CHAPTER 18

THE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

SUMMARY
By their centennial of 1876, Americans were rapidly developing their society. Most important in this development was an increase in industrialism and the effects of that industrialism on American culture and society.

Industrial Development
Several factors contributed to the rapid economic transformation of the era: an abundance of natural resources for materials, an increasing supply of laborers, an expanded consumer marketplace, increases in railroads for transportation, a plethora of confident investors for capital, and new technology and innovations. Federal, state and local government also fostered economic growth by providing monetary and resource grants to companies, stability, and freedom from regulation.

An Empire on Rails
Revolutionary changes in transportation and communication, including especially the growth of railroads, transformed American life.

“Emblem of Motion and Power”
By ending rural isolation, encouraging economic specialization, creating a national market, and capturing the nation’s imagination, the railroads transformed production, distribution, and business practices.

Building the Empire
By the end of the century, Americans, with substantial assistance from federal and state governments, had built almost 200,000 miles of track. Despite much waste and corruption, the railroads probably did more good than harm. For example, they saved the federal government $1 billion from 1850-1945.

Linking the Nation via Trunk Lines
Before the Civil War, railroad construction served local markets. After 1865, however, the railroads tied much of the nation together through a system of trunk lines over which passengers and freight traveled with relative speed, comfort, and safety. In the South, railroads were not consolidated and integrated into the national railroad system until after Reconstruction.

Rails Across the Continent
Congress voted to allow two companies, the Union Pacific, working westward, and the Central Pacific, working eastward, to compete in the construction of the first
transcontinental railroad. Having begun in 1863, but lagging somewhat during the war, they completed the tracks in May 1869. By 1893, four more railroad lines reached the West Coast.

Problems of Growth
Overbuilding generated vigorous rate wars and intense competition for passengers and freight. At first, railroad managers tried and failed to reduce conflict through cooperation. After 1893, financiers like J. P. Morgan refinanced the railroads and took over the industry, constructing regional monopolies that effectively eliminated competition.

An Industrial Empire
The Bessemer process made possible an industrial empire based on steel.

Carnegie and Steel
The process for manufacturing steel required great deal of capital, access to abundant resources, and sophisticated production techniques. These requirements limited the number of companies able to participate in the industry to the few that could afford it, including most notably Carnegie Steel Company. Steel companies like Carnegie’s grew very large and competition among them was fierce until Carnegie led the industry in a movement toward vertical integration as a means of eliminating competition. In 1901, J.P. Morgan acquired Carnegie Steel Company and several others, combining them into the country’s first billion-dollar corporation, U.S. Steel.

Rockefeller and Oil
The oil industry also boomed during this era with John D. Rockefeller as its undisputed king. He ordered the chaotic oil industry through consolidation, pioneering a new kind of business organization—the trust. By the 1890s, Rockefeller had recognized the cumbersome nature of the trust and reorganized Standard Oil into a holding company.

The Business of Invention
The business of invention also boomed—from fewer than 2,000 patents per year during the 1850s to over 20,000 per year by the 1880s and 1890s. These inventions transformed the communication, clothing, food, lighting, and power industries.

The Sellers
The advent of brand names, print advertising, chain stores, and mail-order houses in what is known as the “science of marketing” brought the new goods to households far and wide and initiated a new and seemingly unified community of consumers.

The Wage Earners
The labor of millions of men and women made the U.S. emerging economic empire possible. Their lives improved in many respects because of new goods, expanded health and educational opportunities, better wages and working conditions, and increased influence in national affairs.
Working Men, Working Women, Working Children
At the same time, life for workers was hard, especially unskilled laborers. They suffered grueling, often dangerous jobs, for relatively low pay. There were few holidays or vacations and no life or health insurance system. Men, women, and children were often forced to work in order to make ends meet. Women and children along with African Americans, Catholics, Jews, and immigrants carried an additional burden of discrimination.

Culture of Work
All workers found that the new factory system required difficult and often demeaning adaptations in age-old patterns of work. Most noteworthy of these changes was factory discipline. Workers worked indoors according to a clock with a strict hierarchy of supervisors and harsh rules. As industries grew, work became more and more impersonal. Even so, most workers accepted the system because it offered substantial social mobility.

