

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 12, NO. 226.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1912.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

## STRAWS OR BEAMS?

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**N editorial article entitled “Increase, Not Decrease, Michigan Army Posts,” reproduced in another column from the Detroit, Mich., *Free Press* of the 30th of last month, recalls the editorial article entitled “Cumulative Symptoms” in which the *Daily People* of April 26, 1911,<sup>1</sup> commenting upon certain military revelations, said:

The San Antonio, Tex., *Light* should overhaul the opinion which it expressed just a week before, when—commenting upon the fact that the War Department at Washington recently made inquiries of contractors regarding their ability “to supply military equipment for one million men”—the paper observed: “Possible intervention in Mexico would call for the employment of not over 75,000 men at the outside. The political horizon shows no prospect of trouble with any nation whose skin is white.”

In other words, the *Light* explained the huge military preparations, that are unquestionably going on, as certain indications of war with the Japanese nation.

Why look so far away?

There is a nation closer at hand that the powers that be are getting ready to fight in the hope of putting it down—and keeping it henceforth down under the iron heel of military despotism.

That Nation is not all white of skin, nor all black, nor all yellow. That Nation is cosmopolitan. It is the Working Class of the land.

The memorial, issued at the last January semi-annual session by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party to the International Socialist Bureau at Brussels, contained the following passage:

“The general political and economic situation in the country is such that, as every careful observer can see, the American Working Class and the entire Socialist and Labor Movement of the country must be prepared within the nearest future to go through a critical experience in their existence. The plutocratic class and its agents in governmental office are scenting the dan-

<sup>1</sup> [“Cumulating Symptoms,” excerpted here with minor alterations.—*Editor.*]

ger of the approaching social upheaval, which cast its shadow most strikingly in the recent campaign, dislodging the arch-plutocratic Republicans, returning to power the Democrats and generally increasing the vote of opposition parties—middle class radical ‘insurgent Republicans,’ the S.P. (some 40 per cent.), the S.L.P., (some 140 percent.). Signs are rapidly multiplying which clearly indicate that the ruling class of plutocrats proper is preparing to use within the near future its economic and financial power in order to precipitate a financial and industrial crisis—to starve the working masses—to provoke riots as Bismarck tried to so often with the German working class—to drown them in their own blood—incidentally to crush, or at least cripple and throw back, the Socialist and labor movement. The necessary military power for such program is already now being prepared and gotten in shape.”

This estimate of the situation and forecast were made barely two months before the 20,000 troops were mobilizing for “military manœuvres,” barely three months before the War Department made inquiries about supplying “military equipment for one million men.”

The Nation that the land’s plutocracy is foe to, and is arming against, is our own Nation’s vitals—its Working Class.

That was not quite a year ago. Does the matter, then commented upon, throw light upon this year’s frank pronouncement by a bourgeois paper of no less standing than the *Detroit Free Press* demanding an increase of military forces “for maintaining industrial peace”? Are the two matters straws, or are they the beams that betray the direction of the current of events, outlining things to come, and urging necessary counter-action?

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded January 2013

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)