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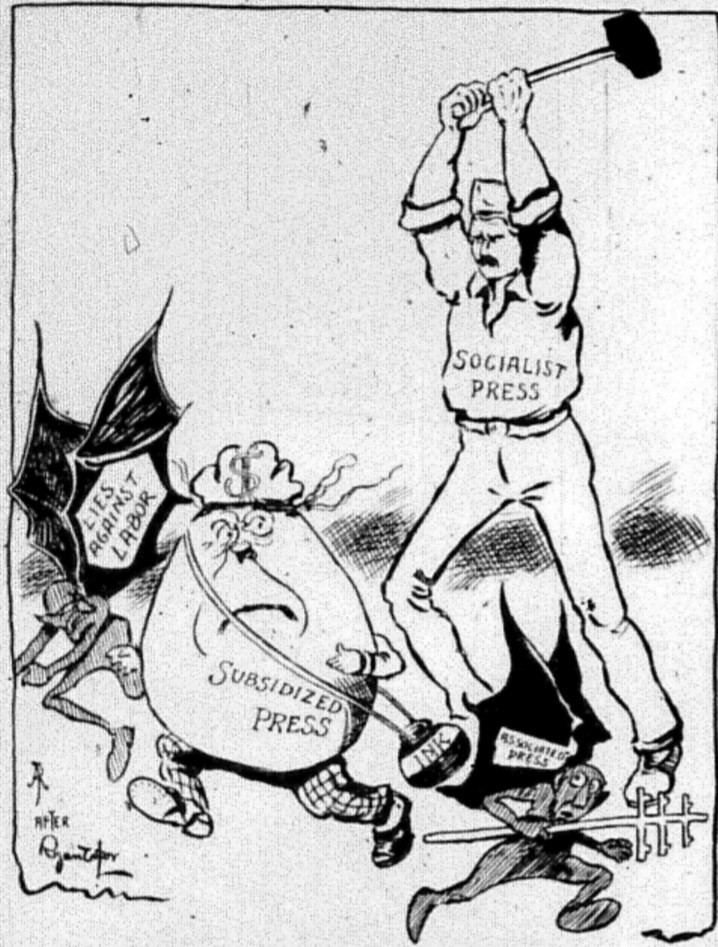


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No. 142

Misinformation of the World

By GEORGE D. HERRON



SOCIALIST PRESS IN ACTION

The Fear of Free Inquiry—A Courtier Class.

The distinctive characteristic of a class civilization is its fear of free inquiry. The owners of the world dread nothing so much as a search into the sources of their ownership and its authority. The powers-that-be are quick to resent and punish any questioning of the righteousness or sacredness of their being. With them, truth is something revealed or ordered in their interests, something to be accepted by the people, not to be inquired into. Hence it follows that the teaching class, whether it be religious or academic, literary or journalistic, depending as it does upon proprietary interests for economic sustenance, is inevitably a courtier or retainer class; it must teach those things pleasing to its masters, or at least consistent with their security and perpetuity. Thus the occupations that are professionally engaged in the search and exposure of truth are actually engaged in the concealment of truth; in the prevention and punishment of any free look at life. This is markedly so of capitalism.

Civilization Founded on Robbery.

The exposure of the sources of capitalistic authority to the people would result in its instant dissolution; for it springs not from right or order or law, but from sheer economic might, from fraud and falsehood, from violence and collective murder. It is no mere agitator's exclamation that our present kind of civilization is founded in robbery and massacre; it is the historical and scientific fact. It is upon the concealment of this fact, and upon veiling it with all sorts of divine origins and sacred phrases, that our institutions of property and state depend, as well as our arts and manners and morals. It is only through the systematic misinformation of the people, through the darkening and deceiving of the common mind, that ruling classes and their retainers perpetuate themselves. It is because the people are still under the spell of the huge and strong delusion of authority, still hypnotized by the belief that the might and morals of property are sacred, still without a social mind or will, that they permit the few to own the resources of all, and to make laws and institutions by which to privately appropriate the labor of all.

Property Interests Poison Morals.

And so long as some people own that upon which all people depend, so long as civilization and its institutions rest upon the private appropriation of social labor, so long as the power to live off the labor of others remains, just so long will the question of ethics be an impertinence. How can a world founded in robbery discuss right and wrong? We know not right from wrong, nor darkness from light, nor truth from error, so long as we discuss these abstractions in the terms, and according to the interests, of a capitalistic or exploiting mode of society. Right and wrong will continue to be, as they now are, merely terms of calculation—terms by which to serve the interest and safety of the owning class. The laws and morals of the world will continue to be made to perpetuate, defend and increase the power of private capitalism. That is all the standing armies, the law courts and churches are for—to compel and exhort the submission of labor to the exploitation of the world-owners, who are always the world-rulers. Our philosophies, our moral codes, the very atmosphere we breathe, are all poisoned by the interests of the propertied class. Until Labor comes to its own, nothing will be right; and nothing ought to be right. Before we can begin a beautiful or truthful world we must lay the foundation of economic truth; then we may see what the building is to be. Good and truth must become things in themselves, and not things of mere calculation.

