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use of the rest of it, in which Faulkner speaks of the low state of his finances and his worry over having to write potboilers to keep ahead of his creditors.

The World's Best, of 1950, was an even more ambitious undertaking than *This is My Best*. The scheme for its compilation was, indeed, so elaborate that a few authors thought the undertaking absurd. Most of the dissenters, if they were invited to the party, finally consented to appear. Mr. Burnett first made up a ballot on which the names of 457 "world authors" were printed. The ballot was sent to eleven groups of voters. Among these groups were authors, editors, reviewers, librarians, members of P.E.N. clubs, college presidents, and "miscellaneous public figures." A surprising number of ballots were returned, including 96 from authors, some of whom agonized over whether they should vote for themselves. (Sinclair Lewis thought the practice of Abraham Lincoln, if known, might be followed.)

After the ballots were tabulated, the "world authors" were found to number 105. (There were also lists of the first 10 and the 50 most voted upon.) Much of the correspondence which this huge enterprise elicited is interesting and will be of considerable value to scholars. Thomas Mann, for instance, was very serious about the business. There are four good letters from him and the manuscript (corrected in his hand) of a preface he wrote for "The Masters of Buddenbrooks" selection. Edith Sitwell writes graciously. James Thurber writes caustically, though he did consent to appear since he had been voted in. (You may be sure that Mr. Burnett did not quote from any of the four Thurber letters.) Shaw could not be hooked though agents and publishers joined Mr. Burnett in trying to land him. He was even niggardly in his correspondence. There is one pink post-card (not found) and another p.c. with "No" on it.

You will not suppose that this rich archive was wafted off the shelves in the offices of *Story* into the secure stacks of the Princeton University Library. We are grateful to two Princeton alumni, Richard Wathen '39 and Levering Cartwright '26, whose generosity made this acquisition possible. Mr. Wathen, who was an associate editor of *Story* when it was revived in 1960, was naturally eager to have the Burnett archive come to Princeton. Mr. Cartwright, a member of the Advisory Council of the Department of English and of the Council of the Friends of the Princeton Library, assumed, from the time he learned that negotiations were under way, that the papers would come to Princeton. He was ready at the critical moment to substantiate his assumption.

Ivy Lee: "Father of Modern Public Relations"

BY RAY ELDON HIEBERT

THE Ivy Lee Papers in the Princeton University Library provide an important source of information about a significant but hitherto largely inaccessible area of American history: the development of public relations. The papers were given to the Library in 1958 by Lee's widow, Mrs. Cornelia Bigelow Lee of Wilton, Conn., and their sons, James W. II of Dorset, Vt., and Ivy Jr. of San Francisco. Additional material was added after 1958, and in 1963, through a grant from the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education, the entire collection was catalogued and arranged chronologically and topically.¹

Ivy Ledbetter Lee has often been called the "father of modern public relations." He was born on July 16, 1877 and died on November 9, 1934, but in his brief lifetime of fifty-seven years, the America in which he lived underwent revolutionary changes. From an agrarian, laissez-faire, individualistic, and isolated community, it became an industrial, controlled, mass society and world power. In other parts of the world similar changes produced violent results—the overthrow of kings and emperors in bloody conflicts, and the loss of individual rights as the state assumed supreme authority under Fascist or Communist rule. In the United States, however, this revolution was relatively peaceful, largely due to the increased practice of an activity that became known as public relations, in which Ivy Lee was a leading pioneer.

"Public relations," according to Ivy Lee, was the art of relating one's ideas and purposes to the public, or the activity of explaining one group within society to another. In order to achieve a workable relationship between any two groups, effective means of communication were needed. Lee called this communicating "publicity," and he felt that every medium of communication had its appropriate use in relating one group to another, from Gothic cathedrals to brass bands. He did not build any Gothic cathedrals, but, as an example of that type of public relations, he urged the building of Rockefeller Center, the reconstruction of Williamsburg, and the founding of the Riverside Memorial Church, as means of explaining the ideas and purposes of the Rockefellers, just as he pioneered the use of employee news-

¹ By the author of this article—Eds.

papers, management newsletters, stockholder reports, and press releases to explain the purposes of the Pennsylvania Railroad and other industrial concerns.

