

EDITORIAL

## A PENDING DISGRACE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**J**AN POUREN, a Lett who was active in the revolution that recently broke out in the Baltic provinces against the Czar, now lies in the Tombs, a prisoner under requisition from the Russian Government. War is not a picnic towards which the several parties contribute goodies. There was war in Russia—with all that that implies. The side on which Pouden fought went under, and Pouden fled to America.

It was legitimate, from the premises, of the Czar's régime, for it to massacre its prisoners of war; and it did so, and is still doing so. Barbarism implies barbaric methods. For such conduct this country, neither its people nor its Government, is responsible. The Czar's régime, however, seeks to render this country its accomplice. Not satisfied with massacring its prisoners of war, caught on its own soil, the Czar's régime now seeks the extradition of Pouden. To deliver Pouden is to imbrue the Nation's hand in the blood of the Czar's foes who escaped his soldiery. For such an act this country would be responsible. It would be a stain on our national escutcheon.



JAN POUREN

The methods adopted by the Czar's régime in seeking the extradition of Pouden only aggravate the offense that is demanded of us. The papers are not sworn to; worst of all, the Russian protocols are themselves naively, if not brazenly, quoted. The protocols set forth the fact of a state of war having existed at the time of the alleged crimes. We are not afforded even the shelter of a pretext that we know not from what premises the Czar's régime proceeds. The delivery of Pouden is demanded plainly on the ground of his past bellicose activities. If the United States delivers Pouden, the country brands itself a base coward for not having demanded

from Great Britain the delivery of Capt. Semes of the *Alabama* when the *Kearsarge* sunk the Confederate privateer, and its captain swam for asylum to a British bottom.

There are certain things that civilization should be spared the necessity of arguing. Among these is the sanctity of asylum for fleeing militants. That away, and all the horrors of the universal empire of Old Rome are upon the world-humanity.

There are things to which it should require no more than to call the popular attention, in order to arouse the popular conscience, and cause the officials to act responsively. The facts in the Pouren case are of this nature. Whether we be Republicans or Socialists, Democrats or Prohibitionists—whatever differences of opinion divide us, and however radical the differences, these are differences on the plane of civilized man. We all stand upon certain conquests of civilization that we all respect. Among these is the principle that the massacre of the vanquished is barbarism; hence the demand for their extradition is a breath, not of civilization, but of barbarism.

The pending disgrace of Pouren's threatened extradition must be averted. America does not slaughter her prisoners of war. Neither can she tolerate her being made accessory to such a misdeed.

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

Uploaded March 2010

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)