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EDITORIAL

AN OMINOUS CRY.

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THE despatches from Europe announce that the cry of “Long live Poland!” has gone up in Russian Poland. This is an ominous cry. It is more directly ominous to western Europe than the cry in Russia now going up from workingmen’s throats: “Down with the Czar!”

Poland once was an independent nation. She was powerful. Her armies once entered Moscow, not like Napoleon’s, as a preliminary to his route, but as the culmination of a victorious movement against the Moscovite; and, in the opposite direction, it was her arms that drove back the Turk when he was knocking at the gates of Vienna. Nor were her people less distinguished in intellectual powers and achievements. Unfortunately for Poland, her existence aroused the jealousy of her three powerful neighbors—Russia, Prussia and Austria; while her geographic location both engendered their cupidity and aided their schemes to gratify it. Poland was assaulted by the three, and, after three successive dismemberments, was finally partitioned among them. Although thus torn into three, the Polish spirit was not subdued. How implacable has remained the hatred of the Pole for the three butchers of her national existence, every nation knows where Polish exiles have taken refuge. Kuroki, the brilliant Japanese general and son of one of these exiles, who opened the Japanese campaign in Manchuria, resistlessly rolling the Russian hosts before him, attests to the inextinguishable fires that burn in the breasts of the Poles. Hitherto, the smoldering spark of vengeance and of the aspiration for the re-acquirement of her former independence has flared up in flame in Poland only as a reflection of revolutionary movements in western Europe, and the flame was speedily extinguished. The cry: “Long live Poland”, now going up in Russian Poland, is more ominous. Instead of its being a pale reflex of stirrings in western Europe, it may be the spark that will light a conflagration from Warsaw westward to Paris

and Madrid and Rome.

The cry “Long live Poland!” uttered in Russian Poland, is bound to find an echo outside of Russia such as the cry “Down with the Czar!” need not awaken. It will re-echo fervently in the Austrian, above all, it will re-echo in the Prussian or German Empire segments of the Polish nationality. However desirous the German Emperor, instinctively dreadful of revolution, may be to afford to his Moscovite cousin, now hiding in Tsarsco-Celo, the aid of the military forces of Germany in quelling his rebellious subjects, considerations both of general propriety and of safety at home will curb his wishes. With the cry of “Long live Poland!” re-echoed as it probably will be in his own Polish domains, all restraining influences will be snapped. The safety of his own domain will force the Emperor’s hand. The Empire’s troops will be mobilized and—ORDERED into Prussian Poland.

It is upon this word “ordered” that the ominousness of the cry “Long live Poland!” hinges. The ball of destiny will thereby be thrown into the hands of the German Social Democracy. The German Social Democracy has long held revolutionary language; it has voiced the aspirations of subjugated nationalities; it has looked forward with gladsome expectation to the revolution in Russia and, with the Socialists everywhere, is now thrilled with joy at the uprising of the Russian people; moreover, it has long claimed a tangible percentage of the rank and file of the Empire’s military forces: that percentage must have greatly increased with the increase of the party’s strength to 3,500,000 voters.—What will the German Social Democracy do?

What it will do will depend upon what it can do; and what it can, or can not do, will uncover the qualities of its propagandistic methods. If its propagandistic methods are as inefficient as Robert Michels, one of its own members, sets forth in a recent number of the Paris *Mouvement Socialiste*, then it will passively submit, and the spectacle will then be seen of the large percentage—as indicated by the 3,500,000 votes—of Social Democrats in the Imperial German Army firing, upon the command of Imperial officers, perchance of the detested Emperor himself, upon the Polish patriots, and, the color having been furnished for intervention, crossing the frontier and helping to slaughter the Russian revolution itself. On the other hand, if the propagandistic methods of the German Social Democracy have been efficient,

then there will be the very opposite of passive submission to such “orders”. Then the cry “Long live Poland!” will re-echo over Germany with an adaptation to German conditions. Nor will the wave stop there. Crossing the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, who knows but the British Channel also, the cry will re-appear, adapted and re-adapted to the local conditions that it encounters. Waves of such nature, once set in motion, act and react upon one another. A European conflagration is inevitable. Who will foretell what Sphinx will be born from such ashes!

It is no wonder that the governing powers of Europe are alarmed, and even our own begin to twitch uneasily. The cry: “Long live Poland!” is big with possibilities.

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