Document A: Emma Goldman (ORIGINAL)

It was May 1892. News from Pittsburgh announced that trouble had broken out between the Carnegie Steel Company and its employees organized in the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers. It was one of the biggest and most efficient labour bodies of the country, consisting mostly of Americans, men of decision and grit, who would assert their rights. The Carnegie Company, on the other hand, was a powerful corporation, known as a hard master. It was particularly significant that Andrew Carnegie, its president, had temporarily turned over the entire management to the company's chairman, Henry Clay Frick, a man known for his enmity to labour. Frick was also the owner of extensive coke-fields, where unions were prohibited and the workers were ruled with an iron hand.

The high tariff on imported steel had greatly boomed the American steel industry. The Carnegie Company had practically a monopoly of it and enjoyed unprecedented prosperity. Its largest mills were in Homestead, near Pittsburgh, where thousands of workers were employed, their tasks requiring long training and high skill. Wages were arranged between the company and the union, according to a sliding scale based on the prevailing market price of steel products. The current agreement was about to expire, and the workers presented a new wage schedule, calling for an increase because of the higher market prices and enlarged output of the mills.

The philanthropic Andrew Carnegie conveniently retired to his castle in Scotland, and Frick took full charge of the situation. He declared that henceforth the sliding scale would be abolished. The company would make no more agreements with the Amalgamated Association; it would itself determine the wages to be paid. In fact, he would not recognize the union at all. He would not treat with the employees collectively, as before. He would close the mills, and the men might consider themselves discharged. Thereafter they would have to apply for work individually, and the pay would be arranged with every worker separately. Frick curtly refused the peace advances of the workers' organization, declaring that there was "nothing to arbitrate." Presently the mills were closed. "Not a strike, but a lockout," Frick announced. It was an open declaration of war.

Feeling ran high in Homestead and vicinity. The sympathy of the entire country was with the men. Even the most conservative part of the press condemned Frick for his arbitrary and drastic methods. They charged him with deliberately provoking a crisis that might assume national proportions, in view of the great numbers of men locked out by Frick's action, and the probable effect upon

affiliated unions and on related industries.

Labour throughout the country was aroused. The steel-workers declared that they were ready to take up the challenge of Frick: they would insist on their right to organize and to deal collectively with their employers. Their tone was manly, ringing with the spirit of their rebellious forebears of the Revolutionary War.

Far away from the scene of the impending struggle, in our little ice-cream parlour in the city of Worcester, we eagerly followed developments. To us it sounded the awakening of the American worker, the long-awaited day of his resurrection. The native toiler had risen, he was beginning to feel his mighty strength, he was determined to break the chains that had held him in bondage so long, we thought. Our hearts were fired with admiration for the men of Homestead.

We continued our daily work, waiting on customers, frying pancakes, serving tea and ice-cream; but our thoughts were in Homestead, with the brave steel-workers. We became so absorbed in the news that we would not permit ourselves enough time even for sleep. At daybreak one of the boys would be off to get the first editions of the papers. We saturated ourselves with the events in Homestead to the exclusion of everything else. Entire nights we would sit up discussing the various phases of the situation, almost engulfed by the possibilities of the gigantic struggle.

One afternoon a customer came in for an ice-cream, while I was alone in the store. As I set the dish down before him, I caught the large headlines of his paper: “LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN HOMESTEAD — FAMILIES OF STRIKERS EVICTED FROM THE COMPANY HOUSES—WOMAN IN CONFINEMENT CARRIED OUT INTO STREET BY SHERIFFS.” I read over the man’s shoulder Frick’s dictum to the workers: he would rather see them dead than concede to their demands, and he threatened to import Pinkerton detectives. The brutal bluntness of the account, the inhumanity of Frick towards the evicted mother, inflamed my mind. Indignation swept my whole being. I heard the man at the table ask: “Are you sick, young lady? Can I do anything for you?” "Yes, you can let me have your paper,“ I blurted out. ”You won’t have to pay me for the ice-cream. But I must ask you to leave. I must close the store." The man looked at me as if I had gone crazy.