Unlike the advertising agent, however, Lee was not simply interested in promoting his clients by selling their products, personalities, or ideas, but rather he was concerned with achieving public understanding for them. In a democratic society, he reasoned, nothing could succeed without public approval. If one's policies were not acceptable to the public, he must change them. The work of the public relations man, then, was two-fold, according to Lee: to relate his group to others through effective channels of communication, and to adjust those relationships by advising different plans of action when misunderstanding or conflict arose.

This was the basic philosophy under which Lee operated. The practice of public relations evolved out of the nineteenth-century activity of the press agent. To be sure, much that parades under the title of public relations today is still nineteenth-century press agency, the use of stunts and distortions to get free advertising space in the mass media. Lee was perhaps the first man to make a sharp distinction between the press agent and the public relations counsel; he was certainly the first man to achieve widespread fame (and considerable infamy) for a distinct practice of public relations, particularly in his association with the Rockefellers. He probably did not "father" public relations by himself, but he was certainly one of the earliest pioneers, and he was representative of the best and most influential of his kind.

Lee was born in Georgia, the son of a well-known Methodist minister and religious author, the Rev. Dr. James Wideman Lee. He attended Princeton, class of '98, and entered newspaper work in New York City, first as a general assignment reporter and then as a financial writer covering Wall Street and the stock market. He worked for three great New York papers, the *Journal*, the *World*, and the *Times*. The Lee Papers contain much material on this early period of his life. Diaries cover his high school and college years. Scrapbooks also contain material on his activities, particularly his years at Princeton and his work as a newspaper reporter in New York, including the stories he wrote. The collection also includes hundreds of letters between Lee and his father during these years. Someone once said that not a day went by that they did not write to each other.

In 1903 Lee quit his newspaper job to become a free-lance

writer and publicist. He wrote several magazine articles, but was soon pressed into service as the director of publicity for the Fusion Party in New York City and its anti-Tammany campaign. In 1904 he served as a publicist for Judge Alton B. Parker, the Democratic presidential candidate in the campaign against Theodore Roosevelt. In 1905 he went to work as the publicity director for the coal industry, which was in the midst of severe labor problems. Lee succeeded in getting the coal operators to take the radical step of opening their offices and telling the facts of the case, a policy which ultimately helped ease the strike situation. He issued his now famous "declaration of principles" which stated that his press bureau for the coal owners would supply "all the facts," a landmark in the evolution of the public relations man.

The Lee Papers do not contain a great deal of business correspondence and material from Lee's early career as a publicist, from 1903 to 1906. There are scrapbooks and printed materials about his early political publicity work in New York City in 1903 and for the Democratic National campaign in 1904. Most interesting from this period is some correspondence between Lee's father and Lee's first partner, George Parker, which sheds some light on this important but otherwise lost member of the nation's first public relations partnership.

In 1906 Lee went to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad where one of his first and most famous actions was to change its policies with regard to rail accidents. The Pennsylvania, feeling that any accident publicity was bad, refused to allow reporters to come to the scene of an accident and declined to give out any information about the situation. As a consequence, the railroad suffered from rumors as well as reporters' ill-will. Lee changed the policy and took reporters directly to the scene of any accident at Pennsylvania expense, giving them complete access to all the facts of the case. As a result, the Pennsylvania won a good press and eventually achieved better public understanding for its problems.

Lee soon realized that if an organization were to open channels of communication and tell the truth about itself, it must have a good truth to tell. So he began to advise the Pennsylvania to install more safety equipment, to beautify its stations, to raise its employees' salaries and benefits, even to begin a profit-sharing plan. He spent some time in Europe in 1909-1911, then returned to the Pennsylvania as Assistant to the President, where he continued to give advice on the company's public problems.

