

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 6, NO. 264.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1906.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

CLUMSY RUSSIA.

By DANIEL DE LEON

REPORTS are pouring in from Russia that the much heralded popular elections are that only in name. Hardly anybody, not pleasing to the powers that be, is allowed to participate. Some are imprisoned, others are beaten away from the polls, and yet others are killed outright. In not a few instances whole batches of would-be suffragists are deported. The peasants are browbeaten on the fields; the workingmen are terrorized in the towns; the radicals are persecuted. In short the hustings are surrounded by a vast cordon of sabres, clubs and knouts. Now, all this is a clumsy way of going about it. Russia should take a tip from the American capitalist class. The present conduct of Russia is a rough way of "counting out" the votes; the American capitalist class has a refined way of doing the job.

Here in America the capitalist class does not go through the trouble and expense of getting up an armed force to surround the hustings. On the contrary; it is particularly anxious for "peace and order." Saloons are closed, crowds are dispersed. We may expect any one of these days to see carpets, soft and beautiful, spread from the voters' residences and centering at the hustings. Who knows but that even sweet-scented flowers may one of these days be strewn over these carpets, and the same lined with bands of music! In America the capitalist class reserves for AFTER the polls are closed, and the voters have been indulged, the scampish tricks that the less refined Russian ruling class practices BEFORE the votes are cast. The difference in time works a vast difference in appearance. The same thing, which, if done BEFORE the vote is cast, requires vast physical effort, large numbers, and not a little noise, can be accomplished with no physical effort whatsoever, small numbers and the silence of the grave, if done AFTER the vote is cast. Both the Russian and the American ruling class's plan is to disfranchise the voter. Both

reach their goal. But the Russian, going about it before the vote is cast, does it in a way that horrifies the “law and order” Tammany-Republican capitalists; whereas these, going about it after the vote is cast, charm both themselves and their Russian cousins.

The Russian class of the plunderer will have to learn manners from its American cousin. The election manners of the American capitalist consist in counting the votes out: the election manners of the Russian bear consist in shooting, knouting, sabring {sic}, deporting the votes out. Is it not infinitely wiser, and cheaper withal, to accomplish the same end quietly and neatly, rather than bloodily and boisterously? Well has it been said that silence is a badge of the civilized, boisterousness a badge of the uncivilized man.

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Uploaded February 2009

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