

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 5, NO. 297.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 1905.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

JINGOISM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

SUCH is the exuberance of the nonsense in the Ernest Untermann “arguments,” in the debate that he recently had in Chicago with a member of the Socialist Labor Party, published last week in these columns for general edification and “size-up,” that there is danger of the only important thing said by the gentleman being lost sight of. The important thing lies in the passage in which he declares:

“De Leon was born upon some island in South America and, SUBJECT TO THE NATURAL INSTINCTS OF HIS RACE, would either rule or ruin.”

It matters not what race Mr. Untermann has in mind as De Leon’s race; nor does the childishness of Mr. Untermann’s conclusion, as to the racial foundation for a “rule or ruin” instinct require notice; nor yet is De Leon himself the subject of consideration in the consideration of the passage quoted. The point that deserves attention is the fact that Mr. Untermann considers “race” a proper subject to bank a conclusion upon in a Socialist discussion, and that he does so in an obvious attempt to set up his own—the German—race as superior to that of some one else. This circumstance is of no slight importance to us in America: it has many curious features about it, but it also has features about it that the American Movement can neglect only at its own peril.

There is no virtue and there is no vice that is peculiar to any one race, and that any other race could not, or does not indulge in. Indeed, even before natural science scorned race theorists as the “astrologers of sociology,” the averagely informed man made the experience that virtues as well as vices are international. The fact is pre-eminently illustrated by the universality of the vice of Jingoism: there is no nationality, or race using the term loosely, whose folklore does not indicate that, in its infancy, that particular race did not consider itself the “salt of the earth,” the

“elect of the Lord”; and there is no race some of whose literature, even at this present date, does not indicate that the writer considers his race “the thing.” Even the general common sense of the human race has relegated the Jingo to the shelves where curios are kept that recall the infancy and barbaric period of man; and Socialist science, based upon the material facts, rejects the Jingoic presumption of any race, while Socialist morality, the reflex of the material fact, condemns the posture of the Jingo as immorally harmful. All this notwithstanding, there is a curious phenomenon that appears in our days, a phenomenon all the more curious because it appears in the Socialist camp—that phenomenon consists in the impudent presumption on the part of a certain element, that is merely a caricature of the German people, and a misfit element of the Movement in Germany, to set itself up, as Germans, as superior to all other people, and, of course, as oracles of Socialism.

We have seen the phenomenon in a bunch and in its collective hideousness in the New Yorker Volkszeitung Corporation—we saw its Herman Schlueter declare: “We Germans speak from above down”! We saw its Alexander Jonas declare: “The American people are hopelessly stupid and corrupt”! We saw barely a year ago the paper that it issues declare that there is no safety to an English Socialist press unless controlled by “us Germans” (meaning the Jingo *Volkszeitung* Germans)! We have seen that element look with contempt upon any German who learned English, whereupon they would pronounce him “Americanized,” meaning thereby depraved! We have seen its paper publish articles to prove that the English language is “absurd and untruthful”! Only the other day we saw its paper contain the Jingoic calumny that the “Irish are corrupt to the marrow”! We have seen them pooh-pooh the idea that any but a German could understand Socialism and be trusted with teaching it!—and now Mr. Ernest Untermann attests his kinship to the Volkszeitung Corporation clowns!

Providentially, Marx, a German himself, castigated with the club-weight of his reasoning and the trenchant Toledo blade of his satire, the absurdity of German Jingo. In America, especially in the Socialist camp, the matter is worse than absurd. It can only tend to play into the capitalist’s hand by tending to keep the nationalities of the land divided; it can only tend to throw ridicule upon our German

fellow-wage-slaves who are too intelligent and honorable to share such views, and who deserve better than to have their people caricatured by such arrant and pretentious humbugs; above all, to the Socialist Movement in particular, this abscess is dangerous, the Movement's safety requires that it be lanced.

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

Uploaded December 2007

slpns@slp.org