

All TV is propaganda – why worry?

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2007-3-13

I remember a long time ago editing a sequence of a current affairs film about the most boring subject possible – the future of European integration from a German perspective. I had cut a sequence of images of German politicians to a very stirring piece of music by Sibelius. When my editor came in for a viewing he demanded we cut it out. It wasn't because of the commentary – there wasn't any. It was simply that the combination of bombastic, Romantic orchestral music with a marching beat set to images of Germans evoked terrifying memories of the Nazis. And whatever Helmut Kohl may have been, he wasn't a Nazi.

This week we have seen the power of propaganda TV on Channel 4's [Great Global Warming Swindle](#) and BBC 2's [The Trap](#) by Adam Curtis. I love counter-intuitive argument, almost to a fault. The novelty is irresistible to anyone tired of the regular voices of reason. But I disagreed with the thesis of both programmes, almost from the very first frames. Like my old editor, I could sense straight away that I was going to be manipulated by the clever and distorting selection of images and facts to construct a logical but deeply flawed and partial essay in thrall to an undisclosed agenda. Funnily enough, those very clever, tireless and very left-wing self-appointed media monitors at [MediaLens](#) had a pop at the right-wing anti-Climate Change film but were content with [Adam Curtis'](#) efforts to undermine capitalism, although in the past they've even been [critical](#) of Mr Curtis. To be fair, the former was distortion of the facts -the latter was a piece of polemic and didn't pretend to be anything else. But both used the language of TV to the limits of veracity and both were very enjoyable bits of telly.

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