

# Presentation notes

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## Introduction:

We lost, and to move forward, we have to question everything we know to be true. For the past 10-15 years, I've increasingly thought we've been going about fighting from the left all wrong. Our organizing strategies and tactics have barely evolved or changed in the last 30 years. Sure, new tools have been adopted, but not much has changed. Progress has not only stalled, but been pushed back, we're doing something wrong. We've had peaks, but we haven't been able to sustain them or turn them into lasting victories— If you sat in on the Men of Color: The New Swing Voters, panel, you know why this is important.

What is being presented today is effectively 15 years of work, in studying history, learning about movements, changes in human social structures and behavior, and military history (from an organizational lens). While also analyzing our contemporary political climate and movements. The goal was to examine what has worked and what hasn't.

There is a lot to cover in an hour, but not everything made the cut. More will be written over the coming months, filling out the rest of the framework and concepts. The proper way to engage with this is not a checklist, but a guiding framework and concepts; it is more theoretical than a "how-to" guide.

## Opening question: How was WWII Won?

- Learning lessons quickly
- Industry
- Logistics
- Cooperation & Coordination
- Flexibility

## Grounding Concepts

1. **Battles Don't Decide, They Reveal:** Moving from an electoral/mass mobilization mindset to an infrastructure, logistics, and grand-strategy framework.
  - a. [Battles reveal](#) "the state of the war and the balance between the two armies. It's not determining the outcome of the war, it's revealing exactly where we are now."
  - b. Elections and mass-mobilizing events are like battles; they reveal where we are now and the state of balance between the opposition and MAGA.

2. **Narratives don't communicate reality, but give reality meaning:** Everything must be grounded in a meta-narrative, giving all you do meaning. Give meaning and a vision to a new world.
  - a. From Narrative Warfare: "Narrative is like poetry. It doesn't make sense to say a poem is untrue or inaccurate. Truth is irrelevant to poetry. What is relevant is that it strikes a chord in experience. The same is true of narrative."
3. **[Understanding fascism as a play, and Trump as a Heel](#):** Everyone plays a part, it becomes group behavior driven by craven self-interest to act out their sadistic desires. Trump gives them permission as the Heel. Lean into the drama, and become the Face.
  - a. [Face vs a Heel](#)
  - b. [Trump and Professional Wrestling](#)

Asymmetrical War is being waged on the people of America and the idea of America. We can gain valuable insights into how MAGA is waging war by examining the [Russian approach to warfare](#). They don't view it as kinetic vs non-kinetic, but as a multilayered process, with some aspects being kinetic and others not. Most importantly, they wage it within the mind.

Focusing on elections and mass mobilization, opposed to sustained engagement through the information space and civil society, keeps us one step behind.

## Developing War-like Mentality

Warfare takes place at multiple levels, and isn't just kinetic. Or as Carl Von Clausewitz describes it, "politics by other means." Warfare is enforcing your political goals upon your opposition through multiple domains, narrative warfare, "is all about influence," and the "meaning of information."

## Core Concepts

1. Focus on logistics and infrastructure
2. Operational Flexibility
3. Mutually Supportive Efforts: Intra-organizational and inter-organizational
4. Ending the opposition's ability to operate

## The Strategic Levels

1. Grand-Strategy: What we're trying to achieve, ally recruitment, and identifying needs.
2. Strategic: Development of the operational plans to meet macro goals set by the grand strategy. The how we achieve it.
3. Operational: Putting everything in place to tactically apply. Ties together macro and micro.
4. Tactical: Localized/micro application/operations of plans.

While these are military concepts, there are real examples used in organizing efforts. The Civil Rights movement was a massive coordinated effort of not just organizations, but institutions as well. Through training, planning, and coordination, they were able to operate flexibly and take advantage of situations on the fly because they were ready. The Montgomery bus boycott was long-planned, but it was planned to be short-term. But because of the many years of work, efforts, and training before that, they were able to extend it to a year. This was a textbook example of operational flexibility and coordination of efforts and resources.

This is reiterated by a recent substack [talking about AI and drone warfare](#), “militaries do not win wars merely by acquiring new gadgets, but by developing the institutions, training regimens, logistical networks, and doctrinal concepts that enable those tools to be used effectively at scale.” Technology “must be embedded within a structure that can harness it to achieve strategic effect.” The new messaging, or newsletter app doesn’t matter if there are insufficient infrastructure to harness them to strategic effect. And the new app doesn’t exist in isolation.

Adopting new technology without a larger strategic framework to integrate it into your operations, will only lead to marginal effects and tactical, not strategic victories.

