

EDITORIAL

BAKOUNIN—HAYWOOD.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WE must begin with apologies to Bakounin.

After all that may be justly said of Michael Bakounin—the inferiority of his intellect to that of Marx; his consequent enviousness; the criminal Benedict-Arnold-like flames that enviousness kindled in his breast, and that, once kindled, spurred him to a conduct so violently at war with his own ultimate ideals as to make against these;—notwithstanding all this, to mention the cultured and cultivated Bakounin in the same breath with William D. Haywood requires apologies to the shades of the former.

Nevertheless, though Bakounin is as far above Haywood as a low-browed gorilla is below man, the points in common between the two are matters for study, profitable to the militant Socialist.

Elsewhere in this issue will be found a passage from a signed article in the *United Mine Workers' Journal*, which, as the article's title indicates, affords "A Near View of Bill Haywood."

At this point, after reading the *United Mine Workers' Journal* article, many an admirer of the personality of Bakounin might cry out: "What! Would Bakounin ever have stooped to the ways of the door-mat thief? Would he ever have been so reckless with funds entrusted to him for the defence of a workingman in distress? Would Bakounin not sooner have eaten up his own head than descend so low in the scale of man?"

There is a good deal in the protest that the question involves, yet is the protest substantially unfounded. Whatever Bakounin may, or may not, have "done," the conduct of Haywood and his Chicago I.W.W. fellows, male and female, is the "programme" of Bakounin put into execution.

Section 5 of the Programme of the Revolutionary International Brothers—Bakounin's organization—urged the "unchaining of what we have been taught

to call the bad passions of man,” and these bad passions, in control of a staff of men “whose being must be animated by the devil” were to be the revolutionary agency to bring down capitalist society.

What but “the bad passions” and the “devil” peeped through the conduct of the men and women who, at Spokane, wrapped themselves in the mantle of “Free Speech,” and desecrated the same with riot ?

What but a still larger dose of “bad passions” and a still stronger hold by the “devil” could have driven such people to collect funds for the martyrs of their swindle, and then use the funds for their own purposes, leaving the martyrs to rot in jail, and the exposé of the infamy to die in his boots on a lonely road with a hole in his head?

What but liberal quantities of “bad passions” and a still stronger grip of the “devil” could have forced such people to queer the name of the Industrial Workers of the World—the organized and disciplined, and dignity-full class consciously moved proletariat—by covering with that name a riotous mob of advocates of theft, arson and assassination?

Finally, what if not a sublimation of “the bad passions” could have moved, and the strongest jab of the “devil’s” harpoon have sent, Haywood kiting to Paterson and there try to stab in the back proletarians on strike for bread, and have kept him ever since exploiting the wretchedness of workingmen, workingwomen and children, and varying his course of exploitation with gorilla outbreaks of physical brutality followed by the gorilla’s cowardice of running away?

The incidents, that the correspondent of the *United Mine Workers’ Journal* specifies in his near view of Haywood seven years ago, are tame in comparison with the incidents of the developed Haywood of to-day; but tame only in the sense that the hyena whelp is tame in comparison with the full grown zoologic obscenity. And what is the spectacle that the incidents represent but that of “the bad passions” rampant, with “the devil” prodding them—in short, Bakounin’s hideous programme in execution?

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded August 2014

slpns@slp.org