

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 5, NO. 229.

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1905.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE PERFIDY OF REVOLUTIONARY CLASSES.

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VOLUMES are told in the despatches from Russia, which, starting with manifestoes of “concessions” by the Czar, wind up with reports of “spreading strikes”, “riots” and fusillades. Boiled down to their essence, the despatches amount to this: “The Government continues stiff-necked; the Revolution spreads”. Translated into the language of the philosophy of history the events now transpiring in Russia illustrate the providential perfidy of revolutionary classes.

A bullet needs the resistance of the atmosphere to impart sufficient steadiness to its course. Without atmospheric resistance the bullet would wobble about aimlessly. A class, whose economic interests designate it as the bearer of whatever revolution is next in the order of succession, is in the nature of a bullet. It must overthrow, and it must encounter resistance, or it will wobble in its course, and wholly miss its aim. Forces, wholly outside of the leaden bullet’s control, furnish the missile with the resistance that it requires to reach its goal; it is otherwise with the human bullet of a revolutionary class; it must itself inspire the resistance requisite for its own success. The requisite resistance must come from the class that is the next candidate for overthrow. In the inspiring of this class with the sentiments and habits of thought that will generate resistance lies the providential perfidy that all truly revolutionary classes are everywhere instinct with.

The plaint is often heard that the Working Class of America is dumb and numb. It is mercilessly fleeced, while, like no other Working Class anywhere else, it yields fabulous wealth to the idle Capitalist Class; it rears palaces and is huddled up in barracks where, both moral and physical hygiene are undermined; it produces food in abundance, yet its life is pinched by perpetual starvation; it weaves and prepares

exquisite raiment in ampleness, yet itself is under-clad; it carpets and festoons the homes of its plunderers, while its own family is rent to pieces in the search for work, its children deprived of schooling and pleasures, its wives unsexed. With all this, the policeman's club, spiked and otherwise, the militia's and the military's rifle diet, and the judiciary's Gatling guns on paper are the answers it receives when it prays for better conditions. And its reply to the cruel answer:—It is meekness and submission. Pointing at this fact, and failing to see below the surface of things, there are those who are heard to despair of the American Working Class. They pronounce it dumb and numb, hopeless. Not so. The hitherto “dumb” and “numb” Czared and Cossacked Russian people is illustrating the point. The temporary numbness and dumbness to outrage on the part of a class, designated by its economic interests as the bearer of the revolution next in order, is a necessary contribution to revolutionary conditions. Revolutionary conditions are not ripe until the respective ruling class and candidate for overthrow has acquired so ingrain a contempt for the class below that it considers the same not only unfit for aught but slavery, but also incapable of aught but submission. Not until then is that ruling class sufficiently seasoned to fulfill the last remaining mission left to it to fulfill—the offering of the requisite resistance without which, the hour having sounded for the ferment of revolution to stir the revolutionary mass, the Revolution would fizzle down, and enterprises of great pith and moment their currents turn awry and lose the name of action.

The perfidy of a revolutionary class, in inspiring contempt for itself, and thereby confirming its despots in their habits of despotism, is an unconscious act that, proceeding from the revolutionary class, turns its oppressor himself into a midwife of the Revolution. At periodically recurring epochs in the history of the human race, the singular fact assumes control. Then the shell of “dumbness” and “numbness” breaks: the despot tumbles; the Revolution is accomplished.

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Uploaded November 2007

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