

HCO PL: Black PR

Hubbard, L. Ron, Hubbard Communication Office Policy Letter 11 May 1971 "Black PR"

About the most involved employment of PR is its covert use in destroying the reputations of individuals and groups.

More correctly this is technically called BLACK PROPAGANDA.

Basically it is an intelligence technique.

[…]

Black propaganda is, in its technical accuracy, a covert operation where unknown authors publicly effect a derogatory reaction and then remain unknown.

[…]

The ability of the public to stand around and look stupidly at a dripping-handed murderer without doing a thing about it is a symptom of our civilization. They ought to act. They don't. You can form an opinion amongst them but governing bodies won't consult it.

Exposure is not an effective road to action. It can be to opinion. It is slow.

Then what is effective?

INTELLIGENCE

By definition intelligence is covert. Under cover. If it is kept so all the way, it is effective.

When intelligence surfaces, it becomes very ineffective.

[…]

Exposure is the basic threat of intelligence.

PR is the willful broadcast of information.

The two don't mix well.

BLACK PROPAGANDA

Possibly used since the morning pale of history, black propaganda was developed by the British and German services in World War I into a fine art.

The word "propaganda" means putting out slanted information to populations.

One propagandizes the enemy population or one's own or neutrals.

In popular interpretation it is a parade of lies or half-truths or exaggerations.

PR and advertising technology and mass news media are employed as well as word of mouth and posters.

The trouble with it is that it can often be disproven, discrediting the utterers of it.

It may serve the moment but after a war it leaves a very bad taste.

If one is engaging on a campaign of this nature, its success depends on sticking to the truth and being able to document it.

[…]

So black propaganda is not a certain-result technology. It is costly. It makes fantastic trouble.

Essentially it is NOT a PR campaign. It is a cross between PR and intelligence.

The technique is

A hidden source injects lies and derogatory data into public view.

Since it is a hidden source, it requires an intelligence approach to successfully end it.

In the meanwhile the "dead agent caper" is the best tool to counter it.

Legal action can restrain such a campaign but is chancy unless one knows the source or at least has counterdocuments. It is risky solely because "law" is unpredictable. However, legal action has a definite role in restraining, not in ending, such a campaign.

A good policy when faced with a black propaganda campaign is to defend as best you can (dead agent and legal restraints) while you find out (intelligence) WHO is doing it. Then, confrontation can occur. Finding and suing false whos can make things much more involved.

Black propaganda countercampaigns are inevitable. One engages upon them whether he would or not. These are engaged on while one narrows down the area to an exact WHO. For instance, one knows the whatsits are attacking one. Thus he can counterattack the whatsits. But what are the whatsits exactly, and to whom are they connected, and exactly WHO (an individual always) is keeping it going? These last three have to be answered eventually. And that requires an intelligence-type search.

THE CROSS

So there is where intelligence and PR cross.

When PR goes into black propaganda (hidden source using lies and defamation to destroy) it has crossed intelligence with publicity. They don't mix well.

The action is risky to engage upon as it may run into an ex-intelligence officer or trained intelligence personnel. It may also run into a dead agent caper or legal restraint. Anyone engaging in black propaganda is either using a wrong way to right a wrong or confessing he can't make it in open competition.

See The Dangerous Environment Racket