

THE SPORT OF DISTRACTION

∞ SECOND EDITION ∞

*Identifying the
Beneficiaries of a
Dumbed-Down Society
& the Strategies Used
to Develop It*

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So that all might think independently...

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“In order that the masses themselves may not guess what they are about we further distract them with amusements, games, pastimes, passions, people’s palaces...Soon we shall begin through the press to propose competitions in arts, in sport of all kinds these interests will finally distract their minds from question in which we should find ourselves compelled to oppose them. Growing more and more disaccustomed to reflect and form any opinions of their own, people will begin to talk in the same tone as we, because we alone shall be offering them new directions for thought...”

Protocol #13, Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion

First and foremost, it must be noted that referencing the *Protocols* in order to serve a larger purpose does not symbolize agreeance with the ideas and notions put forth by the highly controversial and thoroughly disputed book--as it relates to the accusations of a Jewish-led conspiracy. To focus on that aspect is to completely miss the intention of its use. It’s essential for the messenger to be distanced from the message so that the substance of the passage is given full attention—regardless of its origin and implications. After coming to that understanding, the reader is advised to revisit the quote. Be the referenced book a wildly fictitious product of a vivid imagination or an actual blueprint, whether utilized by Jew, Gentile, Muslim, agnostic, or pagan, the relevance of the objective addressed within the quote cannot be disregarded. The notion that the spirit of the idea lives and breathes within American society is as undeniable and obvious as is the need for a new way of thinking.

By introducing the reader to analogies and parallels between sport and politics, *The Sport of Distraction* has a goal of defogging the American mind from the pathologically conditioned states of apathy and partisanship that have plagued generation after generation of the citizenry—picking up steam most recently. An unhealthy number of individuals within society are stagnated and underdeveloped in all genres of intellect as a result of an inability to think critically. It’s the author’s

assertion that this state is the result of a cultural ritual of being enthralled within entertainment-based distractions and blind obedience; quite similar to the allegiance displayed by sports fanatics for their favorite sports teams. This text tackles this proposed epidemic of societal regression by pushing the envelope of what is considered to be the acceptable paradigms within society. Also introduced will be the identification of those that benefit from the disinformed state of the nation, as well as those who ultimately suffer from these circumstances.

...

As a society, America is bombarded with distractions; from the ever materialistically evolving but never metaphysically flourishing “pop culture” of movies, television, music, and fashion—to the massively obsessive preoccupation with the pleasing of the libido—to the relentless pursuit of technological nuance. With a multi-pronged attack aimed at dominating the sensibilities of the American public, which in-turn carries weight with the global populace, it’s easily understood how these elements have played a role in American society’s evolution from active producers of agriculture and industry, to entertainment-minded consumers with an initiative deficiency. As if the aforementioned social distractions were not enough to preoccupy the American mind from the most relevant issues of the day, yet another will be discussed; the industry of sport. Organized athletics are unsurpassed in regards to organization and the relentless advancement of it into the lives of the public.

Beginning in the elementary school days of American children, prominence and acceleration in sport is sought after and rewarded. Inspired in the playgrounds of grade school recess, picking up steam in the million-dollar high school gymnasium, and culminating in the multi billion-dollar industries that are collegiate and professional athletics, a premium is placed on American children developing their bodies and secondly their minds into machines that are able to produce winning results on a consistent basis—on several levels. In regards to young

males—who as well as females should be focused on the development of well-rounded, intellectual prowess—failure to outdo their peers athletically or at the very least show an interest in athletics, is considered to be less than masculine.

The parameters of society are defined at an early stage; the “popular” crowd shuns intellectual growth and the communion of such a group in large part includes athletic events as a common interest. The handful of individuals that pursue academic achievement are labeled as nerds and become outcasts as well as the punch lines of running jokes, furthering the rejection from the majority. With such options available to perceptive youth still on the verge of deciding which path to travel, the choice for most will quite clearly be the pursuit of social acceptance which will exclude the embracement of education and include the interest in the common attractions.

As it happens, there is no more universally stereotypical route to achieve popularity for youth than through the channels of athletics. A notably slight portion are able to achieve athletic dominance resulting in the desired societal effect, while the others that fall short of the goal do not stray far from the common interest—developing extended attachments to sport as territory of familiarity which may develop into life-long identity.

