

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 4, NO. 12.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JULY 12, 1903.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

## FREE SPEECH.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**E**LSEWHERE in this issue will be found the announcement of the decision of the Appellate Division of the Court of Appeals of this State confirming the decision of the Amsterdam, N.Y., court that sentenced three members of the Socialist Labor Party for speaking in the open air.<sup>1</sup>

It was in the days when the saffron colored press and pulpit was inciting the populace to riot. McKinley had been assassinated. That was the opportunity of every interest in the land that lived on the sweat of Labor's brow to blacken Socialism in the public esteem. Of course, the onslaught was directed against the Socialist Labor Party. Its speakers were hounded. That none was lynched was a miracle. As an official declaration of war ever unchains the social beasts that had been forced to lie low, and gives them "carte blanche" to commit murder, the assassination of McKinley was utilized by the Beast of Capitalism as a pretext to drop the mask of humanity and to step out in its true colors. Of course such conduct utterly failed to intimidate the S.L.P. men. All others who had been claiming to be Socialists of various degrees of "buts" crept into holes, and waited for the storm to blow over. The S.L.P., however, being no "fair weather craft," breasted the storm alone. If, indeed, terrorism can silence the speech of {the} Movement; if indeed, the terrorizers find their game succeeds—then terrorism feels encouraged, and will not let up. The S.L.P. bearded the beast.

The trial of the three S.L.P. men, whom the popinjay of the Social Democratic party of this State claim as its members from the safe hole into which it had crept, was a result of the terrorism that capitalist interests had set on foot. The trial, of course, went against them; and now, dodging the issue, the Appellate Division

---

<sup>1</sup> ["Free Speech: Though Beaten Down by the Appellate Division of the Court of Appeals Will be Insisted On by the S.L.P."—R.B.]

confirms the fines.

For all that, the S.L.P. won out. No blow struck for Right, no stand taken for Freedom ever is lost. In these instances the organized capitalist brigandage that rules the country failed absolutely—their judgments of conviction notwithstanding. The S.L.P.'s position, valiantly maintained by its members, and brilliantly expressed in the briefs of {the} Party's Counsellor, Benjamin Patterson, and published elsewhere in this issue,<sup>2</sup> are of the nature that resists rebuffs, and will ever be reasserted.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded January 2007

---

<sup>2</sup> [Same as preceding note—*R.B.*]