**Theory of Victory:** What is the end goal? Not just the issue or policy changes, but the end goal?

- What is our opposition's end goal? They have a maximalist agenda. How do we respond?
- What are the conditions needed, based upon our opposition's end goal, to successfully implement a new socio-political paradigm?

Their maximalist agenda necessitates a maximalist end goal— we have to not only remove them from power, but then wield power to destroy their ability to regain power. They have forfeited their right to govern, based on their own authoritarian end goal.

## Narrative Warfare:

**Meta-Narrative:** A narrative that “encourages a perspective that is consistent with (our) interests.” One that gives a reality people are experiencing, meaning.

“Narratives do not tell facts. Narratives tell the meaning of Facts”- Narrative Warfare by Ajit Mann

1. “Narratives do not tell facts. Narratives tell the meaning of Facts”- Narrative Warfare by Ajit Mann
2. Make people heroes by making them belong to something more than themselves.  
Create a myth

**A narrative strategy is a form of strategic planning. You create a set of strategic objectives built from a meta-narrative:**

1. Design a meta-narrative that determines what truth or fact you want to give meaning to and what that meaning is. It should create a unifying identity. Doing so allows you to:

- Go on the offensive.
- Give people a sense of belonging— patriotism doesn't have to mean exclusionary nationalism.

**Example:** Zohran Mamdani is running as a proud New Yorker and American, where the NYC people know and love is being stolen by billionaires. He makes it about the “we” and presents an inclusive idea of what it means to be a New Yorker and American.

2. Designing a counter-narrative (which can be the meta) that provides an alternative to the opposition.

These two steps lead into the ideas and beliefs you want to communicate, and then, what behaviors you want to change or influence, leading to action. Propaganda and messaging are tools to influence those behaviors.

[Example Universal meta-narrative:](#)

TL/DR version: Being an American, being the peoples of America is the eternal rejection of tyrants and kings. And to embrace our interconnected roots as the peoples of America, working hard to create and build a future of our kids and grandkids to thrive in.

**Each organization doesn't have to have a meta-narrative, but a broader coordinated meta-narrative, individualized to each organization's base. It's all the same, but each organization adapts its application to its strategic messaging, tailoring it to meet its audience where they are.**

Narrative Strategy Levels:

1. Meta-Narrative/Grand Strategy (my term): This is a narrative that “encourages a perspective that is consistent with (our) interests)
2. Strategic (Master) Narrative: “A Narrative that describes what we are doing, why we are doing it, and how it will help.” Or a mission statement, if you will.
3. Operational Narrative: “Connects and synchronizes micro and macro narratives in action.” In essence, it is a communications strategy.
4. Tactical: “Narratives that address the concerns of local populations, domestic audiences, and organizers on the ground. We can think of this as issue messaging.

On Propaganda and PSYOPS: Concepts

For some, propaganda and PSYOPS, as terms, can be scary, but this is something we need to get comfortable with. Yes, it is manipulation, but so is all messaging and marketing, we're trying to influence, aka manipulate people, to take an action. This isn't inherently bad. But becoming intentional about it, and being willing to step into gray and black areas of propaganda.

The use of deception to achieve your goals isn't inherently bad, especially when facing down such a threat as fascism. We have to use all the tools in our toolbox to win.

"In the narrow sense, psychological warfare comprises the use of propaganda against an enemy, together with such military operational measures as may supplement the propaganda. Propaganda may be described, in turn, as organized persuasion by non-violent means...Psychological warfare seeks to win military gains without military force," - Paul Linebarger in "Psychological Warfare"

"Propaganda consists of planned use of any form of communication designed to affect the minds and emotions of a given enemy, neutral, or friendly (group) for a specific strategic or tactical purpose...Propaganda must have a known purpose," - Paul Linebarger. It must have a "result it is supposed to effect."

From Psychological Warfare: "Propaganda is distinguished by the consideration of five elements."

1. Source (including media):
2. Time
3. Audience
4. Subject
5. Mission

"For Psychological warfare purposes, it is useful to define the enemy as:

1. Ruler
2. Or the ruling group
3. Or unspecified manipulators
4. Any definite minority

It is thoroughly unsound to define the enemy too widely."

## **Types of propaganda**

**White:** Doesn't hide what it is or where it is coming from, an "acknowledged source," from an official channel.

**Gray:** Gives plausible deniability, a wink, and a nod. It does not identify the source.

**Black:** Hides its origin, think sock puppet accounts. "Acts as if it is coming from a source other than the true one."

**Strategic:** "directed at (a target) in their entirety, and— in coordination with strategic planning—is designed to effectuate results planned and sought over a period of weeks, months, or years."

**Tactical:** “directed at specific audiences, usually named, and is prepared and executed in support of localized (operations).”

