

EDITORIAL

## THE CALIFORNIA ALIEN LAND BILL. {2}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE cat-and-dog conflict of interests within the camp of the bourgeois who framed and the bourgeois who would un-frame the “alien land” bill of California, and the poltroonery that marks the fighting methods of the two elements, have been exposed in a previous article.<sup>1</sup> The event of the bill is worth while returning to. Apart from the feature already commented on, there is another.

As pointed out by Socialism in general, and scores of times in these columns and by Socialist Labor Party literature in particular, not only did the bourgeois Revolution perform the important mission of raising the scaffolding for the structure of the Co-operative Commonwealth, it also had the mission of introducing positive virtues. The value of the scaffolding was temporary: the structure, once raised, the scaffolding could, and had to be removed, and thrown away. Otherwise with the virtues. They, at least the principle upon which they rested, were a permanent acquisition for the human race. These virtues are commonly termed the “bourgeois freedoms”—freedom of speech; freedom of the press; freedom of political expression; last, not least, freedom of emigration, immigration, re-emigration.

If we scratch further down, the principle of free migration will be found to have broken through the feudal incrustations of race-and-creed cultivated superstitions concerning the “elect of the Lord,” and to have raised a new principle into practical application, the principle of the oneness of the human {race}. Bourgeois exigencies blurred, no sooner than the bourgeois Revolution had set up, the principle. It was left to Socialism to re-state the principle, re-plant it, and then to insist upon its observation. Men of the stamp of Woodrow Wilson, who live in the atmosphere of the days of the bourgeois Revolution, hold to the bourgeois freedom of migration, and,

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<sup>1</sup> “The California Alien Land Bill.” {1}, *Daily People*, April 26, 1913.

finding the same warped, blurred, and twisted awry, seek in our generation to straighten out and enforce the principle. It matters not that the policy of such men is, to-day, utopian: their good intentions are admirable: what is more, their good intentions are aidful to the Social Revolution.

What, under such circumstances, should Woodrow Wilson be justified to expect but that the Socialist Movement trimmed the lamp of the freedom of migration, and, by its agitation, made easy the task that he undertook in California? Woodrow Wilson may, or may not have formulated the expectation in clear shape. Whether he did, or not, he was entitled to the help. Did it come to him? Exactly the opposite.

In California the voice of the Socialist Labor Party has been practically smothered for the last thirteen years. A Movement that flew the colors of Socialism; a Movement that set up, as the test of the correctness of Socialist agitation, “success in getting votes,” and success in “getting the cash” requisite thereto; a Movement that succeeded in making the unthinking accept the test, and, thereby, accept as Socialism that which is a denial of Socialism, that which blocks Socialism by virtue of its false agitation and of the corruption that such methods generate;—such a Movement, named the “Socialist party,” held, in California especially, a posture that threw the popular mind backward; back behind the days of the bourgeois Revolution; back to the dark days of the bourgeois Revolution; back to the dark days of feudal racial divisions, superstitions and iniquities.

This fact is not the least valuable one that the California “alien land bill” is throwing up. The first fact, the fact concerning inter-bourgeois feuds, is valuable for the militant Socialist to make use of. The second fact is valuable, besides, as a warning against the false test of Socialist “success.”

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