EDITORIAL

THE CHANCES OF 60-YEAR-OLD WORKERS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ABOUT ten years ago the British Consul, located at Chicago, rendered to
his Government a report on the labor conditions in the United States, with
the machinists’ trade as an illustration. The report was to the effect that,
in America, if a machinist has reached his forty-second year and is out of work it
will go hard for him to get a job—because, if he worked as hard as he is expected to
work, then he is worn out, and no employer has any use for him; and if he is not
worn out, then it is a sign that he did not work as hard as he is expected to, and no
employer has any use for him, anyhow.

Now, eleven years later, another British Consul, Barnett by name, reporting to
his home Government upon labor conditions in New York, New Jersey and Con-
nnecticut last year says:

“Every worker in America puts more energy into his work than does
the European in his own country. Speeding is partly responsible for this,
but the reserve of energy is no greater in America than in European stock.
American energy is consequently exhausted more rapidly. At between the
ages of 40 and 50, when the European workman is at his best, the Ameri-
can frequently breaks down. Physical exhaustion, dyspepsia, or nervous
prostration follow, and the man’s life as a worker is done. His place is
taken by a younger man.”

It does not need British Consuls to tell us this. America being the most capital-
istically developed country on earth, this country exhibits capitalistic features in
boldest relief. One of these features is cannibalism—veiled or refined cannibalism.
Not the frank cannibalism of the savage who dances a jig around the pot in which
his quartered victim is stewing, but the covert cannibalism that chants the hymns
of brotherly love, and coins the flesh, bones and marrow of the working class into
heaps of profits under the benediction of the pulpit. No, it does not need British
Consuls to furnish our people, least of all the Socialists of America, with information that at once damns capitalism, and also Bergerism, with its pension schemes for workingmen of sixty years and over.