**Conversionary:** “Designed to change the emotional operational allegiance of individuals from one group to another

**Divisive:** “Designed to split apart the component subgroups of the enemy and thereby reduce the effectiveness of the enemy group considered as a single unit.”

**Consolidation:** “Directed toward civilian populations in areas occupied by military force...designed to ensure compliance with the commands...by the commander of the occupying force”

**Counterpropaganda:** designed to refute a specific point or theme of enemy propaganda.”

“Most of the distinction can be forgotten; the basic distinctions are those determined by the task involved, and not by the propaganda content.”

### **Preparation Steps: Grand Strategy level**

1. Develop a meta-narrative
2. Shift into a war-like mentality
3. Develop a theory of victory
4. Develop a modified spectrum of allies and desired behavior changes
5. Psychological profiles
6. Develop organizational doctrines: how these efforts will be integrated and operate in your organization.
7. Identify the right tools
8. Sustainment of efforts

### **Design Concepts**

1. What is your overarching strategic goal?
2. What is your opposition?
3. What is your opposition’s narrative reality and its pieces? (What narrative are they telling, and what are the stories/messages they are saying to tell it?)
4. What is the world and reality you want people to inhabit?
5. What are the different pieces/threads of this narrative? Think of individual stories, messages, facts, and realities to communicate.
6. What actions do you want people to take to achieve this world? This can motivate someone to take positive action towards your strategic goal or disrupt opposition from theirs. - focus on changing behavior, not ideology, and not traditional calls to action
7. Dopamine theater

## Spectrum of Allies: an example

**Active Support:** These are our most active supporters; not only do they vote, but we can count on them to volunteer for campaigns and show up to protests.

**Ritual Support:** In most instances, these people will vote for Democratic candidates, put up yard signs, and encourage others to vote within their network, but tend not to do much else. They're aligned but take minimal action beyond voting.

**Loyal Neutrality:** They see themselves aligned and generally agree with our worldview. A likely voter, especially when motivated, but that's where it ends.

**Discontented Allies/Support:** Active and pay attention to politics, will attend protests, might vote for third-party or anti-establishment candidates. Dissatisfied with the party.

**Apathetic:** Disengaged from politics for various reasons. They don't hold a constant ideology; they are a low-information voter when they do vote.

**Opposition Neutral:** Generally opposed, closer to apathetic, but open to MAGA ideology, will quietly turn out to vote for Trump. Not paying close attention to politics.

**Ritual opposition:** Regular GOP voters may not be the most MAGA ideologically, but will vote for the GOP and fall in line.

**Active Opposition:** Full MAGA. The Goal is to move them into a state of apathy; you want them to lose their faith within the MAGA movement.

**Integration of traditional demographics:** within each spectrum of allies, is where you then integrate the traditional demographic approach. No demographic is a monoculture— they have different subcultures and groups, with their own mixture of more conservative and more liberal behavior. Older Black voters might be more church going, a bit more conservative on some issues, more liberal on others, but vote Dem. Gen-X male Black voters, especially entrepreneurs, might lean more economically conservative. Some Latine populations might want Spanish-only messaging, Spanglish, English, a dialect of Spanish, etc.

**Using Data:** Get over buying data; *we have people leaving or wanting to leave academia to help create behavior profiles based upon data.* Even more importantly, this is where you can get into the specifics of how to integrate the spectrum of allies and traditional demographic information in targeting. Not only that, but the ability to hyper-target with geo-tags allows for running hyper-localized campaigns (e.g., targeting a healthcare executive by sending literature to everyone in their zipcode). We can identify which types of campaigns influence behavior among specific demographics and which don't.

**Target Vets and Service Members:** The military plays a crucial role in shaping the direction of growing authoritarianism. We know there is discontent among veterans and service members;

we can't leave it to the few veteran organizations to target them. Develop a strategy, in coordination with organizations that target vets, to target veterans and service members. Pull them away from compliance to the regime, especially with service members. This can be done through deep organizing and propaganda efforts. They will be a vital part of getting out of the other side of this, let's make them a priority.

## Prop & PSYOPS: Operational design

### Designing Operations:

- Identify the spectrum of allies.
- Identify ideal behavior change, rather than focusing on beliefs or ideology, by examining their behavior— such as demobilizing, mobilizing, or becoming an organizer.
- What type and how many resources will you spend on each?
- What are the roles of staff and field staff in targeting them
- Identify the application of intelligence, data, and metrics used to target and evaluate efforts..
- Design of targeted campaigns

### Key Concepts Continued

1. Sustainment of efforts
2. Impacting behavior, not ideology, is the goal. Soften the ground.
3. Mutually supportive efforts: one campaign, one effort, should support another
4. Dopamine Theater
5. Integrated into all efforts

