



Das Kapital

In these perilous times, while criminal syndicalist laws are rampant and soups are seasoned with certiorari, it is considered the height of incaution to monkey with profits.

Established truths are waylaid and sand-bagged, or suppressed. William Jennings Bryan, alive to the painful experiences of Eugene V. Debs, arises and contends in stentorian tones that our industrial captains are not descended from monkeys.

One way of keeping out of jail.

Nevertheless, it would seem at this time, while so little is being said about capital, and especially by the men who control said capital, that a word from me would not be out of place. Too often have we trusted the discussion of this important phase of our suffering to those only who have a theoretical knowledge of capital and its many vagaries.

People with a mere smattering of knowledge regarding wealth have waxed eloquent, while those who have made capital a study, and an anathema, have been pushed in the corner.

I take personal and pardonable pride in pointing out that I have completed a brief survey, a personally conducted investigation of the true nature and habits of capital, and I can say, with the voice of authority, that capital is nothing less than the dollars and cents that the laborer did not receive. As to its habits, it is what might accurately be termed "skittish."

At this period in our beloved history there appears to be a generous shortage of capital among the working classes—demonetized, so as to say—and it is thought that low wages is the cause of this phenomenon. But I may say in alluding to capital, that capital is only a minor calamity compared to the lack of organization among the workers in conjunction with the "unity-plus" of the shirkers. Even the petty larceny tin-horn "wit worker" despises and adds his mite to the discomfiture of labor.

Other things may happen in the sphere of our paper-collared activity which, in a way of heartrending gloom and hydra-headed sorrow, make the large fortunes wrung from labor look like a plugged nickel in a "lead mine." I have in mind the (pitiful) lack of solidarity among the exponents of "Do as you're told," vote as you're told, and die as you're told. It's a poor man who has to be told.

Would that I had the gift, even such as has a journalist on our daily papers. Gladly would I oil my stylograph and boldly assail capital in burning words of denunciation, criticism, censure and—protest. If that would not suffice, I would apologize for distracting the master's mind, just as he was about to send other workers to the poor house.

Yea, verily would I attack injustice in (every form) in general and exploitation in particular. I would indict the malevolent malefactors and offer maledictions upon their heads.

I would pillory them in a flow of language teeming with the misery of centuries of interminable toil, as the most dastardly cruel, inhuman, unsocial, ungodly, unchristian, ungentlemanly and unnecessary affliction, too long suffered by the unprotesting proletariat.

But, unfortunately, I have not the gift to properly express my appreciation of the abiding iniquity of the system founded on slavery, permeated with cunning and perpetuated in selfishness.

What can I do? I am helpless. My vocabulary is weak. The constabulary is strong. I must ever be mindful of the fate of Debs. (I might lose my citizenship.) Tough, isn't it?

When great men like William J. Bryan dare not call the profiteers monkeys, but slightly removed, it is time I withhold my native American spleen and "lay off" this demoniacal system which creeps upon us like a jackal, treeing us and starving half the population of the world, old and young, into submission.

What can I do? What can I say? I have much to say but I have no way of saying it. I am stuck.

The best way to take what is justly due you is to organize to take, the way the employer is organized to retain, the products of your toil—industrially!

Once you are organized he will be "tickled to death" to hand it to you. You will not "have" to take it. He will bring it up to the house. . . .

Tell him to throw it on the shif-fo-nierre. Ask him to take a chair for a change—walking is so hard on a heavy man.