I locked up the store and ran full speed the three blocks to our little flat. It was Homestead, not Russia; I knew it now. We belonged in Homestead. The boys, resting for the evening shift, sat up as I rushed into the room, newspaper clutched in my hand. “What has happened, Emma? You look terrible!” I could not

speak. I handed them the paper.

Sasha was the first on his feet. “Homestead!”he exclaimed. “I must go to Homestead!” I flung my arms around him, crying out his name. I, too, would go. “We must go tonight,” he said; “ the great moment has come at last!” Being internationalists, he added, it mattered not to us where the blow was struck by the workers; we must be with them. We must bring them our great message and help them see that it was not only for the moment that they must strike, but for all time, for a free life, for anarchism. Russia had many heroic men and women, but who was there in America? Yes, we must go to Homestead, tonight!

I had never heard Sasha so eloquent. He seemed to have grown in stature. He looked strong and defiant, an inner light on his face making him beautiful, as he had never appeared to me before.

We immediately went to our landlord and informed him of our decision to leave. He replied that we were mad; we were doing so well, we were on the way to fortune. If we would hold out to the end of the summer, we would be able to clear at least a thousand dollars. But he argued in vain—we were not to be moved. We invented the story that a very dear relative was in a dying condition, and that therefore we must depart. We would turn the store over to him; all we wanted was the evening’s receipts. We would remain until closing-hours, leave everything in order, and give him the keys.

That evening we were especially busy. We had never before had so many customers. By one o’clock we had sold out everything. Our receipts were seventy-five dollars. We left on an early morning train.

On the way we discussed our immediate plans. First of all, we would print a manifesto to the steel-workers. We would have to find somebody to translate it into English, as we were still unable to express our thoughts correctly in that tongue. We would have the German and English texts printed in New York and take them with us to Pittsburgh. With the help of the German comrades there, meetings could be organized for me to address. Fedya was to remain in New York till further developments.

From the station we went straight to the flat of Mollock, an Austrian comrade we had met in the Autonomie group. He was a baker who worked at night; but Peppie, his wife, with her two children was at home. We were sure she could put us up.

She was surprised to see the three of us march in, bag and baggage, but she

made us welcome, fed us, and suggested that we go to bed. But we had other things to do.

Sasha and I went in search of Claus Timmermann, an ardent German anarchist we knew. He had considerable poetic talent and wrote forceful propaganda. In fact, he had been the editor of an anarchist paper in St. Louis before coming to New York. He was a likable fellow and entirely trustworthy, though a considerable drinker. We felt that Claus was the only person we could safely draw into our plan. He caught our spirit at once. The manifesto was written that afternoon. It was a flaming call to the men of Homestead to throw off the yoke of capitalism, to use their present struggle as a stepping-stone to the destruction of the wage system, and to continue towards social revolution and anarchism.

A few days after our return to New York the news was flashed across the country of the slaughter of steel-workers by Pinkertons. Frick had fortified the Homestead mills, built a high fence around them. Then, in the dead of night, a barge packed with strike-breakers, under protection of heavily armed Pinkerton thugs, quietly stole up the Monongahela River. The steel-men had learned of Frick's move. They stationed themselves along the shore, determined to drive back Frick's hirelings. When the barge got within range, the Pinkertons had opened fire, without warning, killing a number of Homestead men on the shore, among them a little boy, and wounding scores of others.

The wanton murders aroused even the daily papers. Several came out in strong editorials, severely criticizing Frick. He had gone too , far; he had added fuel to the fire in the labour ranks and would have himself to blame for any desperate acts that might come.

We were stunned. We saw at once that the time for our manifesto had passed. Words had lost their meaning in the face of the innocent blood spilled on the banks of the Monongahela. Intuitively each felt what was surging in the heart of the others. Sasha broke the silence. “Frick is the responsible factor in this crime,” he said; “he must be made to stand the consequences.” It was the psychological moment for an Attentat; the whole country was aroused, everybody was considering Frick the perpetrator of a cold-blooded murder. A blow aimed at Frick would re-echo in the poorest hovel, would call the attention of the whole world to the real cause behind the Homestead struggle. It would also strike terror in the enemy's ranks and make them realize that the proletariat of America had its avengers.