### PSYOP Examples: What would these look like now

1. Der Chef: der Chef, a black propaganda radio channel. Where the person hosting it, Der Chef, presented himself as a Prussian soldier and uber-nazi. The radio station and Der Chef would defend German generals. The aim was to push “Nazi ideology...further into the ridiculous, where it is harmful to Germany.” But avoided satire. It used rumors, salacious hooks, and highlighted corruption within the Nazi party, while not attacking Nazisms.
2. Sender: Soldatensender Calais (Sender), a grey propaganda station. Instead of presenting angry rantings, it presented itself as a regular news and radio station. Delivered Gestapo speeches, played music, government announcements, and “messages” from loved ones to U-boat crews and eventually troops. It would present the “inequality of sacrifices” by troops as regular news, a “soldier's friend.

## Shifting Your Organization

### Preparation Steps: Grand Strategy level

1. Develop a meta-narrative

2. Shift into a war-like mentality
3. Develop a theory of victory
4. Develop a modified spectrum of allies and desired behavior changes
5. Develop organizational doctrines: how these efforts will be integrated and operate in your organization
6. Identify the right tools
7. Strategy for sustaining efforts: Every team sport involves a rotation. Similarly, in combat, people are rotated off the frontline. Organizers and volunteers often burn out and leave the movement. Find ways to create a rotation of people on and off the line. Get people time to rest, train, and teambuild, before sending them back out.

## Infrastructure and Logistical Focus

- **Training field staff and volunteers:** one training or onboarding session is not enough. Training needs to be ongoing. Anytime a campaign ends, debrief, learn lessons, and train again. Make it as simulated as you possibly can.
- **Funding:** Diversify your funding. Yes, continue working with large donors and foundations, but also strive to become a member-driven organization if possible. Develop out what a member looks like— how involved they are in your operations, what roles do they play, etc.
- **Right tools for the right job:** Just because there's an app for it, doesn't mean you should use it. As you design your strategy and operations, identify what tools you need to achieve your goals, and in whose hands do they need to be in.
- **Organizational coalitions:** Although many states have established various coalitions and tables, this is insufficient. There is not enough coordination and sharing of resources among coalitions. Too many people still get called multiple times by multiple organizations or have their doors knocked on by multiple organizations for GOTV efforts, and more. This wastes money and resources, and frustrates people on the receiving end. It's carpet-bombing when targeted hits are needed.
  - Also, the coordination is still too siloed; organizations that organize are at a table together, more communications or digital-focused organizations are on a table together, when they need to be integrated. Same for issue tables.
  - Much stronger coordination of efforts and sharing resources, we can't worry about "guarding what is ours" within an organization anymore— we don't have the luxury.
- **Frontline rotation/sustainment:**
  - Rotation: rotate field staff and volunteers away from always being on "the frontline." Integrate rest and training within your operations.
  - Sustainment: Operations must be sustained over a period of time, constant pressure must be put upon the Trump regime, its logistics, funding, and people. This puts us in a position to take the initiative and launch larger and larger operations. All the while it puts them on the defensive, it forces them to react to us, and stretches their ability to operate coherently.

- **Data & Intelligence gathering:** a great example of infrastructure, we as a movement need to create data infrastructure and resource training, not necessarily consulting firms to do data. We need to have infrastructure and do resource sharing, unless you're a huge org not gonna have a data director.
- **Information economy:** Don't try to find the Joe Rogan of the left, to a homerun, especially right now. Invest in the infrastructure of the information economy. Integrate it with other efforts, enabling them to operate independently, while also building it. This also means we invest in things that aren't overtly political, but can be. More Perfect Union is excellent, but since it's obviously progressive or left-leaning, it will likely attract more existing supporters than new, unactivated audiences. We need diversity within the ecosystem for it to thrive.