Capitalism Destroys Integrity.

The essence of integrity is truthful being, or being the truth. Integrity depends upon our freedom and encouragement to outwardly express all that we inwardly or potentially are; all that we see or think or feel. Integrity is truth in the individual or in society. Social or individual integrity is realized just to the measure that each man or the common life may express truth, or what seems to be truth, without forethought or afterthought; without calculations or consequences; without interests or re-

wards to be considered, save the joy and reward that inhere in the truth itself, in the feeling and finding of it.

Now, it is just this root or source of integrity, this individual and social self-affirmation, that our capitalistic civilization destroys. Calculative morals, the concealment of truth, the destruction of free inquiry—these are the staple of our spiritual and social life; and these are the destruction of the very soul of integrity. It is, indeed, upon the negation of integrity that the forms and institutions of our society rest.

Capitalistic Press Fed on Lies.

Perhaps the most destructive agent which capitalism possesses is the public press, owned and edited for the systematic misinformation of the world. We say that nothing is true that we read in the newspapers—and laugh. But the truth that lies behind the joke has not been seriously considered. We do not appreciate the enormous and devastating tragedy of a world-life daily and systematically fed upon lies. We do not realize that there is scarcely a line in a modern newspaper, concerning even the most trivial items of news, that is not motivated or amended by the interests of the owning class. It is impossible to state or conceive the awfulness of this world-atmosphere of lies which we breathe—the poison and death and darkness of it all. In even the most reputable part of the capitalist press, in its religious and literary journals, there is not one thing concerning current events, or the men who make them, that can be taken as really true. The more I have investigated specific cases of this systematic misinformation of the common life, the more I am appalled by the fact and the horror of it; at the absoluteness or absence of any conscience about the matter. In specifically religious journals, as well as political, there is absolutely no sense of moral responsibility for stating or arriving at the truth about men or things; there is only responsibility for carrying a point, exalting a courtier or crushing an opponent.

Subsidized Tongues and Pens.

Furthermore, there is the absolute helplessness of men and measures that are stamped with obliquity in the interests of the existing order. There is no redress or escape for those who are effectively against the capitalist system. There is no precinct or sanctuary of life which the journalistic and religious vultures do not enter. There is no appeal from press to press, or from press to people; for capitalism practically controls all the sources and channels of information, so that all information poured into the public mind must possess the quality of capitalist interests. And the public mind has not the smallest apprehension of how ghastly and murderous, of how pitilessly and consciencelessly false, are the subsidized tongues or pens from which come its news and preachments. Nor has it any apprehension of the universal prostitution of mind and heart, the universal paralysis of effort and character, that result from this universal misinformation.

The Barcelona Strike—As Represented.

A few months ago, I was not very far away from Barcelona, Spain, where a strike of starved and wretched workmen took place. Immediately the agents of the press were sent to the scene, with orders as to what they were to report. For many days the press of Europe and America were filled with accounts of riot and bloodshed. It was represented that a standing army corps would be sent to the scene. The names of Socialists and Anarchists were subtly and insidiously linked together, and Barcelona was pictured as in the midst of a conflagration that might spread to other cities of Europe. The criminal classes and Socialist leaders were reported as pouring into Barcelona from the rest of Europe, with anarchists and their bombs in the advance. On one day alone, the killed and wounded were reported at from five to fifteen hundred. Cablegrams, telegrams, and editorials, supplied Christendom with a fund of stirring information, and warnings for the public mind. And the people generally believe that such riot and bloodshed, growing out of the strike, initiated by Socialists and anarchists, really took place.

The Barcelona Strike—the Facts.

Now as to the facts. The people of Barcelona are to-day entirely in ignorance of the light in which they and their city appeared to the world. The strike in question was entirely peaceful. Not a gun was fired. Not a man, woman or child was injured. There was neither riot nor excitement nor bloodshed; nor was there at any time the slightest apprehension of these things. Absolutely nothing took place in Barcelona beyond the usual quiet course of the city's life, and a very quiet and locally unnoticed strike. The whole report of a revolutionary state of things at Barcelona, and the whole impression concerning the strike made in the public mind of the nations, was a monstrous manufacture of misinformation, with a view to frightening people away from the international Socialist movement.

