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EDITORIAL

## MOST SHOCKING OF IT ALL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE attempted assassination of President McKinley has come as a severe shock upon the public. It speaks well for the moral sense of man that, despite the increasing frequency of such mischievous deeds, the human mind fails to become habituated to the thing. As France, and Germany, and Italy, and England, even Japan, together with all the other foreign nations in the sisterhood of civilized States, are each stirred to their profoundest depths every time a son of theirs steep his hand in human blood, blinded to the insane length of committing political murder, so is America. Her moral sense also revolts when such of her sons as Booth, the assassin of Lincoln; Guiteau, the assassin of Garfield; Norcross, the would-be dynamiter of Russell Sage; Prendergast, the assassin of Mayor Carter Harrison; together with the assassin or assassins of Gov. Goebel of Kentucky, and also many others, too numerous to mention, resort to the felony of political crime. And it goes without saying that the Socialist—the man up in moral and intellectual indignation at that insidious system of cannibalism called “Capitalism”—, shares the common sentiment, and feels the shock strongest, every time such attempts are perpetrated in defiance of the moral and the intellectual progress of society. Such deeds as the recent Buffalo attempted assassination are shocks, severe and wide-felt. But severe and wide-felt as such shocks are, most shocking of all in connection with this one, is the conduct of the *New York Sun*.

Among the *Sun's* despatches on the Buffalo tragedy, contained in its issue of the 7th instant, is the following, here reproduced in full:

**“GOOD!” CRIED A SOCIALIST.**

**“MAN NEARLY MOBBED IN INDIANAPOLIS—RESCUED BY POLICE.**

“INDIANAPOLIS, Sept. 6.—The attempted assassination of President McKinley created intense excitement in this city, and while it was at its height there came near being mob violence on one of the principal streets.

The news was being told from mouth to mouth when some one called out in a loud voice:

“President McKinley is shot.’

“From a nearby crowd someone answered with a strong foreign accent:

“Good.’

“In an instant the excitement was increased to a fever heat and the man supposed to have uttered the commendatory words was surrounded and roughly handled, several persons striking him in the face and punching him in the ribs with their fists.

“Hang him! Hang him! Hang the scoundrel!’ came a number of voices in chorus, while the man was protesting that it was not he that had used the objectionable word, and all the time the crowd was becoming more excited and more demonstrative. At that instant a policeman rushed into the crowd, followed quickly by several others, and the man was led away. He was severely reprimanded by the police, but there were no charges against him, and as a case could not be made he was advised to get off the street as quickly as possible, which he did by darting down an alley and disappearing.

“It was afterward said that the man is a Socialist and that he uttered the words although he denied them when he saw what a furore it had created. No one in the crowd knew him and his name could not learned.”

The average newspaper reader is a headline reader. Now, then, the headlines of this despatch are a felonious calumny upon Socialism and Socialists, manufactured in the *Sun’s* office. The headlines are not borne out by the report. The fact appears all the clearer from its closing paragraph, evidently also doctored in the *Sun’s* office, and which adds the offence of insulting its readers by thinking them dull enough not to detect the fraud that crouches in the statement:

“It was afterward said that the man is a Socialist,”

evidently interpolated by the *Sun’s* felon of character, who forgot to strike off the closing line:

“No one in the crowd knew him and his name could not learned;”

and thus left himself impaled as a clumsy forger of defamatory “news.”

Who steals my purse, steals trash; ’tis something, nothing;  
'Twas mine, ’tis his, and has been slave to thousands;  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him

And makes me poor, indeed.<sup>1</sup>

How base the “Cause” that needs such poisoned weapons as the assassination of character! How base the “Cause” that enlists such base servitors as the *Sun*, has shown itself, to wield such weapons in its behalf!

Not the shot that felled President McKinley, shocking as that was, but the shot meant to fell the noblest movement of all ages, by assassinating the good name of its apostles, is the most shocking incident connected with the shocking Buffalo tragedy.

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

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<sup>1</sup> [William Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act III, Scene 3.]