

**A PERVERTED EGOISM**

The socialists are famous for obscure terms. Their ism is said to be "egoistic" as opposed to an "altruistic" theory, which, being translated into the vernacular means that socialists believe every man (with the rarest exceptions) acts in harmony with what he believes to be his own self-interest, rather than through any love or consideration for his fellow men. In fact, they contend that he is compelled to do this; that in any conflict between his material interests and his ideals, the average man will respond to his material interests.

Of course, with such a theory, there must be some explanation of this phenomenon: Millions of men, women and children toiling many hours each day for the barest necessities of life—some of them starving—while some few thousands live without work surrounded by wealth in lavish profusion. The socialists are called upon to explain why these millions give up the wealth they produce and starve and deny themselves and permit the non-producing thousands to live a life of idleness and luxury. Their answer is that these thousands dominate the government and that they "pervert the egoism" of the millions; which is another way of saying that the idle thousands by some hocus pocus cause the toiling millions to believe that their lot is inevitable, the result of natural causes, over which man has no control, or else is the direct fault of the toiler and starver himself—he being addicted to drink, or the tobacco habit, or is lazy and shiftless, etc.

It is needless to add that however much there may be in socialism that is either absolutely objectionable or visionary, there is an element of truth in this "perverted egoism" explanation. For example, the socialists point out that the controlling factor today in perverting men's egoism is "public opinion;" that this is now more powerful than any other force; that men respect and obey "public opinion," but pay little attention to future rewards and punishments to accrue to them in the world to come. In other words, their fear of public ostracism and their love for public plaudits is more intense than their hopes of heaven or their fears of hell; and this fact is amply sustained by the testimony of the clergy itself, especially when it speaks frankly of the decadence of church-going among the wage-working masses.

Now, this "public opinion" is manufactured by officers of government, educators, editors, lawyers, doctors, and the preachers themselves—all of which, with a few exceptions, look to the wealthy thousands for their support. Being manufactured by the beneficiaries of wealth holders, it is natural that "public opinion" should be made to favor those who pay for it. Hence, with rare exceptions, we find these moulders of public opinion preaching the gospel of content, "let well enough alone," "keep on letting well enough alone," and "for God's sake keep on letting well enough alone." As their own bread and butter depends upon making the proper brand of "public opinion," their "egoism" requires them to speak and write many things which their consciences revolt at.

Hence, we can understand the reasons why a preacher of the gospel of brotherly love taught by Jesus Christ, will roll over his tongue the dainty morsels of "benevolent assimilation," "destiny," "the will of God," etc., in supporting the republican party in its Philippine policy, with its sultan of Sulu and his slaves and harem, with its Hell Roaring Jake Smith and his "kill all over tan" atrocities.

We can understand why college and university professors will teach and write the most absurdly grotesque statements upon any subject which might enlighten the toiling millions, and thus open their eyes and release them from their "perverted egoism."

We can understand why editors and lawyers and doctors do the same. Every man of them knows that his bread and butter and preserves extra would be menaced by telling anything against the interest of the powers that be; so consciously hypocritical or unconsciously foolish, all of these "moulders" work ceaselessly to blind the eyes of those who produce wealth only to be robbed of it through the operation of laws which are heralded as the acme of legislative wisdom.

We ought to thank the socialists for this delightfully obscure term, "perverted egoism." We need not pay much attention to the words themselves, but what they stand for is worthy of thought. Every plutocratic newspaper in the land is working overtime to keep up this "perverted egoism." And that the plutocrats themselves understand the power of the press, is well shown by their immense subsidies to insure a free circulation of such papers among the wealth producers. Papers like The Independent are compelled to fight over every inch of the ground to gain in circulation, and are put to all sorts of inconveniences by the government officials (under the guise of "rules and regulations"). Such a paper cannot grow without the aid of its subscribers who have had their eyes opened, whose "egoism" is no longer perverted by the skilfully told lies of the plutocratic "moulders of public opinion."

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**ONE AS BAD AS THE OTHER**

When a partisan frenzy seizes a population, it has characteristics that differ somewhat from all other frenzies. It, in some respects, differs from a religious frenzy, but has many things in common with that sort of insanity. Raymond, the Chicago Tribune's Washington correspondent, in speaking of the late campaign in Ohio, says:

"Senator Hanna's personal popularity was so great, and the meetings he addressed were so pronouncedly republican, that he would have been applauded if he had advocated a scheme for the propagation and encouragement of typhoid fever."

When there is such a condition among the people, sane men can only bide their time and wait until the craze is passed. There is not a particle of doubt that Hanna could have got an unanimous indorsement from his followers in Ohio for a ship subsidy scheme—that every one of them would have voted to give millions of dollars, and taxed themselves to pay it, to any great syndicate of multimillionaires that Hanna would have named. That a subsidy to ships, paid out of the government treasury, could not in any way benefit an Ohio farmer, wage-worker or small business man, would have made no difference to them. They would have "voted 'er straight" anyhow.

But it will be impossible to maintain that sort of frenzy any great length of time. It will disappear and if hard times should come along with its disappearance, the same shouting crowds would be just as willing to tear Hanna to pieces and trample him beneath their feet. In such an upheaval, sane men would take no greater part than they did in the preceding craze, and they will be the ones to whom the people will turn for final leadership. The whole republican scheme of trusts, tariffs, ship subsidies, railroad corporations and graft will have no worse results than "a propagation of typhoid fever."

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A great many sermons were preached in Chicago last Sunday on the career of the youthful criminals who murdered eight people and committed many other crimes. The ministers laid the blame of their depravity upon everything except the right thing. Some of them even laid the blame on the education of the lower classes. If they had cast a glance at their Sunday morning papers and noted the pages devoted to giving notoriety to these detestible villains and thought for a moment upon what the influence of such literature would be upon the young, they would have had no difficulty in arriving at the cause of the degeneracy of the youth of the land. There was not a preacher among the whole lot who had courage enough to attack the depraved daily press.

The Alabama supreme court has rendered a decision that knocks out the law disfranchising negroes on account of color. We would like to see a northern court that would hand down a decision so much against popular clamor and public opinion as that was. The supreme court of the United States has always been a political court and has never yet rendered a decision against the party in power. When the party in power was pro-slavery, the court was pro-slavery. When the government was in favor of greenbacks the court favored them. When Wall street captured the government and it was against greenbacks, the court was against them, and so it has been through all its history. Men everywhere will take off their hats to this Alabama court. If we had that sort of courts everywhere we would have a different sort of a government.

"Competition" in the telephone service in Nebraska City does not seem to work. They have an independent company there which was to "compete" with the Nebraska Telephone company. The old company has raised

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its rates from \$1.75 to \$3 per month. The grocers and butchers all ordered the 'phones taken out, but they soon submitted and had them put back. Now the business men have to have two 'phones, and pay the old company more than ever before. That gold bug town will perhaps learn something after a while and go to populism for relief. In that day, the city will own all the telephones and everybody will be served at cost.

After the first of January a verdict against a railroad in a district court will not be worth very much. There will be always an appeal to the supreme court and the old-time record of reversals will be beaten.

Charles Weston, state auditor, who is in the hands of a sheriff out in Wyoming for violating the banking laws, is also president of the Northwestern State bank of Hay Springs, Neb. The cashier will have to run that institution for a while without Mr. Weston's assistance.