

The National Honor

By Daniel De Leon

No man, do he what he may, can lay upon another that dishonor that a man can lay upon himself; a man's honor is in the keeping of himself, not others. As with individuals, so with nations. A nation's honor is not in the keeping of others. It is not the conduct of other nations that honors or dishonors another; a nation stands honored or dishonored by its own acts at home. The application of these irrefutable principles are just now timely.

In the harbor of Havana several hundred United States marines have recently met their death.¹ Let the worst imaginable be imagined: Let it be imagined that the Spanish government itself was guilty of the stupidity of encompassing the death of these men; that is conceived, planned and executed the dastardly deed. Such action, as far as the United States is concerned, is an insult to us, no doubt. But who and what is that government that is to redress the wrong done to our honor? Upon its own character depends its fitness to demand and execute redress. Is it fit?

The government of the United States represents, not our people, but a small minority thereof; it represents not the honor, the industry, the sinews of the nation; it represents the nation's dishonor; it represents the capitalist class exclusively, i.e., a felon class. As the representative of that class, the present government is from head to foot red with the blood, not of a few hundred, but of thousands upon thousands of the nation's veterans of labor—male, female and infant—whom in mines, railroad yards, mills and shops it daily blows up, kills, mutilates and starves by slow degrees. The class that government represents is even now in the prisoner's dock at Wilkes-Barre, Pa., for the wholesale murder of workingmen, and by its strumpet press it is doctoring the evidence in such manner as to make the criminals innocent and the innocent criminals, thereby adding insult to injury.² Can so disreputable a government, with no honor of itself to guard, truly avenge the insult done to our flag?

No!

Whatever insult comes to us from abroad can, in the very nature of things, be avenged only when that class, together with all its war-cry-

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ing heelers of all degrees, has been overthrown, and its working class, its only honorable part, and that part the overwhelming majority, has attained power by capturing the government.

The redress of whatever insult falls upon us from abroad must, in the very nature of things, be postponed to that day when we can settle scores with the nation's domestic insulters, the now ruling capitalist class, for all the insults it is daily and brazenly heaping upon the people.

By all means, let us resent the insults to our nation, and labor to avenge her.

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Socialist Labor Party

¹The U.S. battleship *Maine* sank in Havana harbor Feb. 15, 1898, following an explosion, with the loss of 260 men.

²In September 1897, a sheriff's posse in Hazleton, Pa., opened fire on a group of unarmed, peacefully assembled miners, killing 19 on the spot and seriously wounding several others. Many of those killed and wounded were shot in the back. Despite this cold-blooded murder, the capitalist press praised Sheriff Martin who led the posse composed of mine owners, their families and their lackeys. Martin's powerful allies obstructed efforts to bring him and his accomplices to trial.