

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 5, NO. 213.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 1905.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

THE “TALK OF WILD MEN.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

RECENT events in Russia have furnished occasion for three parallels between Czar government and Capitalist government—the parallel between the Trades Union and the Zemstvos Movements; that between the language held by capitalists and the language held by Russian bureaucrats; finally, the parallel between our own Adj. Gens. Bell and the Russian Grand-Dukes Vladimir. The *New York Times* furnishes occasion for a fourth.

In its issue of the 25th instant, the *Times* discovers “with surprise and gratification” the “marked difference” between the Russian Socialists and the American Socialists. As to the proclamation of the former, with its demand for the summoning of a constitutional assembly of elected representatives of the people, the inviolability of person and domicile, the removal of race privileges, freedom of conscience, speech, press, meetings, strikes and political associations, etc.—as to all that and similar achievements of bourgeois revolutions, says the *Times*, no fault can be found; in fact, the *Times* is of the opinion that such a proclamation “contains nothing that a sensible and right-thinking American could not approve, sanction and sign”; but the *Times* indignantly declares that our, the American, apostles of the Socialist faith “talk like wild men.” These are the exact words now being applied by the Russian bureaucracy to the Russian workingmen and people generally, now in open revolt against Czarism—“they talk like wild men!” or, in the Russian vernacular, as it appears in the Czar’s proclamation, issued through Gen. Trepoff, “they demand impossibilities”!

None better than the Socialist—because none better understands the fact—is aware of the vast superiority of bourgeois political and civic institutions over feudal ones. It takes a Socialist to appreciate the superiority. None other than a Socialist can. All others—speaking, of course, of the Working Class—would absolutely

contemn bourgeois institutions. They find themselves fleeced as much as under feudalism; they find class prerogatives abolished in form and enforced in practice, as ruthlessly as ever; they find liberty preached and despotism practiced to the point of their being grape-shot-and-canistered, bayoneted and clubbed to death. Realizing his plight, the non-Socialist workingman cannot appreciate capitalism, and he despairs; he despairs just because he is a non-Socialist. Unenlightened by Socialism, he does not know that, despite all its atrocities, often undistinguishable from those of feudalism, capitalism is a vast improvement—a vast improvement in that IT affords the opportunity, that feudalism never could: the opportunity for final economic emancipation, without which all other freedom is visionary; in short IT affords the opportunity for the rearing of the Socialist Republic. That such language, that the agitation, education and organization towards such an end, must fall upon the ears of the American capitalist class like “the talk of wild men”—as much like “wild men’s talk” as the language of the Socialist Working Class of backward Russia is now falling upon the ears of the Russian feudal over-lords—is natural. But not because it is natural are these beneficiaries of class rule and candidates for social extinction less ridiculous.

The savage ancestors of the human race needed but their nails to grub food with, and satisfy their aspirations; their barbarian successors began to use tools{,} bows and arrows, and to require skins of animals for clothing; their still more advanced descendants needed pottery; then fixed fields for agriculture, then fortified towns; to-day, we, the latest scions in the long line of descent, have needs unknown to these ancestors, aspirations of which they had no inkling. These needs and aspirations are as vital to our existence as the infinitely more trifling wants of our predecessors were to them. “You take my life, when you do take the means whereby I live” holds as good of {for?} the trifles, once needed to live and gratify life with, as of the vastly more extensive requirements for modern civilized life. Every usurping class, from the remotest times down to the present, that withheld or withholds from the laborer that whereby he lived or lives, has successively had to face the music of the “wild men’s talk.” It is no pleasant music to the ears of the successive hierarchies of Usurpation. None can blame them for the sound’s grating upon their ears. It has regularly been the knell of their reign.

The march of the human race towards an every higher grade of life-fruitation is ever started to, and enlivened with the cadence of "the talk of wild men."

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

Uploaded October 2007

slpns@slp.org