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EDITORIAL

BERGER'S MISS NO. 29.

By DANIEL DE LEON

RETURNING once more to the speech delivered in Congress on May 3rd by Representative James M. Graham of Illinois, the gentleman announced amid "applause on the Democratic side" that "protection has borne two legitimate children"—the Trusts and the Panics.

Where was the Socialist Congressman when so superbly an anti-Socialist doctrine was set afloat among the people of the United States from the shipyard of Congress, and for what reason did not the Socialist Congressman rise deliberately, and deliberately say:

"Will the gentleman from Illinois yield for a moment? The railroads of the land are said by some to be controlled by only fifty magnates. Some reduce the figure to twenty-five. Whether twenty-five or fifty, certain it is that the railroad industry is a colossal Trust. But, apart from its magnitude the railroad Trust is of a nature to grip the vitals of the land. We might get without oil, at a pinch, and use tallow. We might find some temporary, however inadequate, a substitute for meat, leather, copper, and the rest of the trustified necessities. One necessary there is for which there is no substitute. That necessary is transportation. It reaches into all the corners of the land. Without it the Nation is hamstrung. Here you have a Trust of Trusts—the Trust *par excellence*. The railroad industry can by no stretch of the imagination come under the head of 'protected industries.' If the industries are to be divided into 'protected' and 'free trade' ones, the railroads would come under the designation of 'free trade industries.' And yet the industry is the best trustified, with all the powers for mischief of such—a despot over other industries except those who find shelter under its shadow; and identify themselves with it; a builder and smiter of cities; a cruel despot over its employes whom it slaughters by the scores of thousands. If the Trust is as the gentleman states, a legitimate child of Protection,

must it not then follow, seeing the railroad industry is foremost among Trusts and it is not born from the womb of Protection, that it is an illegitimate child? From forth the kennel of what womb does this illegitimate monster come forth? Do not, I would ask the gentleman, the facts in the case point to a Mormon father, potent enough to beget upon a multiple mother—Dame Free Trade, along with Dame Protection,—his brood of social-economic monsters? The question then comes, Who may that father be? How can the gentleman from Illinois escape the conclusion that the Trusts—meaning thereby the evils of the privately owned and highest developed contrivance for production,—trace their line of descent lineally and legitimately from the Capitalist System, a System, which by leaving in the hands of private concerns the necessaries for production, dooms the rest of the people to various grades of vassalage, subjection and wretchedness? Who, if not Capitalism, is the sire of the mischief?”

Where, we asked, was Victor L. Berger when Representative Graham's violently anti-Socialist pronouncement was made? Why did not Berger rise in his seat on the spot in due parliamentary form, and in the exercise of his parliamentary rights? Why?—Simply because the “first Socialist Congressman” was not at his post of duty. Having regularly missed every opportunity to do his duty by the Working Class and by Socialism when he was present in Congress, he, logically enough, concluded he might as well stay away from his post in Congress, away even from Washington, and exhibit himself upon public platforms where to solace himself in the sun of the facile popularity yielded by gaping and curious crowds.

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