### **Operational Flexibility**

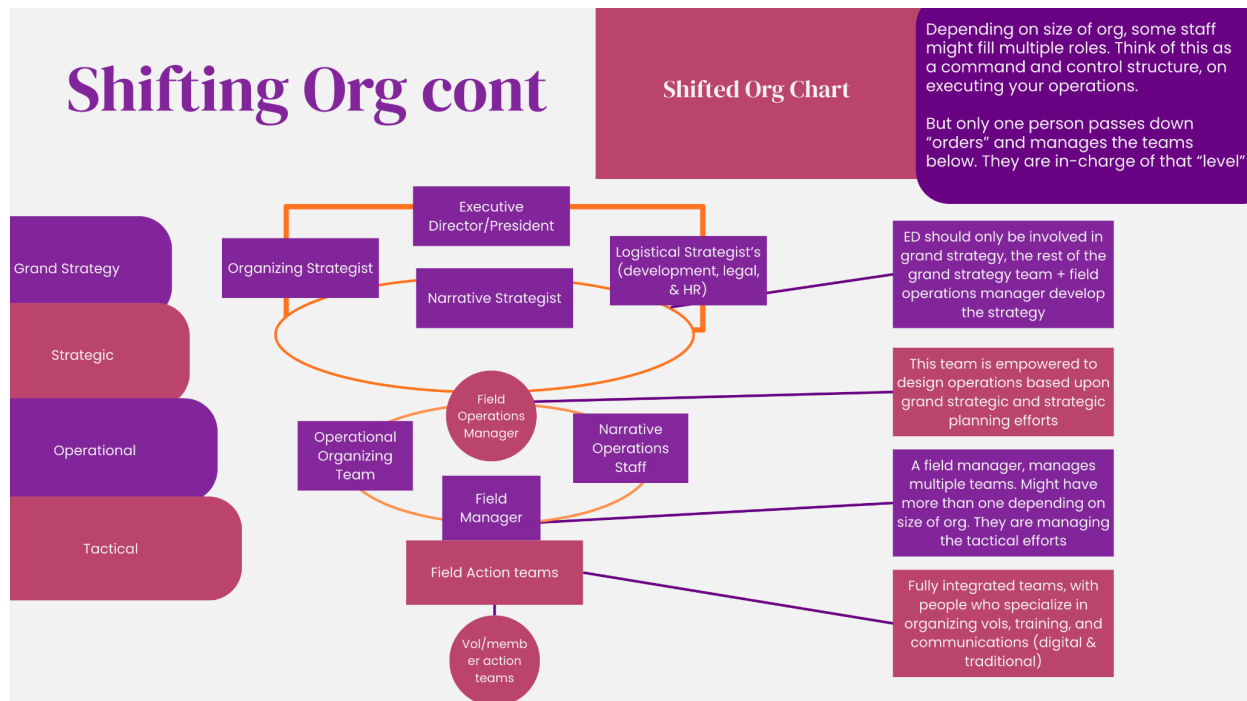
- Distributed organizing:
- Distributed communications:
- Staff empowerment & chain of command
- Rotations
- Member funded

### **Mutually Supportive**

- Communications
- Organizing
- Allied Coordination
- Intelligence

**Traditional Org chart:** See slide deck

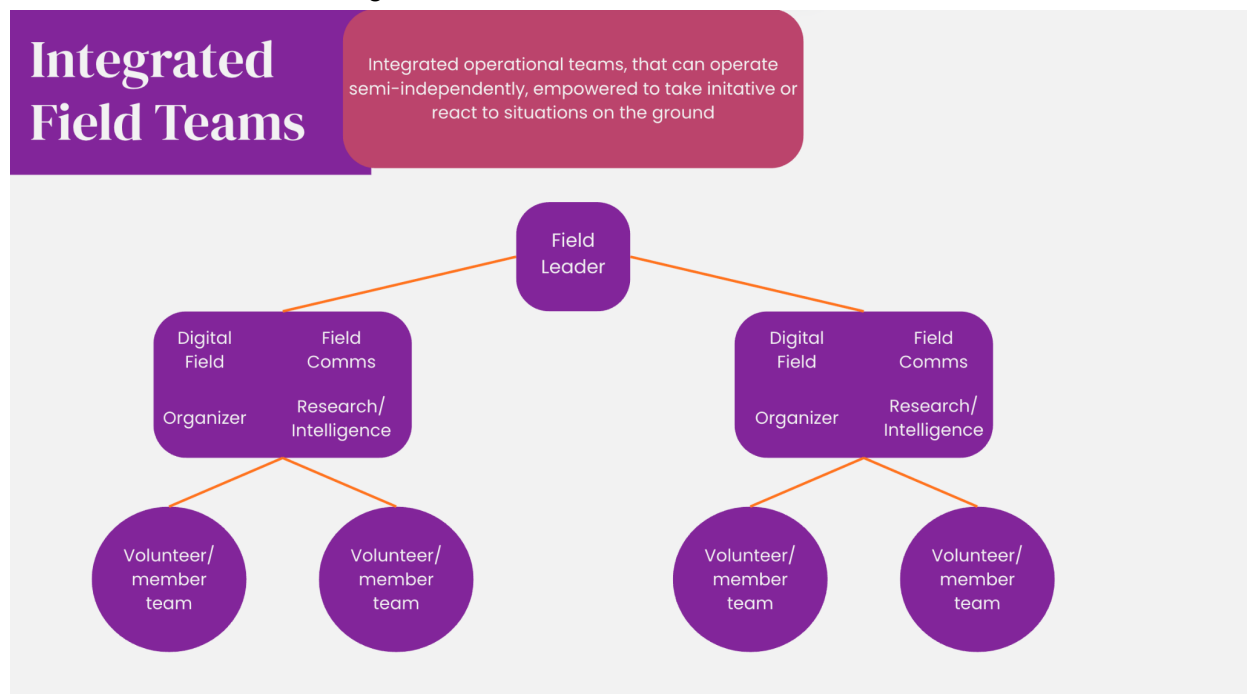
**Updated Org Chart:**



Depending on the size of the org, some staff might fill multiple roles. Think of this as a command and control structure for executing your operations. But only one person passes down "orders" and manages the teams below. They are in charge of that "level"

