

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE PUBLIC RELATIONS INDUSTRY?



A COMIC BY KATE EVANS AND Corporate Watch

BASED ON THE Corporate Watch REPORT "ALL THE REST IS ADVERTISING..."

**PUBLIC RELATIONS.
IT'S A RESPECTABLE
PROFESSION...**



**...AN
ATTRACTIVE
CAREER CHOICE...**



**...IT'S ALL ABOUT
COMMUNICATION...**



**...BEING
MEDIA SAVVY...**



**SPRUCING UP
A COMPANY'S
IMAGE**



**AFTER ALL,
WE ALL NEED
A LITTLE
HELP TO
LOOK OUR
BEST!**



BUT PR WILL STOP
AT NOTHING TO
KEEP A CLIENT
LOOKING
GOOD.



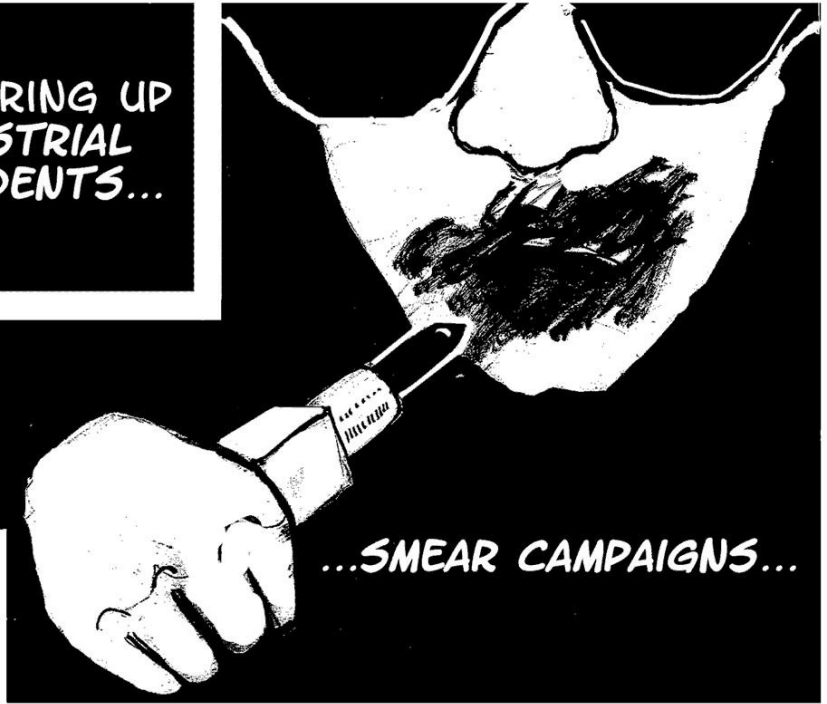
IT'S ABOUT
CONCEALING
CORPORATE
MALPRACTICE...



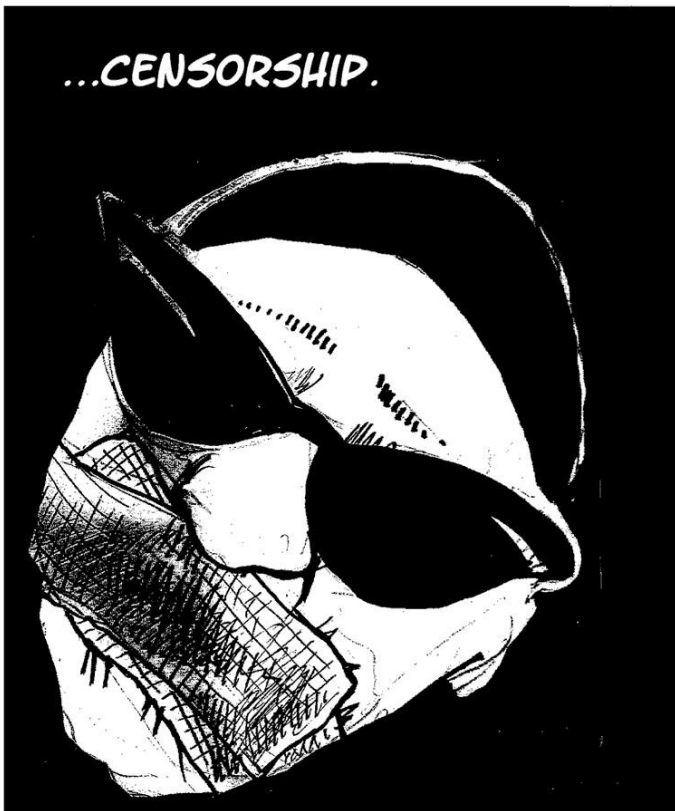
...COVERING UP
INDUSTRIAL
ACCIDENTS...



