

has devoured the kid. This professed desire for peace is a false pretense. They dread the war of competition because the people share in the spoils. When rid of that, they always turn their guns upon the masses and depredate without limit or mercy.

The main weapons of the trust are threats, intimidation, bribery, fraud, wreck, and pillage. Take one well-authenticated instance in the history of the Oat Meal Trust as an example. In 1887 this trust decided that part of their mills should stand idle. They were accordingly closed. This resulted in the discharge of a large number of laborers who had to suffer in consequence. The mills which were continued in operation would produce seven million barrels of meal during the year. Shortly after shutting down, the trust advanced the price of meal one dollar per barrel, and the public was forced to stand the assessment. The mills were more profitable when idle than when in operation.

The Sugar Trust has it within its power to levy a tribute of \$30,000,000 upon the people of the United States by simply advancing the price of sugar one cent per pound for one year. If popular tumult breaks out and legislation in restraint of these depredations is threatened, they can advance prices, extort campaign expenses and corruption funds from the people, and force the disgruntled multitude to furnish the sinews of war for their own destruction. They not only have the power to do these things, but it is their known mode of warfare, and they actually practice it from year to year.

The most distressing feature of this war of the trusts is the fact that they control the articles which the plain people consume in their daily life. It cuts off their accumulations and deprives them of the staff upon which they fain would lean in their old age.

C. The New Philosophy of Materialism

* I. Andrew Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth (1889)

Andrew Carnegie, the ambitious Scottish steel magnate, spent the first part of his life in the United States making a half-billion or so dollars and the rest of it giving his fortune away. Not a gambler or speculator at heart, he gambled everything on the future prosperity of the United States. His social conscience led him to preach "the gospel of wealth," notably in the following magazine article. Why does he believe that the millionaire is a trustee for the poor and that direct charity is an evil?

This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth: first, to set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display or extravagance; to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and after doing so to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer, and strictly bound as a matter of duty to administer in the manner which, in his judgment, is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community—the man of wealth thus becoming the mere agent and

¹Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth," *North American Review* 148 (June 1889): 661-664.

The man who dies leaving behind him millions of available wealth, which was his to administer during life, will pass away "unwept, unhonored, and unsung," no matter to what uses he leaves the dross which he cannot take with him. Of such as these the public verdict will then be: "The man who dies thus rich dies disgraced."

Such, in my opinion, is the true Gospel concerning Wealth, obedience to which is destined some day to solve the problem of the Rich and the Poor, and to bring "Peace on earth, among men good will."

* 2. The Nation Challenges Carnegie (1901)

Carnegie avoided the "disgrace" of dying rich. He gave away \$350 million of the fortune he had accumulated. Some \$60 million went to public municipal libraries, many named after himself. Finley Peter Dunne ("Mr. Dooley") poked fun at this immodest arrangement, especially the feature that required the community to provide the site, the books, the upkeep: "Ivry time he [Carnegie] dbrops a dollar, it makes a noise like a waitther [waiter] fallin' downstairs with a tray w dishes." The New York Nation reviewed rather critically Carnegie's essay on the gospel of wealth when it was publshed in book form. Does Carnegie or the Nation have the better of the argument as to the baleful effects of inherited riches? How have these issues changed since Carnegie's day?

Mr. Carnegie's philosophy is perfectly simple, and it is stated clearly and forcibly. He holds, first, that the present competitive system, which necessarily creates millionaires, or allows men to get rich, is essential to progress, and should not be altered. Secondly, rich men should not leave their fortunes to their children, because their children will be demoralized by having money to spend which they have not earned. Thirdly, rich men should not indulge in luxury. Fourthly, they should dispose of their fortunes while living, or the government should confiscate them at their death. Fifthly, the only practical way of disposing of them is to found libraries and other public institutions, requiring the public to contribute to their support.

Evidently, this system assumes that millionaires are sinners above other men. The number of persons who have wealth sufficient to maintain their children in idleness is very large, and such persons are able to indulge in many luxuries. We cannot concede that the children of millionaires will go straight to perdition if they inherit their parents' wealth, while those who get but a hundred thousand shall be immune. Everyone familiar with the life of the common people knows that an inheritance of a very few thousand dollars may demoralize a young man, and this principle has been illustrated on a prodigious scale in our pension largesses.

