

# **Capitalism Means War!**

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*By Daniel De Leon*

## Introduction

Daniel De Leon did not pass through the experience of world war. His death on May 11, 1914, deprived him of the opportunity to apply to the first world war that relentless search for basic causes, to bring to bear that keen and penetrating analysis on social, political and economic phenomena, which seldom left much else to be done or said about them—in basic terms, that is. But an even greater tragedy was the fact that the world, and specifically the world of Socialism, the proletarian world, was denied the benefit, the guiding light, which would have been the fruit of his searching mind, of his extraordinary genius.

Yet, though De Leon did not know world war, he knew capitalism—knew it as few others have known it. He knew it as a cancerous social organism that must be removed if society is to be restored to health.

The editorials enclosed within the covers of this pamphlet comprise but a small part of De Leon's writings on war. A very interesting and instructing part. They have been compiled with the intention of presenting various important sidelights on capitalist war that no other Socialist has developed so well.

It is to be hoped that the reader will recognize that the present collection of editorials is of more than historical value. De Leon was of that rare company possessing prescience. Analyzing incidents of the Spanish-American War, of the Russo-Japanese War, of the days preceding World War I, De Leon analyzed *capitalism*. His conclusions remain as fresh as though they were written today, as valid as though he had lived to see the degeneration of capitalism now visible to thinking and social-minded men and women whose vision is not blurred by private and selfish material interests.

No better illustration of his prescience can be chosen than that presented in "A Word to the Proletariat of Spain." Written upon the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, it is truly prophetic of the *fact* that the lot of the American, Spanish and Cuban workers has not improved, that, on the contrary, the lot of these workers has been most seriously impaired by the development of capitalism, so much so that, regardless of the outcome of the

Spanish-American War and the wars that have followed, in Spain and Cuba the workers' lot approaches that of the animals that are not fattened before slaughter, so much so that in the United States the pretense is forgotten that the American workers' lot is much different from that of other workers.

Many other illustrations of De Leon's prescience could be chosen. Present-day pacifism, for instance, is shown for the futile thing it is in "An Open Letter." The point is well made that striking at *effects* leaves the cause untouched, a lesson that every hater of war must learn. Sadly, it must be related, pacifists have not learned the lesson. Indeed, many pacifists, some of whom pretended to be Socialists, have followed the logical path of their unwillingness to recognize the cause of war and the need of uprooting that cause. The list is a long one and includes many names of "liberals" whose opposition to World War I was consistent if not fundamental. That logical path, it is almost needless to say, is support of World War II, which, in so many cases, has been made to pay dividends of cash and to mend slightly soiled reputations. For an explanation of this phenomenon, we must again turn to De Leon. The explanation may be found in the editorial, "Materialist Conception of History," included in the pamphlet, *Abolition of Poverty*.

Capitalist hypocrisy is shown in masterly fashion in "Throwing Washington Overboard," a jettisoning that was accomplished once more during the process of rushing the "lend-lease" bill through Congress in the early part of 1941. The labor faker is photographed as he really is in "Caricatures." This 1898 editorial might have been written for the purpose of nailing William Green, John L. Lewis and their sub-lieutenants. The value of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's indignation over the sinking of munitions-laden American ships (bearing the Panamanian flag) and the torpedoing of American destroyers (while hunting U-boats) is shown in "The National Honor," written on the receipt of the news of the sinking of the *Maine*. The spur that drives the leaders of the various master classes at war is exposed to the reader by a reading of "Why War?"

The reader will, of course, find many more present-day applications of De Leon's analyses. A further discovery (to those who have never read the great American Socialist before) will be the incomparable weaving of words that achieves the seldom-accomplished task of creating literature while perfecting a science. The student might well study these editorials simply for their style,

for their pithiness, for their beauty as literature. Yet, the need for social understanding being so great, and time being at a premium, the reader is advised to use his full energies in studying their content, and in helping to spread the message contained therein as far and as wide as possible.

To the question: "What is the attitude of the Socialist Labor Party toward anti-militarism?" De Leon gave this terse reply:

"Organize the working class integrally-industrially Only then can the revolt against militarism result in a Waterloo to the [capitalist] class of sponge, instead of a massacre to the class of labor."

The Socialist Industrial Union is the answer, then, to the threat of war and militarism, as it is the answer to the continued and increasing menace of decadent capitalism itself. In the strong and direct language of De Leon:

"The integrally organized [Socialist] Industrial Union is the weapon that Social Evolution places within the grasp of the proletariat as the means of their emancipation."

