
Letter from Ellis Island by Four Polish Communist Deportees, March 17, 1921

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Comrades and Friends:

As the result of the Palmerian raids, the authorities are deporting from time to time groups of workers to Soviet Russia or other countries. If a worker is deported to the Soviet Republic, he is satisfied because there are many who are envying the deportee, for they are going at the expense of the American government.

On the 18th of March on the *SS Mongolia* there [will again leave] 62 "enemies of the capitalist freedom," among them one woman, and with them there are going 9 wives of the deported comrades and 16 children.

In that group the following Polish workers are leaving: DARDZINSKI, IWANOSKI, and ULL from Detroit and J. KOWALSKI of Chicago.

The majority of the deported consider themselves Communists, although there are a few Anarchists among them.

The departure of the new group of radical workers will not weaken the struggle because the remaining comrades will continue to work for the labor movement [which is] not the result of Bolshevik propaganda or any other factors but is a natural demonstration of the struggle for existence of the workers under the capitalistic system.

Travel.

The deported from various cities arrived on Ellis Island in special Pullman cars under escort. Eating on the trains was plentiful and pos-

sible. A few go at their own expense and without escort. Permission for such travel may be obtained at a local immigration bureau of the city from which the deportee is about to leave. The advantage of this is that while traveling, the deportee is free while in New York, he being obliged to report at Ellis Island 24 hours before the sailing.

Deportees who are going at their own expense and with their wives pay for their transportation at Ellis Island when notice of their order of deportation is received. The local immigration officials should also be notified, so that he may make reservations for the wife and children. One of the comrades paid \$211.00 for a steamship ticket of the third class for his wife and children. If anybody can afford it and desires so, he is permitted to procure a ticket of the second or first class. The deportees at Ellis Island who are married are separated from their families. They are permitted only to eat breakfast, dinner, and supper in the same dining room with their families. The cells are locked and the window grated. The food given at Ellis Island is possible; the aliens are permitted to buy anything they desire, but the prices are high. The committees of the political prisoners are sending their representatives there for the purpose of assisting the deportees. The deportees are permitted to take along as many articles as they wish. Baggage weighing 150 pounds may be shipped by railroad or steamship without extra charge; anyone having baggage in excess of that weight will have to pay extra — the amount is not known as yet. The contents of our trunks were not examined as yet.

In the cells there is no other bedding except quilts. Everybody receives quilts, which serves as a pillow, mattress, and cover. We have exercise every day on the roof of the building.

Soviet.

Upon arrival at the island, we organized a Soviet, elected an Executive Committee with authority to represent us. The Anarchists, as opponents of all authority, protested. Generally speaking, there is harmony among all the deportees. We have here members of the Communist Party, United Communist Party, IWW, and Anarchists. In one of the cells there is a Brazilian Anarchist and a Mexican Anarchist, who declare they have no country, and a Russia sailor who attempted to cross the border unlawfully. They all have remained here for some time and their finances are exhausted. Therefore we made a collection and handed it to them. The Brazilian and the Mexican are

to be deported in the near future, but the sailor does not know anything about his fate.

Our group purchased \$500.00 worth of medical and stationery supplies, which we intend to present to the Soviet government as a gift from the deportees. The Soviet also made arrangements not to leave us idle here and therefore we are holding meetings — educating ourselves.

Our Last Message.

We say good-bye to you, Comrades, for the last time from the land of Washington and from under the Statue of Liberty. We declare that brutal violence was committed upon us and this violence cannot be justified because all our crime was that we demanded the rights for the working people and that our thoughts were going faster. Leaving this country, we do not regret anything except that we have done so little for the common cause. You comrades, remaining yet in this country, act so you will be able to say about yourselves when deported, “we have fulfilled our duty.” Do not desert the battlefield; do not leave this country voluntarily unless you should meet the same fate as we have met.

Ellis Island, New York.
The 17th of March, 1921.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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