Labor Unions
National unions gradually took shape during the era and approached the problems of labor in different ways. The Knights of Labor, for example, organized like a fraternal order and sought broad social reforms, while the American Federation of Labor organized craft unions of skilled workers and sought practical, immediate, and tangible improvements for its members. Few labor unions allowed women or African Americans to join.

Labor Unrest
Though workers joined unions for better wages, etc., they also found in them and other social and fraternal organizations companionship, insurance, job listings, and even food for the sick. Employees tried to humanize the factory while employers tried to determine wages and conditions on the basis of supply and demand rather than the welfare of the workers. This conflict of purposes often led to violent strikes. The injunction was the most useful tool employers had to end workers’ strikes.

Conclusion: Industrialization’s Benefits and Costs
To be sure, industrial growth meant progress and power but it also meant rapid change, social instability, exploitation of labor, and a growing gap between rich and poor.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Discuss each of the major factors that contributed to the rapid industrialization of 1870-1900.
2. Describe the principal economic and social effects of the railroad from 1865-1900 and trace the building of the American railroad network from 1865-1900.
3. Detail the rise and consolidation of the steel industry.
4. Detail the rise and consolidation of the oil industry.
5. List and describe the most important inventions of the last third of the nineteenth century, including their major effects.
6. Identify and explain each of the major factors in the development of a national consumer market.
7. Compare and contrast the effects of industrialization on the working lives of native-born White Anglo-Saxon Protestant males and, on the other hand, women, children, Catholics, Jews, and immigrants.
8. Identify the adaptations in the “culture of work” required by the new factory system, and the response to those changes by working people.
9. Compare and contrast the policies and methods of the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor.
10. Discuss the violence that emerged from employer/employee conflict and assess the role of the U.S. government in restoring order.

GLOSSARY

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms:

1. **entrepreneurs** those who assume the opportunities and risks for business ventures. "In this atmosphere, entrepreneurs flourished."
2. **economic specialization** the production or distribution of a specific good or service. [The railroad] "... encouraged economic specialization."
3. **trunk lines** major routes or channels of transportation. "... four great trunk lines took shape . . ."

4. **pools** combinations of businesses for specific purposes, such as eliminating competition and raising prices. "... steel companies . . . tried secret agreements, pools, and consolidation."

5. **vertical integration** business combination including some of each stage of a production process. "... they moved toward vertical integration . . ."

6. **philanthropy** donation of money, time, or property to the needy or to institutions helping the needy. "... he wanted to devote his full time to philanthropy."

7. **trust** a type of combination of businesses to reduce competition. "... the first of the modern trusts was born."

8. **monopoly** a company that controls an economic good or service. "The word trust became synonymous with monopoly . . ."

9. **socialism** an economic system in which society owns the means of production and distribution of goods and services. "... he . . . experimented for a time with socialism . . ."

10. **anarchism** the doctrine that all governments oppress individuals and should be abolished. "Linking labor and anarchism in the public mind . . ."

**IDENTIFICATION**

Briefly identify the meaning and significance of the following terms:

1. Centennial Exposition__________________________________________

2. Central and Union Pacific Railroad Companies ________________________________

3. J. P. Morgan ________________________________________________________

4. Andrew Carnegie ______________________________________________________
5. John D. Rockefeller______________________________

6. National Labor Union______________________________

7. Knights of Labor______________________________

8. American Federation of Labor______________________________

9. Haymarket Riot______________________________

10. Trunk lines______________________________

MATCHING

A. Match the following individuals with the appropriate description:

_____1. Cornelius Vanderbilt a. speculator who built lines just to sell them to competitors

_____2. Andrew Carnegie b. shipping magnate who put together his own railroad trunk line

_____3. J. P. Morgan c. financier who dominated American railroading

_____4. Jay Gould d. construction chief for the Union Pacific

_____5. Charles Crocker e. construction chief for the Central Pacific

f. brilliant businessperson who dominated the steel industry before selling his company in 1901
B. Match the following individuals with their invention or process:

_____ 1. Cyrus W. Field  a. photographic process that led to film
_____ 2. George Eastman  b. meat “disassembly” plants
_____ 3. Gustavus F. Swift  c. telephone
_____ 4. Alexander Graham Bell  d. electric streetcar system
_____ 5. George Westinghouse  e. improved transatlantic cable
                  f. use of high-voltage alternating current

COMPLETION

Answer the question or complete the statement by filling in the blanks with the correct word or words.