That potent weapon alone, and not the destructive and negative weapons of militarism and war, will serve the workers in their struggle for social happiness, peace and freedom.

Capitalism means war!

Socialism alone insures peace!

JOHN TIMM.

November 15, 1941.

## Why War?

The war wave, which a fortnight ago was beating high, and then went somewhat down, has again risen almost to its former high water mark. Its persistence shows the strength of the interests back of it. What these interests are we have partly indicated in previous issues. There remains another "interest," at times a controlling one.

A foreign war ever has been the refuge of tyrants from the danger of turbulent elements at home. To simply massacre these, and thus get rid of them, is no easy task, however absolute the power of the tyrant. Local and isolated massacres may be indulged in and may not shock the public conscience; but they are inadequate. A foreign war meets all the requirements of the case. By means of a generous beating of the drum patriotic the very domestic element considered dangerous at home is lured into the army; war, once engaged in, the carnage among these is looked upon as an incident of war; and, whatever the issue of the war the tyrant that brought it on wins his real point: the turbulent elements that alarmed him are decimated; the more submissive ones, being less heated, did not go to the front, and remain an easier mass to get along with. Just such motives as these are back of the war wave we are now experiencing, and they it is that give it the persistence it has.

Our capitalist class looks with an alarm that it seeks to conceal, but does not succeed in, at the masses of the poor that its system breeds. These poor masses have been kept in such dense ignorance that they have no understanding of their actual condition. They feel pinched, hounded and oppressed. Why and how is a secret to them. They even believe that their hardships are natural, and that the social system that grinds them down is "eternal." And yet for all this they are restless. Their very ignorance renders them violent, when they do not think; and flighty, rushing after political chimeras, when they do think to the extent that it is given to them to think. In either case they are a source of danger. War is an outlet. The capitalist

class of America to-day, as a whole, favors the opportunity that will afford a wholesale blood-letting without their bearing the charge of inhumanity, on the contrary, giving them a chance to affect patriotic devotion.

Carnage is a spectre that dogs the heels of capitalism—that “best of all possible social systems.”

*The People*, Vol. VII, No. 51, March 20, 1898

## **Caricatures**

More than once, and each time illustrating the statement with a fact, have we pointed out that the pure and simple trade union is not a labor organization but a caricature of capitalism. An incident during these war days helps prove the fact.

All intelligent observers know that the present war, with sympathy for Cuba as the pretext, is, among other things, but a method adopted by the Capitalist Class to ease up the congested labor market, and help to remove the stroke of apoplexy that the Nation is threatened with. The Capitalist Class realizes that capitalism is the cause of the congestion: the privately owned machinery of production displaces labor and brings on the congestion that threatens collapse. To remove the cause of the disease and place in the hands of the nation the machinery of production, is no part of the capitalist programme. No Class, conscious of its own interests, will cut its own throat. To propose the removal of the cause of the present convulsions that threaten society, would, on the part of the Capitalist Class, be tantamount with decreeing its own death. Intelligently, as a Class, it upholds the conditions for its existence; and, not unintelligently, as a Class, it seeks to avoid the consequences of its own system, by letting its victims, the Working Class, bleed profusely. A war carries away members of the Working Class by the thousands; thus a war relieves the situation, at least for a time. A war is a not unintelligent Capitalist Class method to keep itself up.

Now what do we find many a pure and simple union doing? The congestion of the labor market through the displacement of labor by machinery that causes the Capitalist Class to tremble for its existence, has the effect of crowding down wages. The intelligent labor organization, New Trade Unionism, knows the reason thereof; and being class-

conscious, it seeks to remove the evil by removing the cause: to place the machinery of production in the people's hands so that, instead of human beings being displaced, toil, hours of work, be thrown out, and more time be gained for the enjoyment of life. Not so the pure and simple, or British form of organization. With the capitalists, it seeks to relieve the strain, and strains to uphold the cause; and—with the capitalists, it adopts a method that sacrifices its own class. Several of these pure and simple unions are now, not only shouting for war, but showing why they want war, to wit, to deplete the labor market; and, like the capitalists, they are offering inducements to their members to go to the war, which means, to betake themselves off, and leave their jobs to others, and thereby make the getting of a job and the keeping of it, when one is got, a little easier.

