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The rich need us. We don't need them.

written by Stephen Millies
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Mark Hanna was a high school classmate of the world's first billionaire, John D. Rockefeller, and became a pretty big capitalist himself. [The Cleveland Central Labor Union's secretary wrote in 1896](#) that Hanna wrecked the Seamen's Union on the Great Lakes, smashed the Cleveland streetcar workers' union and helped destroy the miners' union in Pennsylvania.

That same year, this millionaire union buster, as Rockefeller's political manager, put William McKinley in the White House. McKinley invaded Cuba, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines to form Wall Street's first overseas colonial empire along with Hawai'i. Capitalists had already spent centuries committing genocide against

Indigenous nations.

Yet Hanna believed his employees working 10-hour and 12-hour workdays [should be grateful to him as their “work-giver.”](#)

The rich think that they’re doing you a favor by paying low wages. Unfortunately, some workers feel that way too.

Unemployment can make people grateful for any job. Even during capitalist “prosperity” millions of workers are unemployed.

In July, [14.6 percent of Black workers 24 years old and younger were jobless, and 11.3 percent of Latinx youth were jobless.](#) Unemployment rates for Indigenous youth are even worse.

None of the official unemployment rates count the 2.2 million poor people in jail. They’re part of the working class. too.

An alternative or supplement to low-wage jobs in New York and some other states is to join the army of people collecting cans and bottles for a nickel each.

Before the first of the month, you can see elderly people carry huge bags of bottles to supermarkets. The deposit money helps pay their rent.

Pennsylvania capitalists are so vicious that they’ve blocked a bottle and can deposit law from being passed. They don’t want poor people to get any money.

Keep them as “peasants”

Capitalist decay has destroyed millions of manufacturing jobs, but capitalists still need workers. [The Walton family’s \\$155 billion fortune comes from 1.5 million workers in U.S. Walmart being paid poverty wages.](#) Another 700,000 Walmart workers are exploited in other countries.

The Bloomberg Billionaires Index claims that Jeff Bezos' \$113 billion is "self-made." That's a lie. Every cent of Bezos' wealth comes from the 650,000 worked-to-death employees in Amazon warehouses.

The rich and the rest of us would starve without undocumented workers in the farm fields. Members of the Du Pont dynasty are not picking crops or working in the poultry and meat packing plants.

Trump and the other wealthy parasites hate Asian, Black, Indigenous and Latinx workers, but they can't live without them. White workers are also despised by all the Trumps.

Over 40 years ago, New York City embarked on a policy of "planned shrinkage." That was the term coined by Mayor Abe Beame's head of Housing and Development, Roger Starr.

"Stop the Puerto Ricans and the rural Blacks from living in the city," said Starr in 1976. "Our urban system is based on the theory of taking the peasant and turning him into an industrial worker. Now there are no industrial jobs. Why not keep him a peasant?" ("The Long Default: New York City and the Urban Fiscal Crisis," by William K. Tabb)

Beame was forced to fire Starr, but this racist was soon hired by the New York Times, where he spent 15 years writing editorials.

Starr talked about New York City shrinking to maybe 5 million people. Yet despite losing almost 900,000 manufacturing jobs in the last 60 years, Gotham's population has increased to 8.6 million from around 7.3 million in the mid-1970s. How so?

Manhattan's garment district, which once employed 200,000 workers, is gone. But "somebody" needs to work in the office buildings, stores, warehouses, schools and hospitals.

“Somebody” has to push hand trucks, stock shelves and mop the floors. “Somebody” has to be nannies and clean the toilets.

An army of construction workers — many of them immigrants — is needed to build the luxury apartments with unaffordable rents. Wouldn’t the workers prefer to build housing that they and other working people could move into?

Eugene Debs — a pioneering U.S. socialist who led the 1894 railroad workers’ strike — wrote that “We can run the mills without them, but they cannot run them without us.” Poor and working people produce all the values in capitalist society.

Despite the U.S. blockade, Cuban people are living much better since their factory owners, plantation owners and landlords fled to Miami. We need a socialist revolution just to keep capitalism from cooking the earth.

To paraphrase a slogan from the LGBTQ2S movement: Workers need capitalists like fish need bicycles.

