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## The Use of Blow-Holes.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he silence of Mr. Andrew Carnegie in these feverish days of plentiful and warlike patriotic talk must have surprised not a few. Whenever there has been the slightest occasion for an “interview”, a “magazine article”, or a “speech” on some “burning question” of the day, Mr. Carnegie has regularly been found frontmost in the front ranks; even when there was no occasion of itself, he would furnish one: an invitation from some college, society, or some such concern would be brought about, and Mr. Carnegie would then orate. The contrast between his usual eagerness to speak and his present reticence is surely striking. Whence does it proceed, what is it ascribable to?

It proceeds from and is ascribable to BLOW-HOLES.

The moment the war scare started, Mr. Carnegie felt sick in the stomach. It will be remembered that Mr. Carnegie's concern got the contract to supply our navy with armor plate, and it will not have been forgotten that the same was found full of blow-holes and other blemishes that, rather than repel, invited the transit of hostile missiles. With patriotic capitalist devotion, he swindled the Government, patriotically making large profits by the operation. Our blow-hole navy was a beautiful sight to behold; it was redoubtable in appearance; swaggerishness-inspiring; and the theme of bravado speeches without end. But as a weapon of defence for the nation, let alone of offence, it was not worth much. How little it was good for in that capacity none knows so well as the patriot bourgeois who got the contract to build it; and how thoroughly convinced they are of its unfitness for anything but show and bluster may be judged from Mr. Carnegie's tomb-like silence in these days of feverish patriotism.

War is at best a horrible necessity. The only thing to justify it would be the noblest of aims.

If a war were pending to blow into eternity that social system that consigns a

nation's marines to the most dangerous part of a ship so that explosions kill them by the hundreds and leave hardly touched the swaggering officers, as happened with the *Maine*, one might rest content;

If a war were pending to bring freedom, not the mock freedom of the capitalist régime, to an oppressed people, one might feel inspired;

But to fan the flames of war for the purpose of killing off the "superfluous" members of our working class, and to rivet more firmly upon our own people the yoke of capitalist slavery, while carrying such slavery into Cuba,—and to do all that under the pretence of humanity and liberty, as is the case just now, is an act of refined barbarism.

That the flame of war is not fed by the additional voice of Mr. Carnegie, quite a strong bellows at such seasons and for such purposes, one may be devoutly thankful for; and this is due to the blow-holes he sold to our navy. He now fears that the true inwardness of his patriotism may be exposed by the rude cannon balls of the Spaniards.

Truly, even the worst things have their uses—blow-holes included.

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

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