

# For whom the polls toll

by L. Wolfe

In the 1996 national political conventions, ABC television unveiled what it called the latest “breakthrough” in polling—the “Insta-poll.” A small “focus group” of selected individuals, supposedly a statistically valid demographic representation of the American population, sat in a room watching live telecasts of the Dole and Clinton acceptance speeches. In their hands, they held a rheostat-like device with which they registered their pleasure or displeasure with statements made by the candidate as he was speaking. These responses were fed into a computer, which then converted the aggregate responses into graphic representations, fluctuating on the screen as opinions instantly changed. The ABC commentators proclaimed that this “new” technology enabled them to break down the speech, to analyze what parts of it “played in Peoria.”<sup>1</sup>

Graphic representations aside, the technology was hardly new. Some 60 years ago, a similar device had been developed as part of a Rockefeller Foundation-funded project, using the U.S. networks of Freudian brainwashers from the Frankfurt School’s Institute for Social Research<sup>2</sup>, and other operatives allied with the London Tavistock Institute, to study radio’s impact on society and its potential for mass brainwashing. Directing the so-called Radio Research Project, based at Princeton University, was one of the fathers of public opinion polling, Paul Lazarsfeld, along with three others who were to become prominent in that “black art”: the Tavistock-linked Gordon Allport, from Harvard; Hadley Cantril, who established one of the leading polling-profiling operations out of Princeton; and Frank Stanton, then the director of research for the CBS radio network, who was later to rise to head CBS’s News Division, and still later to head both CBS network and the RAND Corporation.

The crowning achievement of the Radio Research Project was the Stanton-Lazarsfeld Program Analyzer, the so-called “Little Annie”—a rheostat-like device with which test audi-

ences could register the intensity of their likes and dislikes of radio programs, or commercials, on a *moment-to-moment* basis; the brainwashers were able to determine what particular characters or situations produced the desired, momentary feeling states in the target audience.<sup>3</sup>

## In the beginning . . .

All public opinion polling has its origins in “sociometrics,” or statistical sociology, as developed in the early part of this century by Frankfurt School-linked operatives, including Max Weber.<sup>4</sup> It is based, as with ABC’s Insta-Poll, or the Radio Research Project’s “Little Annie,” on the measurement of momentary feeling states, or *opinions*, on given subjects. This provides a detailed profile of the *prejudices* and *assumptions* of a targetted population; as such, polls can be useful for mass brainwashing campaigns to shift opinions to those desired by those who run them. The mass media, as they developed through this century, from print, to radio, to television, became the principal vehicles for the promotion of such shifts.

*Creative thinking* defies measurement in quantifiable terms. It is impossible to come up with a statistical correlation, based on polling, that could determine whether one creative idea is better or more valid than another, whether it can be accepted by society as useful, important, or true. As those involved with the Radio Research Project, and such American pollsters as George Gallup and Lou Harris, or Elmo Roper, “proved,” *opinions* can be easily counted; other-directed Americans, always concerned about what their neighbors think, as determinant of what they should think about given subjects, were shown to be readily susceptible to manipulation by poll results, accepting the poll numbers as true, and being guided in their own actions by the perceived “major-

1. While the commentators had clearly hoped for some dramatic results, the graphic data showed hardly any “connection” between the focus group, split between “Democrats,” “Republicans,” and “Independents,” and the acceptance speeches: The graphs were mostly horizontal lines, similar to the “flat-liner” readings of the vital signs of dead patients.

2. See Michael Minnicino, “The New Dark Age: The Frankfurt School and ‘Political Correctness,’” *Fidelio*, Winter 1992.

3. To this day, CBS maintains “program analyzer” capabilities in both New York and Hollywood; other networks and production studios use similar devices. It is said that they correlate 85% to A.C. Nielsen polling-ratings for television viewership.

4. While the concept of public opinion was discussed during the last century, the idea of statistically measuring it with polls is new to the twentieth century. The first interpretive public opinion poll was conducted in 1912, with the advice of Max Weber, to determine for a German trade union leader what his members thought about certain subjects, so that he could take the position on them that the majority would favor.