### Integrated Field teams

Integrated operational teams that can operate semi-independently, empowered to take initiative or react to situations on the ground



## Rethinking Org Tectics

1. **Dopamine theater:** Think beyond political messaging, and instead think viral marketing, WWE, and Reality TV. Use drama, conflict, create controversy, and don't hesitate to be salacious. Consider how you can spark interest and encourage people to investigate further. We have theater kids, let's utilize them.
2. **"Owned" media:** Traditional news relies upon conflict and controversy; they have to think people are talking about something. It also takes a lot of energy to land a pitch, and we know a lot of pitches don't end up landing. Use a combination of your organizational channel and proxy channels that have different target audiences.
  - a. If you have a story to tell, consider sharing it through multiple channels, not just your organization's branded one. This will help amplify it, pushing it out into the world through numerous target populations and increasing the chance of earned media.
3. **Affinity to Political:** Train volunteers and work with content creators to use their affinity interests for content creation. Within their content, you slowly integrate political education within their regular posts— this political education and messaging must be in the creator's own voice, it can't be a top-down approval, but organic implementation. You give them the support and political education they need, along with any necessary tools and light guidance, rather than a heavy hand.
  - a.
4. **Disruption/Confrontation:** What is the goal of blocking highways? What is the strategic aim? We need to think of disruption differently; instead of disruption for the sake of it, think about 1. How is this interrupting the regime or the GOP's ability to operate? 2. Is this disrupting something they're trying to implement?
  - a. Civil Rights restaurant sit-ins and ICE raid disruptions are great examples of good disruptions: The sit-ins directly targeted segregated establishments, forcing a reaction from those who wanted segregation, causing conflict, but more importantly, interrupting the daily operations of an apartheid social structure. The ICE raid disruptions achieve a similar outcome.
  - b. It is essential to consider our opponents' operational methods, identify their key logistical points, and understand their objectives. Then strategize tactics to disrupt those things.



## 5. Vol/member content

- a. Empower your Vol skills and interests, let them create content that isn't top-down controlled. It can be beyond affinity, and strictly political. Empower field staff, members, and volunteers to take action.
  - b. We have theater kids, damnit!
  - c. Stop the damn fundraising texts, unless they're actually about relationship building or sharing resources/information. Stop the dramatic fundraising texts.
6. **Deep organizing:** This will tie into number seven, but deep organizing is effective. We know how impactful relationship building is; by returning to these roots of organizing, we will bring in more volunteers, activate more potential volunteers, and mobilize far more people ready and willing to act. And who can act when it is time for mass mobilization events, they already know what to do.
7. **Service as political education:** Some organizations already do this by engaging their communities locally and providing a service— it can be a job fair, help them fill out a resume, a read-in, a food drive, etc. And when you hold it, provide political education alongside it. This will develop trust with community members, making them more likely to trust you when you're providing political education, with traditional calls to action, and other forms of engagement.
8. **Teams/Cells:** Your volunteer teams can do far more than just knocking doors, posting content, and making calls. Do you have accountants as volunteers? Have them dig into the financials of funders, elected officials, and organizations; then you can use your own multiple media channels to release that information. **Create a volunteer intake that takes into account their interests and skill sets, then group them with other folks with a similar set of skills to train them on specific types of operations fitting of those skills.**
  - a. Volunteer skills can be the base of a service as a political education effort.
  - b. They can help with opposition research.
  - c. They can run proxy citizen news channels
  - d. Street teams to put up propaganda posters and signs
  - e. Disruption teams

- f. Do we have former MAGA members, or Evangelical Church members? They can be great at creating targeted propaganda at MAGA, for different purposes. They can disrupt, demobilize, cause chaos and division, and deep organizing efforts.
  - g. The list is longer than I can imagine!
- 9. **Demobilization:** Target MAGA through different means, propaganda, infiltration, and deep organizing to demobilize them. We don't need to bring them over, just start to demobilize and deradicalize them.
- 10. **Infiltration & Intelligence gathering:** We have to think beyond traditional opposition research and start to dig into what the GOP, their organizations, and funders are trying to accomplish. What are their operations, what are they trying to achieve within those operations, and how can we interrupt them?
  - a. One example is something we can take from an old, largely out-of-fashion labor union practice. Salting. We can have a volunteer work to get hired by a GOP organization, or infiltrate a church (maybe they were once part of an Evangelical Church.) From there they can work to understand how that church supports local and regional GOP efforts, find dirt on the leaders, spread rumors, and cause division within the Church. Maybe there are rumors of shady bookkeeping, so you use another volunteer to dig into it.
  - b. Someone could get hired by the Federal government, or a GOP organization, work to sabotage operations, give you intelligence about what is going on, who the players are, and more.

