



Science of Coercion: Communication Research & Psychological Warfare, 1945–1960 (Forbidden Bookshelf)

By Christopher Simpson

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A provocative and eye-opening study of the essential role the US military and the Central Intelligence Agency played in the advancement of communication studies during the Cold War era, now with a new introduction by Robert W. McChesney and a new preface by the author

Since the mid-twentieth century, the great advances in our knowledge about the most effective methods of mass communication and persuasion have been visible in a wide range of professional fields, including journalism, marketing, public relations, interrogation, and public opinion studies. However, the birth of the modern science of mass communication had surprising and somewhat troubling midwives: the military and covert intelligence arms of the US government.

In this fascinating study, author Christopher Simpson uses long-classified documents from the Pentagon, the CIA, and other national security agencies to demonstrate how this seemingly benign social science grew directly out of secret government-funded research into psychological warfare. It reveals that many of the most respected pioneers in the field of communication science were knowingly complicit in America's Cold War efforts, regardless of their personal politics or individual moralities, and that their findings on mass communication were eventually employed for the purposes of propaganda, subversion, intimidation, and counterinsurgency.

An important, thought-provoking work, *Science of Coercion* shines a blazing light into a hitherto remote and shadowy corner of Cold War history.

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Review

"An intriguing picture of the relations between state power and the intellectual community...."--Noam Chomsky, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

"An original and important contribution...."--*Science*

About the Author

Christopher Simpson is Associate Professor of Communication at American University. His other books include *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis & its Effect on the Cold War* (1987), *The Splendid Blond Beast: Money, Law & Genocide in the 20th Century* (1993), and *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations 1981-1991* (1995). He is the recipient of six national and international awards for historical writing, literature, and investigative reporting. His work has appeared in the *Journal of Communication, Intelligence and National Security*, and many other magazines and journals.

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