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| Bernays, Edward (1891-1995) |
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| Edward Louis Bernays retains a place in the history of modernity for synthesizing Freudian psychology, political communication (or propaganda) and the media. The fruit of that synthesis, modern public relations theory, changed the way governments relate to their citizens and the ways businesses relate to their customers. |
| Edward Louis Bernays retains a place in the history of modernity for synthesizing Freudian psychology, political communication (or propaganda) and the media. The fruit of that synthesis, modern public relations theory, changed the way governments relate to their citizens and the ways businesses relate to their customers. Born in Vienna in 1891, Bernays’ parents, the brother of Sigmund Freud’s wife Martha Bernays and Anna Freud, Freud’s sister, respectively, relocated to America where Bernays was educated. In his major 1928 text *Propaganda*, Bernays makes clear the work of the propagandist (the public relations specialist working for the government): ‘We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of’ (1). Propagandists streamline democracy by limiting citizens’ choices and channelling their energy. Bernays and Walter Lippman (1889-1974) engaged in this work through American President Woodrow Wilson’s Committee of Public Information (established in 1917), using propaganda as a positive tool to lead public opinion.  Subsequently, as a Public Relations Counselor, Bernays was consulted for both political and commercial purposes, effectively transforming communication between businesses and customers. This was achieved through the development of several other unique public relations strategies. Bernays pioneered the appeal to the expert opinion in advertising, which remains a key strategy. His signature event, the 1929 Easter Parade in New York, demonstrates Bernays at his finest. He hired women to parade as suffragettes while smoking Lucky Strike cigarettes, thereby linking smoking with the emancipation movement: an independent woman not only votes; she smokes.  List of Works  Bernays, Edward (1928) *Propaganda*, New York: Horace Liveright. Reprinted in 2005, Brooklyn: Ig Publishing.  ------ (1947) ‘The Engineering of Consent’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 250: 113-120.  ------ (1951) *Public Relations, Edward L. Bernays and the American Scene: Annotated Bibliography of and Reference Guide to Writings by and about Edward L. Bernays from 1917 to 1951*, Concord: F. W. Faxton Company. (Full text available via *The Internet Archive* <<http://bit.ly/Ny20H4>>.)  ------ (1965) *Biography of an Idea*: *Memoirs* of *Public Relations Counsel*, New York: Simon and Schuster. |
| Further reading:  (Ewen)  (Petroski)  (Rampton) |