U. S. Deputies Setting Fire to Freight Cars.

If this specific instance were extreme or exceptional, it might not be so much in place to mention it. But as a matter of fact it is entirely common and typical. It is a mere instance of the universal news system. The people are daily fed with what is pure invention or violent distortion, in order to serve capitalist interests, and the interests of political and priestly retainers. It is well known that the disorders during the famous Debs strike in Chicago were created by the agents of property for the sake of arousing the public mind against the strikers, and thugs appointed as deputy United States marshals were found setting fire to freight cars. It is known that the men who were condemned and hung for the Haymarket riot had no more to do with killing the policemen, directly or indirectly, than Julius Caesar or Oliver Cromwell. It is known that before war was declared by the United States against Spain the Spanish Government had acceded to all our demands concerning Cuba; but our Government kept the fact secret, and war was declared that American imperialism might be initiated. The public mind is entirely ignorant that the war was not only causeless, but made to order for the service of great speculative interests. And so on, from affairs of international import, like the unspeakable massacres of the defenseless and harmless Chinese, down to the most trivial details of individual lives, the systematic falsification increases. Schools and churches and journals, with economic and social reform leagues, are organized for this sole and deliberate purpose.

Illustration From History.—Martin Luther.

Of course, the misinformation of the world is not a new thing. No intelligent man or scholar pretends that the colossal imposture known as Christianity bears any resemblance to the idea or ideal of Jesus. Organized Christianity was imposed upon the world by imperial armies, in the interests of the exhausted Roman ruling class. And it has been the principal police force of the great propertied interests for more than fifteen hundred

(Continued on page 2.)

A PARRY BELLOWS AGAINST A GIANT

Translation: A Pair o' Bellows against a Giant



THE PIGMY AND THE RISING GIANT

THE dramatic event of the past week in America was President Parry's attack at the New Orleans convention of the Manufacturers' Association on Labor Unions. His denunciation of Organized Labor was terrific, bitter to the last degree.

THERE can be no doubt that he hates the Labor Unions and the "Manufacturers' Association" applauded him to the echo. They evidently are hurt and hurt bad. Here is a sample of his speech:

"Organized labor and the Socialist Party differ in one essential respect. The former seeks to bring about Socialism by forcible methods, and the latter seeks the same end through the ballot box. The attempts of organized labor to compel the shortening of the hours of labor without regard to the effects on industrial welfare, its dictation of uniform wage scales, which place the indolent and inapt on the same footing with energy and capacity, and the absolute power it arrogates to itself over the individual on the theory that the individual has no rights which the many need respect, are all cardinal principles of Socialism. Socialism is a denial of individual and property rights, and so, also, is trades unionism, when reduced to its last analysis."

NOW, what does this attack signify, when seen truly? Simply this. It is the wall of the small manufacturer. He is being crushed between the Big Producer and Organized Labor.

NOTICE that Mark Hanna answered Mr. Parry right away and declared Labor Unions were a good thing. Mr. Hanna represents Big Capital as Mr. Parry represents Little Capital.

LABOR Unions are successful against Little Capital. That is the reason Building Trades Councils are flourishing. They deal with small contractors.

THE truth is, Mr. Parry's crowd cannot hurt Labor. Small production is doomed as much as hand machines. Our cartoon tells the truth about the Small Manufacturers' Association. It is only a ridiculous lot of "Hot Air," a helpless outcry of a swell-headed pigmy against an awakening Giant.

PARRY tries to discredit the Unions by identifying them with Socialism. There is more truth than poetry in this. The real spirit of the New Unionism, which hurts him comes from Karl Marx and the scientific interpreters of the working class during the last half century.

THE Giant has heard that word of terror to capital: "Workingmen of the world, unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains; you have a world to gain." He is rising to his feet, filled with a sense of his power. Socialism has waked him from his long slumber. He will soon grapple with Capital in the final conflict. Not only Small Capital, the disappearing Parrys, but Large Capital, the Morgans and the Hannas, shall feel his power. No, Mr. Hanna, you cannot long delude this Giant with your schemes of conciliation. You can flatter Gompers, and Mitchell, too, perhaps, but not Debs and Chase and Maflly. And if you were to capture all the leaders with fat offices, like Sargent and Powderly and Clark, the rank and file, the Giant Himself, with that mighty sledge, the Ballot, will soon demolish all your power.

Mr. Parry is only a Sign of the Times. We welcome him!

JOPLIN JABS.

All the political economists since the days of Moses, as well as Socialists, declare that labor has created and now creates every form of wealth, except the watered stock of trusts. Do you believe this truth? Then vote for every candidate on the Socialist ticket.

You laboring men who believe this, and demand more wages, should vote for Socialism, which not only assures you higher wages, but guarantees you the whole product of your labor.

Socialists say that if labor produces everything, that the whole business belongs to labor.

No laborer is true to himself and his family who contents himself with the wages capital gives him when it all belongs to him.

Socialism is the best religion in the world, because it ministers to the mortal body of the man, making it a fit tenement for a pure soul.

If you would like to see the men who create everything have a voice in government, vote for the Socialist candidates.

Capital controls every branch of the government. The Republican party is now its first lieutenant, the Democratic party is its non-commissioned officer.

Why do you not vote in your own interest, by voting for the Socialist candidates from top to bottom. Let the political bosses hustle for themselves.—From Joplin (Mo.) campaign circular.

AN OBJECTION TO SOCIALISM (Drawn by Father Hagerty) From "The Comrade," N. Y.



"We must change human nature before Socialism is possible."

