
Eye Opener is Cited by Post Office Department: Successor to American Socialist Ordered to Defend Its Right to Live — Hearing Today

Published in *The New York Call*, vol. 10, no. 279 (Oct. 6, 1917), pp. 1-2.

From *The Call's* Washington Bureau.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 5 [1917].— A speech made in the Senate by Senator William E. Borah of Idaho, pro-free speech cartoons published in the *Nonpartisan Leader*, the official weekly organ of the National Nonpartisan League, represented in Congress by John A. Baer of North Dakota, and six paragraphs from the Socialist Party's majority report, passed by the emergency convention in St. Louis the first week in April [1917] and later adopted overwhelmingly by a referendum vote of the party membership, were cited as matter in violation of the espionage law today by William H. Lamar, solicitor of the Post Office Department, in the case of the Chicago *Eye Opener*, whose publisher was ordered to appear before Third Assistant Postmaster General Dockery and "show cause why the paper should not be deprived of its second class mailing privileges."

The solicitor characterized the majority report as being "the most treasonable document" that had ever come into his possession.

The Post Office Department deprived *The American Socialist*, the Socialist Party's official weekly paper, of its second class permit early in August.

Frank O. Anderson, publisher of a radical weekly called *The Eye Opener*, extended the courtesy of his paper to the Socialist National Office pending action by the Post Office Department on the application for a new permit for *The American Socialist*.

The party was compelled to deposit \$700 a week pending the department's delay. The financial strain was such that the National Executive Committee suspended *The American Socialist* with the issue of

September 8 and sold the unexpired subscriptions to Anderson to be filled out with *The Eye Opener*. Anderson engaged J.L. Engdahl, the editor of the defunct *American Socialist*, to edit the *Eye Opener*. On October 3 Anderson received a communication from Third Assistant Postmaster General Dockery informing him that he must appear at Washington today loaded with reasons why the *Eye Opener* should not be deprived of its second class mailing privileges because of certain matter alleged to be in violation of the espionage act.

Julian Pierce, Socialist National Committeeman, appeared for the *Eye Opener*. Solicitor Lamar unlimbered with a ream of extracts from the *Eye Opener* and the Socialist Party's literature, charging that their circulation caused insubordination, disloyalty, and mutiny in the naval and military forces of the United States, obstructed the recruiting and enlistment service, interfered with the operation and the success of the military and naval forces, and promoted the success of the enemies of the United States.

In view of the fact that this was the first case in which the Postmaster General has cited concrete examples of the matter alleged to be in violation of the espionage law, Pierce requested that the hearing be adjourned in order that the extracts might be examined and adequate argument prepared. Dockery acceded to the request and adjourned the case until tomorrow [Oct. 6, 1917] at 10 o'clock.

Senator Borah's "treasonable" utterance was made in the Senate during the discussion of the war revenue bill.

Borah stood for more taxes and less bonds. Solicitor Lamar cited this paragraph from Borah's speech, printed in the *Eye Opener* in the September 1 issue, as being sufficient to deprive the paper of its second class permit:

"Bonds mean that wealth will buy them, hold them, collect interest, and that when war profits are gone the necessities of life will be taxed to pay."

Edited by Tim Davenport

1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR · October 2013 · Non-commercial reproduction permitted.