Remarks on *Rape of the Mind* by Dr. Joost Meerloo


I became interested in psychology as a result of my years as a 9/11 Truth activist. I was finding that most people were completely immune, they would ignore or rationalize away the facts no matter how much evidence we loaded on them. But some people I talked to, especially overseas, understood almost immediately.

So I was reading about Pavlov and his experiments with dogs, in a book called *Battle for the Mind* by William Sargant. You don’t hear about it, but Pavlov actually rediscovered two kinds of conditioning, the repetitive and the traumatic. For instance, people in the USA can't grasp 9/11 because of conditioning repeated over many years, that the US is always the good guy on the white horse.

Traumas are more powerful, they can make a person instantly and completely switch their character and their conviction to the opposite. It’s a desperate attempt by the mind to regain equilibrium. Trauma suddenly and radically changes a person's world view.

9/11 was the trauma that shocked people out of their apathy about the Middle East. In a state of intense emotion, people are more suggestible. New ideas can be implanted that will remain long afterwards, in spite of evidence to the contrary. So even though the alleged hijackers were Saudis, the shock of 9/11 could be used to mobilize for war on a different country, Iraq.

Then all the lesser terror alerts, false arrests of suspects, the harassment at airports, those are bits of repetitive conditioning, like booster shots to maintain the message. It's well known that people are skeptical to new ideas, but once they accept one, it is hard to get them to change it, even in the light of new evidence.

So I realized why we could not get through to people with the facts about 9/11. People are not logical and open-minded. Short of a traumatic event, human beings simply will not accept new information that doesn't fit into their world view. In fact, turning your world view upside down is a traumatic event itself. People will go to great lengths to avoid that, and that reinforces the repetitive conditioning.

I've had people say literally about 9/11, "I don't want to go there." So if you push them hard enough, they will even abandon their cherished façade of open-mindedness in order to escape the truth. Of course, the 9/11 Truth narrative is way more terrifying than the 9/11 myth. People who have too much invested in the official world view can't deal with it.

I haven't found any silver bullet to get past this, but it would be worth trying, in the introduction to a book or DVD on 9/11, to explain this principle of selective receptiveness. How our mind filters things according to its world view, even when we think we are fair and open-minded.

You can order Sargant’s book, *Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brainwashing* is the full title, from your local bookstore. It’s also available on special offer in a set of three books for only $33 from me, if you go to progressivepress.com and click on 9/11 books. The set is even cheaper from the publisher, there should be a link on the Power Hour website page for this show.

I read the book we're mainly talking about today -- *Rape of the Mind or Menticide* -- from a little bit different angle. What forms of tyranny do we suffer from in our society? And especially, what strategies are there to resist torture and brainwashing, should any of us end up at Camp Fema.
Rape of the Mind is the most famous book of the famous Dutch psychologist, Joost Meerloo. He experienced Nazi indoctrination methods first-hand in Holland. After the war, he came to America. Here he observed three varieties of mental coercion -- the brainwashing techniques of the Chinese Communists on our POW's in Korea, the demagoguery of the McCarthy era, and the mass indoctrination of our high-tech consumer society with its TV, cars, and sleeping pills. Against all four systems he advocates mental independence, faith in the individual.

The full title is Rape of the Mind: the Psychology of Thought Control, Menticide and Brainwashing.

Dr. Meerloo says the best defense against giving in to coercion is to know what principles they are trying to use and to outwit them. Resisting is not about heroism or willpower or logic. They can break that down. For instance, one good trick is to pretend to be mad, and to confess to far more, and far more absurd things than one is accused of, turning the tables on the interrogator.

Some of the tactics they will use are repetition, boredom, isolation, fatigue, hunger, any kind of demoralizing conditions. They apply tension alternating with relaxation to increase suggestibility to their arguments.

Pain is not actually the biggest danger, the fear of pain is worse. Pain and pleasure of course are the stick and carrot used everywhere in life. They will profile inmates to see whether they respond better to pleasure or pain.

In fact they are using very ancient techniques, from long before Pavlov. These are the same methods used to tame animals gradually, how to break horses, so they must date back to the stone age.

