Fourteen political cartoons examining the “labor vs. capital” divide that re-ignited in America after World War One are presented in this collection. They appeared in labor, African American, and general circulation newspapers from 1919, the first year of massive nationwide strikes and of the anxiety-driven Red Scare, to 1926, as labor unrest continued to erupt in violence. Be sure to note the objects or persons labeled “capital” and “labor” in the cartoons.

To analyze a political cartoon, consider its:

- **CONTENT.** First, basically describe what is drawn in the cartoon (without referring to the labels). What is depicted? What is happening?
- **CONTEXT.** Consider the timing. What is happening in national events at the time of the cartoon? Check the date: what occurred in the days and weeks before the cartoon appeared?
- **LABELS.** Read each label; look for labels that are not apparent at first, and for other written content in the cartoon.
- **SYMBOLS.** Name the symbols in the cartoons. What do they mean? How do they convey the cartoon’s meaning?
- **TITLE.** Study the title. Is it a statement, question, exclamation? Does it employ a well-known phrase, e.g., slang, song lyric, movie title, radio show, political or product slogan? How does it encapsulate and enhance the cartoonist’s point?
- **TONE.** Identify the tone of the cartoon. Is it satirical, comic, tragic, ironic, condemning, quizzical, imploring? What adjective describes the feeling of the cartoon? How do the visual elements in the drawing align with its tone?
- **POINT.** Put it all together. What is the cartoonist’s point?

**QUESTIONS**

- What general viewpoint is prevalent in the big-city general circulation newspapers?
- What additional perspective appears in the labor and African American newspapers?
**Untitled**

*Seattle Union Record, February 6, 1919*

Labour newspaper. Cartoonist: I. Swenson

The major labor newspaper in Seattle, Washington, published this cartoon on the first day of a five-day general strike, the first in U.S. history, in which thousands of Seattle workers stopped working to show solidarity with striking shipyard workers.

Reproduced by permission of the University of Washington, Special Collections Library.
“And in the Meantime the Lady Drowns”

Life, May 8, 1919

Cartoonist: Harry Grant Dart


Search in process for copyright holder of Life (estate of Henry T. Rockwell) or illustrations of Harry Grant Dart. Digital image from original publication.
“Why Can’t People Think of That Before Breaking Up All the Furniture”

Des Moines Register [Iowa], June 7, 1919
Cartoonist: Jay N. “Ding” Darling


Reproduced by permission of the Jay N. “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. Digital image courtesy of the University of Iowa Libraries.
"There Are Moments When Married Life Seems Quite Endurable Even to a Man Who Thinks He's Henpecked"

Des Moines Register, June 14, 1919
Cartoonist: Jay N. "Ding" Darling
Reproduced by permission of the Jay N. "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society. Digital image courtesy of the University of Iowa Libraries.
“And We Also Have Class Unconsciousness”

*Brooklyn Eagle*, ca. Oct./Nov. 1919
as reprinted in the *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 4, 1919

Cartoonist: Nelson Harding

Permission request in process. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
“The Tariff and Immigration Questions”

*Chicago Tribune*, March 1, 1921

Cartoonist: Carey Orr


Reproduced by permission of the Chicago Tribune. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
“There Must Be Cutting from Both Sides”

Brooklyn Eagle, ca. May/June 1921
as reprinted in the Los Angeles Times, June 5, 1921
Cartoonist: Nelson Harding


Permission request in process. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
“Capital’s One Big Fear!”

*Industrial Pioneer*, September 1921

Labor newspaper (IWW).

Capital. One Big Union.

The *Industrial Pioneer* was a monthly publication of the International Workers of the World, the socialist union formed in Chicago in 1905 that adopted the Marxist goal of destroying capitalism and the wage system. It rejected the American Federation of Labor for working within the capitalist system and promoted its alternative of "one big union" of all workers, skilled and unskilled, under the IWW banner.

Permission request in process. Digital image courtesy of Google Books.
Advertisement for the National Association for the Promotion of Labor Unionism among Negroes

*The Messenger*, February 1922


*The Messenger* was an African American socialist magazine founded in 1917 in New York City by A. Philip Randolph and Owen Chandler.

“Agitator Dog”: Socialist and Communist [Bolshevik] labor activists were labeled “agitators” by opponents who charged them with aggravating labor unrest to pursue their goal of a total labor takeover of industrial property. Here the cartoonist uses the term to “agitate” white and African American workers to transcend racial competition and work together in labor unions to gain higher wages.

Courtesy of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.
"Wonder How Much Longer He Can Stand It"

Des Moines Register [Iowa], May 3, 1922
Cartoonist: Jay N. "Ding" Darling


Reproduced by permission of the Jay N. "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society. Digital image courtesy of the University of Iowa Libraries.
The New York Times, ca. 1922
reprinted in the Literary Digest, August 26, 1922
Cartoonist: Edwin Marcus


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 Untitled

*The New York Times*, September 3, 1922

Cartoonist: Edwin Marcus


Reproduced by permission of the Marcus family. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
“A Real American Federation of Labor”

*The Pittsburgh Courier, September 1, 1923*


“Labor Conquers All,” “When Labor Will Be Able to Bring Capital to Its Knees.”

Reproduced by permission of the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
“The Devil’s ‘Home Brew’”

*The Afro-American*, Baltimore, May 8, 1926


“Home Brew”: homemade illegal alcohol.

“Cateret outburst”: In April 1926 in Carteret, New Jersey, rioting white mobs attacked black residents, burned churches, and drove the terrorized black population from the town. For several years, white laborers had resented the competition from southern blacks who were hired for lower wages in the town’s fertilizer factory.

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