Lee's work for the Pennsylvania had meaning for the entire

railroad industry, which turned to him for help in solving many of its public difficulties. A great effort was being made in some quarters to nationalize the railroads during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Lee was retained as public relations counsel not only by the Pennsylvania but also the New York Central, the Baltimore and Ohio, and all the Harriman lines, and he helped set up the Association of Railroad Executives, in an effort to win better understanding for railroad owners' point of view. A good case could be made from the Ivy Lee papers that, because of Lee's influence on the American railroads, that industry was able to retain private ownership at a time when most other western countries were nationalizing their rail lines.

Lee's work with the railroads in general and the Pennsylvania in particular is well-documented in the Princeton collection. Correspondence is included with many of the chief railroad executives of the United States, Canada and Great Britain from 1906 to 1934. Also contained in the collection are dozens of articles, speeches, and manuscripts by Lee dealing with the problems of the railroads during that period.

Lee's public relations for the railroads was perhaps his most significant contribution, but his work for the Rockefellers was his most spectacular success. In 1914 he was "loaned" to the Rockefellers by the Pennsylvania to help them with the public criticism that had resulted from the Ludlow "massacre" during a strike in the Colorado coal fields owned partly by the Rockefellers. Lee told Rockefeller that he must open his books and tell the truth, and if the people did not like what Rockefeller was doing, he must change his policies to bring them into line with public opinion. Rockefeller liked Lee's point of view and retained him for the rest of his life for advice on his public problems. Many today give Lee credit for helping to make the Rockefeller name a blessing rather than a curse throughout the world.

The Lee collection in the Princeton Library does not contain all the letters of Lee and the Rockefellers nor the complete record of his activities for the family and their interests. But it has the heart of the correspondence, from his Colorado letter to the Rockefellers in 1914 to a moving tribute from John D. Rockefeller Jr. to Lee's widow in 1935. Certainly, enough is here to document the kind of advice that Lee gave to the world's richest man. Included are scrapbooks of clippings and publicity about the Rockefellers during the period, as well as some of the materials that Lee and his firm prepared for them, even a film of one of the Rockefeller

weddings (Lee being a pioneer in the use of many media in his work).

One of the Rockefeller letters, a copy of which is in the Princeton collection, is indicative of the esteem in which the Rockefellers held Lee and his counsel. John D. Rockefeller Jr., writing to Lee's widow on August 26, 1935, commented:

From the early days of my contact with your husband it became clear to me that his point of view was the same as ours, that complete sincerity, honesty and integrity were the fundamental principles which regulated his daily life and upon which his every action was based. What he did for us in the Colorado situation and in the general relation of our family and business interest to the public thereafter was of greatest value.

During World War I, Ivy Lee took out time from the activities of his clients to become the publicity director of the Red Cross, where he reorganized the entire publicity efforts. He saw the Red Cross as a kind of Rockefeller Foundation for America, helping to explain to the rest of the world America's character, its generosity, its good will, its desire to help humanity and win the peace. Under Lee's guidance, the Red Cross became one of the most important propaganda tools of the Allies in the war. He continued to serve the Red Cross on a voluntary basis after the war and helped the organization solve many of its public relations problems. The library has an excellent collection of Lee scrapbooks of the posters, flyers, and other publicity material that he helped prepare for the Red Cross war effort.

Lee's successful work for the railroads, Rockefellers, and Red Cross brought him to the attention of the leading businessmen and industrialists in America. After the war, the independent counseling business that he founded became the leading public relations firm in the world, representing such corporations as Standard Oil, Bethlehem Steel, American Tobacco, Armour and Company, Chrysler Corporation, and many others. He served public utilities, banks, investment companies, shipping interests, copper manufacturers, sugar cartels, and foreign countries. He aided the public relations problems of universities, including Princeton and Harvard, and a wide variety of charitable foundations and activities from the Red Cross and the Rockefeller Foundation to the Y.M.C.A. and the Henry Street Settlement. Much

of this activity is documented in the Ivy Lee Papers in correspondence, publicity material, articles, speeches, and manuscripts.

