

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 2, NO. 11.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JULY 11, 1901.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

IMPROVING THE ARMY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE strike of the machinists and the threatened strike of the iron workers—not to speak of the minor conflicts which have lately taken place in various parts of this country—have evidently been watched with considerable interest by the national executive of the Capitalist Will. Not that any fear of serious outbreaks was entertained at Washington, for no one is better aware of the present submissiveness of the working class than the President and his cabinet, and no one is more thoroughly informed concerning the ability of the present repressive powers, national, state, and municipal, to quell any riot which those powers themselves, in accordance with the time-honored rules of capitalistic policy, may initiate or provoke. Lastly, it is as well understood at the White House and at the War Department as in the office of the DAILY PEOPLE, that, supposing the possibility of a more or less widespread disturbance, suddenly caused by intolerable abuse, the working class, under its present corrupt and cowardly leaders, would prove incapable of so much even as an insurrection.

Nevertheless, it is announced that THE ARMY is to be IMPROVED; not for active duty in the Philippines or in China, but for contemplated service at home. Secretary Root will next week inspect several forts at a short distance from populous centers. “The gradual extermination of the Indians,” we are blandly told, “has simplified conditions, until the service is now resolved into two divisions—coast defence and the massing of troops at central railway points, where they may be most readily used in case of riotous strikes.”

A million dollars—or, for that matter, as many million dollars as may be necessary—will immediately be spent in improving the forts; that is, in enlarging their capacity as military barracks, so that the troops which will be withdrawn from the Indian border may find in them ample accommodations; and when all is prepared, not only these forts will be employed as practice schools for the graduates of West Point, but “a test will be made of the proposition to give the various State

military organizations drills under officers and with enlisted men of the regular army.”

But it may be asked: “If the national government does not actually apprehend any uprising; if it is fully satisfied that the various repressive powers at the command of the capitalist class are ample for any possible emergency, why should it thus, gratuitously as it were, irritate and challenge the wage-working masses? Their votes, after all, have placed the present Republican administration in power and they might in blind revenge substitute for it a Democratic one at the next election. At any rate the Democrats, ever so ready to commit the same crime against the working class, ever so bloodstained by their murders of Chicago, Buffalo, Brooklyn, and a hundred other places, will not fail to befool the people, with denunciations of this particular act of the Republican party.

This is true, so far as it goes. But it has well been said by Mark Hanna, in a recent speech, that the real issue was soon to be no longer between Republicans and Democrats, but between Capitalism and Socialism. The Republican party is not blind. Precisely because it is well aware of the impotency of the working people under their present leaders; precisely because it is full of contempt for the Organized Scabbery, it realizes that a profound change must soon take place in the spirit and methods of the proletarian masses. Well informed as it is, it knows of the rapid growth of that class-consciousness which the S.L.P. is awakening everywhere, and it perceives quite plainly that the day must come when the robber class which it represents, beaten at the polls, cannot maintain its power but by resorting to a murderous coup d'état.

The S.L.P. views without alarm these military preparations. No weapon of any kind, no army of any size can beat back the Social Revolution when in the natural course of events its day will come.

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

Uploaded April 2006