

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 5, NO. 208.

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1905.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

EAST AND WEST—ACTION AND REACTION.

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IF the Star of Freedom westward takes its course, eastward is the orbit of the Star of Despotism. To our Colorados, our Coeur d'Alenes, and our Hazletons and so many other mining districts, where the American miner, crying for redress, is pitilessly butchered down; to our Buffalos, our Albanys and our Brooklyns, where the American railroader, demanding that at least the laws be enforced and the capitalist be stopped from violating the ten-hour Act, find their cities placed under martial law and their homes outraged; to our Chicagos and Pullmans, where the American wealth-producer, laying down work to obtain human conditions, finds himself enfiladed between Federal musketry and judicial "Gatling guns on paper"; to our Bostons, where the American freight-handler, weary of extortion and seeking surcease of sorrows, is clubbed by the Police;—in short, to these instances of Ruling Class absolutism in the Western, there have just followed in the Eastern hemisphere the St. Petersburg, the Putiloff, the Lodz echoes of scenes that we are here familiar with, the mowing down of Labor imploring help from its oppressor.

Let none deny the correctness of the parallel. No doubt, behind the Labor or strike demonstrations in Russia there is a political tidal-wave gathering. But is there none in America, gathering behind our own Labor and strike demonstrations? The blind may not see it; the Utopian visionaries may not perceive it; even the Capitalist Usurper may in most instances fail to realize the fact. As to the blind, they are hopeless; as to the Utopian visionaries, their cranium is too full of vacancy; and as to most of the Capitalist Usurpers, the disastrous results to them of their inability to appreciate the significance of passing events will be the penalty they will have to pay for the carefully cultivated ignorance in which they cause their

press to keep them. Infinitely vaster and more resistless is the political tidal wave that is gathering head in this country behind every American strike or Labor manifestation against Czar Capital and Capitalist Bureaucracy. The Labor Movement is essentially political: it implies political overturn. In Russia, where the feudal system still prevails, the strike can be the forerunner only of a bourgeois political tidal-wave; with us in America, who have our bourgeois tidal-wave behind us, the strike is the symptom of that incomparably more formidable political tidal-wave, that culminating tidal-waves in the serial of political tidal-waves that the human race has experienced—THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION, the emancipation of the wage-slave, Socialism, in short. The parallel is accurate. As here, so in Russia, the prayers of the oppressed to the oppressor are answered with grape shot and canister. Here, the agency to administer the dose, and thereby to impart vigor, precision and directness to the tidal-wave are the Adj-Generals Bell; in Russia the agency are the Grand-Dukes Vladimir.

The East echoes back the despotism of the West; undoubtedly the West, whither Freedom travels, will not be slow in echoing with proportionally increased loudness the cry of Freedom now going up in the East.

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

Uploaded October 2007

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