

EDITORIAL

A VICTORIOUS DEFEAT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“THE Labor-Socialist motion condemning the King’s visit to Russia was defeated—225 votes to 59,” so runs the triumphant closing paragraph of the London despatch that reports the debate in the House of Commons on King Edward’s contemplated visit to Russia.

As there are victories which, if repeated, mean annihilation, there are defeats that are triumphs. The defeat in this instance was one of them.

The objections to the King’s visit were expressly put upon the ground that a state visit by the King to the Czar was in the nature of fraternizing “with the hangman of Liberty in Russia”; of condoning the “horrors, tortures and persecutions” that are dyeing Russia red; and that such contact would be “a disgrace to Great Britain who could not avoid contamination if she mixed in evil company.”

What matters it whether a majority of nearly 4 to 1 took a different view? What matters it whether only a bare fifth of the House stood for these sentiments? The fact that the sentiments were uttered—that is the triumphant fact. No majorities can wipe out that, or down it.

There are minorities and minorities. The minority of Error and the minority of Truth. The former sees its day and vanishes; the latter rises, never to fall away from sight. Its very appearance is a rebuke to the “triumphant majority” of the moment. Once it has appeared it never disappears. It may be majorized down again and again, but it will bob up serenely to plague the majority, until the day arrives when the majority takes to its heels and leaves the quondam minority master of the field.

Such Truths as that the Imperial Regime of Russia is the “hangman of Liberty” and that association with it is “contamination”, are Truths that will not down. Once

uttered they can only spread.

Sir Edward Grey is reported to have replied with “dignity” to the “violent assault.” Nothing is so “dignified” as a corpse. The thunders hurled from the House of Commons at the Regime of Murder enthroned in St. Petersburg had for their actual effect the turning into a corpse the previous confidence with which the Ministry of Great Britain enjoyed its life. It was not “dignity” that spoke through Sir Edwards, it was the iciness of conscious death from which all heat and fire had fled.

Some more such “defeats” for the Cause of Human Progress, and bloodstained “triumph” will wrap itself into its winding clothes and free the earth of its pollution.

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

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