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EDITORIAL

“SPEAKING THE NOBLER TRUTH.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

REPUBLICAN and Democratic, Protection and Free Trade, capitalist papers, in short, are praising the language held by President Eliot and Carnegie before the Immigration Commission. The gentlemen objected to the exclusion of the immigrant. The reasons they gave for the faith that is in them were numerous. These may be summed up in the sentence: “Surely, something foreign countries are unwilling to give us must have very considerable value.” The conclusion that we should take or decoy to our shores that which “foreign countries are unwilling to give us” is upon that ground pronounced to be “Speaking the nobler Truth.”

This “nobler truth” requires probing. What is it that “foreign countries are unwilling to give us,” meaning by “foreign countries,” of course, their respective ruling class? What they are unwilling to give us is the fruit of the labors of their own “noble” ancestors, to wit, the wholly dispossessed, the proletariat. The proletariat does not grow wild upon trees. It is a fruit the tree of which requires careful training, and the soil on which it rises needs sweatful plowing. The plow, in this instance, was not the bucolic emblem of peace that the prophets sing about, it was the sword and shot-gun. With this peculiar “plow” the old “nobility” furrowed their titular lands. The furrowing consisted in dispossessing the peasants. It was arduous labor; the only labor the “nobility” ever performed. With the land thus plowed, the proletarian tree was raised. Capitalist development attended to the rest. To-day, when the European feudalized capitalist and the capitalized feudal lord have entered into close alliance, they are the joint heirs—by all the laws of inheritance that “safe-guard law, order, religion and the family”—to the fruits of the joint labor of their “noble” and “industrious” ancestors. Among these fruits, the most legitimate and valuable of all is an overstocked labor-market. That overstocked

labor-market is the altar on which is raised the statue of Saint Supply-and-Demand, and at which the Saint is worshiped with low wages to correspond. Without an overstocked labor-market the Saint has nothing to stand on. It is, consequently, the acme of religious zeal in the religion of the God Capital to keep that altar in repair and working order. The ruling class of foreign countries may not, without backsliding from all the sacred scientific and canonical tenets of Capitalism, tolerate any sacrilege upon the shrine of Saint Supply-and-Demand. Not only must they prop up and garland the shrine with ever larger supplies of labor thrown into their own labor-market, but they must also not connive at their own labor-market being drained. In short, that which “foreign countries are unwilling to give us” is a large supply of the social victims without which capitalism can not exist, and which are the product of the arduous toil of their own illustrious ancestry. In other words, the “nobler thought” spoken by the mouth-pieces of the upstart American Capitalist Class is the thought of pilfering from the lords and masters of foreign countries the fruits of the toil of the ancestors of those noble lords and masters. The “nobler thought” is to wheedle and cajole and decoy that fruit over to America so as to set up here an opposition shrine to Saint Supply-and-Demand. The “nobler thought” consists in the zeal to appropriate the fruit of the toil of foreign brigands, so that, with the aid of domestic labor-displacing privately-owned improved machinery, so fiercely an overstocked labor-market be brought about that its fumes may enrapture the nostrils of Saint Supply-and-Demand, and furnish the pietistic pretense for savagely lowering wages.—That is the “nobler thought,” villainy for villainous purposes.

The Socialist workingman knows that it is folly to attempt to obtain from the class-government of Capitalism real relief, let alone redress, for the Working Class. The Socialist workingman knows that an overstocked and ever more overstocked labor-market is a principle, aye, a necessity, of Capitalism. The Socialist workingman knows, accordingly, that he might as well try to reach the moon with his hands as expect effectively to check a labor-market-overstocking immigration. On the other hand, the Socialist workingman knows that, with less effort than it now would take him to hold the runaway horse of Capitalism back by the tail with anti-immigration and such like legislation, his class could, by united effort, throw

down the run-away, abolish Capitalism, and itself take the reins of government, and that, that being done, the question of immigration ceases to be. It ceases to be with the blotting out of the labor-market. No wage slavery, no labor-market. Saint Supply-and-Demand will have joined the procession of the rest of the heathen myths.

The Nobler Truth can spring up and find utterance only on the lips of the Working Class; on the lips of the Capitalist Class only base bunkum can settle and be spoken.

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