On the other hand, virtue among the children of millionaires is not quite so rare as Mr. Carnegie intimates. Instances are known where inherited wealth has been wisely administered by men of respectable and even irreproachable habits. Mr. Carnegie's dictum, "I would as soon leave to my son a curse as the almighty dollar,"

²*Nation* (New York) 62 (January 17, 1901): 55.

It cannot be too strongly impressed upon the public mind that the South, to use a comprehensible phrase, "has joined the procession." Its mind is turned to the development of its resources, to business, to enterprise, to education, to economic problems; it is marching with the North in the same purpose of wealth by industry. It is true that the railways, mines, and furnaces could not have been without enormous investments of Northern capital, but I was continually surprised to find so many and important local industries the result solely of home capital, made and saved since the war.

* 3. Life in a Southern Mill (1910)

From Charles Dickens's England to the modern-day Third World, the onset of industrialization has repeatedly wrenched people out of traditional habits of life and forced harsh accommodation to the cruel discipline of the factory floor. The rapidly industrializing late-nineteenth-century South was no exception, as the following excerpt from a congressional investigation illustrates. What were the hardest conditions of life in the southern textile mills? Were there any distinctively southern aspects to these mill workers' plight?

In many mill villages the mill whistles blow at 4.30 or 5 A.M. to awaken the inhabitants, and in winter employees begin work in the mills before daybreak and they work until after nightfall.

When a mill is operated longer than its nominal working schedule, the machinery is started before the announced time of beginning work in the morning and at noon, and, in some cases, continues to run later than the announced time of stopping work at noon and in the evening. Mill managers, when questioned as to this practice, said that employees are not required to work before or after the announced scheduled time. In reality, however, employees are required to be at their machines whenever the machines are running. Otherwise the work gets in bad condition, and in the case of weavers dockage is made for imperfections, which are liable to occur when the weaver is not attending the looms.

The practice of requiring employees to begin before the announced beginning time and to work after the announced stopping time is called by them "stealing time." . . .

Taking the 28 North Carolina mills which employed women or children at night, all together, the children working by day in all these mills were 25.32 per cent of all the day employees there, and the 437 children working by night in all these mills were 26.29 per cent of all the night workers. . . .

In only 2 establishments investigated did the night force work more than 5 nights a week. In each of these mills, both of which were in North Carolina, an additional half day's work on Saturday was demanded, and this demand caused much dissatisfaction. In 1 of these 2 establishments the night shift worked 11 hours and 15 minutes nightly from Monday to Friday, inclusive, and on Saturday resumed at noon and worked until 6.15 in the evening, making a total of 62 hours and 30 minutes a

³Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage-Earners in the United States, U.S. Congress, 61st Cong., 2d sess., Senate Document No. 645 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910), pp. 280-291.

to request day workers to come and work half of the night. Some employees usually declined to do overtime work. Others worked alternate nights as a regular custom.

Ordinarily this overtime work was paid for at the time it was performed and there was no record to show its extent. In the case of one family, however, the names of workers were entered on both the day roll and the night roll and this record showed that 4 children, 2 boys, doffers, one 10 and one 15 years old, and 2 girls, spinners, one 11 and one 13, and also a youth 17 years old, all members of the same family, had been paid for 78 to 84 hours of work per week. They had worked this number of hours, less a little time for supper and breakfast, on days when extra work was done. It was found that during a considerable part of the eight months that this family had been at this mill these children had worked two or three half nights each week, in addition to day work. After working from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., with 35 minutes for dinner, they had returned to the mill, usually every other night, immediately after supper and worked until midnight, when they went home for four or five hours of sleep before beginning the next day's work; or, they had been aroused at midnight and sent to the mill for the second half of the night, where they remained until 6 o'clock the following afternoon, except when eating breakfast and dinner. In either case, they were on duty for a working day of 17 hours, with no rest period save for meals. Those who worked the second half of the night went home for a hurried breakfast just before 6 A.M. The mill stopped only 35 minutes out of the 24 hours, from 12 M. to 12.35 P.M. On one or two occasions two younger children of the same family, one a girl spinner and spooler-helper 7 years old, and the other a male doffer, reported 10 years old but apparently 8, had worked half of the night in addition to day work.

