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FOURTH EDITORIAL

Retribution.

By DANIEL DE LEON

The careful observer of passing events can not but feel awe-inspired by the spectacle presented by Spain, and perceive the retribution that overtakes the guilty.

The pickle the Spanish ruling class, the Spanish property-holding class, is in is a pickle of its own salting.

Long would our own capitalist class have had to look for a pretext for war with somebody, and thus had a chance to give full swing to its highwaysman schemes had not the "Cuban Insurrection" been there ready at hand. And what is it, who is it that kept up the myth of an insurrection in Cuba? Why the Spanish officials themselves, who, both in Cuba and Spain, found in an "insurrection" all the opportunities imaginable to plunder the Cuban and the Spanish people; and, consequently, helped to keep up the lie of "insurrection."

Here at home, the yellow papers and others found their immediate and prospective account in the reports of "great battles fought in Cuba." These battles were fought only in the columns of these papers. They helped to sell the paper, and the stockholders who were aiming for war and had started the thing were thus furnished with "information" that they could furnish their Congressmen with, and cause advance war speeches to be made.

Now, then, at any time the Spanish ruling class might have put an end to the farce. But that did not suit them. They had their own game to play. They needed a pretext for taxation, for troops, for appropriations. All of these give beautiful opportunities for fraud. So then, their men in Cuba, to them what the papers were here to the American capitalists who wanted war, had to report encounters, skirmishes, captures, etc., etc. These official reports gave a color to the lying newspaper reports of our yellow journals, and the newspaper reports of our yellow journals gave a color to the lying military reports from Cuba.

For a time both sets of brigands—the American and the Spanish capitalist class—were happy. But the time came when they had to part company. That time arrived, when, basing his claims upon the reports of Spain herself, McKinley declared that those “atrocities must cease, and that he would put an end to them.”

War resulted, with Spain in as uncomfortable a position as can well be imagined, and her capitalist class exposed at every moment to be called to a harsh reckoning by her infuriated people.

The Spanish ruling class is now tasting the punishment for its misdeeds; the American ruling class, now used by Providence as a scourge, will receive its chastisement next.

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