1. The exhibit that attracted the most attention at the 1876 Centennial Exposition was the _________________.

2. ________________ described the locomotives as “Type of the modern—emblem of motion and power . . .”

3. The ________________ first divided the United States into four time zones.

4. Many railroad speculators ________________ their stock; that is, they distributed more stock than the value of their company's assets.

5. Financier J. P. Morgan combined Carnegie's company with others to establish the _________________.

6. To centralize control of Standard Oil, John D. Rockefeller led in the establishment of the first modern ________________ in 1882.

7. Between the 1850s and 1890s, the number of patents issued to inventors increased from fewer than ________________ a year to more than ________________ a year.

8. Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward started as __________________________ businesses.
9. __________________________________ is the business process by which a single company owns and controls the entire process from the unearthing of raw materials to the manufacture and sale of the finished product.

10. The __________________ and the __________________ were two incidents of labor violence that led many Americans to regret the heavy price of social upheaval that accompanied industrialization.

TRUE/FALSE

Mark the following statements either T (True) or F (False):

_____ 1. By 1900, America's manufacturing output exceeded that of Great Britain, France, and Germany combined.

_____ 2. Although the railroads tied together the major cities, they left America's villages and rural areas in greater isolation than ever.

_____ 3. Because of waste and corruption, government grants for railroad construction probably did more harm than good.

_____ 4. Andrew Carnegie favored workers and unions far more than most industrialists of his era.

_____ 5. J. P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller advocated vigorous competition among corporations because it would improve the quality of goods and services and reduce prices.

_____ 6. Soon after Rockefeller established his oil trust, other highly competitive industries, including the sugar industry, adopted the monopolistic method.

_____ 7. The establishment of the Menlo Park research laboratory may have been as important as any other invention by Thomas Edison.

_____ 8. White, native-born Protestants benefited most from early industrial society.

_____ 9. In the late nineteenth century, workers often used court injunctions to protect themselves and their unions from corporate strikebreaking activities.

_____ 10. To increase their numbers, early unions opened membership to both women and African Americans.
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the one alternative that best completes the statement or answers the question.

1. The 1876 Centennial Exposition focused mainly on
   a. American history.
   b. machinery.
   c. popular culture.
   d. art and literature.

2. Which of the following did not contribute significantly to American industrialization of the late nineteenth century?
   a. abundant resources
   b. rapid population growth
   c. international free trade
   d. investor confidence

3. Which of the following lists industrial developments in proper chronological order?
   a. the completion of the first transcontinental railroad, formation of the first trust, formation of U.S. Steel Corporation
   b. the formation of U.S. Steel Corporation, formation of the first trust, completion of the first transcontinental railroad
   c. the formation of the first trust, completion of the first transcontinental railroad, formation of U.S. Steel Corporation
   d. none of the above

4. Which of the following industries was not transformed by a nineteenth-century invention by either Alexander Graham Bell or Thomas Alva Edison?
   a. communications
   b. power
   c. entertainment
   d. textiles

5. Why did trusts form in the late nineteenth century?
   a. to increase efficiency
   b. to reduce costs
   c. to decrease competition
   d. to increase the supply of capital
6. The Bessemer process transformed the steel industry because it
   a. required less capital.
   b. used far less labor.
   c. produced more durable steel.
   d. used cheap ore.

7. John D. Rockefeller's methods for defeating competitors did not include
   a. high quality and low prices.
   b. threats and bribery.
   c. spies and harassment.
   d. financial support from J. P. Morgan.

8. According to Herbert Gutman, industrialization transformed the “culture of work.”
   Which of the following best states his meaning?
   a. Industrialization dramatically increased leisure time.
   b. Workers eagerly adopted the new technology because it made their work much easier.
   c. The new technology often required difficult and demeaning adaptations to premodern work patterns.
   d. Low pay led to frequent worker resistance, especially “sit-down” strikes.