What the Capitalist Class seeks, the pure and simple union seeks also. But what the former seeks class-consciously, and, therefore, intelligently, the latter seeks class-unconsciously, and, therefore, as a caricature of the former.

*The People*, Vol. VIII, No. 5. May 1, 1898

## An Open Letter

To Wm. C. McDowell,  
President of the League of Peace,  
New York.

Dear Sir:

It is not that the *Daily People* thirsts for war, nor is it that the *Daily People* lacks appreciation of the desire for international peace—on the contrary, it is for the very reason that the *Daily People*, being an organ of the Socialist Labor Party, strains for peace on earth, that it must decline your request to co-operate with your efforts for an “Electoral College” of the “United Nations of the World,” with the International Court at The Hague as the “Judiciary Department,” the united national parliaments of the world as the “Legislative Department,” and an “Executive whose title shall be “The Peacemaker.”

May we be frank to you, without giving offence? Your plan is a close

parallel with the Greenback Movement. The Greenback Movement aspired to institute Socialist money before instituting Socialist Production—an absurdity. You aspire to institute Social Peace before instituting Economic Peace—an equal absurdity.

No more than any other country is our own, being under the Rule of Capital, free from entangling alliances, as you erroneously imagine the United States to be.

As much as any Government, ours is entangled in war-breeding alliances with others. The reason should be obvious.

Like all other Governments, our own is on a footing of social war with the bulk of its own population—the Working Class. War at home compels alliances abroad.

As the Working Class of this and other lands, in the measure that it grows conscious of its class interests, hence, of its lofty class mission, forthwith allies itself with the Working Class of all other lands, so also does the Capitalist Class of this and other lands, being up to the hilt conscious of its own class interests, hence, of its own worldly mission, enter into close alliance with the Ruling Class of other lands.

Beyond that point, war at home dictates a different policy to the two classes. While to the ruled, or Working Class, war at home dictates peace with its allies, the whole Working Class abroad, hence ultimate, international peace, war at home dictates to the ruling, or Capitalist Class, peace with only some of its allies abroad, and war with others. The reason for the different effect upon the two Classes of war at home lies in their social anatomy.

The social anatomy of the Working Class requires peace. The social anatomy of the Capitalist Class requires struggle. The law of existence of the Working Class is fraternity. The law of existence of the Capitalist Class is: “Each man’s hand against all men’s throats.” To expect international peace, or that any “clever contrivance” may insure international peace, so long as the capitalist system prevails, is to ignore the premises of Peace, as completely as Greenbackism ignored the premises of Socialist Money. It will not take long, if your mechanism for the world’s peace is ever launched, before your Executive, “The Peacemaker,” will look like the proverbial umpire at a baseball game.

Profoundly convinced of the Bible wisdom that warns against preaching



peace, peace, where there is no peace possible, and animated with the sanely noble and nobly sane Socialist aspiration to end the present regime of universal warfare, the organ of the Socialist Labor Party has no choice but to expose the visionariness of your project, and will continue to hew close to the lines that social science lays down—promote by agitation and education the organization of the working class for the overthrow of the Capitalist reign of human Exploitation, and its substitution with the Socialist reign of human Justice.

*Daily People*, Vol. XII, No. 184. Sunday, December 31, 1911

## **An Int'l Trust That Insures Int'l War**

Back from attendance at the Metallurgical Congress at Brussels where, in point of fact, the International Steel Trust was launched, J. A. Farrell, president of the United States Steel Corporation, and Charles M. Schwab, president of the Bethlehem Steel ditto, were emphatic in the assertion that the Congress had laid the foundation for international peace. The gentlemen did not adduce the fact of their returning with Italian armor contracts in their pockets as proof of their assertion. It was well they did not. There is a limit in doublefacedness.

Much is sure to be made of the circumstance that the International Steel Trust will furnish rails for railroads. The argument, already foreshadowed, will be to the effect that railroads promote intercourse; intercourse commerce; commerce peace. Hence the Trust, being an international producer of rails, is a promoter of peace. Nothing, of course, is said about “military roads,” such as a double-track one across Siberia, and a lot of many-track ones from Asia Minor eastward. But leaving aside this discrepancy, the Italian armor contracts tell a tale to which there is no discrepancy.

