

EDITORIAL

## EXTORTION THWARTED IN NEW JERSEY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**I**T was not a case of being “unable or unwilling to pay,” as the capitalist press puts it, that caused the 57 I.W.W. pickets who were fined \$10 apiece in Paterson to refuse payment, and that they rather went to jail.

The act was deliberate. It was a declaration, as distinct as the brutality of Recorder Carroll’s court permitted, that the men consider their arrest a “hold up” in the interest of the firm of Aronson and Blum; that they consider their sentence an attempt at extortion; and that they consider the whole performance a bit of banditism.

The right to “picket” is a civic right—as inherent as the right to walk the streets—and is qualified only by the restrictions that civilization puts upon walking the streets. These restrictions—abstinence of violence, abstinence of blocking the thoroughfare to the extent of infringing upon the equal rights of others—none will so zealously observe as the members of the I.W.W.; and none do.

This notwithstanding, and at the behest of employers, I.W.W. pickets were arrested. Upon that initial violation of their civic rights, followed a number of other violations in quick succession—while officers of the I.W.W. were excluded from the court, the firm of Aronson and Blum were in the Recorder’s private room, whither he repaired for frequent inspiration; notwithstanding the testimony of the officer who made the arrest was wholly in the prisoners’ favor, they were sentenced; and when they decided to go to jail rather than submit to be thus spoliated, one of their officers, Frank F. Young, was arrested under false pretenses and thrust into a cell.

This is banditism. Nor can the purpose thereof be doubtful.

More than a year ago the National Executive Committee warned the Working Class of the land that the Capitalist Class was scheming to incite riots, and was preparing the armed forces whereby to perpetrate massacres. The evidences hereof

have since multiplied; and Northern New Jersey, the I.W.W. silk workers' strike zone, has seen some signal instances. Whooped up by the Newark *Star*, the organ of ex-Senator Jim Smith, who was known during his incumbency in Washington as "The Sugar Trust Senator," and their efforts seconded by Pless-Domo, an employe of the Newark Bryan Detective Agency, agents of an Anarchist body that usurps the name of "I.W.W.," and that preaches theft, slashing of warps, striking at the ballot box with an ax, and even murder, have prowled these many weeks around Passaic.

Such conditions are "inflammable." Straws will take fire. The heat thereby generated will task the I.W.W. workers to their utmost, and, along with them, the rest of the long suffering Paterson proletariat.

Under such circumstances, the firmest, and, at the same time the wisest of stands is demanded. A moment's weakness will encourage the capitalist politicians to further outrages, and will add the fuel of pretexts to the fire that Anarchy is kindling.

The 57 I.W.W. pickets are to be congratulated upon their resistance to a possible impulse of weakness. By preferring imprisonment, pending appeal, to the payment of lawlessly inflicted fines, the I.W.W. pickets proclaim that they will not abet, or even condone Extortion and banditism.

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