

The People.

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SECOND EDITORIAL

SHADOWS CAST AHEAD.

By DANIEL DE LEON

The news of the Movement that has of late been coming from Europe is far from reassuring for the European proletariat: the shadows it casts ahead of it are those of fresh Commune disasters.

On top of the cumulative evidences of so strong an injection of bourgeois radicalism in the Social Democracy of Germany, that the Party's recent Congress in Hanover failed to take the only stand called for by the insult hurled at it by Bernstein (one of its own members), who pronounced it a "bourgeois reform" party, cloaked in "revolutionary declamation," and summoned it to "dare appear what it really is"; on top of the decision of this year's Spanish Socialist Labor Party's Congress in Madrid to abandon the programme adopted in Barcelona, and henceforth fuse with the republican and federalist bourgeois reform parties;—on top of this all comes the demonstration, held in Paris on the occasion of the inauguration of Dalou's gigantic monument on the Place de la Nation, representing the triumph of the Republic.¹ It is estimated that not less than two hundred thousand persons composed the revolutionary division of the manifestation; but that gigantic mass—a power, if intellectually united,—gave the picture of impotence: it was rent in fragments by the diametrically opposed mottoes that it carried, and the cries that went up from its ranks.

Whatever expectations may be entertained here of a peaceful solution of the Social Question, no such expectation is warranted in Europe. The nature of the Governments there and traditional conditions place that out of all question. The gathering social storm, gathering in dark clouds above the horizon of all capitalistic nations, may here, possibly, be peacefully dissipated, thanks to the still prevailing democratic-republican forms and political habits. But, at any rate, should the worst

¹ [Dalou, Aimé-Jules (1838–1902). For a detailed biography and summary of this artist's work, go to the website of the National Gallery of Art, <http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/pbio?58100>]

come to the worst here, the stiff and steady lightning-rod of the Socialist Labor Party will be potent to capture the lightning, and safely pocket the bolt. The tidings of the Movement in Europe denote the absence there of any such means of escape from disaster.

Democratic phantasia and bourgeois navel-strings is the worst combination to cope with the approaching Social Shock; the former heats, the other irritates the brains of Rage. Divergence, instead of CONvergence of thought is the result. What otherwise would be an Army becomes a Mob—with Catastrophe for its share.

THE pregnant feature of the Commune was that it became headless the moment Thiers caught its only head.

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