

The Labor Question and Humanity (October 15, 1906)

The labor question, broadly stated and understood, is the question of *humanity*. On it depends the welfare of *all* the people. The capitalist system, which springs from feudal times, has divided society into two classes — capitalists and the workers — and these classes are pitted against each other in *worldwide struggle*. Unfortunately for the workingmen the capitalists own the tools, which in these days consist of machinery. A different state of affairs existed a hundred years ago, when men worked by hand. Then there were no millionaires and no tramps. Today we have 1,000 of the former and approximately 1,000,000 of the latter.

There are 26 million working people in the United States at the present time. Five million are women and 2 million are children. Having no tools of their own, they are forced to enter the labor market, competing with each other for a livelihood. They do not sell themselves bodily, but they sell ten and twelve hours of their time each day for a stipend. With the wealth their labor produces, men and women of the capitalist class make merry in New York and Newport.

The capitalist class is unnecessary to society. Its members do absolutely nothing that is useful. Their function is to spend what the working class produces.

Let me use Andrew Carnegie as an illustration. He is a fully developed capitalist and therefore a fully developed parasite. Carnegie owns or practically owns a great modern steel plant, in which 70,000 men toil for a living. These 70,000 men do the work and produce Carnegie's wealth. Carnegie spends most of his time in Scotland and has no more to do with the direction of the steel industry in Pittsburgh than if he were on another planet. The same is true of the capitalist class generally.

Politicians employed by capitalists endeavor to keep the workingmen of America divided on *alleged issues* in which the laboring classes have no interest whatsoever. As long as they succeed in doing this the capitalists will hold the reins of power.

Both the Republican and Democratic parties are capitalist parties. The Republican Party protects the interests of the Carnegies, the Rockefellers, the Morgans, the Hills, and all of the great trusts and corporations. The

Democratic Party represents the small capitalists and the middle classes. If either party wins the laboring man loses, because both enact laws to protect capital.

Workingmen of all classes will secure justice only when they control the social machinery, of which they are the greatest part.

The middle class is rapidly disappearing, owing to the encroachments of capital, and it is only a matter of time before all men of the so-called middle class will be socialists.

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