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EDITORIAL

THE WAR IN THE FAR EAST.

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TWO nations, both despotic monarchies,—Russia and Japan—are at war. The tragedy, now on the world's stage, for what else is it than a tragedy, offers at its start an interesting tableau on "Development"; its end may offer some other tableaux on the "Hidden Ways of Providence."

As to the tableau on "Development," the rupture between Russia and Japan, does not so much reflect upon "despotic power" as it should put to shame the praise-singers of the "civilized" nations. These praise-singers love to boast of the enlightenment that the western nations enjoy. In the war between Russia and Japan they may see what that enlightenment amounts to. Russia and Japan are supposedly backward, despotic, without representative government and all that; yet what do we see? We see the two leap forward, put on the garb of the present, and dropping the olden garb of dynastic pretexts for the extension of their territory, appear in up-to-date rig, assuming the mercantile pretext for the same end. The cause of the war between Russia and Japan—the acquisition of territory for markets—brings home how absolutely nil is the much vaunted governmental progress of "civilized" nations; it brings home the fact that the essence has remained and the form only changed. Mutually illumining each other, the fact is perceived that under "free" capitalist governments and under "despotic" feudal governments the wars that break out between them have remained essentially the same—DYNASTIC. When the government is "despotic," the interests of the ruling family and its retainers are the thing pursued by a war, and it is pursued with the blood of the workers; when the government is "representative," the interests pursued are those of the ruling, the small capitalist class and its parasites, and again it is pursued with the blood of the masses. In either case, the war is DYNASTIC, that is, in the interest of the ruling "family" exclusively, the means

being more territory, originally, to tax; while now the means are more territory, to trade with, that is, to cheat,—in either case to exploit for the ruling “family.”

As to the prospective tableaux, the possibilities are many. On the whole, it may be said that, as to Russia, the war will ultimately redound to its peoples’ favor, whether it wins or loses;—in either case, altho’ more so if it loses, the war will contribute in waking up the masses from their torpor. Once awakened, there is no telling wither people will go, except that they will go towards light and not towards darkness. As to Japan, the war, whether successful or not, is not likely to have upon its masses any appreciable influence for good. As yet the Japanese masses are too full of admiration for their capitalist-feudal rulers, who “brought them into the sisterhood of nations.” Victory will intoxicate them with still more admiration for that class, while defeat will not yet be able to deaden the admiration.

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

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