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EDITORIAL

WE CAN NOT EAT OUR CAKE AND HAVE IT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

GRUESOME are the revelations made by Mrs. C.H. Towner, Principal of School No. 114, 73 Oliver street, concerning the starving little children who faint with hunger at their studies. But what is the rhyme or reason in “revealing” such gruesomeness! Is not capitalism good, wise, humane, patriotic, Christian—above all NECESSARY?

A nation that delights in the “eating of the cake” of sporting Countesses Szechenyi, Duchesses of Manchester, Marchionesses Juili, imperial Rockefellers, Duchesses of Marlborough, Countesses of Campo-Felice, etc., etc.—such a nation but stands in the childish attitude of wanting to “have its cake” if it expects well-fed, well-clad children among the working class.

Nothing is got for nothing. Everything must be paid for. The people of America cannot delight in the luxuries of their grandees without paying for the same with the fainting spells of starving school children, and other horrors. He who glories in an exploiter, must be ready to pay therefor with the sight of exploitation. He whose breast can swell at “our” phenomenal wealth (owned by the plundering capitalist class) must be able and ready to resist, and even to apologize for, and justify “our” phenomenal poverty (owned by the working class).

Even a school child would be sharply rebuked if it sought to divide 100 cents between two persons in such a way that, while the one received 99 cents, the other still kept more than 1 cent. Grown people should be above and beyond such mathematical blunders. The wealth produced by labor is divided by the capitalist class upon the principle of 99 cents to the capitalist idler. What is there left, what can be there left for the toiling masses but 1 cent, to starve upon?

The nation pays for its capitalism with its pauperism; for the warm and ventilated palatial residences of the capitalist class with the cold and ill-ventilated

tenements of the working class; for the banquets of the idle exploiters with the starvation of the industrious and exploited class; for the laughter and cheer of the children of the capitalist plunderer with the tears and sorrows of the children of the workers.

Reveal distress! What idle work!

There is no fruitful revelation of distress that does not crystallize in the political and economic organization of the Working Class to vote down the capitalist system of Asiatic inequality, and that possesses the organized power to enforce the fiat of that ballot.

All else are idle, impotent, tiresome sighs—the sighs of children who would eat their cake and have it.

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

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