unnecessary fear among people, yet still present a realistic picture of what is going on? The step towards propaganda is sometimes a slippery one, and truth is often stranger than fiction.

Fifth lesson

”– – suomalaiset valkobandiitit luulivat hyötyvänsä neuvostokansan kustannuksella.”

”– – the white Finnish bandits thought they could take advantage of the Soviet nation.”

Totuus, August 14th 1941

Do you notice the same words appearing time and time again? Always the same storyline and recurring concepts? Repetition is one of the strongest tools of propaganda, and therefore it makes a fitting final lesson.

In *Totuus*, an enemy image of the Finnish people was created by consistently attaching the word “white” to “Finnish” or “Finns”. This was a way for *Totuus* to separate the good Finns – the red ones, aka communists – from the enemy Finns, the white ones, aka capitalists. When parts of Finland had been attached to the Soviet Union after the Winter War, **Stalin** promoted the Finnish language in Soviet Karelia. As a result, the writers of *Totuus* were mostly Finns or Karelians. The word “white” was therefore essential in constructing the enemy image – otherwise, the propagandists might have been targeting themselves. For the Soviet Union, the communist ideology was more important than nationality.


You can test yourself on this fifth lesson with a simple thought experiment. Choose a few debated terms and do a “rapid fire” exercise: say the very first thing that comes to mind when you hear a certain term. You may quickly notice suspicious combinations, such as immigrants and crime. No matter your ideology, you, too, are a victim of current mass media, and therefore might hold surprising connections in your subconscious without ever having consciously formed them. Repetition is the key to effective propaganda. If

you tell a lie often enough, people will eventually start to believe it.

Resisting propaganda

Totuus serves well as a case study example of propaganda, as it breathes the communist narrative, delivers fierce war-time messaging, and strives to create strong images of both the enemies of the Soviet Union and its own readers – being the central newspaper of a newly formed region. In *Totuus*, therefore, propaganda is often clear and recognizable. However, this is not always the case especially with modern media. Sometimes propaganda is very subtle, believable and great at hiding.

With the help of my five short lessons, you can now analyze information to see whether it is malicious or not. Does it claim to speak the truth, urge you to act in a certain way, speak very loudly, exaggerate its message, and repeat it often? There you have enough red flags to confidently declare a message as propaganda.

In fact, after reading this article, you will probably start noticing more red flags in the media than before. It is difficult to spot attempts at influence when caught off guard, but once you know the signs, you know what to look for. When propaganda can be recognized, its influence can be resisted. Therefore, I urge everyone to learn more about propaganda in order to survive in the modern information mayhem – all while acknowledging that I am, in fact, urging you to take action, just as any proper propagandist would. 



Sources

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