In addition, a contributor to this equation is the lack of incentive for those that show an interest in academics. Should as much emphasis be placed on the development of the intellectual muscle, as on the current avenues of social acceptance and prosperity, the psychological make-up of the adults, that are the result of the children within the initial equation, may have a higher level of probability for diversity in thought-patterns. In other words, society would reflect a more creative and eclectic group of individuals if the individuals were pushed to develop independent and intelligent thought, as opposed to emotionally based followership—or a mob-mentality. Under the current elements, the benefits of becoming enchanted with the sciences and mathematics are overwhelmingly defeated by the incentives—real or perceived—of the prevailing social distractions.

Others making similar societal evaluations might argue that sexually based commercial enterprise eclipses sport as the leader of distractions. Hypersexual deviance is unquestionably embedded within the psyche of individuals that make-up the society, but it is for the most part more individualistic in nature. Of course, the idea of sex being private has become less accurate in recent times, with each generation's youth increasingly leading the way in public displays of infatuation. But generally, the idolization of sex is a phenomenon that is unspoken and more or less viewed as a shameful and private corruption or hobby—depending on your vantage point—of a different breed. Although equally as controlling, sport is an activity that can be openly discussed and can be viewed and/or participated in groups as a social, *public* gathering. Athletics are either a builder of camaraderie or a centerpiece for competition—but nonetheless a source of pride for those who choose to take part in, and/or claim to be knowledgeable of, the sports world.

There is not a day in the calendar year that passes without at least one professional arena filled with tens of thousands of fanatics observing a sporting event. Not to mention, at the very least, potentially hundreds of thousands watching from the convenience of their living rooms in this steadily diversifying communications era of unlimited accessibility (i.e. NFL Ticket, NBA League Pass, and other cable TV packages). Without exaggeration, any professional sporting event being played on any given evening—of the four major professional team sports (football, baseball, basketball, and hockey)—can be viewed from any cable-ready location in the United States, and often are. Additionally, the individual sports—such as golf, tennis, and car racing—draw a similar number of viewers and are not to be forgotten within the discussion.

Finally, it would be a gross miscalculation if an assessment of this nature did not address the new sideshow in American society: *Reality T.V.* This last tier mentioned can be described as the non-sports fan's sport, in that it has a driving force of women and children, an audience that typically wouldn't be as interested in, or dedicated to, the traditional sporting events. With this added wrinkle in the equation, grandma, mom, and daughter searching for an outlet to pour an equal level of their energy

and intensity into, are provided a venue to do so on the same level to that which is already in-place for dad and junior. Regardless of the event, the premise remains the same; the theory of distraction sustains its legitimacy and the events continue to dominate the few hours of time the populace possesses between work and sleep. In further dissecting the arena of sport, the basis for the argument should become clearer and gain momentum.

Take into account that each event does not stand-alone as a 2-3 hour experience, which is the actual length of the contest; both a preface and an epilogue are attached to it. This includes the indoctrination of the fanatic through pre-game analysis, predictions of the outcome, as well as interviews with the players, coaches, and executives of the teams. Not to mention the incredibly detailed “feel good” or “get to know...” stories and at times demonizing exposes produced by the media outlets in order to draw the viewer closer to the action. The all too common result is the love-handled, pot-bellied, and/or male-patterned balding fan subconsciously re-living the glory days he never had vicariously through the athlete or team that captures his adornment. Literally, each free hour of the day is designed to attract and distract the sports fanatic from focusing on the political realities of their lives. There are games within the game; be it gambling, fantasy leagues, or office pools. From both radio to television, programming airs 24 hours a day—reporting, discussing, and debating the most meaningless details of the sport-universe.

Of course, to assume that the creation of a political smokescreen is the sole motivation behind developing a social juggernaut such as sport is half-sighted. The financial benefit of the industry and its contribution to the perpetuation of the domestic and international economies are incredible. If the owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team can afford to sign a *player* to a \$250 million contract, imagine how much revenue the owner takes in. If the creation of a proposed new stadium for the New York Jets football team costs \$1.4 billion, take a minute to estimate the amount of money the games being played in that stadium will generate. The numbers are not often discussed, but as popularity crosses time zones, oceans, and language barriers, the level of revenue continues to

rise. In order to develop a complete understanding of this and every situation, it must be understood that nothing is absolute and that various reasons exist for each circumstance.

In effect, a parallel dimension of society has been created--independent of the political domain. This sub-culture is able to provide almost every aspect of the actual occurrences in the parent society, as well as pacify the fundamental human need for social politics, competition, and suspense, with the realization of neither the details of modern-day geopolitics, nor the fallout thereof.

