

EDITORIAL

## FREE TRADE EXPLOITING LAWRENCE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**W**ERE Marx alive to-day, and took in the policy of the Free Traders towards the Lawrence strike, he surely would add a number of pungent paragraphs to that admirable satire of his—the address on Free Trade.

The Free Trader is nothing if not a “lover of the worker.” Out of love for the workingmen, and only out of love for the workingmen, the Free Trader hates the Tariff. He wishes to remove the Tariff, at any rate reduce the cost of living. “Will not cheaper food and clothing, rendered cheaper by the reduction or removal of the Tariff, leave the dear workingmen so much more in pocket?” asks the Free Trader unctuously, and, thrusting his tongue into his cheeks he adds to himself: “If I can only get the fools to believe that, then, I, not they, shall be the richer for the difference in prices, since the first thing I shall do will be to lower their wages proportionally.”

Animated with that surpassing love for the workers, the Free Trader to-day, through his press and his House of Representatives, is exploiting the Lawrence strike. In the columns of his press he is shedding crocodile tears over the woes of the men, women and children employed by the American Woolen Company, one of the most highly “protected” industries in the land; and through his Federal House of Representatives he is holding hearings, and is to hold a “probe” of Lawrence whereby to exhibit the wounds of the downtrodden Lawrence mill workers as the hideous thorns on the stalk of Protection—while all the while he has his tongue thrust into his check, ready to cast off the Lawrence strike as a squeezed lemon the moment he has won his point, got himself into the saddle, and himself can begin to dispense starvation wages to men, women and children, and back up the pittance with Law and Order police clubs and militia bayonets.

The factory laws of England were the club with which the landed proprietors smote their upstart competitors in rulerdom, the bourgeoisie. British Labor profited

by the fight between its two sets of exploiters. Unless Lawrence Labor organize itself in such manner that it will touch a responsive chord in other towns, and throughout the land—unless it does that, the wounds of the Lawrence proletariat, now sympathetically exposed by Free Trade in its struggle with Protection, will be coined only into larger profits for the Free Trader.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded March 2013

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