The polling process, as seen in the newspaper *New Federalist*.

ity opinion.”

Polling of the type that most Americans are familiar with began in the 1930s, becoming featured material on radio and in newspapers. At that time, most polls were conducted by national polling agencies, such as Gallup, Roper, or Harris, with specialized contracting handled through Cantril’s operation at Princeton and, later, Allport’s at Harvard. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the key U.S. nodes of Tavistock were conducting specialized polling operations, under contract from government agencies and the private sector. In the 1960s, the television and radio networks linked up with major newspapers, such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, to run their own polling operations; they are now a staple of the nightly television news broadcasts on all networks, including the cable news channels, such as CNN.<sup>5</sup>

### Shifting policy

There has always been a more covert, secret side to these polling operations. The results of the Radio Research Project had demonstrated the effectiveness of public opinion polling for *profiling* populations, to determine their subjective weaknesses, for purposes of manipulation. This was put to work during World War II, as Tavistock-linked brainwashers conducted extensive polling of the enemy and allied populations,

5. It was Frank Stanton who introduced polling as a component of the “Evening News” during his reign at CBS.

operating from the Army’s Psychological Warfare Directorate and the Committee on National Morale, to determine the effectiveness of brainwashing propaganda.<sup>6</sup> The findings became the basis of detailed country and regional population profiles that were used by the British oligarchy and its American lackeys to shape post-World War II policy.<sup>7</sup>

6. One of the key profiling operations revolved around the study of war bond sales, and the effectiveness of the various promotional campaigns. Among its findings, was that the American population had little belief in anything that political figures said, with the exception of President Franklin Roosevelt; however, they tended to look favorably upon the same statements made by movie stars and similar figures of popular culture.

7. Some of the results of the polling was published in journals, such as *Public Opinion Quarterly*, edited by Cantril, and directed toward pollsters and their controllers. These and other classified data revealed that Americans, while still fearing “communism,” looked forward toward working with Russia as a continuing ally in President Roosevelt’s proposed postwar “grand design” for peace and prosperity. There was also a great deal of distrust of the colonial powers, most notably the British Empire, and support for a policy of emancipation for all colonial peoples, and an accompanying economic improvement—provided that American prosperity could be insured; the overriding fear of a new depression was noted, as well. After Roosevelt’s death, British-inspired efforts split the potential alliance between the Russians and the United States, and a new wave of anti-communist hysteria was cranked up leading to the obscenity of McCarthyism. Simultaneously, the country was plunged into a new depression, and its profiled response had Americans retreating into their own fearful lives, giving up, for that crucial moment, the hopes for a better world, free of colonialism, that had been inspired by Roosevelt and the victory over fascism.

Immediately after World War II, the most extensive profiling of the American population to date took place under the auspices of a project run jointly through the Tavistock-Frankfurt School networks, ostensibly to study “prejudice” in the United States. The study, whose most notorious volume was titled *The Authoritarian Personality*, was used to promote the still-widely-held belief that fascism derives from certain “personality types,” and its quack measurements and description of this personality type have since been used to target any enemy of British policy interests.<sup>8</sup> The database assembled from the tens of thousands of interviews, provided a compilation of manipulable proclivities and fears of Americans, that was used in the following decades.<sup>9</sup>

Another major polling-profiling operation was undertaken by Tavistock networks in the 1960s, under a NASA grant, ostensibly to examine the impact of the space program on the population. The findings of the semi-secret Rapoport Report, of which only one volume was published, found that the space program had produced a “dangerous” outbreak of cultural optimism and belief in the capability of creative scientific thinking to solve problems; this was dangerous to the British policy of post-industrialism, then beginning to be implemented.<sup>10</sup> The reports, which found their way into the highest policy circles of the British Empire, led to a decision to shut down the U.S. space program as rapidly as possible, even as it was achieving its crowning success with the 1969 manned lunar landing.

