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EDITORIAL

AN OPEN LETTER TO DR. K. VORNBERG.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TO Dr. K. Vornberg, Secretary American Jewish Society for the Regulation of Immigration, New York City.

Dear Sir:—Your favor of the 14th of the current month is at hand, calling our attention to “the inhuman and arbitrary deportation of hundreds of immigrants” and requesting our co-operation in “devising means and ways to remove the obnoxious regulations and do away with the injurious results.”

The conduct of the Commissioner of Immigration, alluded to in your letter, cannot be censured too severely. Not only is it inhuman, it is also arbitrary; not only is it arbitrarily inhuman, it is a conduct peculiarly mischievous to the healthy growth and development of the country.

An issue so plain and so vital should present no difficulty in grappling with. Indeed, one wonders the issue is there at all. The history of this country, since its earliest colonial days down to the present, should have settled the matter for all time. When all this notwithstanding, the issue does arise, and arises with the force that we see, the reason can only be widespread confusion of thought. Confusion of thought can be fought in only one way—a propaganda, illustrated by conduct, a conduct illumined by propaganda that is unswervingly consistent. Only that can straighten out the kinks of confusion.

For this specific work the East Side, the Jewish and widely immigrant portion of our city, is peculiarly called.

During last year’s campaign the issue of immigration was forced upon the East Side in a general and in a specific manner. It was forced upon the East Side constituencies through the general posture on immigration of one of the parties in the field. The attitude of the Socialist party at two successive International Congresses, and at its national convention, where it took the stand against

“Orientals,” is well known. Moreover, the issue was forced upon the East Side by the specific act of the S.P. in setting up in that very district two candidates whose posture on immigration was particularly reactionary—one of them the spokesman of the “backward races” proposition at the International Congresses; the other the author of a book in which the novel proposition is advanced that the cause of infanticide among his own old stock Americans was the inflow of the “degraded” immigrants, and in which “Polish, Roumanian and Russian” Jewish immigration was specifically cited. We may not, in honor to the East Side, leave unmentioned the fact that, despite the hurrah manoeuvres of the S.P., seconded by the English capitalist press, the East Side resented the insult by cutting down the vote of one of these candidates by a round 1,000, and turning its shoulders very squarely upon the other. For all this the ominous fact remains that, out of the four Yiddish dailies on the East Side, only one sniffed the threatening issue, and faced it squarely by squarely opposing these representative candidates of a principle now enforced by the Commissioner of Immigration, while, of the other three, one gave them direct support, and the other two opposed them, not for their reactionary posture on immigration, but simply because they were not Republicans or Democrats.

These facts, fresh from the oven, are strongly suggestive of the course that the American Jewish Society for the Regulation of Immigration should adopt in the pursuit of the “means and ways to remove the obnoxious regulations and do away with the injurious results” complained of.

The picture of the East Side daily press, as sketched above, betrays a woeful confusion of thought. The breath in the nostrils of the Commissioners Williams is just such confusion of thought in quarters where clearness of thought should be a distinctive characteristic. As stated before, nothing short of propaganda that is illustrated by conduct, and conduct that is illumined by a propaganda that is unswervingly consistent can bring help in such cases. Three-fourths of the Yiddish daily press on the East Side are in need of such propaganda, backed by conduct. We would suggest to the American Jewish Society for the Regulation of Immigration that it open a campaign for the education of the afore-named press as the first step towards removing the obnoxious regulations, and doing away with the injurious results of an unenlightened policy on immigration.

In full sympathy with, and pledging the support of the Socialist Labor Party press to, the principle that we feel assured your Society is builded on—"The human race is ONE; the earth is for man; liberal immigration is a badge of enlightenment"—we are

Respectfully,

ED. DAILY PEOPLE.

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

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