

EDITORIAL

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By DANIEL DE LEON

GREAT was the applause in the House and the gratification of the Republican Members on May 6, and proportionally the feeling of discomfiture on the Democratic side, on the occasion of ex-Speaker Cannon's climaxing his exposure of the Democratic Members by indignantly charging that what they had done was "to answer a hysterical cry made by the demagogues and the Democrats and by the newspapers about the high cost of living when the necessaries of life were as cheap here as elsewhere in the world."

The ex-Speaker was anxious to answer questions. He laid himself open, expressly, for them. He expressly invited them to be made at the close of his speech. The Democrats sat there cowed by the ex-Speaker's strong personality and the remorseless exposure of their duplicity and political chicanery. Only one dared interrogate him. None other followed suit, and Cannon's speech closed amid loud applause "on the Republican side," the, applause being uninterrupted, or its subsidence punctuated by a single question from the "Democratic side."

Here was another choice opportunity for the "Socialist side" to be heard from:

"If the 'necessaries of life were as cheap'—the gentleman from Illinois surely means 'no dearer,' or 'as dear'—'here as elsewhere in the world,' is not the conclusion inevitable that the affliction of a towering cost of living, unaccompanied with a proportional increase in the wage earner's income, is an affliction against which a 'republican form of government' is no protection? Is not the admission made by the gentleman from Illinois an admission of one of the fundamental contentions of Socialism that the 'form of government,' even if the same be republican, is no better, so far as the wellbeing of Labor is concerned, than where the form of government is monarchic? Has not the gentleman from Illinois by his statement, and correct the statement was, confirmed the Socialist principle that even the best 'form of govern-

ment' must be supplemented by democratic material, or economic, conditions, that is, by a democratic system of production, which, of course, includes distribution, before the Working Class can be emancipated from the slave status of merchandise, a merchandise, at that, whose price ever lags behind its cost of existence? Does the gentleman from Illinois realize that the well deserved shower of blows which he administered to 'the Democratic side' fell 'simultaneously and at once' with equal weight upon 'the Republican side'?"

Was "the Socialist side" of the House heard from to this effect? No. The "Democratic side" lay silent, cowed. Was "the Socialist side" equally cowed, being equally silent?

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