

has been evolved under the state and government ownership plans in vogue in Europe.

Let us take a trip on any one of the old country railroads, for instance, and let us note carefully how every concern for public service has become subservient to the system of forms and uniforms, straightlaced and haughty, which is nothing short of being an obsession among those in the service — tools of a system that perpetuates itself.

Autocracy! Gold-braided, the public-be-damned autocracy! — a ghost that continues to stalk through every old country — that is the very nature which characterizes the service given the public by every government owned and operated public utility in the old world.

And you find this complexion stamped a plenty on every phase of the public ownership service in every little two-by-four country in Europe from which emanates so much of the troublesome propaganda we have with us today and which is chiefly directed against America's political institutions and its free and democratic business system. It is not difficult to find the lofty purpose for this propaganda. It is inspired with the idea of saddling onto this country every well developed grief of autocratic and proletarian tinkering and feudalism that is rampant back there. That is the only way in which a basis for dissatisfaction against the American form of government can be established within our country, and the agitators are working through many channels to destroy the faith and confidence that is common among the people of America — a condition that it is necessary to bring about in any country where the ultimate object is general revolt.

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Waste and extravagance in the management of the governmental machinery has loaded a tax-burden on the individual citizen of Europe that is keeping even the individual workingman in a state of slavery, paying from seven to twenty percent of his gross earnings of every kind, with few and insignificant exemptions.

Talk to any European traveling in this country. Ask him how he likes America, and ten to one, if he is not a propagandist, he will commence telling you about the wonderful service and courtesy he has met with on the American railway lines, everywhere. He is a good judge, because he has been impressed with something new in public service, something he regretfully will tell you is sadly lacking in the travel system of the common carriers in Europe. He marvels at the accuracy and ease with which everything works over here, the handling of the baggage, the checking system which enables him to travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific with stop-over privileges, changing from one railway line to another, yet finds that his baggage has arrived simultaneously, or is sure to be in on any one of the trains following. If he checks it out a little ahead of time he knows that he can step off the train at his destination, after two or three days of travel, and go to the baggage room in the depot where he lands, present his claim checks and, well, there is the trunk, the handbags and whatever he checked. Marvelous! And he has not had to supervise the matter and follow his baggage, handle it himself, or worry all the way lest

something miscarried, and no one able to tell him just why the dilemma. If he has plenty of money, sure, he will tell you, he can get some attention and extra service from the paid government railroad crew, over there, but he will readily admit that they do not display any compunction at the sight of the traveler's discomfiture and that only a piece of coin is likely to make them hustle and show signs of taking definite action in a search for the passenger's straying baggage, which probably through carelessness has been dumped off at some little way-station.

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Another thing in connection with public ownership that is likely to attract our attention over on the other side, is not particularly conducive to starting any one of us arguing for introducing the pattern over here.

Go into any one of the main offices of a public utility, under government ownership, in any of the old countries and if you are a simple commoner and not a man of airy demeanor — they can read your connections a long way off — you will have your patience tested and tried lengthwise and sideways before you are given any service, and if you show any signs of impatience they will take that out of your system, too, before they get through with you.

By this time you will be apt to appreciate some of the everyday phases of public service in the privately owned and operated competitive utilities back in America, which you more than likely had overlooked until you were treated to a mild dose of government utility service in the country where you were reared.

And to whom will you complain? Bless your soul, the "head" is too high of station to be bothered with such trifles as the outraged feelings of just a common scrub who is in no position to give the supervising autocrat any worries.

Well, they have been trained in the school of died-in-the-wool autocracy over there, and unless you belong to the various castes and classes of preference, then you are just a common nobody, that's all. You see, you have no legitimate rights over there, except in name only, and so, they just dish out to you a grain of what's coming to you and try to make you feel sort of tickled pink that they noticed you at all. That benign stuff, you know, has been a great help to the upper crust, over there, to keep the commoners in check.

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In the democracy of America, you might say, we don't have any autocracy to contend with, so there is no need to worry, over here, lest government ownership might tend to destroy the margin of service which we now enjoy under private ownership of America's public utilities.

Lest we have forgotten and are unable to recall our experiences with government control and operation of public utilities during the recent war, the argument might sound reasonable enough when we bring forth our childlike faith in the infallibility of our democracy, believing it always capable of working its magic spell on "the other fellow", though we practice little of its principles and precepts ourselves.

The echoes are still reverberating on the air how the average American citizen, accustomed to courtesies and attention by the employees of the privately controlled

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