

EDITORIAL

SOME STATISTICS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

CHARLES F. PIDGIN, Statistician, is publishing some interesting Census figures upon the industries of the land. The articles are introduced in these words:

“The industrial army of the United States in round numbers contains 7,700,000, members; of these 276,000 (6.3 per cent.) are proprietors, the so-called ‘captains of industry’; the minor officials, including clerks, number 800,000 (7.5 per cent.); the bone and muscle is furnished by 6,640,000 (82.2 per cent.)”

Let us submit these statistics to the analytical scalpel.

In the first place, the item of 800,000 “minor officials, including clerks” is a bit of pure and simple statistical jugglery:

1. The “minor officials” in the number do not belong there. If they are at all “officials” they have already been included in the 276,000 proprietors. It is only by virtue of their-holdings that these proprietors become officials. True to the Marxian words that “the leadership of industry is an attribute of capital, just as in feudal times the functions of general and judge were attributes of landed property,” the function of “official” is the attribute of proprietorship.

2. After eliminating these “officials” from the item of 800,000 “minor officials, including clerks,” there would be left the “clerks,” and they do not belong under a separate rubric, they belong under the general rubric together with those who “furnish the bone and muscle.” The 86.2 per cent. will have to be increased by as many as of 7.5 per cent. as are clerks. The whole number—considerably larger than 6,640,000—belong under the general rubric of wage earners.

In the second place, the designation of the 6,640,000 as the furnishers of the “bone and muscle” belongs not so much under the title of “statistics” as it does un-

der the title of anatomy. The item is, accordingly, a compound of statistico-anatomy, or anatomico-statistical sleight of hand:

The; 6,640,000 are, by the sleight-of-hand, deprived of their brain. The process is a necessary one for “official statisticians.” Without brains there can be no production, neither without bone and muscle. By distributing the “bone and muscle” to the wage earners, the brains are, by implication, awarded to the “captains of industry.” The leger-de-main furnishes a basis for the share that the 6.3 per cent. appropriate to themselves of the products. How large that share is and how small the share of the 86.2 per cent. Statistician Pidgin modestly leaves out.

To sum up, the statistics of Mr. Chas. F. Pidgin are full of holes. Yet, full of holes tho’ they are, in fact, through the very holes, sundry facts are gotten glimpses of:—

First—in view of the smallness of the share of the product that is enjoyed by the many-million captains-of-industried, and the smallness of the number of the captains of industry, the figures for both classes being given by Mr. Pidgin, it is obvious that the captains of industry must rake in a phenomenal amount of plunder;

Second—the alleged captains of industry are so brainless that they do not know enough to train their statisticians in caution.

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