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EDITORIAL

A BASTILLE ON PAPER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TWO men who were arrested at the recent Altgeld Memorial meeting held in Cooper Union, on the charge of distributing literature in a public place, have been held in prison ever since. Little has been said about the case in the public press but it is one of the most flagrant instances of rank injustice.

These men were distributing Anarchist literature. It is on this point that they have been detained. Their case has been put off and put off. The first delay was on the ground that Odell had just signed a bill against Anarchist literature and until its reading was ascertained there could be no trial. Another delay has occurred, and the chances are that the men will drag out, before trial, what amounts to a hard sentence in prison.

The charge of distributing literature in a public place is no longer the one that counts for anything in this case. That has been superseded by the more serious charge of attempting to "overthrow the government." Fool legislators, with the conceptions of the instinctive thug, are responsible for the law as it stands to-day. That law is a monstrous piece of legislation that gives into the hands of legal thugs a power that is unprecedented. The fact that these two men have been held over from day to day, have suffered imprisonment, and have been practically and absolutely deprived of their most elementary rights, the right of a speedy trial, shows how far this new law can go. It is an outrage. It is a crime that has few equals. It is up to the mark of the worst abuses of imprisonment in the days that preceded the French Revolution.

The fool legislator and his thug instincts are at last in the saddle. Watch that law by Imperialists against Anti-Imperialists, by Ship-Subsidy-Billists against Anti-Ship-Subsidy-Billists, by Sampsonites against Schleyites, and by all against the Socialist Labor Party.

As Judge Wood got up a “Gatling Gun on Paper,” there is now a “Bastille on Paper.”

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