

EDITORIAL

## THE SUGAR BEET “VACATION.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**CCORDING to the Bay City, Mich., *Times* of October 12, about four-fifths of the rural schools of Bay county have closed for what has been given the euphonious name of “the sugar beet vacation.” The *Times* explains the object of the vacation to be “to allow the children to work in the beet fields.”

At all seasons, the facts thrown up by the social plow as it furrows its way on the social acre, are of deep interest. They are “specimens,” with all the value attached to prime specimens. Especially valuable are such facts when the social plow turns them in campaign seasons—the season when the popular mind is attuned, or dieted, more so than at any other season, to digest the specimens.

Such a specimen is that regarding the beet sugar “vacation.”

There can be little if any doubt that the “beet sugar vacation” will be utilized by the spread-eagle spokesmen of capitalist society as an evidence of the progressively benevolent nature of Capitalism. The gentry have done so with regard to the increasing number of wage slaves in the land—a social phenomenon which, in fact, denotes the positive spread of economic dependence. The gentry have done so with regard to the increasingly ingenious contrivances against burglary—a manifestation which, in fact, denotes the positive spread of involuntary poverty. And so on. Why should the spread-eagles above referred to not now indulge in dithyrambics on the pre-eminently benign qualities that Capitalism is instinct with and that develop to view in even step with the development of Capitalism itself—as illustrated in the “vacation” offered to school children, and the opportunities opened to them by the sugar beet industry for healthy open air exercise? Why not?

All the same the fact speaks eloquently to those with ears to hear.

It illustrates with a specimen the method of Capitalism whereby to increase the supply in the labor market and thereby lower wages: children are recruited into the

army of Labor.

It illustrates with a specimen the child-devouring Magog nature of Capitalism:—the child's surplus-wealth-producing tissue is churned into profits.

It illustrates with a specimen the self-contradictory make-up of Capitalism:—while being a promoter of intelligence, and needing the intelligence on the part of its wage slaves, Capitalism dwarfs the mind of future generations by promoting illiteracy among the childhood.

Finally, it illustrates with a specimen the viciously insidious practices of Capitalism whereby to profit by its own wrong-doing:—the capitalist-bred poverty of parents is turned to capitalist use by enlisting the services of parents in causing children to be deprived of schooling, and to be early accustomed to the yoke of wage slavery.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)