9. Which of these produced no innovations for marketing or merchandising?
   a. N. W. Ayer and Son
   b. Finley Peter Dunne
   c. R. H. Macy
   d. Marshall Field

10. It took about $600 per year to have a decent standard of living in the 1890s, while workers earned a yearly average of
    a. $300-$400.
    b. $400-$500.
    c. $500-$600.
    d. $600-$700.

11. When a substantial number of women entered a profession,
    a. they became a majority of its workers.
    b. men took its management positions.
    c. many men left for jobs in other fields.
    d. all of the above

12. According to social historian Stephan Thernstrom, what was the extent of social mobility in America in the early industrial era?
    a. almost none
    b. some, but not much
    c. substantial, but limited
    d. a great deal
13. Which of the following best describes the early American Federation of Labor?
   a. an alliance of industrial unions that tried to change the economic system.
   b. an alliance of industrial unions that tried to improve wages and working conditions.
   c. an alliance of craft unions that tried to change the economic system.
   d. an alliance of craft unions that tried to improve wages and working conditions.

14. Which of the following best describes the Knights of Labor?
   a. a union of producers aimed at making each man his own employer
   b. a union of producers aimed only at improving wages and working conditions
   c. a federation of industrial unions aimed at making each man his own employer
   d. a federation of craft unions aimed only at improving wages and working conditions

15. The Haymarket riot weakened the labor movement because it
   a. linked labor and anarchism in the minds of many people.
   b. demonstrated the ineffectiveness of unions.
   c. revealed the violent nature of unions.
   d. initiated the use of court injunctions against strikes.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

To check your understanding of the key issues of this period, solve the following problems:

1. Was the industrial “revolution” inevitable, or could Americans have maintained a more agricultural economy?

2. Why did so many Americans accept, and even applaud, ruthless methods used to accumulate personal fortunes?

3. Are our early industrialists best described as “captains of industry” or as “robber barons”?

4. What were the costs and the benefits of the development of an American “community of consumers”?

5. American workers could have gained more by adopting the program of the Knights of Labor rather than that of the American Federation of Labor. True or false? Explain your answer.
The problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth, that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship. The conditions of human life have not only been changed, but revolutionized, within the past few hundred years. In former days there was little difference between the dwelling, dress, food, and environment of the chief and those of his retainers. . . . The contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us to-day measures the change which has come with civilization. This change, however, is not to be deplored, but welcomed as highly beneficial. It is well, say, essential, for the progress of the race that the houses of some should be homes for all that is highest and best in literature and the arts, and for all the refinements of civilization, rather than that none should be so. Much better this great irregularity than universal squalor. Without wealth there can be no Meccenas.

... to-day the world obtains commodities of excellent quality at prices which even the preceding generation would have deemed incredible. In the commercial world similar causes have produced similar results, and the race is benefited thereby. The poor enjoy what the rich could not before afford. What were the luxuries have become the necessities of life. . . .

Objections to the foundations upon which society is based are not in order, because the condition of the race is better with these than it has been with any other which has been tried. . . . No evil, but good, has come to the race from the accumulation of wealth by those who have had the ability and energy to produce it. . . .

We start, then, with a condition of affairs under which the best interests of the race are promoted, but which inevitably gives wealth to the few. . . . What is the proper mode of administering wealth after the laws upon which civilization is founded have thrown it into the hands of the few? . . .

There are but three modes in which surplus wealth can be disposed of. It can be left to the families of the decedents; or it can be bequeathed for public purposes; or, finally, it can be administered by its possessors during their lives. . . .

There remains, then, only one mode of using great fortunes; but in this we have the true antidote for the temporary unequal distribution of wealth, the reconciliation of the rich and the poor—a reign of harmony, another ideal, differing, indeed, from that of the Communist in requiring only the further evolution of existing conditions, not the total overthrow of our civilization. It is founded upon the most intense Individualism. . . . Under its sway we shall have an ideal State, in which the surplus wealth of the few will become, in the best sense, property of the many, because administering for the common good; and this wealth, passes through the hands of the few, can be made much more potent force for the elevation of our race than if distributed in small sums to the people themselves. Even the poorest can be made to see this, and to agree that great sums gathered by some of their fellow-citizens—spent for public purposes, from which masses reap the principal benefit, are more valuable to them than if scattered among themselves in trifling amounts through the course of many years.

