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PR Series No. 1

LIABILITIES OF PR

PR = Public Relations, a technique of communication of ideas.

A casual investigation of the activities and effects of "PR" as practised in the 1st 70 years of the 20th Century gives one ample data to regard "PR" with caution.

The subject is one which can be said to be dangerous in its incomplete stage of development or in the hands of inexperienced or unscrupulous people.

Thus we have 3 major liabilities in PR usage:

1. It is an incomplete technology as developed and used up to 1970.
 - (a) The human mind was not a known field.
 - (b) Any early technology of the human mind was perverted by the University of Leipzig studies and animal fixations of a Prof. Wundt in 1879 who declared Man a soulless animal subject only to stimulus-response mechanisms and without determinism.
 - (c) Further perversions entered upon the scene in the 1894 Libido Theory of Sigmund Freud attributing all reactions and behaviour to the sex urge.

PR is essentially a matter of reaching minds. Therefore the above four factors have given PR strange elements and bed fellows which have curtailed its development as a subject.

Naturally you'd have to know something of the mind to handle PR. Yet if a PR man is operating not only without knowledge of the mind but with a corrupt idea of it (as in Wundt or Freud) his use of PR technique can spread a fantastic amount of aberration into the society and can result in an aberrated society. PR men operating in the "mass media" (Press, Radio, Television, Magazines and in lobbying parliaments) push strange mental ideas.

2. Inexpert PR men can make a gruesome mess out of the subject and the society.
 - (a) Working with an incompletely developed subject, yet using the powerful communication systems of the society it is not only not unusual for the work of a PR to recoil on his own employers but is usual to bring them into decay.
3. PR lends itself to the use of unscrupulous persons and cliques.
 - (a) The extremists such as the Nazis and Stalinists saw in PR techniques the

means of subjugating their own people, perpetrating horrors and bringing their opponents into disrepute. Such extremist groups were enormously assisted by PR techniques.

- (b) Using PR technique to bring about disrepute of their imagined enemies unscrupulous persons have brought about an atmosphere of war, crime and insanity on the planet.

These are of course harsh words. But it is better to know all sides of a subject.

PR practitioners of course spread PR about PR. But the use of Black PR far exceeds its other uses in this year of 1970. Yet teachers of PR in the smoky cloister (smoke from marijuana) give us only the Sunday School version. According to them *PR* is a nicey-nicey way of *bringing good works to public notice* and that is their favorite definition. In actual fact 10 times as much PR work is done in getting rid of someone or something imagined to be dangerous to the PR's employer.

Bribing newspapermen and "free lance writers" to write horrible lies about a competitor, bribing or lying to Congressmen or ministers or members of Parliament to get a law passed to enable a fast buck to be made and countering the ploys of the other firm's PR men are the common duties of a working Public Relations employee.

This scene doesn't seem to be quite the same as PR as represented in the ivory skulls of its professors.

It's a PR world.

When you read the papers, books and watch the TV of the 20th Century it's not a very nice world. Well, that's PR at work.

The far right PRs against the far left. And in between more moderate groups PR both.

Every government department in England has a PR office. The beginning of the decline of the British Empire and the first British government "information office" are of similar date.

The unsavory history of PR, its use to perpetuate questionable interests and cause needless and murderous quarrels must be confronted as part of the study of PR.

It is not for no reason that PR men are often of pitiful morals and degenerate character.

The countless trillions of volts of radio and TV, the rivers of newsprint and pages tearing through presses, pour fantastic lies into the overwhelmed population of Earth.

The prevailing tone of dismay and contempt across the world is stimulated and kept alive by PRs.

So disabuse yourself of any idea of a pleasant scene in the field of PR.

Even if you are engaged in the promotion of the most worthwhile objects pushed by the most altruistic leader, PR work is done cheek by jowl with some pretty questionable characters whose objects are far from worthwhile and whose masters are about as altruistic as a rattlesnake.

Thus PR easily becomes a cynical activity. The PR deeds of the bad hats throw the field into disrepute and throw the whole world into a whirlpool of hate and decay.

So in entering or studying this field do not walk into it like a wide-eyed virgin

making an incautious visit to a military brothel.

There is no reason to be disillusioned if one does not start out with illusions.

PR is a partially developed technique of creating states of mind in different types of audiences or publics.

PR can be used or abused.

Thus before proceeding any further with the subject it was necessary to restudy the subject and find out what was wrong with it, add it to the subject and thus make it less dangerous to use.

The liabilities of PR, as taught and used before 1970 were:

- A. It inevitably recoiled in greater or lesser degree to the harm of its user.
- B. It had long repute as a carelessly or badly used subject, full of failures.
- C. It is normally used into the teeth of competitive PR.

Unless these objections could be nullified or new discoveries and developments could be accomplished, the basic techniques of PR were about as safe as a cocked Spanish pistol—ready to blow up its user long before it hit anyone else.

This is what has been done with PR in our hands:

1. Its more dangerous points have been located.
2. A *full* study of its texts is required.
3. It is designed now for use that is beneficial as well as offensive and defensive.

Thus the Standard texts of PR have to be studied and studied well. And they must be studied WITH THE ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS KNOWN AND GIVEN HIGH IMPORTANCE.

Only then is it safe to use PR techniques. Otherwise PR activities are almost a complete liability and will lead to trouble.

In this series we will bring PR up to date from the liabilities which exist in its purely PR college textbook practice.

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