Armor plate promotes no intercourse; foments no commerce; encourages no peace. Armor plate checks intercourse; paralyzes commerce; knocks peace on the head. Armor plate is profitable. This Trust staple must find a market. Where the market is not ready at hand it must be “accelerated.” The long and

short of the story is that the newly created Trust, already a national instigator of war—how much so may be gathered from the Steel and Iron King Carnegie’s prominence at “Peace Conferences”—will henceforth be an international prodder of hostilities.

In all of which is realized an up-to-date instance of the contradictions that are inherent in the capitalist system. Commerce requires peace, yet it superinduces war “to open markets”; and now an International Trust, supposedly a snuffer-out of war is an earnest of International hostilities.

*Daily People*, Vol. XII, No. 63. Friday, September 1, 1911

## **The War-Cloud in Europe**

There may be a deal more than idle newspaper gossip in the European despatches that are latterly coming in regarding the imminence of war. The war flurries that we have become familiar with for the last thirty years could be easily discounted. There is that, however, in the present news items that rings a note of different scale.

Why should Napoleon III<sup>1</sup> have wanted war with Germany in 1870? Did he not have his hands full enough at home, or did his foreign wars, notably the raid into Mexico, intoxicate him with martial fumes? Fact is that silent causes have a mighty driving power. The drivers and the driven, alike, act unconsciously. It was such a power that drove Napoleon III on to his undoing. What it might have taken France many years to bring about—the downfall of the Empire and the restoration of an even-paced bourgeois republic—Napoleon accomplished in a few months. The war that he forced upon Germany overthrew him. It not only did that, but caused, as Castelar<sup>2</sup> incisively expressed it, a republic to be raised in France “by gunpowder of divine right,” and that right divine itself, “barely returned to Berlin, to see all around its throne the specter of resurgent democracy.”

The rumors of war that are now coming from Europe concerning the Pan-Slavic

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Bonaparte (1808-73), nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, ruled France as Napoleon III from 1852 until 1870.

<sup>2</sup> Emilio Castelar y Ripoll (1832-99) was president (1873-74) of Spain’s first republic when it was overthrown by a military coup that led to restoration of the Spanish monarchy.

movement that is setting Russia aflame, that is pushing for a war with Germany, and that emits high notes of “revolutionary changes at home,” threateningly beyond the power of the Government to curb—the details of these rumors strike a note from the scale that recalls the days of 1870, when Napoleon III precipitated war upon Germany.

It was as “Frenchman,” and the incarnation of “all that is French,” that Napoleon III issued his challenge to Germany;—as “Slav,” and the incarnation of “all that is Slav,” the Tsar’s regime is now rattling the sword under Germany’s nose.

It was an act of desperation on the part of Napoleon III to force the war; he, along with his regime, felt the soil at home too hot for him; they felt it long before outsiders guessed the fact, or than the fire-kindlers in the boulevards of Paris themselves realized how far they were succeeding; he had no choice; his status had become impossible at home; he had to dash forward and win or lose it all;—similarly circumstanced is the Tsar’s regime; the revolutionary spirit, supposedly strangled of a thousand gibbets, stalks over the land from the Urals to the Vistula; whether the fire-kindlers within Russia are aware of their success or not, the Pan-Slavic shout, encouraged by the Government, with war against Germany lying beyond, is an act of dynastic desperation, driven to stake all upon a throw of the dice.

If, indeed, the present rumors of war in Europe owe their existence to the silent forces at work which raised a republic in France “by powder of divine right,” and thereby spurred up “resurgent democracy” as a specter around the throne at Berlin, then may we expect to see the same German “gunpowder of divine right” cause the overthrow of Tsarism in Russia, and the deed, done in this generation, forty and odd years later than in 1870, in turn, give “resurgent democracy” around the imperial throne of the Hohenzollern a proportionally sharper jab, with consequences that are incalculable.

Not all wars are for markets. Some wars are volcanic explosions strongly dashed with the flavor of Revolution—of Revolution progressward.

*Daily People*, Vol. XIII, No. 287. Sunday, April 13, 1913

## **The National Honor**

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. 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. 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-crying 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.

*The People*, Vol. VII, No. 49, March 6, 1898

## **Throwing Washington Overboard**

The present war days are furnishing an opportunity to study the spirit of capitalism at close range. Much that we have said about the inner make-up of the capitalist system must have seemed "theoretic"; the historic facts upon which we based our arguments not having fallen within the personal observation of the masses, our conclusions were disregarded. Now, however, the facts are at hand; all can see, hear, feel, smell them.