## Action Must Meet the Rhetoric

For propaganda, and in fact all narrative efforts and organizing to be effective, especially amongst aligned parties or populations you hope to be aligned with, the actions must match. If MAGA is being called an existential threat, then all behavior towards MAGA and Trump must treat it as an existential threat; this is where the theory of victory and the propaganda machine meet the road.

In "Stories are Weapons," Newitz interviews others who have participated in propaganda efforts. And one's words, stories, and promises must be matched with action. They say, "The US military is falling behind the curve when it comes to psychological operations. He believes that the United States is perceived as not following through on big promises made in its influence campaigns...when the US government delivers inadequate aid, or none at all, American operatives and diplomats wind up sounding like liars. This creates a backlash within a population that feels betrayed, generating more sympathy for adversaries."

In war, this promise is backed up by military force. In the Pacific Theater, many on the Japanese home islands had no idea the war was going badly; the press and all government messages were that they were winning. However, soon enough, as more and more American bombers flew over Japanese cities, this propaganda was undermined. It lost its punch, and even though the war went on after their propaganda failures, it undermined the war effort. And, as Americans became better at spreading propaganda against the Japanese near the end of the war, there

were more surrenders, and civilian populations under Japanese occupation started not to fear the coming American soldiers.

The lesson is that this information war must be backed up with power politics; America must be reborn to match the narrative frame. Those who hold power must be willing to use it to hold those who have abused it accountable. And to hold accountable billionaires, even Democrats, who abused their power or enabled others to abuse their power as well.

## Parallel Institutions

Start to think of your work as state-building. You are one piece; allies, community non-profits, grassroots organizers, and community members are others. This work exists outside of electoral work, while electoral work exists within state-building.

Part of what states do is wage war; our wider purpose is serving the needs of our communities. Politics, “war,” food, and shelter are methods.

All left or progressive policy advocacy ultimately is about meeting communal needs. Expand how you think about meeting those needs. The Black Panthers are a great example of institutional building; they worked to serve their communities, to meet their needs, and provide political education. They were becoming a parallel institution to our government; this is the root of their danger to the establishment, not the carrying of arms. The creation of the non-profit industrial complex took away these institutions to make them service providers through state capture. The Urban League was no longer a parallel institution, but a government and donor-funded service organization that became responsive to its funding sources, not community needs.

Building parallel or outside institutions: State-making is as much about bureaucratic institutions and communal needs as it is myth-making (think a national founding myth).

Every state has a founding myth; our ultimate goal should be the creation of a new state. This means a founding myth (meta-narrative), providing a positive forward-looking goal for people to work towards— an idea larger than themselves. While also creating the parallel institutions to enact that meta-narrative.

- They’re about taking control, power, and fealty. It manifests in institutional capture—higher-ed is a perfect example.
- Step-by-step, build parallel or outside institutions starting at the local level, focusing on meeting local needs. Low lifts first— community events with food, concentrate on communal literacy. A “read-in” and communal meal. Partner with libraries, local school districts, literacy orgs.
- State bureaucracy is about resource distribution:
- State creation is also about myth-making

- Capturing or filling in missing local state functions builds legitimacy among the populus.
- This work requires coordination with multiple types of entities, sometimes explicit, sometimes covert.
- Strategically and tactically ignore laws; they will use legal frameworks to enact their agenda— they are coming after us no matter what. Rejection of their legal frameworks delegitimizes them, as we build our own.
- Smaller “Guerrilla” states emerge, where national cooperation must come in
- Local electoral state capture, we shift state resources to our parallel institutions.

## Capture of institutions

The far-right has strategically, over the years, [infiltrated local GOP](#) power structures, by presenting as less radical than they are. They then went on to hire each other, with further infiltration. This isn't about an individual working to change from the inside, but the use of deception to capture power levers, and wield them covertly to move the overturn window. It is presently quite difficult to do that at the national level, but at the local and state level, it is quite possible.