Sasha had never made bombs before, but Most's Science of Revolutionary

Warfare was a good text-book. He would procure dynamite from a comrade he knew on Staten Island. He had waited for this sublime moment to serve the Cause, to give his life for the people. He would go to Pittsburgh.

“We will go with you!” Fedya and I cried together. But Sasha would not listen to it. He insisted that it was unnecessary and criminal to waste three lives on one man.

We sat down, Sasha between us, holding our hands. In a quiet and even tone he began to unfold to us his plan. He would perfect a time regulator for the bomb that would enable him to kill Frick, yet save himself. Not because he wanted to escape. No; he wanted to live long enough to justify his act in court, so that the American people might know that he was not a criminal, but an idealist.

“I will kill Frick,” Sasha said, "and of course I shall be condemned to death. I will die proudly in the assurance that I gave my life for the people. But I will die by my own hand, like Lingg. Never will I permit our enemies to kill me."

Source: Emma Goldman was political activist and radical who fiercely supported workers’ rights. The document above comes from her autobiography, written in 1931, where she remembers her reaction to the Homestead strike, thirty-nine years later.

Document B: Henry Frick (ORIGINAL)

Pittsburgh *Post*, July 8, 1892

In an interview yesterday afternoon with Mr. George N. McCain, corespondent of the Philadelphia Press, Mr. H. C. Frick, chairman of the Carnegie Steel Company, Limited, said:

"The question at issue is a very grave one. It is whether the Carnegie Company or the Amalgamated Association shall have absolute control of our plant and business at Homestead. We have decided, after numerous fruitless conferences with the Amalgamated officials in the attempt to amicably adjust the existing difficulties, to operate the plant ourselves. I can say with the greatest emphasis that under no circumstances will we have any further dealings with the Amalgamated Association as an organization. This is final. The Edgar Thomson Works and our establishment at Duquesne are both operated by workmen who are not members of the Amalgamated Association with the greatest satisfaction to ourselves and to the unquestioned advantage of our employees. At both of these plants the work in every department; goes on uninterrupted; the men are not harassed by the interference of trade union officials, and the best evidence that their wages are satisfactory is shown in the fact that we have never had a strike there since they began working under our system of management.

"What was the basis of the differences existing at present between the Carnegie company and their men, Mr. Frick?"

FIRST POINT AT ISSUE.

"There, were three points upon which we differed. The skilled workmen in the Amalgamated Association work under what is known as a sliding scale. As the price of steel advances the earnings of the men advance; as the prices fall their earnings decrease in proportion. While there is no limit to an advance of earnings on the scale, there is a limit at which the decline stops. It is known as the minimum, and the figure heretofore has been $25 per ton for 4 by 4 Bessemer billets. We believe that if earnings based on the selling price of steel can advance without limit the workmen should be willing to follow the selling price down to a reasonable minimum, and so this figure was finally fixed by the Carnegie Company at the rate of $23 instead of $25. The reason for asking this upon our part was that the Carnegie Company has spent large sums of money in the introduction of new machinery in its Homestead plant, by means of which the workmen were enabled to increase their daily output, thereby increasing the

amount of their own earnings. We had originally asked a reduction to $22, but subsequently agreed to compromise the rate at $23. The Amalgamated Association was unwilling to consider a reduction below $24 on steel billets, notwithstanding the fact that the improved machinery would enable their members, even at $23, to earn more than is paid in other Amalgamated mills. This was the first point at issue.

OTHER STUMBLING BLOCKS.

Under the present Amalgamated system the date of the expiration of the sliding scale is June 30, annually. We asked that this date be changed to December 31 (same as at Edgar Thomson), for the reason that the change would permit us to take our estimate upon the wages that we must pay during the year, beginning on January 1, so that we would be enabled to make contracts for the year accordingly. This point the Amalgamated Association refused to accede, and demanded the old date. The third proposition was the reduction in tonnage rates in those departments in the mills where the improvements I have spoken of have been made and which enable the workingmen to increase the output and consequently their earnings. Where no such improvements had been made there was no request on our part for a reduction in tonnage rate. In other words, we asked no reduction in any department of which the output had not been greatly increased by reason of our expensive improvements since the scale of 1889 went into effect.

