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EDITORIAL

AN OPEN LETTER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TO the Hon. Woodrow Wilson
Governor of the State of New Jersey.
Sir:

With all the respect due to your high office, but with all the emphasis that the occasion dictates, the following sequence of events is hereby brought to your notice.

On the 10th of last November the silk weavers of Paterson, organized in the Industrial Workers of the World, began a strike for better, indeed, for human conditions. The strike extended gradually until, by February of this year, it enveloped most of the mills of the town, and spread to other localities in New Jersey.

Throughout, the strike was conducted in exemplary manner. The workers on strike realized, and so expressed themselves, that their movement did not merely contemplate their class's ultimate emancipation from wage slavery, but that it also, and necessarily, contemplated the saving for society all the great conquests of the past that made for Progress—the orderly exercise of civic rights.

To this program the workers on strike stuck with pertinacity. Unaffected by the goadings of the “theft,” “arson,” “murder,” “strike-at-the-ballot-box-with-an-axe”-advocating I'm-a-bummery, or Haywood Anarchists who usurp the name of I.W.W.; undiscouraged by the whoopings-up received by this element from the Newark *Star*, the organ of ex-Senator James Smith;—in no wise affected by either of these disturbing and aggravating social elements, the I.W.W. strikers deported themselves in such manner that “the police had nothing to do.” The employers surrendered one after another.

Suddenly a new leaf was turned. The leaf was turned by the municipal authorities of Paterson, acting in concert with several firms, the firm of Aaronson & Blum leading.

The terms made with their I.W.W. employes were suddenly broken by the firms. The workers re-struck. Whereupon the police highhandedly arrested the pickets; these were rushed to the Recorder's court; there they were summarily sentenced to \$10 fines; one of their organizers was seized and railroaded to three months' imprisonment without his being allowed counsel; agitators who were not residents of Paterson were threatened to get out of town on the charge of being "outsiders"; and, when those who were fined preferred imprisonment, pending appeal, to submitting to extortion, payment of the fines was "accelerated" by cooking vermin into their prison food.

At each step, the hand-in-glove relations between the firms and the municipal magistrates was obvious. The reason therefor—the threat made by the firms to transfer their plants to other localities, and thereby deprive the municipal authorities of the taxes that now go to pay their salaries, unless they are helped to reduce their employes back to starvation wages—aggravates the situation.

Such conduct is a forcible reminder of the pre-Civil War days in the South. It is a reminder of the days when the American residents' civic right of free travel—free ingress, free egress and regress throughout the length and breadth of the land—was trampled upon. It is a reminder of the inhuman prison treatment dealt to the Abolitionists. It is a reminder of Bourbon-Copperhead utter disregard of law, of order, of civilization.

Before this it has not been deemed a necessary prerequisite for the interference of the Chief Executive of a State in local matters, that the "aggrieved take their course at law" until they reach that high tribunal. The readiness with which militias have been repeatedly ordered out by Chief Executives of States, New Jersey included, demonstrates the principle and the fact. If militias can be ordered to localities without the alleged "aggrieved" having first exhausted their legal remedies in lower tribunals, it should seem high time that the Chief Executive of the State of New Jersey, sworn, as he is, to enforce the Constitution and the Laws, take quick measures to put an end to the anarchy that Paterson has become a hotbed of—a state of lawlessness even more injurious to society than the conduct of Bourbon-Copperheadism against the Abolitionists. Bourbon-Copperheadism, when it instituted terrorism in a locality, left the acts of banditism to mobs. In Paterson, to-day,

the banditism is committed by the officers of the law themselves.

Sir—the facts in the case are easily ascertainable. The Socialist Labor Party asks not of you to take sides with the Working Class against the Capitalist Class. What it asks, what it urges, what it demands and expects of you is that you be true to the best of your own Class, hence, that you stamp out feudal brutality in Paterson, where raw-boned feudal brutality has re-raised its hideous head in your State.

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