

EDITORIAL

BERGER'S MISS NO. 2.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE first act done by the House of Representatives of the Congress now in session was the passing on the 13th of this month of a joint resolution providing for a constitutional amendment to elect Senators by a popular vote. Considering the persistence and loudness of the popular call for the measure, and the more than probability of the Senate, as now constituted, at last concurring, the act was important. In a way it marked an epoch.

In view hereof, the question suggests itself, What share did Victor L. Berger take in the event? The answer will not lie in Berger's mouth that the move was a mere reform, unworthy of his notice. For one thing, "reform" is Berger's forte; for another, altho' the immediate results of the move are purely reformatory, the move is a sign of the times, and, as such it offered an opportunity to address the people of the land from the elevated rostrum of Congress upon matters not at all reformatory, and which many an utterance, let drop by the Republican and Democratic speakers, gave a strong handle to.

In the course of the debate—hardly any of the speakers objecting to the move, and most of even those who voted in the negative applauding "the principle" of the amendment—the changes were wrung and re-wrung upon the reason for the amendment, to wit, the ever more frequent scandals that convulse State Legislatures at the election of a Federal Senator. The handle was thus actually thrust into Berger's hand. It was his cue to rise and say:

"Mr. Speaker—On all sides it has been admitted on this floor to-day that State Legislatures have failed in their duty; they have been charged with 'sullyng the fair names of States'; they have been shown to have encompassed 'an evil'; they have been accused, and justly so, of not having been 'responsive to the public will'; they have been rebuked for 'shameful and disgraceful practises';—all of this in the

exercise of one of their functions, the election of a United States Senator. Bodies that disgrace the fair name of their constituents, that are guilty of shameful and disgraceful practises, that close their ears to the voice of the people—bodies guilty of such misconduct in the exercise of any one, can not be guiltless in the exercise of any other of their several functions. The whole International Socialist Movement hails your present move. It hails the move as a step forced upon Political Government by the approaching Social Revolution—a step that is the precursor of a series of other steps—a series that shall close not until the last step is taken, stripping Legislatures of their last functions, in short, the abolition of the Political State, to make room for Industrial Government. To-day's move on your part is a nail driven into the coffin of the last of the series of Political Governments—the Capitalist State. Gladly do I add the hammer blow of my vote to the driving in of this nail,—not because my blow is necessary, but because mine is the only blow, which, being consciously administered, rings in the Industrial Republic: is the first tocsin sounded in this hall announcing its approach.”

Did Berger seize the handle thrust into his hand? Not in the least. On the contrary. The first sound he emitted was after the debate closed, when the vote was being taken upon a double-faced amendment, transparently offered to defeat the resolution, and which the introducer of the resolution scathingly characterized as proceeding from one

“With smooth dissimulation skilled, to grace
“A devil's purpose with an angels face.”

Berger voted for that amendment, and, only upon its defeat, for the resolution itself.

The *Daily People* anxiously awaits the moment when it may initiate a different series, with an article entitled “Berger's Hit No. 1.” To-day we regret to have to record Berger's miss No. 2.

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Uploaded February 2012

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