

EDITORIAL

INGRATITUDE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Republican platform fills full its mouth with self-praise on the score of “the generous provision” it has made “for those who have fought the country’s battles, and for the widows and orphans of those who have fallen.”

The statement is false. The Republican party has reduced the soldiers (it is them it means) who survived the nation’s battles, and the widows and orphans of those who fell, to the condition of fawning beggars whom a bone is thrown to. But even if, indeed, the Republican party had made “generous provisions” for these soldiers, widows and orphans, its conduct would still be marked with crass ingratitude for the men “who have fought the country’s battles, and for the widows and orphans of whose who have fallen.”

Valuable as the services are of the soldiers in the field, and great as their reward should be, they are not the only men “who have fought the country’s battles,” nor are the “widows and orphans of those who have fallen” only the widows and orphans of soldiers killed in battle.

A vastly larger host of the country’s population than all the armies the nation ever had in the field, put together, has been and is this day “fighting the country’s battles”; a vaster number of widows and orphans than all the widows and orphans put together of the soldiers that fell, is the yearly yield of orphans and widows rendered such by their fathers’ and husbands’ falling.

That vaster army is the WORKING CLASS.

And what is more, the battles fought by this army are of vastly greater importance than the battles fought by the armies of soldiers. The battles of this more important army feed, clothe, house, shoe the nation. Its battles are unremitting. And such are the conditions under which they are forced to deliver

battle, in factory, mine and railroads, that not the bloodiest battle ever fought upon the field of battle ever killed as many soldiers as are killed and injured and maimed for life during a single year on the nation's industrial battle-field.

How has the Republican party treated these veterans and their widows and orphans? It has let loose the military and the militia upon them. It has pelted them with injunctions. It has clubbed them with its policemen's clubs. It has enacted legislation that held the word of promise to their ears and broke it to their hearts. It has superintended the plunder of their products and has shielded the plunderers. It has, true enough, with the powerful help of the Democratic party in State and Nation, so managed affairs that, over night, millions of them may find themselves upon the street, jobless, starving!

Ingratitude, base ingratitude to "those who fought the country's battles, and to the widows and orphans of those who fell," is the distinctive characteristic of both the dominant capitalist parties—the Republican party being a full length ahead of its Democratic compeer.

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

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