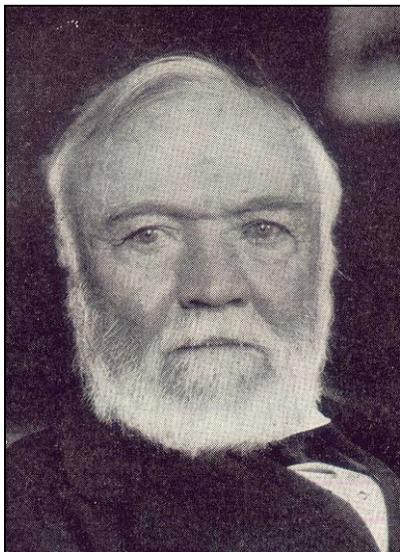


EDITORIAL

WORSE AND WORSE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AFTER donating \$4,000,000 worth of bonds for a fund for his employees, Andrew Carnegie comes out with an offer of \$5,200,000 to establish sixty-five branch libraries in New York. Can benevolence go further?



ANDREW CARNEGIE (1835–1919)

How far capitalist “benevolence” goes, in the matter of the \$4,000,000 endowment fund, has been explained in these columns. That seemed far enough. It wasn’t. Capitalist benevolence can go further yet. How much further, this \$5,200,000 offer for libraries brings out.

An increasing number of our people is being pauperized, and the intensity of poverty is being daily felt more keenly. Families are ripped apart, as if smitten by the hordes of an Attila, parents going hither and thither in search of work, abandoning homes and leaving children to shift for themselves; Suicide stalks with heavy tread through the land; and Labor, driven by Want, accepts work at occupations that fill the hospitals with “accidents.” Ever more Chinese become the quarters of the workingmen, their diet and their belongings; ever more Chinese their income and their standard of living. “Bread, give us bread!” is the appalling cry of an ever huger mass of our population;—and the answer of “benevolence” is: “Here are books!” With decreasing opportunities for relaxation, for study, for reading; with increasing gnawings of the stomach; instead of bread, instead of the opportunity to earn it, or best of all, instead of the endeavor to remove the perverse social system that breeds pauperism in the midst of idleness;—instead of that, “Here are books!”

“Ah,” one hears the pack of Pharisees cry out, “there you have the brute Socialists again; always food for the stomach, and never food for the mind and soul!”

It boots not, it is superfluous to refute the lie direct contained in the cry. That the Socialist's ultimate aims encompass the well-being of the intellectual and spiritual part of man, is a fact that needs no re-statement or proof. More essential is the tearing of the mask off the faces of these hypocrites in their pretences of being the particular guardians of the spiritual in man.

On a memorable occasion in the traditional history of man, when the Nazarene is said to have assembled multitudes in order to impart to them spiritual food, it was discovered that the crowd was hungry. Forthwith the administration of the spiritual food was postponed. The animal part of the crowd was first attended to, and, not until that was satisfactorily done, was the spiritual food administered.

To affect benevolence by making gifts of books to people who stand in need of bread is a still more refined hypocrisy than to establish endowment funds for the benefit of workingmen who must themselves produce the wealth with which they are to be pensioned. Aye, such endowment of books to the hungry, is more heinous hypocrisy than even the \$4,000,000 "given" by a capitalist to his workingmen who are killed in his factories at the appalling rate—19 since last January—at which the objects of Carnegie's benevolence are massacred.

He {who} succumbs to gratitude at the sight of Capitalist benevolence is either a knave or a fool.

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