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EDITORIAL

THOUGHTS THAT MUST BE ASSAILING OOM PAUL.

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AWAY from the torrid fields and the turmoil of the clash of arms in South Africa, and enjoying the peace and quiet of the forests and canals of the City of The Hague in Holland, it should not be strange if Oom Paul occasionally indulged in contemplation. Indeed, The Hague, with the associations that cluster around it, should suggest to the exiled Bible-quoting, economic Centaur, half landlord and half capitalist, thoughts calculated to remodel the mental basis on which he has lived and fought and hoped.

Three hundred years ago and more, the identical stock, that he and his brave nation are of, stood the brunt of, and fought to a finish the greatest, longest, most colossal war ever fought before or since, a war that has furnished the subject for epic poems that rival Homer's, and for histories that read like epics. It was the war of the Dutch against Spain, of a pigmy in point of numbers, and of area of land and of disposable wealth against a giant, the mightiest nation of its day. The books, that Oom Paul certainly must have been brought up on, tell in graphic details of the deeds of heroism, abnegation and fortitude of his people in that contest, and attributed all their trials to the "ferocity of the Papist nation," that sought to subjugate them. His mind, to a great extent the minds of his countrymen in Holland, are molded to the thought that the conflict with Spain was a religious conflict, and that only Papists could display the blood-thirstiness displayed by the Spaniard under Alva in a march through the country where his track was lighted by conflagration and his footprints marked in blood.

Three hundred and odd years have rolled by. And what is the panorama that now unfolds itself to his eyes? That same Dutch stock, transplanted to another continent, is again engaged with the old-time valor, abnegation and fortitude in another matchless contest. Again it is defending its own soil against foreign aggression, again the aggressor is from far away and is thought by many the very

mightiest of all nations, and again pitiless ferocity marks the aggressor's conduct. The blood-thirsty invader this time, however, is a Protestant nation; no Papist Alva, but Protestant Kitchener this time brandishes the torch of incendiarism and wields the weapons of rapine.

When people, seemingly different, do the same thing, the difference can only be superficial; the motive of their conduct must be one they both have in common.

The drama that is now on the stage in South Africa explains the drama on the stage of Western Europe three hundred and odd years ago. Churchianity is a cloak, theology a pretence. Spain fighting Holland, England now fighting the Transvaal, the Jews exterminating the inhabitants in the valley of the Jordan, the disciples of Mohammed overrunning Northern Africa,—all these are identical manifestations: The chase for property to keep up life, the chase of property to ward off the danger of want. They are all manifestations of the beast in man, of a beast that once may have had its justification, but that to-day is only artificially kept alive by the capitalist system of society.

Do these thoughts assail Oom Paul in his retreat in The Hague, and bring home to him the fact that the sword and torch which are now devastating his own beloved Transvaal are wielded by a force which he is himself contributing to strengthen by his landlord-capitalist instincts, disguised in the cant phrases of Biblical citations? If these thoughts do not occur to Paul Kruger, whom of the brigand class can they be expected to occur to?

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