...SMEAR CAMPAIGNS...

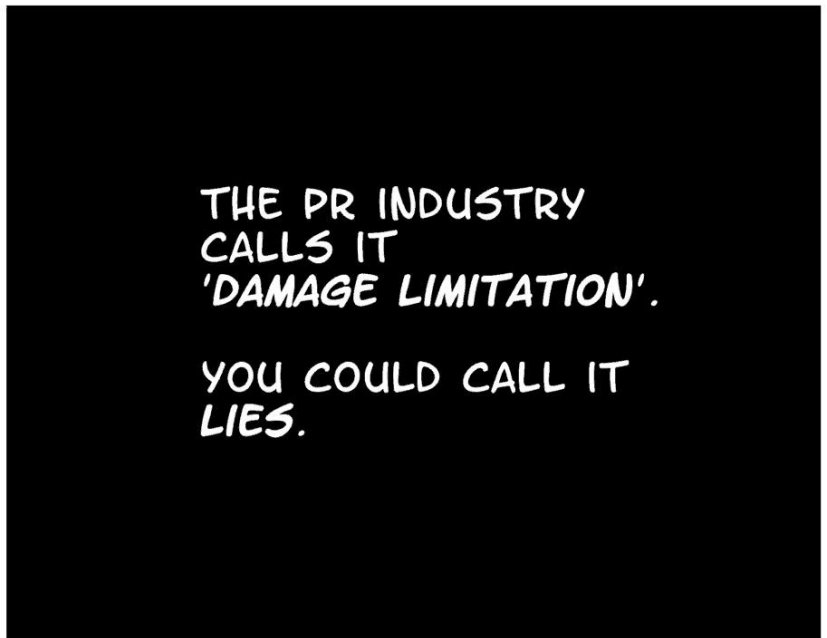


...CENSORSHIP.



THE PR INDUSTRY
CALLS IT
'DAMAGE LIMITATION'.

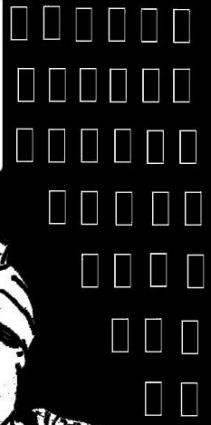
YOU COULD CALL IT
LIES.



The press release is the PR agent's secret weapon!



PR LOVE THE MEDIA BECAUSE THE PUBLIC TRUST NEWS REPORTS AND REVIEWS



IT MUST BE TRUE. I READ IT IN THE PAPER.



THE MEDIA LOVE PR...

...IN OUR AGE OF INSTANT INFO-TAINMENT, JOURNALISTS FACE INCREASING WORKLOADS AND DECREASING DEADLINES. THEY CHURN OUT PR GENERATED 'NEWS CONTENT' WITHOUT THE TIME OR RESOURCES TO CHECK THE 'FACTS'.

IT MUST BE TRUE. I READ IT IN THE PRESS RELEASE.

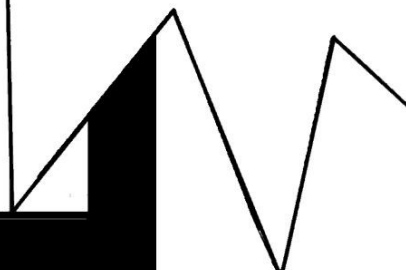


AND SO THE NEWS GETS DUMBER AND DUMBER...