A by-product of becoming mesmerized by social distractions is the development of safe-havens, which protect the fanatic from being forced to deal with unflattering truths that may exist as to the means that have facilitated the political and/or societal end. In addition, it provides stress relief for the average 50-hour a week, lunch-bucket laborer that seeks an emotional outlet, as well as the intrigue of competition-based contests. The irony that lives within the confusion is that the competition, loyalty, drama, strategic techniques, and in recent years—irresistible scandal in the athletic world exists within the sport of politics. If the sport fanatic would be able to come to an understanding of the similar fundamental make-up that exists in politics and sport, the entire paradigm—referring to the public's interests as well as their political involvement—has a better chance at refinement into a desirably democratic ideal.

Such ideals should include among other things the complete and absolute right to vote, with zero exceptions. An undeniable fact is that the history of elections in America is tainted with disenfranchisement, as well as intimidation aimed at certain groups of Americans [as discussed at a later point within this work]. A primary function of government should be the assurance that such injustice does not occur regardless of who becomes the beneficiary of the injustice. Unfortunately, through the failure of the public to become active participants in the democracy, if the individuals in power stand to stand to prosper, the miscarriage goes unresolved.

Beyond disenfranchisement and intimidation, the format of the election is not designed to accommodate and encourage complete participation. A comparison of US elections and the historic Iraqi election of January 2005 cause disturbing truths to surface. US elections are held on one day, a weekday, and it is up to the individual to ensure that all circumstances are in place that will allow the individual to vote. This is not to say that individuals should not be responsible for their participation in democracy, but if the day were on a Saturday, certain obstacles would be eliminated. Compared to the Iraqi election, which went as far as to open voting locations within foreign countries in order for exiled Iraqis to participate and was conducted over the course of several days (January 28-30, 2005) undoubtedly to maximize participation, the American system seems uninterested in total inclusiveness. Would anyone disagree with taking the steps necessary to encourage total inclusiveness?

Further displeasure should ripen when considering that with America's fixation on instant gratification, the winner of the American presidential election is projected and announced within 24 hours of the start of the election. Once again the Iraqi system prevails as the Iraqi results, as well as open speculation, were delayed for two weeks, as votes were counted to increase the probability that all votes were counted and done so properly. Lastly, with all of the physical as well as moral obstacles placed in front of eligible Iraqi voters, the fact that any Iraqis turned out at all reflects—among other things--the hunger in the human spirit for democratic involvement. It also supports the notion that when people are afforded the time and alleviated of unnecessary barriers, that very spirit is fostered and participation may increase. Due to the circumstances that brought the election about, if any group of people has the right to choose not to vote and boycott an election it would be the Iraqi people. It wouldn't be a wise decision, but Iraqis retain that right before Americans would.

With all of that being noted, the question that ascends is "How could the election of an infantile democracy, nothing more than a handful of months old, be more inclusive, in theory, than that of a 200-year-old

republic?” The point is that a focused electorate is less likely to allow such an absurdity, as is this imbalance, to take place.

Delving into such issues is but a glimmer of the light that the republic needs to move towards. The time for political apathy induced by a climate of misdirected passion must come to an end, as it does nothing more than suffocate the democratic spirit. Although it is democratic to decide not to participate, it should be a thoughtful and conscious decision—meaning individuals should not be afforded that option until education of the political landscape has been achieved, as well as an awareness of the unsavory schemes used by politicians that solicit their support. At the point when those elements are comprehended, then and only then can a true democratic spirit within the republic exist.

The fruits of such an environment will be an informed nation that understands the intricacies of issues, forces politicians to behave—by having a command of the facts—in accordance with the interests of the people, and will in-turn foster a bona fide brand of patriotism. Such patriotism is in complete contrast to the current brand that is displayed, which reeks of ignorance, promotes silent conformity, and discourages any level of structural examination.

Obscuring Focus While Defining Patriotism

"...guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism..."
– George Washington (Farewell Address – 1796)

Contributing to the confusion and distraction of the populace, sport and patriotism have been deliberately linked and have developed a close working relationship. More accurately stated—nationalistic feelings have been injected into both local and international athletics with one of the results being the obscuring of the clearly defined parameters that separate the “*power elite—working class*” relationship from *fraternal camaraderie*. Due to this bewilderment of perception, there is a shortage in public concern that accountable, legal, and moral public policy is being examined, implemented, and separated from a blanket patriotic advocacy for morally bankrupt and constitutionally inconsistent practice.

