**Fact or Fiction – Identifying Propaganda and Conspiracy Theories**

These activities are part of an [exhibit](https://www.jewishexponent.com/2023/01/18/un-exhibit-remembers-when-the-world-turned-its-back-on-stateless-jewish-refugees/) created by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and the United Nations Department of Global Communications, “After the End of the World: Displaced Persons and Displaced Persons Camps.” A lesson on the power of propaganda is available from [Facing History & Ourselves](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/power-propaganda-1).

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| **Propaganda or Not?**  The power of propaganda depends on the following main characteristics aimed at specific groups:   * Playing on emotions * Attacking antagonists * Simplifying information   Do more than half of the below apply? If so, it is most likely propaganda.   1. The message compels you to think or do something. 2. The message is addressed to a specific group of people. 3. There is an obvious and specific antagonist. 4. The message uses stereotypical images of the “other.” 5. The message presents a complex issue as actually being quite simple. 6. The message plays on your emotions. 7. The message is short and easy to repeat and makes use of slogans. 8. The message uses lies, half-truths and out-of-context truths. 9. You find the message only in restricted media channels. 10. The message uses specific symbols. | **Conspiracy Theories or Not?**  A conspiracy theory has a firm structure. A powerful group has a secret plan which is disadvantageous for the majority and yields an advantage for the first (powerful) group.  Do more than half of the below apply? If so, it is most likely a conspiracy theory.   1. The story begins in a credible way and with clear facts but gradually becomes more improbable. 2. The story is presented as the unmasking of the real truth. 3. There is a “powerful” group of people who keep the real truth hidden. 4. Everything is part of a larger plan and the story reveals this plan. 5. The story provokes intense emotions. 6. There is extreme distrust against scientists, news media or government. 7. Discussions are not held in public forums but instead, for example, in private chats. 8. The story is often being removed from social media. 9. Fact checkers and journalists say the story is not true. 10. People who oppose the story are said to be easily duped and unable to think critically. |