Capitalism, threatened from behind by the Social Revolution, turns around to the uprising Proletariat, and with a sanctimonious scowl invokes the past as a sacred thing, to be worshipped and bowed down before. What?! Does the Socialist Movement want to break with the "time-honored" habits of the land? What?! Shall the principles of Americanism, consecrated by the Revolutionary Fathers, be done away with? What?! In horror the Pillars of Society throw up their arms, and the conviction leaps from their eyes that, as the Socialists have no reverence for the past, they must be wiped out.

Nevertheless, we have again and again maintained that there is nothing more infidel than Capitalism; all its gods, its idols, its principles are readily sacrificed whenever it can thereby turn its sacred things into money. It came into the world decapitating everything in sight and out of sight; uprooting churches, overturning altars, kicking down idols, and it ever is ready to do the same over again.

This war proves it.

Among the most venerated figures in the land, Washington holds very generally a leading place; to him our capitalist politicians, professors and parsons have ever turned;

his words have again and again been quoted; and among the bad things imputed to the bad Socialists more than once has an intention to “repudiate Washington” been mentioned.

And yet, what do we see now?

In Congress, in the press, in the pulpit, the Washingtonian warning against entangling alliances, conquests, etc., now frequently uttered against the plan to keep the Philippines, take Hawaii, etc., etc., is met with, what? With nothing short of a sneer at Washington, a declaration amounting to pronouncing him a “back number”, in short, by throwing him overboard.

Washington, these same recent devotees of the past now say, could not have foreseen the changed conditions in which we now live; Washington, they tell us, wrote and spoke and thought in other and for other times; Washington, in short, is not now of any account.

Of the many symptoms of the times, this capitalist breaking loose with their own gods is the most certain symptom of impending revolution. The capitalist ship is cutting loose from its moorings. Set adrift, what will become of that water-logged craft?

*The People*, Vol. VIII, No. 13. June 26, 1898

## **Bandyng ‘Traitor!’ in the Senate**

To judge by the yellow journals of the land, from the lightest saffron to the deepest amber, the United States is presenting a remarkable contrast with Spain: While, in Spain, the country is torn by dissensions, here, with us, the spectacle is that of a united lump of humanity, nearly eighty million strong, perfectly at one, and thrilled from center to circumference, and back again, with the mutual admiration and mutual confidence of its multitudinous units. Indeed, the spectacle were remarkable, if it were true; but it is not true; and natural it is that ’tis not true, seeing the intense antagonism of class and sub-class that reigns here, and that of necessity must reign in a country like ours where the capitalist system is rankest. The country does not present the spectacle of universal mutual admiration and confidence. Just the reverse; and the clash has broken out in Congress with such intensity that the yellow journals truly deserve credit for “skilfulness,”

having succeeded, as well as they have done, in hushing up the matter, and keeping up their fiction.

On Monday, the 25th of April, the following scene took place in the United States Senate, as may be gathered from the *Congressional Record* published two days later:

Senator Butler, of North Carolina, had the floor; he and those who held with him flashed defiant looks at an opposite set, with Senator Hawley, of Connecticut, as its center. What divided the two? "Patriotism," as each understood it. The former set, the one clustered around the Senator who had the floor, had earned its spurs by selling out the country to the Silver Syndicate, and by shooting down the silver mine workers when they demanded better conditions; the latter set had earned its spurs by selling out the country to the Armor-Plate Trust, among others, and bayonetting the workers into submission. The Silver Syndicate brigade had not succeeded in being bought up by the Armor-Plate Trust; the Armor-Plate Trust had not succeeded in being bought up by the Silver Syndicate. As a matter of course, the patriotism of each was at dagger's point with that of the other. Their mutual enmity burns hot—all the more as each is "on the make" in the war. With this background the performance that took place will be best understood.