Communist operators were themselves products of an oversimplified pseudo-Pavlovian theory: that all society has to do to tame and mold a person is link pain to bad thoughts and pleasure to good ones, repeat that over and over, and block out other influences. The aim is to break down the mind so they can imprint new patterns on it. But this method is so crude that it can't work very well if you see through it.

People need companionship, and isolation can make one dependent on the guards or an interrogator with a charming personality. Those who resisted best in Korea were groups of friends who trusted each other. The guards try to make inmates suspicious of each other, to pick them off one by one.

The Communists had cemented their control over China by keeping counter-revolutionaries in solitary confinement until they gave in to carrot and stick techniques.

Dictators keep their people cut off from the world, because isolated groups easily fall prey to mass delusion. We can see the delusions of other groups but not our own. One form is the explanation delusion, where the ideology has to have answers for everything, like parents with kids asking why why. We conspiracy theorists can also fall into this tendency sometimes.

Americans do tend to be cut off from the world and reality, being isolated by the oceans, lack of vacation time and foreign language skills, and seduced by fantasies of the controlled media.

Totalitarianism uses similar methods on its captive population and on captive enemy soldiers. They try to play on guilt feelings and other internal contradictions in the personality. Inmates who are free of such conflicts have the best chance of resisting.
They may threaten reprisals against loved ones if you don't give in. This can be a trick, they may punish your family either way.

Knowing that you have people outside the camp who care about you is also very important to help resist. In Korea the handlers told POWs that they had been betrayed by their country and their loved ones.

Everyone may have the tendency to take the path of least resistance, to say, if you can't beat them, join them. In Korea, those who held out best were rebels back home, too. Physical strength or advanced intellectual training is not important.

In the camps it can be dangerous to look too alive. Most inmates try to look apathetic. But real apathy is defeat. It is important to have some kind of strong faith, a sense of mission, a feeling of continuity and belief in the future -- to remember that this too will pass, it's only one chapter of life.

They can use sensory overload as well as sensory deprivation. In the Korean POW camps they had loudspeakers blaring all the time. In the US we have the TV blaring all the time. Writing in 1956, Meerloo already saw clearly the threat of TV, an invention like many others that should have led to greater freedom. One of my authors, Jeff Grupp, has a book on this called the Telescreen, which will be out soon. Maybe you can have him on sometime to go into that in more detail.

Totalitarians use false confessions and show trials to terrorize others, like Guantanamo today. Life in the US itself is drenched with unobtrusive coercion. Mass media make us passive, public opinion is engineered.

They play on the human herd instinct, the fear of ridicule for being different. The velvet glove is more effective than Nazi or Soviet coercion, because the victims don't even feel it. I once coined the term "Open Totalitarian Society" for the United States. Meerloo called the Nazi form of this mental contagion. They get people going around brainwashing each other on their own time, like do-it-yourselfers. It's like "Open Source Totalitarianism" - always up to date, and much easier on the powers that be.

Drugs enslave people - like medication into submission in Soviet psychiatry. Drugs make us accept fate rather than trying to change things. A gang leader who can get drugs for his followers has control over them. Dictators offer ideologies of mass delusion as a drug. The Nazis exported barbiturates to occupied countries, much as England tried to conquer China with opium. Chemical dependency leads to political dependency.

The so-called Truth serum drugs are actually a violation of the 5th amendment against self-incrimination, and the same goes for polygraphs, hypnosis, false counsel, and of course, all forms of torture.

Education based on memorizing facts and quiz scores also leads to mental passivity. Meerloo distinguishes Quantillectuals, who absorb masses of facts, and Quintillectuals, who really think over new ideas and make them their own.

Technology robs us of our identity by making life too easy, and also too busy. Is it our tool or our master? Both communism and capitalism are forms of materialism, which dulls the spirit. Bureaucracy also is a form of tyranny in all societies.

To sum it up, inner-directed personalities have much better odds of resisting than those who take their cues externally, like windvanes. The ancient Greek answer was short and sweet: Know thyself.