Prior to the start of any and every sporting event, America’s national anthem is played. Why? After overcoming the initial “knee-jerk” emotional reaction—logically, what does one have to do with the other? If the explanation for its heavy rotation is justified by invoking tradition, then the origin of that tradition should be examined. Following that path will bring the explorer to the World War I timeframe whereas with every modern-day major military conflict, a public relations campaign was launched in an effort to enlist support from the public for the venture at hand.

The progression of the public relations industry can easily be attributed to the twenty-eighth president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. President Wilson’s decision to create the Creel Committee, officially known as the U.S. Committee on Public Information (CPI), was a defining maneuver in the attempt to coerce the public’s opinion into support for America’s entry into World War I, because it ended up legally institutionalizing government run propaganda.

A team that mixed, among others, George Creel (newspaper editor), Edward Bernays (a psychologist), and Walter Lippman (*the* definitive

pundit of his era) came together to form CPI. Following his work for Wilson, Creel, the head of the committee, authored a book entitled *The Selling of the War* (1920), in which he stated:

“There was no part of the great war machinery that we did not touch, no medium of appeal that we did not employ. The printed word, the spoken word, the motion picture, the telegraph, the cable, the wireless, the poster, the sign-board - all these were used in our campaign to make our own people and all other peoples understand the causes that compelled America to take arms.”

Edward Bernays', in his post-Creel Committee days, produced a revealing text named *Propaganda* (1928), which was quite insightful:

"The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country...We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of."

Walter Lippmann, the individual that coined the phrase “manufacturing consent” pieced together a timelessly honest classic, *Public Opinion* (1922). Within it, Lippmann unearthed key elements that serve to formulate the public’s feelings and stances on certain issues. He refers to the creation of consent as an “art” and informs the reader that propaganda “was supposed to have died out with the appearance of democracy. But it has not died out. It has, in fact, improved enormously in technique, because it is now based on analysis rather than on rule of thumb.” In other words, what was once a simple tool forcibly applied to the masses by those in overt and visible totalitarian power has become an

inconspicuous applied science of “free societies”. Lippmann’s follow-up work was the 1925 release *The Phantom Public*, in which he proclaimed that:

“The public must be put in its place... so that each of us may live free of the trampling and the roar of a bewildered herd.”

The documented writings of this group should make apparent to the reader the philosophies and sentiments of the masterminds tasked by Woodrow Wilson to create the desired patriotic fervor. The slightest amount of research will reveal that these committee members are considered the forefathers of, and set the tone for, the current public relations industry. This taskforce clearly held a low opinion of the public’s ability to receive, digest, and analyze the affairs of the state in relation to what they thought the collective opinion should be. These individuals, and the officials they were hired by, had no interest in the public’s comprehension of domestic and foreign policy and seemed to spare no moral violation in pursuit of their goals. Regardless of the case, the public needed to be persuaded, thus their exposure to public relation tactics.

Beyond moral implications, the business of manufacturing consent is quite costly. A report entitled Federal Public Relations Spending (January 2005), which was conducted by the U.S. House of Representatives’ Committee on Government Reform, exposed that between the years of 2001-2004 the federal government spent \$250 million—of taxpayer money—on contracts with public relations firms. With one firm, Ketchum Communications, being the recipient of \$97 million in contracts. It must be noted that at the time of Congress’ report certain government agencies, Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, Commerce, State, Agriculture, and Interior, had not completely reported their expenditures. Naturally, the \$250 million figure would have increased significantly had all agencies reported in full. In comparison, George Creel admitted that the “propaganda machine...cost taxpayers \$4,912,553” (1), during the 28 month period of CPI’s existence.

After reflecting upon the 90 years of implemented policy that bridges the two timeframes discussed, the amount of taxpayer money that's been spent on convincing taxpayers to support public policy becomes mind-boggling. Although insult is definitely the soup of the day, it's difficult to distinguish exactly which is more offensive: the squandered funds that could have been utilized to uplift the people and cultivate a healthy society, or the disrespectful manner in which the masters of illusion have spun their webs of wizardry.

Would a populace that was as familiar with this information as they are of who the quarterback for the Green Bay Packers is, or the relationship status of Nick and Jessica, allow such misapplication of government funds?

...