Senator Butler, of the Silver Syndicate brigade, was speaking: he went extensively into the armor-plate swindle, and dilated very much in full upon the blow-holes that were sold to the Government by the Armor-Plate Trust; so as not to be charged with indefiniteness, he went into details, specifying the ships in detail and the parts of each that were armored with blow-holes. He was proceeding at this rate, when sudden interruptions came from the Armor-Plate Trust brigade, with Senator Hawley as its center. The interruptions gained in frequency and violence, until Senator Hawley screeched out:

I must protest against this. If privately the Senator of South Carolina should write a communication to the Spanish Government disclosing the defects as to certain armor plates, and pointing them out, he would be (pointing his finger threateningly at Senator Butler) **GUILTY OF AIDING AND ABETTING TREASON!**



This shot, fired from the Armor-Plate Trust camp of patriotism, was answered by this other from the Silver Syndicate camp of patriotism, with Senator Butler as the gunner:

If anyone is GUILTY OF TREASON, it is those, INCLUDING THE SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT, who have stood as a partisan by the Armor-Plate Trust, and helped them to perpetrate these frauds on the Government, AND GET THEIR EXORBITANT PAY FOR DOING SO, thus ENDANGERING OUR SHIPS, THE LIVES OF OUR SAILORS, AND POSSIBLY TO HUMILIATE OUR FLAG.

“Treason!” bandied in the highest branch of Congress by traitors to their country, each of whom in his own way has done his level best to degrade our people in the interest of his own sub-class of capitalism, and is now pulling his way to make all he can out of the war, throws not only the proper light on the capitalist “patriot,” but throws into relief the utter impossibility of oneness in the capitalist camp—even in time of national danger.

*The People*, Vol. VIII, No. 7. May 15, 1898

## **Admiral Togo**

The greatest living historic figure is the guest from Japan—Admiral Togo.<sup>3</sup>

There are those who think that the message of Togo to the world consists in the “matchless naval strategy displayed in the Sea of Japan, whereby a country, until then comparatively obscure, was raised abreast of the foremost.”

This mistaken opinion, held by admirers of destructive exploits, may be cause for puling sentimentalists to fly to the opposite extreme with sweeping contempt for “the butcher of Tsushima Strait.”

It is true that the act which drew the world’s eye upon Togo was an act

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<sup>3</sup> Admiral Heihachiro Togo (1846-1934) led the Japanese naval forces that defeated Russian fleets at Port Arthur and Tsushima during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905.



delivered by the “mailed fist,” accordingly, an act of force, squanderous of human life. But such are the limitations of most of mankind, that it will learn only through suffering: suffering only will attune its senses to receptiveness for any Message. If most, or barely one-half, of humankind consisted of Marxes, Jules Guesdes, Pablo Iglesiases, or Hervés, the Socialist or Industrial Republic would now be an established fact, the horrors of Capitalism a thing of the past. The mind’s ear of mankind can be reached only by and through the wails of men.

Through such a medium Togo delivered his Message—the refutation of the conceit-engendered and progress-retarding theory of “Backward Races.”

Although, like all warfare, a perversion of the conquests of science, naval warfare makes by far the heavier drafts upon the intelligence, the moral and physical fibre of the combatant. From the Admiral down to the trainer of the marine gun, the naval warrior ranks higher than the correspondent land soldier. To conquer, with modern instruments of nautical warfare, by the strategy that Togo did, bespeaks a high order of man, and not merely of the man who chieftained the conquest and of those associated with him, but of the nation that produced him and them. Togo’s fleet, differently from that of any other nation, surely different from ours, was officered and manned exclusively by Japanese. It was the achievement of the Japanese race.

Referring, enviously referring in the House of Lords, to the victory of Japan over Russia, topnotched by Togo, Lord Curzon<sup>4</sup> said of that event that it “was a thunderclap that reverberated through the whispering galleries of Asia.” Laden with meaning though Lord Curzon’s words were, they fell far short of the fact in the premises. The victory of Japan, insured by Togo’s mental and physical prowess, was a Message thundered to “Superior Races,” loud enough to shatter the superstition concerning “Backward Races.” As such it was a message that rolled up one Era, and marked another; it was a Message of Humankind; a contributor to the International; one of the cornerstones upon which the structure is to be reared from the cupola of which is to be unfurled the Red Flag of Human Brotherhood, the emblem of the Socialist movement.

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<sup>4</sup> George Nathaniel Curzon (1859-1925), a British Conservative Party politician who entered parliament in 1886 and was viceroy of India from 1895 to 1905, was a member of the House of Lords and chancellor of Oxford University when this editorial was written in 1911.

It matters not that Togo “builded better than he knew.” The trumpets, through which Social Evolution trumpets its Messages, are no “penny-whistles,” they are instruments of choicest metal forged on the anvils of Time.

