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EDITORIAL

REINSTEIN'S TIMELY WARNING.

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BORIS REINSTEIN'S address, delivered on Wednesday, the 13th, under the auspices of Section New York, on "Slum Elements and Slum Tactics in a Revolutionary Movement," was a broad-based warning that can not be heeded too soon.

In a nutshell, the principle enunciated by Reinstein, and planted by him upon the solid foundation of a vast experience made and being made in Europe, and manifestations of which already are cropping up in this country, is this:—

"A revolutionary movement, being in its very nature a Movement against the existing order of society, presents itself to the slum-mind in the light of slum ethics, to wit, the ethics of swindle and degeneracy; of crime, generally. This fact, of itself, renders revolutionary Movements sympathetic to the slum-mind—a danger to the Movement. The danger is hard to protect against. The strictest self-enforced discipline of conduct and utterance will hardly afford full protection. Looseness in either opens wide the door for the entrance of the slum. If mere looseness of utterance and conduct opens the door to the slum-mind, the utterance and practice of slum ethics act as a positive invitation. They confirm the mind in the preconceived idea that the revolution is flesh of its flesh and bone of its bone. The ultimate result is the utter demoralization of the Movement."

The revolutionary organization of this generation is, true enough, no church organization. It deals with man; it, consequently, must make allowance for man's foibles. But, after full allowance is made on that head, there remains a deep and wide chasm between the revolutionary camp and the swamp of moral turpitude in which the slum wallows.

We say, and justly say, the European Movement has much to learn from the American. This other is equally true—the American Movement may not, except at its own peril, disregard the practical experience painfully gathered by the

Movement in Europe. “The man of frayed pants,” as Reinstein pithily put it, “is not the only denizen of the slums. The slums are recruited of both ‘frayed pants’ and ‘spotless shirts.’ Slum ethics draw together their kindred from all strata of society.”

Classic theory and classic experience combine to impress the necessity of strict adherence to the scientific principle that the “Proletariat” does not mean the ash-barrel of society, and that the emancipation of the Proletariat must be the work of the Proletariat itself, combined with the equally scientific principle that the Slum is the quarter of greatest danger to the Revolution—a foe upon which the Plutocracy leans—a reserve army which the Plutocracy stores up for its last resource.

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