The headlines tonight. Smiley's crisps are now available in a new exciting flavour

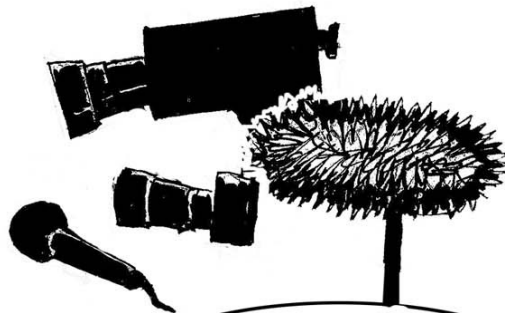


IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT BETWEEN 50% AND 80% OF THE STORIES IN THE NEWS COME VIA PR PRESS DEPARTMENTS



BUT WHEN BAD NEWS THREATENS A CLIENT, PR DEPARTMENTS ENSURE THAT THE MEDIA IS STRUCK COMPLETELY DUMB...

...EMPLOYEES ARE GAGGED...



I CAN'T ANSWER QUESTIONS. YOU HAVE TO SPEAK TO THE PR PEOPLE.



SPIKE THAT...

...PAPERS ARE THREATENED...

...AND I'M SURE WE CAN COME TO AN ARRANGEMENT.

...JOURNALISTS ARE "PERSUADED".

"50% OF THE JOB IS KEEPING STUFF OUT OF THE PRESS" - TIM BLYTHE, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS AT WHSMITH

IF THE STORY EVER MAKES IT INTO THE PRESS, PR STEPS IN TO CONFUSE THE FACTS AND DERAIL THE DEBATE.

There is no scientific consensus on this issue as our "experts", Dr Ivor Addabung and Major Corporate-Sponsor, can prove.

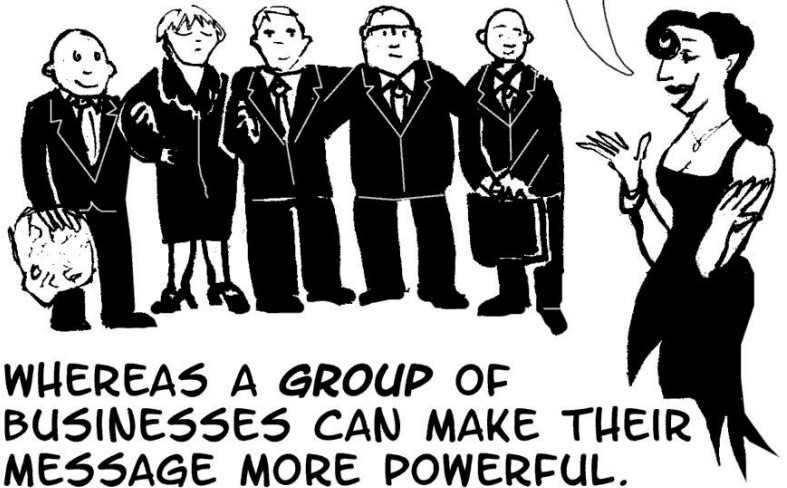


PR IS ABOUT PROMOTING THE CORPORATE AGENDA:

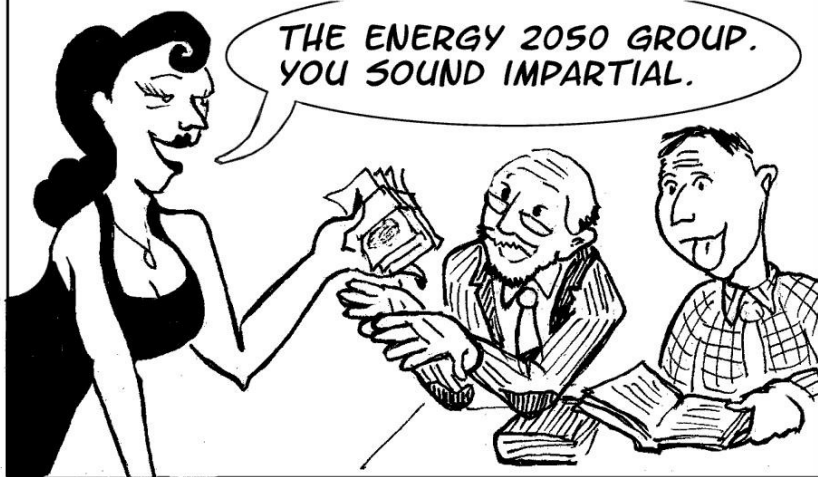
ONE COMPANY, ACTING ALONE, CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH TO PROMOTE ITS PRODUCT.



THE OIL AND GAS FEDERATION. MUCH MORE IMPRESSIVE.



ESPECIALLY IF THEY BUY UP AN 'INDEPENDENT' THINK TANK TO DO THEIR TALKING FOR THEM...



The Real Causes of Global Warming: Planetary Alignments and Little Green Men from Mars

...WHO THEN FUND 'SCIENTIFIC' REPORTS.



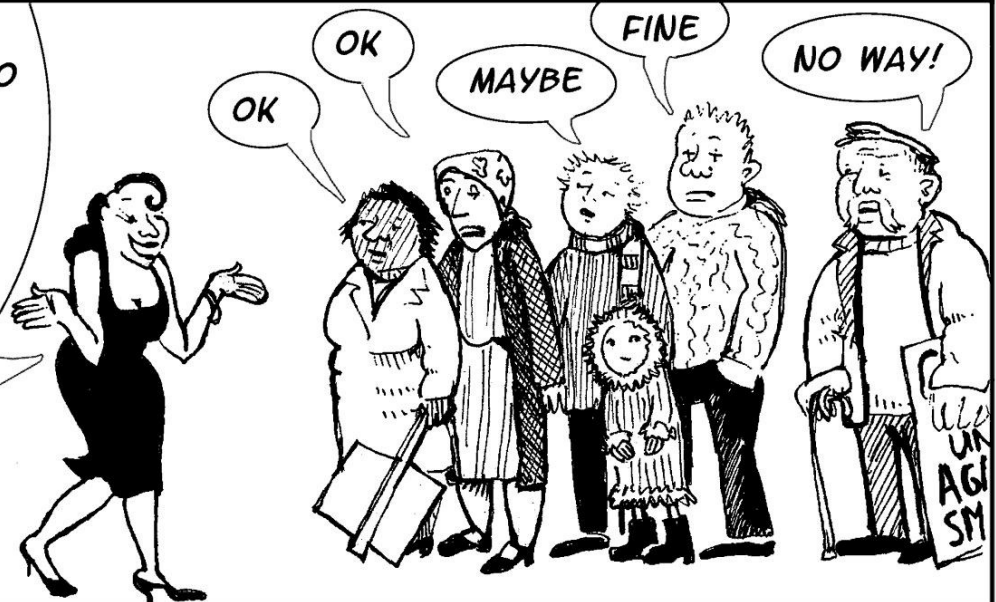
PR FIRMS CAN EVEN MANUFACTURE 'GRASSROOTS' POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS.





OF COURSE, GENUINE PUBLIC PROTEST OFTEN THREATENS A COMPANY'S IMAGE. AT THIS POINT, PR TAKES DIRECT ACTION...

OF COURSE, WE RECOGNISE YOUR DEMOCRATIC RIGHT TO STATE YOUR VIEWS. WE SIMPLY WANT TO ENGAGE YOU IN A STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ABOUT THIS CONTENTIOUS ISSUE, WHERE WE WOW YOU WITH OUR SLICK ARGUMENTS AND FREE LUNCHES, AND SUBTLY REDEFINE THE TERMS OF THE DEBATE...