As a rule, the men who were making the largest wages in the mill were the ones who most bitterly denounced the proposed revision of the scale, for out of the 3,800 men employed in every department only 325 were directly affected by this reduction.

WORKMEN HELD SWAY.

"Finding that it was impossible to arrive at any agreement with the Amalgamated Association we decided to close our works at Homestead. Immediately the town was taken possession of by the workmen. An advisory committee of 50 took upon itself the direction of the affairs of the place; the streets were patrolled by men appointed by this committee, and every stranger entering the town became an object of surveillance, was closely questioned, and if there was the slightest reason to suspect him he was ordered to leave the place instantly under the threat of bodily harm. Guards were stationed at every approach to Homestead by the self-organized local government. Our employees were prohibited from going to the mills, and we, as the owners of the property, were compelled to stand by

powerless to conduct the affairs of our business or direct its management. This condition of affairs lasted until Tuesday, when I appealed to the sheriff of Allegheny County, stating the facts as I have outlined them. The sheriff visited Homestead and talked with the advisory committee. Its members asked that they be permitted to appoint men from their own number to act as deputy sheriffs; in other words, the men who were interfering with the exercise of our corporate rights, preventing us from conducting our business affairs, requested that they be clothed with the authority of deputy sheriffs to take charge of our plant. The sheriff declined their proposition, and the advisory committee disbanded. The rest of the story is a familiar one; the handful of deputies sent up by the Sheriff McCleary were surrounded by the mob and forced to leave the town, and then the watchmen were sent up to be landed on our own property for the protection of our plant.

“Why did the Carnegie Company call upon the Pinkertons for watchmen to protect their property?”

"We did not see how else we would have protection. We only wanted them for watchmen to protect our property and see that workmen we would take to Homestead—and we have had applications from many men to go there to—were not interfered with.

DOUBTED THE SHERIFF’S POWER.

“Did you doubt the ability of the sheriff to enforce order at Homestead and protect your property?”

“Yes sir; with local deputies.”

“Why?”

"For the reason that three years ago our concern had an experience similar to this. We felt the necessity of a change at the works; that a scale should be adopted based on the sliding price of billets, and we asked the county authorities for protection. The workmen began tactics similar to those employed in the present troubles. The sheriff assured the members of the firm that there would be no difficulty, that he would give them ample protection and see that men who were willing to work were not interfered with. What was the result? The posse taken up by the sheriff—something over 100 men—were not permitted to land on our property; were driven off with threats of bodily harm, and it looked as if there was going to be great destruction of life and property. That frightened our people. Mr. Abbott was then in charge of the Carnegie, Phipps & Co. business, and was

asked by the Amalgamated officials for a conference, which he agreed to, fearful if he did not do so there might be loss of life and destruction of property. Under that stress, in fear of the Amalgamated Association, an agreement was made and work was resumed. We did not propose this time to be placed in that position.

"The Pinkerton men, as generally understood, had been summoned and all arrangements made with them to be on hand in case of failure by the sheriff to afford protection. Is that a fact or not?

"The facts concerning the engagement of the Pinkerton men are these: From past experience, not only with the present sheriff but with all others, we have found that he has been unable to furnish us with a sufficient number of deputies to guard our property and protect the men who were anxious to work on our terms. As the Amalgamated men from the 1st of July had surrounded our works placed guards at all the entrances, and at all avenues or roads leading to our establishment and for miles distant therefrom, we felt that for the safety of our property, and in order to protect our workmen, it was necessary for us to secure our own watchmen to assist the sheriff, and we knew of no other source from which to obtain them than from Pinkerton agencies, and to them we applied.

TRIED TO AVOID TROUBLE.

"We brought the watchmen here as quietly as possible; had them taken to Homestead at an hour of the night when we hoped to have them enter our works without any interference whatever and without meeting anybody. We proposed to land them on our own property, and all our efforts were to prevent the possibilities of a collision between our former workmen and our watchmen. We are to-day barred out of our property at Homestead, and have been since the 1st of July. There is nobody in the mills up there now; they are standing a silent mass of machinery with nobody to look after them. They are in the hands of our former workmen.