Lee believed that public conflict, such as existed between labor and management, could be solved peacefully through public relations—communication that would lead to understanding and compromise on both sides. He felt that the same techniques could be used to gain international peace and understanding, and in the twenties he devoted himself increasingly to international public relations. He gave advice on publicizing reconstruction loans to the governments of France, Poland, and Rumania. His firm served foreign businesses such as the Solvay Chemical Corporation of Belgium and the German Dye Trust, the latter involving Ivy Lee in a controversial role during the early years of the Nazi regime. He was investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee for being a Nazi propagandist. But the committee cleared him of any wrong-doing and showed that his public relations advice was sound and honest. In essence he told the Dye Trust that Hitler's policies were not good public relations because they would never be acceptable to the American people.

Lee also became involved in a public controversy over Russia, a country in which he first became interested in 1905 when he visited it as a free-lance writer and publicist. After the Bolshevik revolution, he became interested in and concerned about the news policies of the Soviets and their experiments in closing all the channels of communication with the outside world. Lee felt that only a free flow of information between the East and the West would bring the two camps into peaceful understanding of each other. Thus, in the twenties he began to urge diplomatic recognition for Red Russia at a time when such an idea was violently opposed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the government. Lee was attacked as a press agent and propagandist for the Soviets, but the State Department and a Senate investigating committee eventually cleared him of any such charges.

The Lee Papers contain much valuable material about his relationship with foreign countries, especially Germany, Great Britain, and Russia, and the general subject of international public relations and propaganda. The papers on Russia are perhaps the most useful to scholars outside the field of American business or social history. Lee himself constantly gathered material about Russia. In fact, the library has, separately, the "Ivy Lee Collection

of Clippings on Russia," which, together with the Lee Papers, form an important and largely untapped source of information about Russia during the first third of the century.

The Ivy Lee Papers have been arranged in five categories in fifty-five boxes. The first category is public relations theory, including Lee's manuscripts on public relations left unpublished at his death. Second is public relations practice, encompassing the papers and correspondence dealing with Lee's actual work for his clients. Third is foreign relations, consisting of materials relating to his work in international public relations. Fourth is office papers, the inter-office memoranda of his firm. And fifth is his personal papers, including his diaries and scrapbooks and those papers dealing with his family and personal life. The library has other papers and materials pertaining to Ivy Lee, housed separately because they were given at different times. Among these are the Russian clippings, the scrapbooks of the 1903 and 1904 political campaigns, and the Red Cross scrapbooks.

The Lee Papers would seem to have three important uses for scholars. First, of course, they shed light on Lee's personality, ideas, and actions as they influenced the development of public relations. Second, they could provide meaningful secondary sources for scholars interested in some aspect of history upon which Lee touched, such as Russia, railroads, Rockefellers, and others. Third and most important, the Lee Papers could provide the data for the analysis of the lines of influence in our society, the advice which the advisors give to the executives, politicians, and financial barons. This collection is one of the first and most important of such sources to be made available. One would hope that more material of this sort will be given to libraries and scholars in the future to enable us to better understand our society and the way in which it operates.

However, one cannot come to these papers hoping to expose the Rockefellers, Pennsylvania Railroad, Bethlehem Steel, or even the public relations man. Lee was not interested in covering up the dirty laundry of his clients but in advising them on how to change their policies to prevent soiled reputations. In these papers one can rather discover the proper nature of public relations activity—the effort to bring about public understanding and to solve public conflict through communication and conciliation. And in this collection of material one might find a test of the effectiveness of that effort by Ivy Lee. The evidence is probably

here to document the fact that, by following Lee's advice, much of big business in the critical first three decades of the twentieth century found a way to win public understanding, thus perhaps preserving a free-enterprise system in spite of the increased complexities of a mass society and an authoritarian age.