...AND WE KNOW THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH WEIRDO CRAZY EXTREMISTS LIKE HIM OVER THERE.



PR FIRMS INFILTRATE ACTIVIST GROUPS. THEY CONDUCT SMEAR CAMPAIGNS AGAINST CORPORATE CRITICS. THEY HAVE EVEN BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH BURGLARY AND INTIMIDATION OF THOSE PERCEIVED TO BE A THORN IN A COMPANY'S SIDE.

BUT HEY, WHO CARES ABOUT MANIPULATING PUBLIC OPINION?
WHY NOT CUT STRAIGHT TO THE PLACE WHERE THE
DECISIONS ARE ALL BEING MADE?

LOBBYING GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

IT SOUNDS
INNOCUOUS.

IT'S NOT.

PR FIRMS RECRUIT
EX-CIVIL SERVANTS
OR POLITICAL
PARTY ACTIVISTS.
PEOPLE WITH THE
**SOCIAL
CONTACTS**
TO GET
THEIR
MESSAGE
ACROSS.

THEY WORK FOR FREE FOR MPS,
**RESEARCHING SUBJECTS,
DRAFTING SPEECHES,**
ASSISTING
PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEES,
EVEN **WRITING
PARLIAMENTARY
REPORTS.**

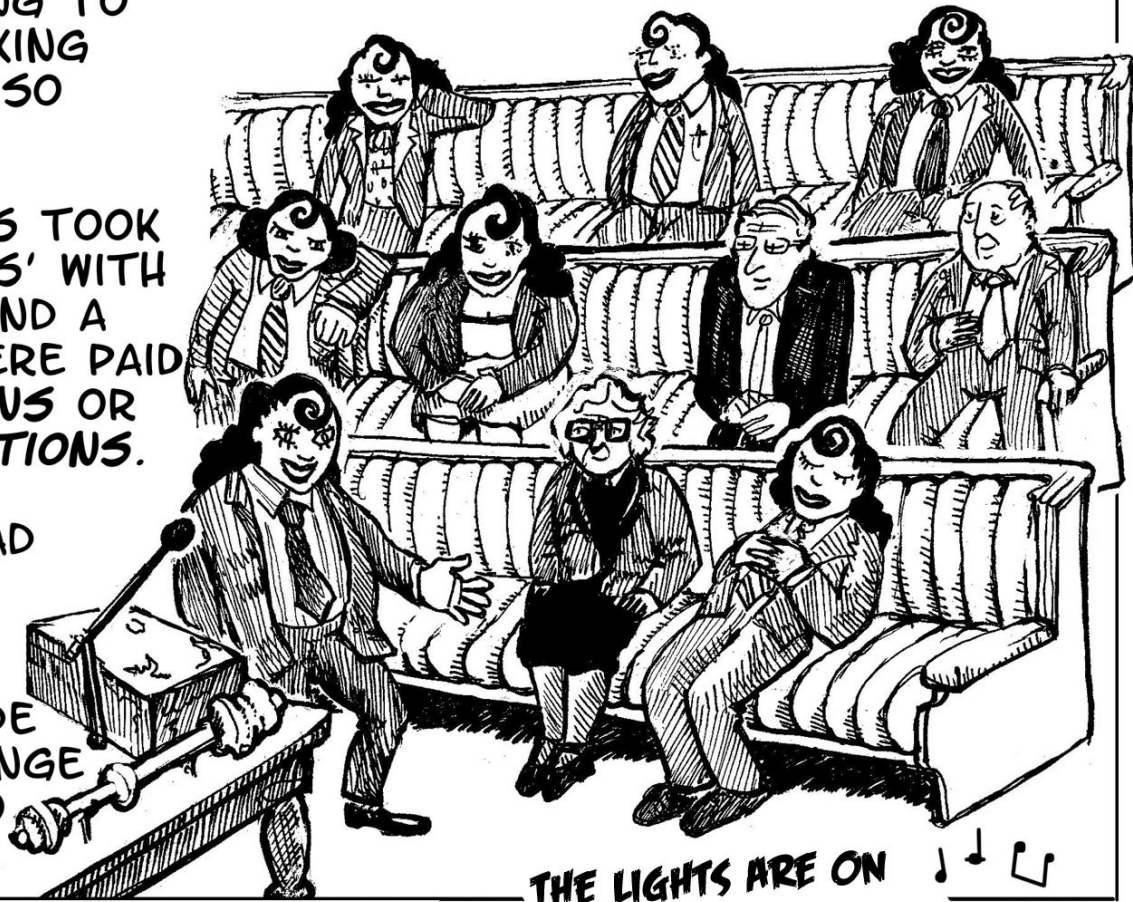
THERE'S NO WAY OF
KNOWING HOW MANY
CORPORATE ACTIVISTS
PASS THROUGH THE
REVOLVING DOORS OF
THE PALACE OF
WESTMINSTER,
BUT WE DO KNOW
THAT THEIR
INFLUENCE IS
FELT UP TO THE
HIGHEST LEVELS
OF GOVERNMENT.

