

EDITORIAL

THE WAR-CLOUD IN EUROPE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THERE may be a deal more than idle newspaper gossip in the European despatches that are latterly coming in regarding the imminence of war. The war flurries that we have become familiar with for the last thirty years could be easily discounted. There is that, however, in the present news items that rings a note of different scale.

Why should Napoleon III. have wanted war with Germany in 1870? Did he not have his hands full enough at home, or did his foreign wars, notably the raid into Mexico, intoxicate him with martial fumes? Fact is that silent causes have a mighty driving power. The drivers and the driven, alike, act unconsciously. It was such a power that drove Napoleon III. on to his undoing. What it might have taken France many years to bring about—the downfall of the Empire and the restoration of an even-paced bourgeois republic—Napoleon accomplished in a few months. The war that he forced upon Germany overthrew him. It not only did that, but caused, as Castelar incisively expressed it, a republic to be raised in France “by gunpowder of divine right,” and that right divine itself, “barely returned to Berlin, to see all around its throne the specter of resurgent democracy.”

The rumors of war that are now coming from Europe concerning the Pan-Slavic movement that is setting Russia aflame, that is pushing for a war with Germany, and that emits high notes of “revolutionary changes at home,” threateningly beyond the power of the Government to curb—the details of these rumors strike a note from the scale that recalls the days of 1870, when Napoleon III. precipitated war upon Germany.

It was as “Frenchman,” and the incarnation of “all that is French,” that Napoleon III. issued his challenge to Germany;—as “Slav,” and the incarnation of “all

that is Slay,” the Tzar’s regime is now rattling the sword under Germany's nose.

It was an act of desperation on the part of Napoleon III. to force the war; he, along with his regime, felt the soil at home too hot for him; they felt it long before outsiders guessed the fact, or than the fire-kindlers in the boulevards of Paris themselves realized how far they were succeeding; he had no choice; his status had become impossible at home; he had to dash forward and win or lose it all;—similarly circumstanced is the Tzar’s regime; the revolutionary spirit, supposedly strangled on a thousand gibbets, stalks over the land from the Ural{s} to the Vistula; whether the fire-kindlers within Russia are aware of their success or not, the Pan-Slavic shout, encouraged by the Government, with war against Germany lying beyond, is an act of dynastic desperation, driven to stake all upon a throw of the dice.

If, indeed, the present rumors of war in Europe owe their existence to the silent forces at work which raised a republic in France, “by powder of divine right,” and thereby spurred up “resurgent democracy” as a specter around the throne at Berlin, then may we expect to see the same German “gunpowder of divine right” cause the overthrow of Tzarism in Russia, and the deed, done in this generation, forty and odd years later than in 1870, in turn, give “resurgent democracy” around the imperial throne of the Hohenzollern a proportionally sharper jab, with consequences that are incalculable.

Not all wars are for markets. Some wars are volcanic explosions strongly dashed with the flavor of Revolution—Revolution progressward.

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