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EDITORIAL

NO BUMMERY!

By DANIEL DE LEON

FROM Paterson, N.J.; from Astoria, N.Y.; from Mauch Chunk, Pa.; from Bayonne, Passaic, Plainfield, Hudson County—from all the closely situated, or distantly located centers of the silk industry, where the I.W.W. strike is on, the identical report comes: The workers, with one voice, order out of their midst the emissaries of the Anarchist body that masquerades under the name of “I.W.W.,” and whose favorite song has for its refrain: “I’m a bum! I’m a bum!”

Of course, every Socialist knows that society is primarily responsible for the moral cripples known in social science as “the slums,” or the “slum proletariat.” The mere existence of these social wastrels is an indictment on a social system, misnamed “order,” that has wrought so stepmotherly upon her own children as to turn them into such specimens. Sentiment, running away with Judgment, would hug the slummist to its heart. Judgment, keeping Sentiment under control, keeps the Slummist at a distance from the Movement. While straining every nerve to remove the conditions that can generate and the environment that can perpetuate and intensify slummism, the Movement’s experience has taught it that deep and wide is the chasm that separates the slum from the industrial proletariat; that, while upon the latter, the industrial proletariat, depends the life of society and the success of the Social Revolution; the former, the slum proletariat, is a parasite, with all the vices of such, ready at all times to betray the workers by making common cause with the exploiters.

Eugene Sue’s masterpiece, *The History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages*, records many an instance of the vicious part played in Revolution by the slums, and also of the stern methods adopted by the industrial proletariat for their protection against this peculiar source of danger.

The voice of the many thousand I.W.W. workers on strike, and the many more

thousands who have just won, ordering the “I’m-a-bummery” from their gatherings is a condensed expression of the experience. As the strikers speak almost all the languages of Europe, their voice voices the international sentiment of the Dignity of Labor, which rejects theft as a means of mass-expropriation; which rejects double dealing and equivocation as a means of Labor’s self-assertion; in short, which spurns “Direct Action” or “Anarchy.”

Through the I.W.W. the American Labor Movement is placed abreast of the times, and one of the clarion notes of the Movement is the experience-laden note—“No Bummery!”

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