10

THERE'S NOTHING TO STOP MPS WORKING FOR INDUSTRY, SO THEY DO.

IN 1995, 26 MPS TOOK 'CONSULTANCIES' WITH PR AGENCIES, AND A FURTHER 142 WERE PAID BY CORPORATIONS OR TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.

ALMOST 70% HAD SOME SORT OF FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH AN OUTSIDE BODY, IN EXCHANGE FOR ACCESS TO POWER.



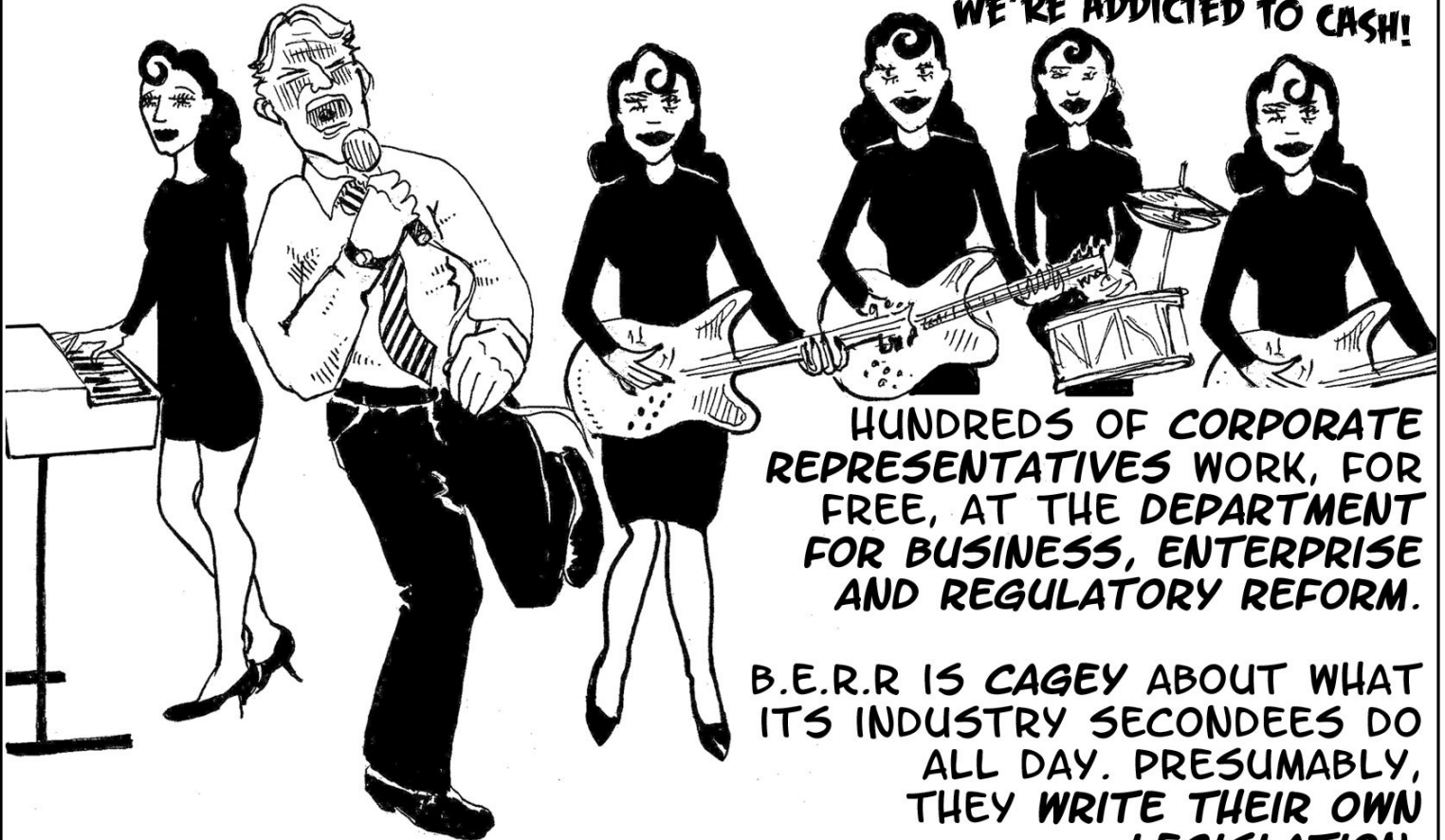
THE LIGHTS ARE ON

AND THESE DAYS, THERE'S NOTHING TO STOP INDUSTRY WORKING IN GOVERNMENT.

BUT YOU'RE NOT HOME
YOUR MIND IS NOT YOUR OWN...

...CLOSER TO THE TRUTH TO SAY, WE CAN'T GET ENOUGH..

WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO FACE IT
WE'RE ADDICTED TO CASH!



HUNDREDS OF CORPORATE REPRESENTATIVES WORK, FOR FREE, AT THE DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE AND REGULATORY REFORM.

B.E.R.R IS CAGEY ABOUT WHAT ITS INDUSTRY SECONDEES DO ALL DAY. PRESUMABLY, THEY WRITE THEIR OWN LEGISLATION.

INFORMATION IS POWER.

**WHAT IF ONE COMPANY SET
OUT TO DOCUMENT EVERY
MENTION MADE BY EVERY MP
ON ANY SUBJECT...**

**...IT MONITORS THE AIRWAVES,
AND SCOURS THE PRESS, TO
