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EDITORIAL

## THE “BLACK HUNDREDS.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HERE are two absolutely opposing sets of people who hold that Revolutions recruit their forces from the “submerged,” the slum portion of the population. One of these sets consists of the upholders of “Law and Order,” that is to say, of “things as they are,” which means Usurpation. This set—arrogant in the enjoyment of the affluence which Usurpation has placed in their hands, and proud in the superiority of manners and culture that their privileged position bestows upon them—look upon Revolutions as “vulgar manifestations of the vulgar.” To this set the slums represent the revolutionary forces; to this set “slum” and “revolution” are virtually identical. The other set is a division of the revolutionary forces themselves. This set, while justly returning with contempt the contempt of the usurpers for revolutions and revolutionists, hold to the theory that misery is the hot-bed of revolution. To this set the slums have a sacred odor. To them the slum is the ideal preparation for revolutions, and the source of revolutions’ inspiration and numbers.

The “Black Hundreds” in Russia dispose of the arrogant pretensions of the former set, and of the serious error of the latter.

The “Black Hundreds” is an organization of assassins and incendiaries, set on foot by the supporters of the Czar, and recruited from the lowest elements of the population. The Russian Revolution, pre-eminently the offspring of Russian intelligence, born as it was in the Universities and propagated by an intensely serious and widely read portion of the people, is grappling with the Russian elite of government and long standing for wealth. In this struggle the Revolution, while grappling with the open enemy, finds itself assailed in the dark by the midnight assassin, picked up in the slums.

This phenomenon is nothing peculiar. Class-want furnishes the material basis

for revolutions. The slum is the ash-barrel of society. It lacks class instinct. As a whole, the slum is a threat to Revolution. The denizens of the slum, demoralized by practice, may side with the revolution at its inception, and might stay with it, but for the depraved habits that render it readily accessible to a bribe of the cheapest price. The moment it is approached by Usurpation it enlists readily. It knows instinctively that its vilest passions can be gratified by Reaction in a way that Revolution offers no chance.

The slum can and will aid Revolution only when the victory of Revolution is so obviously assured that the depraved elements of society realize that Usurpation can no longer keep it immune from punishment. Until then the slum can only betray the Revolution and stab it in the back.

Not the least of the lessons taught to the international Movement by the upheaval now going on in Russia is the appearance of the "Black Hundreds" as allies of ermine-clad Czarism.

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