

Henry Ford

I am here to testify on behalf of the achievers of the American Dream. I grew up on a farm in Michigan, but realized early on I didn't enjoy farming as much as I enjoyed working on the machines we used. Instead of whining and complaining and asking the government to help me, I left home and became an apprentice for a machinist for three years. I eventually became an engineer which gave me some money and time to experiment on an internal combustion engine. The rest of my story is that through hard work and ingenuity I was able to create a system for making automobiles and instead of making two or three a day, my assembly line system could produce a Model T every 24 seconds. This makes my automobile affordable by the majority of Americans. I used my hard work and intellect to make a system where more people could drive cars.

With your group, pause in your reading to discuss and answer this question:

1. Is this character real or fictitious? What is his current situation?

I and my capitalist counter parts are criticized as not looking out for the worker. I instituted a \$5.00 a day minimum wage in my plants and have seen increased productivity. Therefore, I don't need the government or labor unions telling me to pay my workers well. It only makes sense. I want the best workers and by paying them more, I get the best applicants. This ensures I don't have to put up with lazy foreigners, but instead can hire good hard-working mid-westerners. My workers know I appreciate them and work harder for me. I have been criticized for breaking up strikes and not allowing my workers to unionize. However, I say my workers are treated very well and by working together for our mutual best interests, we all win.

I believe that through the free-market system we can achieve the best working situations for both the worker and the owner of our nation's companies. I agree that the Eastern money interests from the end of the last century have controlled too much of the banking, transportation, manufacturing, and printing in our country. However, the best way to combat these forces is through competition, not mail bombs. Socialism, communism, and anarchism are not the way to improve our country. The way to improve us is to unleash the competitive spirit and potential in all our people. These foreign revolutionaries bring their radical religious and political views and corrupt our nation. Emma Goldman and her views on sex and marriage are appalling. There are too many Jews infiltrating our country and bringing their strange religion and corrupt business practices. Eugene Debs incites radicals to take the law into their own hands instead of telling them to work hard and find companies like mine who cares about their workers.

With your group, pause in your reading to discuss and answer this question:

2. What is Ford's view of capitalism? Provide examples of why he feels this way.
3. Describe criticisms of socialism and anarchism Ford puts forward. Why does he think these systems will fail?

The real problem is our allowing foreigners from Asia and southern Europe to corrupt our pure American way of life. They are lazy alcoholics, and prone to violence. We need to stop letting so many of them come into this Christian nation. The Jewish bankers forged an alliance among nations to create conditions that led to the Great War. The Jewish automobile dealers are conspiring against my company and lowering my sales. The best way to save our great country is to get rid of these foreigners who are threatening our democracy and capitalistic system that promotes good values, fair business practices, hard work, and ingenuity.

With your group, pause in your reading to discuss and answer this question:

4. Describe Ford's view of recent immigrants. Provide examples of why he feels this way.
5. What policies toward immigration would Ford support? What does he think should be done with the immigrants?