ANALYSE AND REPORT ITS
CONTENT...**

**...IT LOGS EVERY PARLIAMEN-
TARIAN, EDITOR AND JOURNAL-
IST OF NOTE, PROFILING THEIR
HISTORIES, INTERESTS,
HOBBIES, FAMILIES AND
CONTACT DETAILS...**

**...AND IT MAKES IT ALL
AVAILABLE TO ITS CLIENTS IN
A CROSS-REFERENCED,
SEARCHABLE
DATABASE...**

**...EMAIL-MERGE
FACILITIES MEAN
THAT TARGETED
MESSAGES CAN BE
SENT OUT TO A THOUSAND
RECEPTIVE INBOXES WITH A
SINGLE 'PING'.**

THIS COMPANY EXISTS.

IT IS A PR FIRM.

**THEY SAY OUR DEMOCRACY DEPENDS
UPON THE NOTION OF FREE ASSOCIATION,
A FREE PRESS, AND A PARLIAMENT THAT
REPRESENTS THE INTERESTS OF ITS
ELECTORATE...**

**...SO CAN YOU SEE WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE
PR INDUSTRY?**



IN THE CONVENTIONAL ECONOMIC VIEW CORPORATIONS ARE SIMPLY NEUTRAL PROVIDERS OF THE GOODS AND SERVICES THAT PEOPLE WANT. THEY EXIST TO SERVE SOCIETY'S NEEDS (AND MAKE A TIDY PROFIT IN THE PROCESS). THIS VIEW DISMISSES CORPORATE CRIMES AS MERE ACCIDENTS, AT WORST ERRORS OF JUDGEMENT, WHICH WILL ULTIMATELY BE CORRECTED, SINCE MARKET FORCES HAVE EVERYONE'S BEST INTERESTS AT HEART. DON'T THEY?

