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EDITORIAL

ORGANIZE!

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IN a country like Russia, where the political court of first, last and only resort is the field of physical encounter, no fault can be found, theoretically, with the conduct of the Social Democratic Labor party, for taking the open{ing,} as it did on the 10th instant, and calling upon their fellow workingmen to rise, to join them, and to proclaim the overthrow of Czarism, the stopping of a murderous foreign war in which they are “shedding their own blood for their torturers,” and to end a social system that condemns them to “draw out day by day a laborious existence under conditions that are worse than those of convicts.” No fault can be found, theoretically, with such an act. The cause is justifiable; it merits action, firm, decisive and emphatic. Nor are the means to be condemned: they are the only available ones in Russia.

But the most justifiable of means for the best of causes may be wise or unwise, according as it is opportune or inopportune, well considered or ill considered. Not the correctness of a cause alone justifies the flinging of it in {into?} the arena at a time when its defeat is certain. The chances of success demand weighing. These depend upon at least an approximate knowledge both of the means that the Usurper is equipped with, and of the means that Revolution can rely on. Numbers do not necessarily determine opportuneness. The inspiration of a holy cause itself is legion. Nevertheless, legion though the inspiration of a holy cause may render a relatively small number, there never may be actual disparity; and when to actual disparity in numbers is added a disparity in weapons, then the Revolutionary attempt is ill considered. As such it is harmful.

According to the dispatches, the forces that the Social Democratic Labor party gathered in the Nevski Prospecc at the rendezvous near the Kazan Cathedral were hardly enough to storm an unprotected inn; their only weapons were cudgels; and

their lack of information was so crass that when from behind the Kazan Cathedral a squadron of gendarmerie wheeled like a flash into the Nevski Prospec, and like another flash the doors of adjoining courtyards swung back and opened a passage for several battalions of mounted police with drawn sabres, “the main wedge of the demonstrators could stand fast only a moment or two.” The demonstration was sabred and trampled off the street.

Rage, born of long suffering, may deprive men of their senses. On its face, the demonstration of the Social Democratic Labor party of Russia is an instance in point. It is to be hoped that appearances deceive. The “heresy hunting” Russian censorship can, it is known, perform wonders in the way of suppressing news. For all we know the Nevski Prospec affair is but an incident in a vast series of more effective “demonstrations,” an insignificant skirmish in a battle of real weight. It does not look like it. And if it should not turn out to be otherwise, serious revolutionists everywhere have been furnished with one more warning not to play into the hands of the Usurper. To control their rage; to keep cool;—to ORGANIZE.

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