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EDITORIAL

AND THIS IS A PROFESSOR.

By DANIEL DE LEON

PROF. E.S. Meade of the University of Pennsylvania is just now the best quoted Professor. He is in great demand by the Trust powers. The Trust powers need a man, who, with the air of science backed by the jingle of figures, can make it appear that the Trust is an impossibility; at least, that it is a possibility that can not last; one of those things, one of those evils that may rise, but that break their own backs. If the Trust will break its own back, why bother about legislation against it? It can be left alone,—and that is just what the Trust is after: to be left alone. Prof. Meade is, accordingly, the man for the Trusts.

But while Prof. Meade may be satisfying the Trust, he is not satisfying the intelligent followers of his reasoning. Among the stupidities that he has just uttered is this:

“To my mind this is the real trust question—will the shares of the industrials take their place among the safe investments of the country? If this question can be answered in the affirmative, the specter of monopoly will be laid. Every man with \$100 can become a partner of monopoly.”

This sort of talk is antediluvian. It belongs to the stone age of economics. The idea that a man with \$100 can become “a partner in monopoly” implies ignorance of what monopoly means, in other words, of what capitalism means.

Capital is not any and all amount of wealth. Capital is that amount of wealth that is large enough to render competition hard, if at all possible, to the man with smaller amount, and that compels the workingman to submit to be fleeced by it. The man with \$100 may buy one share in a monopoly, but what good does that do him? He cannot live off the proceeds of that, the \$5 or \$6 or \$7 a year that his share will yield; while on the other hand, his \$100 falls wholly under control of the large holders, who, operating that

amount together with many others, are thereby all the better able to crack the whip of wage slavery over the \$100 share-holding workingmen. As well say that the wage earner in such a monopolistic concern is a partner therein because he invests his own hide by selling it as a wage slave.

The specter of monopoly or capitalism can never be laid for the simple reason that monopoly is no specter but a tangible monster. No incantations can dispose of the monster. It must be lassoed. And the lassoing can be done only by the class-conscious workingman who, organized under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party, marches to the capture of the public powers, for the purpose of nationalizing the monster. Once nationalized the monster will be a docile handmaid to man. It will have been stripped of its fangs and claws, its monopolistic character, and as public property will, instead of producing social nuisances as to-day, be a source of comfort to all. Nor would the elimination of the reasons that prostitute the now Professor Meades be the least of the blessings derived from the change.

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