



Walking With the Dead

Public opinion was an expression that found form in the immediate dark ages just past. It was an entirely legitimate expression a decade or so ago. Not a single charge or hint of deception could be brought against its fair name—in that day. That day was the day of unadulterated thought—unadulterated political thought. Politics then were politics—the era of adulterations had not set in.

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Came the era of adulterations, and politics suffered most of all. The once healthy political thought was ravaged until it was a mere shadow of itself—but people still persisted in calling the shadow by its illustrious parent; even so as we refer to a dead person as Bill or Mike. A great change had happened yet the people had not noticed it. To them a bridge is still a bridge although the flood had torn it down and carried it away. Politics to them was still politics. Public opinion to them was still a thing to be conjured with.

Came an era of Economic Thought following the era of Adulterated Thought—but still we find the people unwilling to accept more appropriate names for the things long dead. Substitute the word chicanery for politics and the people will frown; substitute the words Dormant Thought for public opinion and they will consider you unfriendly, to say the least, and if you escape with your life you are lucky—the good people are in the habit of hanging those who think.

But if you will “only be a sport” and lie down with them in the long eternal sleep they have undertaken, they will snore your praise till Hell won't have it.

Two ages have come and still Politics and Public Opinion remain. Sandals are not shoes; shoes are not sandals—although both are leather footwear. Yet paper footwear is recognized by best public opinion and referred to as shoes.

A common drunk doesn't get so drunk that he refers to the present day concoctions as whiskey—no, he is gifted with a vocabulary—the present day liquid adulterations to him are moon, de-rail and horn, raisin-jack and so on. Where the drunk gets all his perspicacity is more than I can understand.

Politics, for two ages dead, is still politics. Although putrefaction has already set in, it is still Politics. A horse that long dead is a carcass; a cow in such a sad state of putrifaction is carrion—corrupt, rotten, vile and loathsome.

Public Opinion today, like public prejudice, is a (chimerical) ebullition of mind in the throes of a nightmare of chicanery—it is of non-substance and cannot be compared to the Public Opinion of two ages ago.

Ask a man what is his public opinion about a social question and he will inform you, for he can talk, that he has an open mind on that question, that he is just now taking up that question—and if he tells you the truth, he will say his opinion stepped out and did not yet return—nobody home. He hasn't got a public opinion any more than a dressed beef has guts.

Why persist in honoring substitutes with the name of a genuine article? What good purpose can be served by resurrecting the dead? Instead of blowing the breath of life into the stinking mess we should be rearing monuments to the dear, dead, departed Public Opinion that came to an untimely end in the Age of Adulterations—get that: Adulte-Rations.

Let us raise a monument to the dear, dead, departed Political Thought that has persistently and stubbornly rested by the side of Public Opinion, in an unmarked grave. The Age of Adulterations was too long and too strong for these friendly allies and twins to withstand. Peace to their ashes!

Political Thought and Public Opinion are survived by Class Thought and Consciousness.

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I am thanking Fellow Worker Card No. 250709 and Fellow Worker Welinder for the two great articles appearing in Industrial Worker recently. Petrus, too, almost knocked me off center—I believe I could recover damages from him.