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EDITORIAL

POISON AND ANTIDOTE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

BEFORE us lies an interesting document. Its head is emblazoned with the coat of arms of the American Detective Service Co. It is dated New York, July 12, 1907; it is signed J. Weccard, Gen. Mgr.; it is addressed to a business firm in this city. The document, or letter, starts with the statement that "labor troubles at the present time are frequent"; and it declares that the company "have a remedy that will avoid all these troubles." With this prelude the letter goes into details. The method, it explains, consists in "putting operatives among the employees," such as "mechanics, skilled laborers{,} etc." These spy operatives, the firm is promised, will furnish it "all necessary information." Mr. Weccard specifies: "They [the operatives whom he puts among the employes] **WORK THEMSELVES UP IN THE UNION.**" Thus having "worked themselves up," they are in a position to "aid to break the union." Mr. Weccard, Gen. Mgr., expresses his explicit confidence in the potency of his poison. Mr. Weccard does not know that for every poison there is an antidote. The antidote to the poison of the spy is publicity. Light is said to be the best police. Publicity implies a number of things which combine to create an atmosphere in which the nasty pets of Mr. Weccard can live no more than the pestilence bacteria can exist in sanitary conditions.

Publicity implies the opposite of secrecy. That is the first condition for publicity. But it implies more. Nonsense, angry ranting, may at times forget itself and utter itself publicly. The mere fact of there being no secrecy about that does not suffice to suffocate the pestilential bacteria of the Weccard spy. The second of the essentials to publicity is good sense, sound reasoning, coolness. Let the union uproot the tangled reasoning which the Weccard spy needs to thrive on; let the Union stamp out the first manifestations of "flying off the handle," which the Weccard spy needs to wind his tendrils around; let the Union quickly turn the hose and play it firmly

upon the angry ranter;—let the Union do that and couple such methods with a complete absence of secrecy, and Mr. Weccard, plus his incubatees, will have to turn their hands to the honest turning of a penny. Their occupation will be gone.

Agitation, Education, Organization—symbolized by the three stars of the I.W.W.—may be condensed into the motto “Publicity!” That is a squelching antidote to the Weccard poison.

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

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