

EDITORIAL

CAPITALIST THEFT AND MURDER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHETHER there was “cunning trickery” in the framing of the Dingley tariff on wool-tops; and whether, in case there was such trickery, the present Director of the Census, North, was the guilty instrument, as charged before the Ways and Means Committee at the hearing of December 3—these are secondary matters that pale into insignificance before the robust revelations made on that day concerning the wool growing capitalists.

The facts as brought out by Andrew J. Solis, a Boston commission dealer and importer of wool, who described himself as “a Republican ‘kicker,’ a protectionist, but not a ‘stand-patter,’” are these:

The phraseology of the Dingley act on wool is framed in such a way that the duty upon wool-tops amounts to 150 per cent. on the labor cost of the production of top-makers, that is, much higher than the duty on the more advanced product, yarns. The immediate consequence of this is that foreign tops are permanently excluded from our markets, with the following further consequences as the ultimate and practical outcome:

1. The wool-raisers, finding themselves so completely protected against foreign competition, and able to charge a monopoly price for their raw material, reduced expenses of production by a savage reduction of their output, so savage a reduction that when this country had a population of 50,000,000 it had 10,000,000 more sheep than it has now.

2. The exorbitant tariff on wool has brought about a condition of things in which 75 per cent. of the people are clad from head to foot, and from skin out in cotton, while even the remaining 25 per cent. are cheated by having to wear paper cloth in summer, and light-weight cloth in winter.

Being asked: “What’s the difference if they don’t know?” Mr. Solis answered:

“They find out when a cold day comes.”

There is an exhibition taking place at this hour in this city—the Exhibition on Tuberculosis. It is intended to teach people how to avoid the ravaging disease. The revelation on the wool tariff points the finger to the real murderer, and thief, withal.

Out of thankfulness to Mr. Solis, whose interests caused him to uncover these startling facts, we shall here charitably abstain from turning the light upon the tariff reformers themselves, and showing that the wages they pay render health impossible, disease and premature death unavoidable. Aware of the fact that the “tariff reformer” of to-day will be the “stand-patter,” if not worse, of to-morrow, soon as his material interests dictate the somersault, the Socialist is justified in picking out the “stand-patter” as the type of the capitalist, and pitchforking the gentleman, turning the pitchforked social felon into a standard to arouse the proletariat to organize itself by uniting upon the only field where unity is possible—the field over which waves the banner of the Socialist Labor Party, urging the workers to form their battalions on the economic and the political field for the overthrow of capitalism.

Take it all in all, the “honest agricultoorist”—as Artemus Ward used to jeer at the Pharisaic rural population—is typified by the “wool raising industry,” and it, in turn, typifies Capitalism—the despoiler of the land, the robber of the workers’ wealth, the massacer of the people.

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

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slpns@slp.org