## Further Readings

### Books (non-exhaustive)

**How to win an Information war: The Propagandist Who Outwitted Hitler** by Peter Pomerantsev

**Nothing is True and Everything is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia** by Peter Pomerantsev

**On Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: Thinking About the Fundamentals** by Robert L. Helvey

**On War** by General Carl von Clausewitz

**Psychological Warfare** by Paul M.A. Linebarger

**Red Brains, Blue Brains: The Psychology of MAGA** By Scott Robinson

**Subversion: The Strategic Weaponization of Narratives** by Andreas Krieg

**Swarmwise: The Tactical Manual to Changing the World** by Rick Falkvinge

**Narrative Warfare** by Ajit Maan

**Film & radio Propaganda in World War II** Edited by K.R.M Short

**Computational Propaganda: Political Parties, Politicians and Political Manipulation on Social Media** Edited by Samuel C. Woodly and Phillip N. Howard

**Spinning History: Politics and Propaganda in World War II** by Nathaniel Lande

**Propaganda 2.1: Understanding Propaganda in the Digital Age** by Peter K. Fallon

**Stories Are Weapons: Psychological Warfare and the American Mind** by Annalee Newitz

**Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare** by Thomas Rid

**CIA Manual for Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare**

**The Red Book of Guerrilla Warfare** by Mao Zedong

**Myth and Mythmaking** edited by Henry A. Murray

**Analyzing Narrative Reality** by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein

**Russia's War** by Jade McGlynn

**Battling The Big Lie: How Fox, Facebook and the MAGA Media are Destroying America** by Dan Pfeiffer

**Words That Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear** by Dr. Frank Luntz

**Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate** by George Lakoff

**Thinking Points: Communicating Our American Values and Vision** by George Lakoff

**The Political Brain: The role of emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation** by Drew Westen

**Merge Left: Fusing Race and Class, Winning Elections, and Saving America** by Ian Haney Lopez

**The Strategists: Churchill, Stalin, Roosevelt, Mussolini and Hitler— How War Made Them and How They Made War** by Phillips O'Brien

**How The War Was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II** by Phillips O'Brien

**Command: How The Allies Learned to Win the Second World War** by Al Murray

**The Kurdish women's movement: History, Theory, Practice** by Dilar Dirik

Recent relevant readings and media (non-exhaustive)

- [A Primer on Russian Cognitive Warfare | Institute for the Study of War](#)
- [Russia's War Is Also Cognitive](#)
- [Undercover With the New Alt-Right | The Nation](#)
- [They Saw Their Neighbors Taken Away by ICE. Then They Made a Plan. - The New York Times](#)
- [How Techno-Fascists Are Engineering Our Surrender](#)
- [Republicans treat politics like viral marketing. Democrats don't](#)
- [The High Cost of Spam: How the Flood of Dem Fundraising Texts Hurt the Party](#)
- [Why the Democrats' Digital Strategy Is Doomed to Fail](#)
- [A Party's Brand Is Built on Trust. So Why Are Democrats Treating Their Supporters Like Marks?](#)
- [The Psychology of Deception - by Caroline Orr Bueno, PhD](#)
- [Outgunned, Outposted, and Out of Touch: - Will Robinson](#)
- [The Underground Economy Your Neighbors Are Already Building](#)
- [Clausewitz and The Infantry Problem](#)
- [Gods and Mortals: Building a Universal Theory of War](#)
- [Title: People Are Our Power. So Why Aren't We Training Them?](#)
- [Speech and Protest Won't Work. Here's What Will](#)
- [Resisting Autocracy - by Bennett Carpenter](#)
- [Weekend Update #35 - by Phillips P. O'Brien](#)
- [Ep 179: Phillips O'Brien on Grand Strategy in WW2](#)
- [The Real Reason for Zohran's Success Should Rattle National Democrats | The New Republic](#)
- [Why tech billionaires want a 'corporate dictatorship'](#)

- [Transcript: Trump's Vile New Colbert Smear Reveals Firing's Darker Aim | The New Republic](#)
- [Trump Guts Education: Undercover To Expose Republicans w/ Lauren Windsor | MR Live | Majority Report](#)
- [Three archetypes define American politics. Reading this article suggests which one might apply to you](#)
- ["People Don't Want To Feel Helpless." an Interview with Kat Abughazaleh](#)
- [Lessons for protesters from Standing Rock - by Emily Atkin](#)
- [\(PDF\) Taming The Oligarchs? Democratization and State Capture: The Case of Moldova](#)
- [Reforging America](#)
- [Who Needs Empathy? Why Some White Nationalists Condemn Western Civilization](#)
- [Breaking The Clinton/Obama/Biden Cartel](#)
- [For these veterans, the secret to crossing political divides starts with a beer](#)
- [How to Inoculate Young Men Against Fascism - WORT-FM 89.9](#)
- [Fighting Fire With Fire](#)