If we consider the results which flow from the Cooper Institute, for instance. . . . and compare these with those who would have ensured for the good of the man form an equal sum distributed by Mr. Cooper in his lifetime in the form of wages, which the highest form of distributing, being work done and not for charity, we can estimate of the possibilities for the improvement of the race which lie embedded in the present law of the accumulation of wealth. . . .

This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth: 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 trustee and agent for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves. . . .

In bestowing charity, the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give those who desire to rise the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely or never to do all. Neither the individual nor the race is improved by alms giving. Those worthy of assistance, except in rare cases, seldom require assistance. . . .

The rich man is thus almost restricted to following the examples of Peter Cooper, Enoch Pratt of Baltimore, Mr. Pratt of Brooklyn, Senator Stanford, and others, who know that the best means of benefiting the community is to place within its reach the ladders upon which the aspiring can rise—free libraries, parks, and means of recreation, by

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

After reading Andrew Carnegie, from “The Gospel of Wealth” (1899), Mother Jones, “The March of the Mill Children” (1903), and Rose Schneiderman, “The Triangle Fire” (1911), answer the following questions:

Andrew Carnegie, from ”The Gospel of Wealth” (1899)

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which men are helped in body and mind; works of art, certain to give pleasure and improve the general condition of the people; in this manner returning their surplus wealth to the mass of their fellows in the forms best calculated to do them lasting good.

Thus is the problem of rich and poor to be solved. The laws of accumulation will be left free, the laws of distribution free. Individualism will continue, but the millionaire will be but a trustee for the poor, intrusted for a season with a great part of the increased wealth of the community, but administering it for the community far better than if could or would have done for itself. The best minds will thus have reached a stage in the development of the race in which it is clearly seen that there is no mode of disposing of surplus wealth creditable to thoughtful and earnest men into whose hands it flows, save by using it year by year for the general good. . . .

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.”

Mother Jones, *The March of the Mill Children* (1903)

In the spring of 1903 I went to Kensington, Pennsylvania, where seventy-five thousand textile workers were on strike. Of this number at least ten thousand were little children. The workers were striking for more pay and shorter hours. Every day little children came into Union Headquarters, some with their hands off, some with the thumb missing, some with their fingers off at the knuckle. They were stooped little things, round shouldered and skinny. Many of them were not over ten years of age, although the state law prohibited their working before they were twelve years of age.

The law was poorly enforced and the mothers of these children often swore falsely as to their children’s age. In a single block in Kensington, fourteen women, mothers of twenty-two children all under twelve, explained it was a question of starvation or perjury. That the fathers had been killed or maimed at the mines.

I asked the newspapermen why they didn’t publish the facts about child labor in Pennsylvania. They said they couldn’t because the mill owners had stock in the papers.

“Well, I’ve got stock in these little children,” said I, “and I’ll arrange a little publicity.”

We assembled a number of boys and girls one morning in Independence Park, and from there were arranged to parade with banners to the courthouse where we would hold a meeting.

A great crowd gathered in the public square in front of the city hall. I put the little boys with their fingers off and hands crushed and maimed on a platform. I held up their mutilated hands and showed them to the crowd, and made the statement that Philadelphia’s mansions were built on the broken bones, the quivering hearts and drooping heads of these children. That their little lives went out to make wealth for others. That neither state nor city officials paid any attention to these wrongs. That they did not care that these children were to be the future citizens of the nation. . . .

I called upon the millionaire manufacturers to cease their moral murders, and I cried to the officials in the open windows opposite, “Someday the workers will take possession of your city hall, and when we do, no child will be sacrificed on the altar of profit.”

The reporters quoted my statement that Philadelphia mansions were built on the broken bones and quivering hearts of children. The Philadelphia papers and the New York papers got into a scabble with each other over the question. The universities discussed it. Preachers began talking. That was what I wanted. Public attention on the subject of child labor.