To build public support for this shutdown of the space program, starting in that same period, an effort was launched through public opinion polling, by agencies such as Gallup and Harris, and promoted in the media, including television, to “show” that Americans were opposed to the continued expenditures for manned space flight; the fraudulent results of these polls helped shape the 1970-72 election campaigns, in which such a scale-back was debated.<sup>11</sup>

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8. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the British-controlled and -influenced U.S. media have used this method against Lyndon LaRouche.

9. Interestingly, Frankfurt School-directed profiling of the German population in the 1930s found that anti-Semitism was not a feature of the German character, that Germany was not anti-Semitic as a nation, nor was anti-Semitism even the most important feature of Nazism. Those findings proved a great embarrassment, that had to be covered up, for the “authoritarian personality” hoax to play out.

10. A portion of the so-called Rapoport Report was published under the title, *Social Change: Space Impact on Communities and Social Groups* (see also *EIR*, Jan. 12, 1996, “The Tavistock Roots of the ‘Aquarian Conspiracy’”).

11. The cited polls usually asked questions that compared expenditures for the space program to funds needed for mass transit, new housing, and similar “down to earth” programs. At first, there was no direct question about support for the space program itself, or even for the lunar landing; those questions were asked later, after the initial poll results were publicized, and after various “scientists” were brought into public view to claim that unmanned space exploration was the cheaper and more effective use of funds. Never was anyone told about the vast benefits to the domestic economy caused directly and indirectly by the Apollo program.

## Big business

Today, public opinion polling is a multibillion-dollar industry, involving tens of thousands of operatives, and hundreds of thousands of polls annually. Aside from the daily appearance of poll results in the media, corporate and business leaders use polls to guide their decisions on everything from when to best announce layoffs, to what color next year’s cars should be.<sup>12</sup> Political figures, from the President on down, unfortunately rely on polls and pollsters to determine what they should say and how they should act; in the most recent election campaign, approximately 15% of the vast sums of money spent went to pollsters and their analysts.<sup>13</sup>

“Polls prove that people are stupid,” said Hal Becker, who headed the Connecticut-based Futures Group, an outfit which specialized in sophisticated polling of the U.S. and other national populations. “If you want an American to believe something, then all you have to do is get a poll taken that says it is so (and believe me, that is an easy thing to do, if you know how), and then get it publicized. You can tell somebody the Moon is made of green cheese—if the poll numbers say it is so, then the jerk reading them or watching them on the boob tube will believe it. Guaranteed.”

Becker made those comments in 1981. They are just as true today. However, no matter how many people believe that something is true, this doesn’t make it true, but only the prevailing *opinion*. Ted Turner, the media magnate now conjoined with Time-Warner, believes that the future of U.S. politics lies in the instant polling of Americans, which he calls the ultimate form of participatory democracy; new forms of interactive cable and the Internet, he says, will make all this possible.<sup>14</sup> He is not alone in such professed beliefs; a 1991 Tavistock-initiated study on, among other things, new forms of world government, reached a similar conclusion.<sup>15</sup> Our Founding Fathers, in their infinite wisdom, designed a Republican government, based on seeking the truth, and resisting the whims of ill-informed or manipulated “mass democracy.” We have already come too far down the path plowed by the pollsters, and their backers such as Turner—a path which leads straight to fascism.

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12. Walter Lippmann’s associate at the British Wellington House psychological warfare unit during World War I, Sigmund Freud’s nephew Eduard Bernays, was the first to emphasize the value of polling data for determining public taste. Bernays is generally regarded as the father of “Madison Avenue” advertising.

13. Much of the political polling is complete fabrication. As some of the work of Roy Cohn-linked Dick Morris demonstrated, it is intended to manipulate candidates into spending money for media, with the appropriate kickbacks to the pollsters.

14. Turner’s partner, Warner Communications, had experimented with mass interactive democracy during the 1980s, using its interactive cable system, Qube, to provide instant referenda for local governments.

15. The 1989-91 Case Western Reserve-directed study on mass participatory democracy, proposed using technology that became the Internet, as a mechanism for doing away with the nation-state. See *EIR*, May 24, 1996, “Tavistock’s Imperial Brainwashing Project.”