

# The People.

VOL. VII, NO. 50

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 1898

PRICE 3 CENTS

EDITORIAL

## That “Leaven.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he attempt of the felon class that now rules the country to profit by the death of our ill-starred marines in the harbor of Havana by means of a war that shall cost many more workingmen’s lives, has incidentally served a good purpose. It has served the purpose of so throwing our “illustrious patriots,” together with their henchmen, off their guard that, in their headlong rush for war and martial pretences, they are here and there allowing quite valuable insight into the standard of the Americanism that their “patriotism” aspires at. One of these insights is afforded from official source.

The question of the nativity and quality of our marines having been raised, a high navy official expresses the opinion that the native American sailor has great alertness and adaptability; but that on the other hand the duller Briton is apt to have been trained in the school of deference to superiors and unreasoning obedience, which on the sea prove highly valuable. “Where the Yankee sailor,” proceeds our “patriot” navy official, “knows all his rights, and knowing, dares maintain, the foreign-born sailor, ten chances to one, has never set his more sluggish mind to studying the laws of his own status; the same difference is to be observed in an even greater degree between Americans and sailors of any other northern nationality.”

From these premises, our “patriot” navy official draws a conclusion that is worth marking. His conclusion is not that the soldier of a Republic, that is one in fact besides the name, can not too much “know his rights, and, knowing, dare maintain”; that an armed force of civilization can not too zealously steer away from and exclude units of a dull, obsequious and non-self-respecting character. No, our “patriot’s” conclusion is the reverse. He says:

“While the native recruit, therefore, is always welcomed on the receiving ship, the foreign-born citizen constitutes A VALUABLE LEAVEN to distribute throughout the lump, and all experienced naval officers recognize this fact.”

We shall not here stop to probe the opinion that imputes to men, who, finding themselves tyrannized abroad, pull up stakes and flee to our shores, less love of freedom and character than to men who, born here, patiently submit to the indignities that the capitalist class and the Government inflicts upon native and foreign citizens alike. We shall let that pass.

Not so, however, with the opinion that, instead of our native sailors (they "knowing their rights, and, knowing dare maintain"), being used as a "valuable leaven" to raise the standard of our foreign-born citizens in the navy, the reverse should be the case, and our foreign-born citizens in the navy (they being "dull," "deferential" and of "unreasoning obedience") should be used as and constitute a "valuable leaven" to—do what? To lower the higher standard of the natives down to the level of the "deferential" and "unreasoningly obedient" foreign citizen!

Who needed this admission to know what sort of civic virtue our "patriots" have in store for and aspire at in behalf of our peoples? None of any intelligence. Nevertheless, the admission is valuable.

Our ruling class' "Americanism" means a "dull mass, deferential and of unreasoning obedience"; and its "patriotism" is to leaven our people DOWN to that level.

Wipe it out!

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

Uploaded November 2003