In any event, one of President Wilson's significant public relation maneuvers was in 1916 when he ordered (2), that the Star-Spangled Banner be played at all military and naval occasions. Picking up from the spirit of that order—during the 7th inning stretch of professional baseball's 1918 World Series, a band began an "impromptu" (3), performance of the patriotic tune. The popularity of its play led to it being repeated annually at each World Series until it was eventually played prior to each game of the season. Since September 11th of 2001, in addition to the Star-Spangled Banner, professional baseball stadiums have replaced the 7th inning stretch classic *Take Me Out to the Ballgame*, with the sentimental favorite, *God Bless America*. This too is not by accident.

During international athletics, such as the Olympics—a platform designed to promote "peace and friendship among all the people of the world, through the noble competition of sport" (4), who can escape the predominantly echoing chant of "U.S.A., U.S.A., U.S.A.!" That chant is accepted as ritual, but where exactly did it come from? Whatever the answer, the incited emotion tends to blur the boundaries between the

legitimacy of implemented policies, the affects of those policies (foreign & domestic), and loyalty for the team. Suddenly, the supporter of the team is left in the unsettling position of choosing whether to display undying loyalty and think like the group or adopt a challenging stance which might require going against the grain—or better stated, what mass media’s delivered perception of the accepted norm is at the time. The marriage of sporting events and nationalism was, and is, a mere emotional tool serving to influence public opinion. There is no reason or logic available, outside of what has been provided, to explain the combination.

The synergy produced by the marriage of sport and nationalism is inspiring and quite influential, but it reflects the combination of two worlds that, although have certain structural similarities, differ in the most prevalent component of their respective make-ups: the universally infinite conflict brought about by the display of loyalty and the appropriate timing of it.

Inside the sporting arena, absolute devotion to your team is an attribute of the highest caliber. To support your teammates, regardless of right or wrong—oblivious to the facts—is a necessary devotion. The consequence of being on the wrong side bears significance ranging from microscopic to itsy-bitsy. On larger scales, when dealing on a geopolitical level for instance, blind obedience is dangerously careless and produces circumstances that are mostly immeasurable, but catastrophic nonetheless. For instance, to automatically dismiss alternative ideas, and without serious debate rule out the notion that the September 2001 attacks against America might have been the result of a chain reaction brought forth by countless decades of imperially inclined intervention into the affairs of sovereign nations, is to align with a congregation that lacks objectivity and results in an utter state of oblivion. This is not brought up in an attempt to decide who deserves punishment and for which reasons they deserve it; the point is to broaden the conversation. Failure to, at the very least, consider that such reasoning provided justification in the minds of the perpetrators, while simultaneously accepting the idea that the attacks were motivated by a hatred of American freedom and liberty, is either to lack historical understanding

or to be inflicted with a terminal case of denial. Such a denial is brought about by an impulse to remain steadfast in support of, and display a love for, team above principles of logic.

The theory put forth shows undeniable signs of vitality after reviewing a portion of the report by The Pew Research Center entitled The American Public: Opinions and Values in a 51%-48% Nation (5). The study, which was conducted in December of 2004, polled 2,000 American adults---one of the polling questions revealed that 46% agreed with the idea that “people should fight for the country, right or wrong”. Broken down among party lines, the study affirms that 66% of the Republicans, and 27% of the Democrats who were polled feel a closer allegiance to, and prefer, loyalty to country versus a humanitarian-based international justice. The Pew Research Center’s study took place 21 months deep into the internationally illegal (6) and, more domestically prevalent, constitutionally illegal Iraq invasion (7), which should have afforded these individuals more than enough time to become familiar with the issues of the day, as well as the legal status of such occurrences. The act of aggression alone should invigorate the most apathetic of the citizenry to become familiar with the Constitution, international law, and to remain familiar with current events.

One must gather that those polled, as well as the rest of the American populace that share the sentiment cited in the poll, are either unfamiliar with the documents that govern every fiber of their existence as American citizens or are disinterested in equality and fail to value human life beyond locally established, man-made borders. As a general observation, the lack of involvement by the citizens and the absence of familiarity with international, federal, and local legislation which stand as the rule of law may very well result in the temptation of those in power to become mindlessly venturesome in fulfilling agendas that circumvent national interest. On the other hand, if the answer rests in the notion that Americans are not as concerned with the humane treatment of citizens of other countries, then how valid are the founding principles that support America’s claim to greatness?