The matter quieted down for a while and I concluded the people needed stirring up again. . . . I asked some of the parents if they would let me have their little boys and girls for a week or ten days, promising to bring them back safe and sound. They consented. A man named Sweeny was marshall for our “army.” A few men and women went with me to help with the children. They were on strike and I thought they might as well have a little recreation.

The children carried knapsacks on their backs in which was a knife and fork, a tin cup and a plate. We took along a wash boiler in which to cook the food on the road. One little fellow had a drum and another had a fife. That was our band. We carried banners that said, “We want more schools and less hospitals.” “We want time to play.” “Prosperity is here. Where is ours!”

We started from Philadelphia where we held a great mass meeting. I decided to go with the children to see President Roosevelt to ask him to have Congress pass a law prohibiting the exploitation of childhood. I thought that President Roosevelt might see these mill children and compare them with his own little ones who were spending the summer on the seashore at Oyster Bay. . . .

The children were very happy, having plenty to eat, taking baths in the brooks and rivers every day. I thought when the strike is over and they go back to the mills, they will never have another holiday like this. All along the line of the march the farmers drove out to meet us with wagon loads of fruit and vegetables. Their wives brought the children clothes and money. The interurban trainmen would stop their trains and give us free rides.

We were on the outskirts of New Trenton, New Jersey, cooking our lunch in the wash boiler, when the conductor on the interurban car stopped and told us the police were coming to notify us that we could not enter the town. There were mills in the town and the mill owners didn’t like our coming.

I said, “All right, the police will be just in time for lunch.”
Sure enough, the police came and we invited them to dine with us. They looked at the little gathering of children with their tin plates and cups around the wash boiler. They just smiled and spoke kindly to the children, and said nothing at all about not going into the city.

We went in, held our meeting, and it was the wives of the police who took the little children and cared for them that night, sending them back in the morning with a nice lunch rolled up in paper napkins.

Everywhere we had meetings, showing up with living children, the horrors of child labor. . . .

I called on the mayor of Princeton and asked for permission to speak opposite the campus of the University. I said I wanted to speak on higher education. The mayor gave me permission. A great crowd gathered, professors and students and the people; and I told them that the rich robbed these little children of any education of the lowest order, that they might send their sons and daughters to places of higher education. . . . And I showed those professors children in our army who could scarcely read or write because they were working ten hours a day in the silk mills of Pennsylvania.

“Here’s a text book on economics,” I said, pointing to a little chap, James Ashworth, who was ten years old and who was stooped over like an old man from carrying bundles of yarn that weighed seventy-five pounds. “He gets three dollars a week.” . . .

I sent a committee over to the New York Chief of Police, Ebstein, asking for permission to march up Fourth Avenue to Madison Square, where I wanted to hold a meeting. The chief refused and forbade our entrance to the city.

I went over myself to New York and saw Mayor Seth Low. The mayor was most courteous but he said he would have to support the police commissioner. I asked him what the reason was for refusing us entrance to the city, and he said that we were not citizens of New York.

“Oh, I think we will clear that up, Mr. Mayor,” I said. “Permit me to call your attention to an incident which took place in this nation just a year ago. A piece of rotten royalty came over here from Germany, called Prince Henry. The Congress of the United States voted $45,000 to fill that fellow’s stomach for three weeks and to entertain him. His brother was getting $4,000,000 in dividends out of the blood of the workers in this country. Was he a citizen of this land?”

“And it was reported, Mr. Mayor, that you and all the officials of New York and the University Club entertained that chap.” And I repeated, “Was he a citizen of New York?”

“No, Mother,” said the mayor, “he was not.” . . .

“Well, Mr. Mayor, these are the little citizens of the nation and they also produce its wealth. Aren’t we entitled to enter your city?” . . .

We marched to Twentieth Street. I told an immense crowd of the horrors of child labor in the mills around the anthracite region, and I showed them some of the children. I showed them Eddie Dunphy, a little fellow of twelve, whose job it was to sit all day on a high stool, handing in the right thread to another worker. Eleven hours a day he sat on the high stool with dangerous machinery all about him. All day long, winter and summer, spring and fall, for three dollars a week.

And then I showed them Gussie Rangnew, a little girl from whom all the childhood had gone. Her face was like an old woman’s. Gussie packed stockings in a factory, eleven hours a day for a few cents a day.

