

EDITORIAL

A NEW APPLICATION OF “GRAFT.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Hon. Marcus A. Hanna has just enriched the literature of the social question with a new term, at least a new application of the term “graft.” Elsewhere in this issue will be found the report of a conversation recently held by him in Cleveland with a representative of one of the most prominent corporation law firms in this city.¹ Justly taking a gloomy view of the industrial outlook, Mr. Hanna foretells that within a year soup-houses will be seen in all the large cities of the country. The cause of that he declares to be the determination of the capitalist to stop construction and production. And as the cause of this determination he assigns the attitude of Labor in “foolishly trying to prevent a just share of its product reverting to the employer,” and this attitude of Labor Mr. Hanna terms “Labor’s greed of graft.”

Let’s turn to the census figures of 1900. Fifteen groups of industries are there quoted. Mr. Hanna’s multitudinous lines of industry appear in a number of them. According to these figures, the gross value of the products was \$13,000,149,159. Who shared in this colossal product, and in what proportion? The census figures answer the question, tho’ not in full yet clear enough for all practical purposes. Of that total \$8,367,997,844 are given as “net,” that is to say, as profits gone to the capitalist, and \$2,320,938,168 as wages gone to Labor. In other words, deducting the wear and tear of machinery, the price of raw material (excepting Labor), etc., etc., amounting in all to \$2,311,213,147, there remained the sum of \$10,688,936,012. Of this total Labor’s “greed of graft” received \$2,320,938,168, while the “anti-greed of graft” capitalist class took \$8,367,997,844, or MORE THAN THREE TIMES, nearly four times as much!

¹ [See news item on page 3, below.—R.B.]

But not even that tells the tale in full. Where do the \$2,311,213,147, which are deducted from the profits, go? It is not all "wear and tear" of machinery; it is not all the value of the raw product. A big chunk thereof goes to "etc., etc." What do these "etc., etc.," comprise? They comprise "rent," "interest," and such items. And to whom are these "rents" and "interests" paid? Why to the capitalist class. On the same principle that the "good government" Police Commissioner of this city, stands convicted of having bought and sold from and to HIMSELF, the capitalist class, in many cases the individual capitalists themselves, pay "rent" and "interest" to THEMSELVES. Making a low estimate of the "rents" and "interest" items thus deducted from the gross values, it is unquestionable that the "anti-greed of graft" capitalist class modestly and meekly pockets MORE THAN FOUR TIMES the share of the product that "greedy of graft" Labor receives.

Thus the Labor factor in production, the producer, in fact, of at least \$8,367,997,844 of new values, and who receives barely one fourth of the product of its toil, is pronounced "greedy of graft," a grafter; while the idle capitalist class that produces not a pin-head's worth of value, and yet grabs about three-fourths of the wealth produced poses like Abnegation on a monument! Thus the wealth-producers plundered to the extent that a few months of shut-downs throw them upon soup-houses, have insult added to injury—to injury of being plundered, by the Hanna class of plunderers, they are spoken of by these as plunderers or would-be plunderers; to the injury of being grafted upon by the grafter capitalist class, the insult is added of being designated as "greedy of graft"!

Whether the issue be "municipal," "State" or "national," it is one. It is the issue of outraged, plundered, and grafted-upon Labor against the criminal, plundering and grafter capitalist class. Between these two the line is sharp. On the one side stand the embattled political forces of the Grafter, under various colors, that all blend in one and represent the buccaneer's black flag; on the other stands the unbendable and unbreakable standard of the Socialist Labor Party, summoning Labor to crack the Grafter class over the head with the ballot of Labor—the uplifted Arm and Hammer of Emancipation.

HANNA ON "GRAFT"

AN INTERVIEW TAPPED FROM THE REPUBLICAN-DEMOCRAT CAMP.

Labor Pronounced "Greedy of Graft" Because Unwilling to Yield Larger Profits to Fleecers—To Be Dieted Into Submission by Shut-Dows and Soup-Houses.

(Special to *The People*.)

Senator Marcus A. Hanna in conversation about a week ago at his home in Cleveland, with a representative of one of the most prominent corporation law firms in this city, said:

"Labor is going to suffer this winter for its unjust demands on capital millions that would be spent in the erection of buildings, bridges and in railroad construction, contracts for which have been cancelled because the capitalists could not pay the wages sought for and make any profits.

I shiver when I think of what the laboring classes are to suffer from before this winter is over. Soup houses will in my opinion be erected in every

large city in the country, and all because labor has foolishly tried to prevent a just share of its product reverting to the employers.

"Why, only a few days ago Marshall Field told me that he had given up the idea of erecting a big office building in the city of Chicago on account of the higher cost of labor and building materials.

"This is no obsolete case, but quite prevalent during the last three or four months, and is not confined to any one section of the country.

"I repeat the workingmen of the country are going to have a hard road to hoe during the next six months—and all due to what I might term their 'greed of graft.'"

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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