

## Free Trade, Protection, Socialism

By Daniel De Leon

The New York *Commercial* says editorially:

“Trade and industry is languishing in Great Britain much the same as it is in the United States. The odd thing is that while protective tariff duties are advocated as a cure for the trouble in the United Kingdom, a lowering of tariff duties for a similar trouble is advocated in the United States.”

This is assuredly an odd thing; but an odder thing still is that, in thus showing up the fallacy of free trade and protection as a cure for crises, the *Commercial* is not aware that it is doing socialism a great service. Socialism has long contended that free trade and protection cannot cause or cure crises. Socialism contends that crises are due to the robbery of labor in the shop, the mine, the mill, in brief, wherever it is employed by the capitalist class for profit. Labor produces more than it receives in wages, and is thereby prevented from buying back all it produces. Despite foreign markets, and the excessive luxuries and constant investments of the capitalist class, the result of the robbery of labor is “overproduction” and the consequent crises. Socialism further contends that the cure for crises is the abolition of the wages system and the payment to labor of all that it produces, through the social ownership of capital, i.e., the establishment of socialism!

To show, as the *Commercial* does, that crises exist in both free trade England and protection United States, and that the fiscal policy of one is oddly proposed to cure the evils of the other, is to aid socialism to establish these vital points; for the showing demonstrates that neither free trade nor protection, is the cause of, nor the cure for, crises, and that the cause and the cure must be something different and common to both, which they are, viz., the robbery of labor and the social ownership of capital, as claimed by socialism.

Score one more for socialism, with the aid of capitalism!

*Daily People*, August 2, 1904  
Socialist Labor Party