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EDITORIAL

## THE NEW FOOD FOR WORKINGMEN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE old-time slave holder had to lay out several hundreds of dollars before he could come into possession of a slave, and this forced him to consider the value of the negro from the standpoint of bone and muscle. He, therefore, paid some attention to the welfare of the slave, just as to-day a horse owner considers the needs of his beast, that it may be kept in proper condition to serve his purposes. The modern capitalist has no need to give any thought to the welfare of the worker—the wage slave. When one of them drops out, hundreds more are ready to sell themselves, and agree to wait a week, or a month, as pleases the capitalist, before they get any return.

There is no doubt that the slave generally had better food than thousands of workingmen of to-day. Even if the workman gets enough to “fill up” on, the food he gets neither satisfies nor nourishes. Ancient vegetables, slaughter house offal and bad pastry are the chief items of the diet of thousands of the working class of this city. What they need is good beefsteak, wholesome bread and rich, pure milk. But now comes William Mitchell Bowack with his book, *Another View of Industrialism*, who asserts that what laboring men require is:

“A form of common food that might be regarded as the recognized basis of subsistence. It should be a form of food prepared, containing all the elements necessary to perfect nutrition in perfect proportions, palatable and attractive. It must be cheap, lasting and convenient. \* \* \* This common food we would put up in regular packages of certified weight, and place all over the country at a recognized price.”

The nearest approach to this standard ration known to Mr. Bowack is the German military sausage; though the claims of the makers of some of the American breakfast foods seem to approach his ideal.

As is well known to Socialists, wages keep just at about the subsistence level, hence a “cheap, nutritious food” would serve to further reduce wages. This, then, is the ideal; this, then, is the solution of the labor problem that capitalism proposes and applies. Men with few wants, and those wants as near as possible down to the level of the brute, are the ideal workers to the capitalist class. Capitalism seeks to reduce the wants of labor, despite the increasing enjoyments that labor is producing. The black slave had his food, shelter, clothing and medical attendance provided for him, as well as certain enjoyments which he could appreciate, but the wage slave is to be lowered to an ever descending range of feelings, pleasures and aspirations to one thing, and that—his product.

Workingmen, let us show that we are more than beasts that can be quickly whipped or starved into submission! Let us show that we have aspirations that rise higher than the manger! Let us unite, to conquer for ourselves the full fruition of increasing civilization, which is the result of our labor! Let us raise the wants of mankind by raising ourselves to an ever-rising range of feelings, pleasures and aspirations! Let us emancipate ourselves from wage slavery, overthrow class rule and establish freedom! Let us do this—the only way it can be done, through the agency of ourselves, organized in the Socialist Labor Party! Let us begin the work to-day and keep it up till slavery is no more!

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