The father of this family was apparently an active, hard-working man. He expressed the opinion that night work in addition to day work was rather hard on the children, but said that he was trying to get money to buy a home. He also said that as the children were in two sets, part his and part his wife's, he must be careful not to show any favor to either portion of the family. No member of this family could read or write. . . .

E. Labor in Industrial America

I. In Praise of Mechanization (1897)

As capitalists competed for markets and profits, they pushed their workers ever harder. Factory laborers came to dread the "speedup"—the order to produce more goods in less time. The already screeching din of the shop floor then whined to an even higher pitch, as machines were made to run faster—and more dangerously. Some observers claimed that the peculiarly profit-hungry and competitive U.S. business environment rendered the conditions of labor in the United States particularly intolerable. Yet new workers by the millions fled the farms of both America and Europe to seek work tending the rattling industrial machines. In the following

¹E. Levasseur, "The Concentration of Industry, and Machinery in the United States," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 9, no. 2 (March 1897): 12–14, 18–19, 21–24.

So I went to work in Allen street (Manhattan) in what they call a sweatshop, making skirts by machine. I was new at the work and the foreman scolded me a great deal.

"Now, then," he would say, "this place is not for you to be looking around in. Attend to your work. That is what you have to do."

I did not know at first that you must not look around and talk, and I made many mistakes with the sewing, so that I was often called a "stupid animal." But I made \$4 a week by working six days in the week. For there are two Sabbaths here—our own Sabbath, that comes on a Saturday, and the Christian Sabbath that comes on a Sunday. It is against our law to work on our own Sabbath, so we work on their Sabbath.

In Poland I and my father and mother used to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath, but here the women don't go to the synagogue much, tho[ugh] the men do. They are shut up working hard all the week long and when the Sabbath comes they like to sleep long in bed and afterward they must go out where they can breathe the air. The rabbis are strict here, but not so strict as in the old country. . . .

It cost me \$2 a week to live, and I had a dollar a week to spend on clothing and pleasure, and saved the other dollar. I went to night school, but it was hard work learning at first as I did not know much English.

Two years ago I came to this place, Brownsville, where so many of my people are, and where I have friends. I got work in a factory making undershirts—all sorts of cheap undershirts, like cotton and calico for the summer and woolen for the winter, but never the silk, satin or velvet undershirts. I earned \$4.50 a week and lived on \$2 a week, the same as before. . . .

I get up at half-past five o'clock every morning and make myself a cup of coffee on the oil stove. I eat a bit of bread and perhaps some fruit and then go to work. Often I get there soon after six o'clock so as to be in good time, tho[ugh] the factory does not open till seven. I have heard that there is a sort of clock that calls you at the very time you want to get up, but I can't believe that because I don't see how the clock would know.

At seven o'clock we all sit down to our machines and the boss brings to each one the pile of work that he or she is to finish during the day, what they call in English their "stint." This pile is put down beside the machine and as soon as a skirt is done it is laid on the other side of the machine. Sometimes the work is not all finished by six o'clock and then the one who is behind must work overtime. Sometimes one is finished ahead of time and gets away at four or five o'clock, but generally we are not done till six o'clock.

The machines go like mad all day, because the faster you work the more money you get. Sometimes in my haste I get my finger caught and the needle goes right through it. It goes so quick, tho[ugh], that it does not hurt much. I bind the finger up with a piece of cotton and go on working. We all have accidents like that. Where the needle goes through the nail it makes a sore finger, or where it splinters a bone it does much harm. Sometimes a finger has to come off. Generally, tho[ugh], one can be cured by a salve.

All the time we are working the boss walks about examining the finished garments and making us do them over again if they are not just right. So we have to be careful as well as swift. But I am getting so good at the work that within a year I will