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EDITORIAL

## AND CAPITALISM IS NOT PATERNAL!

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE huge sum of \$10,000,000 has been donated by Andrew Carnegie as a fund from which to pay pensions to old teachers of schools and colleges. The sum is to yield a revenue of \$500,000 annually, it is expected to render the old age of deserving instructors bearable, and the awarders will be a committee or board of trustees appointed by the donor. The papers have turned somersaults of praiseful delight, and thrown up their hats in praiseful commendation of the gift. There is not a statement they have made which does not crack the skull of the theory that capitalism means “individuality”; there is not a statement they have made, which together with the occasion for making it, does not brand capitalism as “paternal” in the enervating sense of the word.

At the most, 500 teachers in the land can receive any benefit from the gift. According to the last census there were 446,133 teachers and professors in colleges. Allowing the huge figure of 46,133 as the number of the privileged ones who, through “pull” or other “individualistic” methods, receive salaries large enough to live decently on, and lay by something for the morrow, there remain, accordingly, surely 400,000 of these useful members of society whose earnings—the mere fact of the donation together with the Hosannas sung thereupon, attest it—are avowedly indecently, inhumanly, criminally low. Of these, barely one-eight hundredth the number can expect to profit by the iron-master’s “munificence”!

Let us leave these 399,500 wretches aside, and contemplate the 500 “lucky” ones.

Why are they “lucky”? Their luck rests upon a foundation of deep and broad misfortune. They would not now be deemed “lucky” if they had not previously been martyred. Their present “luck” is grafted on a life of unrequited toil. They labored; got little, too little to live well upon; are consequently prematurely aged; and old age

stares them in the face with absolute destitution in its folds—and that, despite the phenomenal affluence of the land. They did their share in producing that phenomenal wealth through the services that they rendered society; they were robbed of their share by the capitalist class; and now, cap in hand, they are expected to sue at the door of Carnegie’s committee for the pension that is offered. Martyrized with unrequited toil for a life-time, they are now to be unmanned at the end by the cringing necessary to catch the committee’s eye—above all, they are to be de-humanized by the scrambling that they will be forced to resort to in order to elbow the other 399,500 back, and themselves get the plum!

The “plum”?—That is the capstone of the insult! The plum of a pension, even the largest proposed—\$2,000—especially if the towering prices of the necessities of life are considered, is but relatively a “plum”; in fact it is a bone, compared with what these martyrs would have to live upon in old age, if the social system of to-day were not, what it is, a system of refined cannibalism, of robbery under the cloak of legality, of immorality behind the mask of religion.

No \$10,000,000 blankets can blanket up the felony of capitalism. Such blankets are transparently the evidence of a paternality, such as man’s sense of dignity revolts against. Socialism spurns the thought; and it points at the fact as the freshest evidence, that not “paternal” solicitude, dependent upon the caprice or temporary will of any individual will stand, but the democratic, self-reliant effort of the people is required to afford them the self-respecting and pure wellbeing that they are entitled to.

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

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