*Daily People*, Vol. XII, No. 41. Thursday, August 10, 1911

## Two Shots

Now that the Dewey days, with their gala and enthusiasm, are over, public mind may have sobered down enough to consider seriously what it is that really happened at Manila on May 1, '98.

In the history of our country, two epoch-marking shots were fired. One was fired at Lexington, last century; the other was fired in Manila Bay, last year. Both resounded around the world. At both the world was startled: Both announced the entry on the stage of history of a new element, a new nation, that all others and the world's history had to reckon with.

At Lexington, a hundred years ago, the rattle of musketry proclaimed that colonial America severed the navel-string that connected it with feudalism, and entered upon the era of capitalism; in Manila Bay, last year, the cannon from the *Olympia* proclaimed that plutocratic America severed the navel-string that connected it with capitalist conservatism.

At Lexington the rattle of musketry marked time for the start of the race between individual efforts in production; the cannon from the *Olympia* marked time that the race was closed, when no individual effort in production could any longer avail.

At Lexington, the rattle of musketry heralded the advent upon the stage of history of a nation of self-supporting citizens; the cannon from the *Olympia* proclaimed that era to be over.

At Lexington, the rattle of musketry ushered in national conservatism and exclusivism; the cannon from the *Olympia* tore exclusivism to shreds and thundered midst the internationally warring nations the fact of the arrival of a new and mighty force on the arena.

At Lexington, the rattle of musketry marked out the field for internal

struggle; the cannon from the *Olympia* broke through those boundaries and extended them to the confines of the world.

In short, the musketry at Lexington announced the birth of a social-economic revolution; the cannon from the *Olympia* proclaimed that revolution complete, thereby heralding the approach of the next—the SOCIAL REVOLUTION of our own day.

This is the meaning of the event that occurred in Manila Bay, on May 1, '98; and as such, as a milestone the points with certainty to the imminence of the culminating Revolution of all Revolutions—the Social Revolution, that will give birth to the Socialist Republic—it may well be hailed with joy.

*The People*, Vol. IX, No. 29. Sunday, October 15, 1899

## **A Word to the Proletariat of Spain**

Fellow Workingmen—The respective Committees, called Governments, of the ruling class in our two countries have ordered us to fly at each other's throats. The decree is issued.

The attitude in which you and we are placed towards each other exemplifies the deep inhumanity, the monstrous absurdity of the social system in which we live.

What quarrel have you with us or we with you? None. Say that the soil of Cuba be the issue. Has its ownership by the class that rules you in the slightest benefited you? Has the wealth, the increasing wealth, drawn from Cuba's soil flown into your hands in any perceptible amount? Is the "Pearl of the Antilles" a gem that glistens on your brow? The question almost seems cruel. Not only did the wealth drawn from Cuba never fall to you, but constantly, at some periods less, at others more so, you have been forced to mingle the blood of your own veins with the sweat of the brow of Cuba's working class, to secure to your common exploiters the enjoyment of Cuba's fertility. The "Pearl of the Antilles" has ever been but an heirloom of your tyrants and to you and additional scourge. So much as to you.

And as to us, we know full well that, whether Cuba pass over to "us" or is

made “free,” our fate or the fate of Cuba’s toilers will not be improved. Same cause, same effect. The social system under which we both live remains the same. The issue, accordingly, is not one that concerns us. Whom does it concern?

Apart from the general and conflicting capitalist interests in both our countries, the immediate and representative interests concerned are those of our two Governments. Our Republican Government seeks by a war to perpetuate itself; the Government of your Queen-Regent seeks to present its own downfall, which would surely follow as a result of its abandoning Cuba. Back of each of these are grouped kindred interests.

Theory, based upon a long line of facts, has long established the principle that peace and civilization can never be so long as nations are overlorded by the brigand class that now holds the reins of power. Together with this follows the principle that the working class of all nations has but one enemy—the capitalist class of all nations, its own nation’s at the head of the list.

The war which has broken out between our two nations furnishes the freshest illustration of that. Blinded by lack of class-consciousness, many of our own class, on both sides of the waters, may allow themselves to be absorbed and carried away by their exploiters. Nevertheless the hope is justified that this may be one of the last experiences that they are to make; and that, rising to the full elevation of their class, they may soon take that stand that alone will insure the peace of the world.

In the meantime, across the smoke of belching cannons, and the floods of human gore that this war will cause to flow, we, the class-conscious proletariat of America, reach you the hand of brotherhood.

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## **Capitalism Means War!**

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