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EDITORIAL

THE “DAMNED MEN OF TOIL.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHAT militant is there in the Socialist Movement, here or abroad, who has not attended workingmen’s meetings, organized and unorganized?

What militant has not, at such meetings, say meetings of machinists, been present when a vote was taken by raise of hands and not seen such hands as these go up?



What militant has not, at meetings, say, of wood carvers, after some animated discussion, when the vote was called, seen rising such mutilated stumps as these?



What militant, a decision being taken at some meeting of machine bookbinders, for instance, has not seen the conviction of the voters emphasized with hands that present this appearance?



What militant, on attendance at some ironworkers’ meeting, or the meetings of bricklayers, or the meetings of bridge constructors, or the meetings of weavers has not been shocked by the sight, held high, of hands like these?



What militant Socialist, moving, as his militancy compels him, among the proletariat, the toilers of the land, has not shaken, alas! too frequently, and felt the thrill conveyed by hands like any, or all of those!

What militant Socialist can ever forget the language of agony—sometimes plaintive, sometimes indignant, all times stirring—silently spoken by the pressure of these mutilated limbs, typical of the hands of the class that does all the Nation’s useful, yet unrequited toil!

What militant Socialist—at the pressure or sight of these sign-manuals of Capitalist Rule—is not reminded of, and does not ever after carry ringing through his

mind the deep-chested notes of *The Internationale*; snatches of the world encircling song of the pending Social Revolution:—

“Stand up! ye galley-slaves of want!” . . .

“Mass enslaved, fling back the call!” . . .

“In the coffers of the robber-barons blind the world’s great wealth is
thrown! . . .

“Exploitation bows us down!” . . .

“Away with rights that know no duties, and with duties shorn of
rights!” . . .

“’Tis the class-strife’s triumphant, last and mighty tug-of-war!” . . .

We the wage-slaves are “the damned, the damned men of toil!” . . .

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