“Have the men made overtures for a settlement of the difficulties since this trouble commenced?”

“Yes, sir. A leading ex-official in the Amalgamated Association yesterday, when this rioting was going on, called on the sheriff and I am informed asked him to come down to see me, stating that if he could get a promise that we would confer with the representatives of the Amalgamated Association looking toward an adjustment of this trouble, that he would go to Homestead and try to stop the rioting.”

"Did you consider his proposal?"

"No, sir. I told the gentleman who called that we could not confer with Amalgamated Association officials. That it was their followers who were rioting and destroying our property, and we would not accept his proposition. At the same time this representative of our former workmen said that they were willing to accept the terms offered, and concede everything we asked except the date of the scale, which they insisted should be June 30 in place of December 31.

FUTURE OF IT ALL.

"What of the future of this difficulty?"

"It is in the hands of the authorities of Allegheny County. If they are unable to cope with it, it is certainly the duty of the governor of the State to see that we are permitted to operate our establishment unmolested. The men engaged by us through the Pinkerton agencies were sent up to Homestead with the full knowledge sheriff and by him placed in charge of his chief deputy, Col. Gray, and, as we know, with instructions to deputize them in case it became necessary. We have made an impartial investigation and are satisfied beyond doubt that the watchmen employed by us were fired upon by our former workmen and their friends for twenty-five minutes before they reached our property, and were fired upon after they had reached our property. That they did not return the fire until after the boats had touched the shore, and after three of the watchmen had been wounded, one fatally. After a number of the watchmen were wounded, and Capt. Rodgers, in charge of the tow-boat, at their request, had taken the injured away, leaving the barges at our works unprotected, our former workmen refused to allow Capt. Rodgers to return to the barges that he might remove them from our property, but fired at him and fatally wounded one of the crew.

"You doubtless are aware, Mr. Frick, that the troubles at the Homestead mill invited widespread attention, and as a result Congress proposes to investigate the trouble, as well as the employment of Pinkerton detectives?"

"I am aware of the fact, sir. While nobody could regret the occurrences of the last few days more than myself, yet it is my duty, as the executive head of the Carnegie Company, to protect the interests of the association. We desire to, and will protect our property at all hazards. So far as Congressional investigation is concerned, I can say with the utmost candor that we welcome the investigation proposed. We are prepared to submit facts and figures which will convince unprejudiced men of the equity of our position. More than this, I believe that when all of the facts are known revelations will be made which will emphasize the

justice of all our claims.”

AS TO POLITICS.

“How do you regard the present troubles at Homestead from a political standpoint. What effect will it have as a tariff issue in the political campaign of the coming fall?”

"We have never given a thought as to what effect our affairs might have on either of the political parties. We can not afford to run our business and run politics at the same time. It would prove very unprofitable if we were to trim our sails to meet political issues. At the same time I may say that it is not a matter in which the protective tariff is involved, and every intelligent man, whether he be a manufacturer or employee, is aware of the fact. It is, however, a question as to whether or not the proprietors or its workmen will manage the works.

We did not propose to reduce the earnings of our employes below those of Amalgamated men in other mills. As I have said, we have put in improved machinery which other mills do not possess; increased our output and increased the earnings of our men. We asked that a reduction be made in these departments so that the earnings of our employe’s would be on a par with other workmen in other Amalgamated mills. It is not a question of starvation wages, for you will please bear in mind the fact that the proposed equalization of earnings affects only about 325 men out of 3,800, and they are the ones who earn the most money in our establishment. It has no effect upon the wages of more than 15,000 other employees engaged in our establishment. It has no effect upon the wages of more the 15,000 other employees engaged in our establishment at Duquesne, Braddock, Pittsburg, Beaver Falls, and in the coke region."

Source: In this newspaper interview in the Pittsburgh Post *on July 8, 1892, Frick explains his opposition to the union’s demands. Frick argued that the workers were trying to control the company and should be stopped.*