THERE IS ANOTHER VIEW. IN THIS VIEW, CORPORATIONS HAVE GAINED A POWER OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO THEIR ORIGINAL PURPOSE; THE SERVANT AND USEFUL GOODS-PROVIDING MACHINE HAS BECOME THE MASTER AND THE ONLY TRUE CITIZEN. THE RIGHTS OF CORPORATIONS DISGUISED AS 'ENCOURAGING FOREIGN INVESTMENT', 'PROMOTING FREE TRADE', 'PROTECTING THE NATIONAL INTEREST' NOW TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER HUMAN RIGHTS, COMMUNITY INTERESTS, AND THE INTERESTS OF THE PLANET ITSELF.

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1996, Corporate Watch HAS BEEN PART OF THE GROWING ANTI-CORPORATE MOVEMENT SPRINGING UP AROUND THE WORLD. WE ARE A RESEARCH GROUP SUPPORTING CAMPAIGNS THAT ARE INCREASINGLY SUCCESSFUL AT FORCING CORPORATIONS TO BACK DOWN FROM ENVIRONMENTALLY DESTRUCTIVE OR SOCIALLY DIVISIVE PROJECTS. WE DRAG THE CORRUPT LINKS BETWEEN BUSINESS AND POWER, ECONOMICS AND POLITICS INTO THE SPOTLIGHT AGAINST THE RESISTANCE OF THE COMPLACENT, CORPORATE-LED MAINSTREAM MEDIA.

Corporate Watch PRODUCES A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER AND BI-WEEKLY ONLINE NEWS UPDATES HIGHLIGHTING CORPORATE CRIME AND SHOWCASING GRASSROOTS RESISTANCE TO CORPORATIONS. WE ALSO PRODUCE IN-DEPTH, CORPORATE-CRITICAL REPORTS FOCUSING ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF CORPORATE POWER AND THE MECHANISMS CORPORATIONS USE TO WIELD POWER OVER THE WORLD'S SIX BILLION INHABITANTS AND ITS ECOSYSTEMS. OUR WORK EXPOSES THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE PLAYED BY CORPORATIONS IN UNDERMINING STRUGGLES FOR SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE.

Corporate Watch HAS PRODUCED CUTTING EDGE REPORTS ON, FOR EXAMPLE, CORPORATE TECHNOLOGIES (FROM NANOTECHNOLOGY TO FALSE SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE), THE PR AND NUCLEAR INDUSTRIES, WHAT'S WRONG WITH CSR (CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY), CORPORATE LAW AND STRUCTURES, AND THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE-CONTROL OF OUR FOOD FROM FARM TO FORK.

ALL OUR REPORTS AND ARCHIVED MATERIAL CAN BE FOUND ON THE CORPORATE WATCH WEBSITE

WWW.CorporateWatch.ORG

CONTACT@CorporateWatch.ORG

Corporate Watch WORKERS' CO-OPERATIVE

WHAT'S WRONG WITH...

**TRADE ASSOCIATIONS... INVESTOR RELATIONS... SCIENTIFIC SPONSORSHIP...
REPUTATION MANAGEMENT... CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY...
INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS... BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE... OPINION
POLLING... PRESS AGENCIES... MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATIONS...
POLITICAL LOBBYING... ISSUES MANAGEMENT... MEDIA MONITORING...
BRAND MARKETING... INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS... MARKET
RESEARCH... CRISIS MANAGEMENT... TREND FORECASTING... NEWSWIRES...**

...WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE PR INDUSTRY?

**READ ON!
IF YOU DARE!!!**