We raised a lot of money for the strikers, and hundreds of friends offered their homes to the little ones while we were in the city.

The next day we went to Coney Island at the invitation of Mr. Bostick, who owned the wild animal show. The children had a wonderful time such as they never had in all their lives. After the exhibition of the trained animals, Mr. Bostick let me speak to the audience. . . . Right in front were the empty iron cages of the animals. I put my little children in the cages and they clung to the iron bars while I talked. . . .

“Fifty years ago there was a cry against slavery, and men gave up their lives to stop the selling of black children on the block. Today the white child is sold for two dollars a week to the manufacturers. Fifty years ago the black babies were sold C.O.D. Today the white baby is sold on the installment plan. . . .

“The trouble is that no one in Washington cares. I saw our legislators in one hour pass three bills for the relief of the railways, but when labor cries for aid for the children they will not listen.

“I asked a man in prison once how he happened to be there, and he said he had stolen a pair of shoes. I told him if he had stolen a railroad he would be a United States Senator.

“We are told that every American boy has the chance of being president. I tell you that these little boys in the iron cages would sell their chance any day for good square meals and a chance to play.”

The next day we left Coney Island for Manhattan Beach to visit Senator Platt, who had made an appointment to see me at nine o’clock in the morning. The children got stuck in the sandbanks and I had a time cleaning the sand off the littlest ones. So we started to walk on the railroad track. I was told it was private property and we had to get off. Finally a saloon keeper showed us a shortcut into the sacred grounds of the hotel, and suddenly the army appeared in the lobby. The little fellows played “Hail, hail, the gang’s all here” on their fifes and drums, and Senator Platt, when he saw the little army, ran away through the back door to New York.

I asked the manager if he would give the children breakfast, and charge it up to the Senator, as we had an invitation to breakfast that morning with him. He gave us a private room and he gave those children a breakfast as they had never had in all their lives. I had breakfast too, and a reporter from one of the Hearst papers and I charged it all up to Senator Platt.
We marched down to Oyster Bay, but the President refused to see us and he would not answer my letters. But our march had done its work. We had drawn the attention of the nation to the crime of child labor. And while the strike of the textile workers in Kensington was lost and the children driven back to work, not long afterward the Pennsylvania legislature passed a child labor law that sent thousands of children home from the mills, and kept thousands of others from entering the factory until they were fourteen years of age.

Rose Schneiderman, The Triangle Fire (1911)

I would be traitor to these poor burned bodies if I came here to talk good fellowship. We have tried you good people of the public, and we have found you wanting. The old Inquisition had its rack and its thumbscrews and its instruments of torture with iron teeth. We know what these things are today: the iron teeth are our necessities, the thumbscrews the high-powered and swift machinery close to which we must work, and the rack is here in the “fireproof” structures that will destroy us the minute they catch on fire.

This is not the first time girls have been burned alive in the city. Each week I must learn of the untimely death of one of my sister workers. Every year thousands of us are maimed. The life of men and women is so cheap and property is so sacred. There are so many of us for one job it matters little if 143 of us are burned to death.

We tried you, citizens; we are trying you now, and you have a couple of dollars for the sorrowing mothers and daughters and sisters by way of a charity gift. But every time the workers come out in the only way they know to protest against conditions which are unbearable, the strong hand of the law is allowed to press down heavily upon us. Public officials have only words of warning to us—warning that we must be intensely orderly and must be intensely peaceable, and they have the workhouse just back of all their warnings. The strong hand of the law beats us back when we rise into the conditions that make life bearable.

I can’t talk fellowship to you who are gathered here. Too much blood has been spilled. I know from my experience it is up to the working people to save themselves. The only way they can save themselves is by a strong working-class movement.

1. Compare the ideas of Andrew Carnegie in “The Gospel of Wealth” with the Puritan ideas of John Winthrop and the theories of social Darwinism.

2. According to Mother Jones, who caused the mill children to suffer?

3. What are the key differences between the ideas of Andrew Carnegie and Mother Jones?

4. What action does Rose Schneiderman suggest is justified?

5. According to Mother Jones, how free was the press? Why were the newspapers silent regarding the exploitation of children?