

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 6, NO. 200.

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1906.

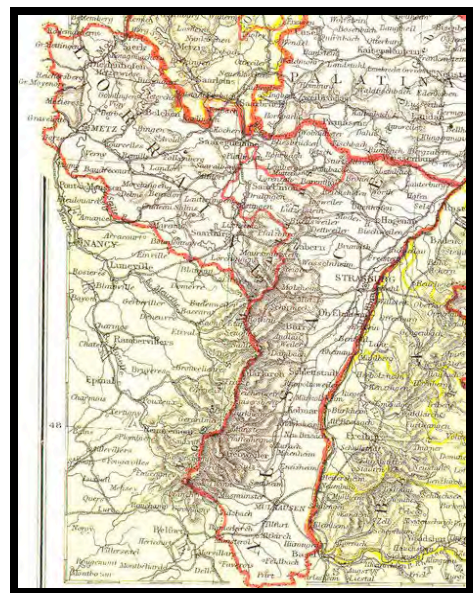
ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## ELSASS—THE PHILIPPINES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE action of Thiers, in ceding Elsass-Lorraine to Germany in the treaty of peace between France and Germany in 1871, was used by the Socialists as one of many instances illustrative of the fact that the capitalist's "country" is his pocket, and the capitalist's "patriotism" is but love for his own private purse, at the expense, if necessary, of the much gloried-about "fatherland." In Elsass-Lorraine, Elsass especially, large and thriving weaving establishments had sprung up. These competed heavily with the weaving establishments of the north of France in the region of Lille. Both being inside of France no tariff legislation could come to the aid of the one against the other. The Lille concerns cut the throats of the Elsass concerns, the Elsass concerns did the same for the Lille concerns. Thiers was one of the leading stockholders in Lille. The competition of the Elsass mills with those of Lille reduced the dividends of what may



ELSASS (ALSACE) AND LORRAINE (1871)

be termed the Thiers syndicate. The Franco-Prussian war broke out. When peace was to be signed, Thiers, the then virtual head of France and leading figure in the peace negotiations, readily acceded to the German demand for the territory of Elsass. The scene in the French parliament, when Thiers announced "the humiliation of 'la France'" through the cession of territory (Elsass-Lorraine) was described by the knaves in the secret and the believing dupes as "pathetic." The "venerable Thiers" broke down "sobbing and tears running down his cheeks." The Socialists laughed. They pronounced the tears "crocodile tears"; they explained

Thiers' "breaking down" as an evidence of overpowering joy at the thought that thenceforth the woven goods of Elsass could no longer compete with the manufactures of Lille: Elsass, thenceforth a foreign country, would have to pay duties at the frontier. The Socialist explanation of the comedy was denounced as an evidence of "Socialist baseness," as an evidence of "the Socialist's incapacity to appreciate the lofty sentiments of patriotism," etc., etc.—Stick a pin there.

About twenty-five years later, soon after the beginning of the Spanish-American war, the Republican jingo protectionists rose to the lofty heights of our "Manifest Destiny." The Philippine Islands had been placed into our hands "by decree of Providence." Ours was the duty to protect the Filipinos against the vultures of the other nations, that, but for our ownership of the islands, would swoop down upon and devour those people. We were to civilize them. Give them their independence? Never! That would be "to betray the trust God had imposed upon us," it would be to "trail the country's name and Old Glory in the mire." Let traitors think of such a thing—patriots never! Such was the language held then; such in even higher pitch was the language subsequently held, when we took possession and started in to civilize the Filipino. Suddenly a crack is heard in the tune. The Payne Philippine tariff bill being introduced in Congress, the jingos split. About 100 Republicans secede from their party caucus. The Payne tariff bill proposes an immediate reduction of the tariff in favor of Philippine products, and absolute free trade with the islands after April 11, 1909. This is more than the patriotism of several interests, the beet sugar and tobacco interests at their head, could stand. They fought the bill, and, finding they could not kill it, resort to the method that the patriot Thiers blazoned the way for. In order to protect the mills of Lille from the competition of the Elsass mills, Thiers gladly turned Elsass into a foreign country. Now, in order to protect the beet sugar, tobacco and other interests of the United States, the one-time Republican jingos—the men who considered our ownership of the Philippine Islands a sacred trust, and who declared the perpetuity of the union of the islands with the United States to be inseparable from the honor of Old Glory—these men now threaten to join the Democrats and give immediate independence to the islands! Rather dismember our "Manifest Destiny" if dismemberment is necessary to clap a heavy tariff on Philippine goods; rather rip

up Old Glory if the rent is required to keep up high prices.

The capitalist has no country but his pocket, no God but the Dollar, no principle but how to make money. The “loftiness” of his aspirations consists in false pretence. He will “expand” the country, or dismember it, just according as expansion or dismemberment may pay.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded February 2009

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