

EDITORIAL

## WILSON AND WAGES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**T Topeka Woodrow Wilson made two remarkable statements.  
He said: "American labor is the cheapest in the world."

He also said: "As a matter of fact some of the most highly protected industries in the country pay very much lower wages than the unprotected."

Both statements are true. And deep is their import. Does Woodrow Wilson realize that? He does not. His remedy for cheap labor and in favor of raising wages is—"a tariff for revenue only"!!!

Why is American labor the cheapest in the world, and how comes it that in highly protected industries lower wages are paid than in unprotected ones?

Wages are the price of labor-power. Labor-power being a merchandise, its price is governed by the identical laws that govern the price of all other merchandise. The price of merchandise is governed by the demand and supply. The larger the supply, all the lower the price; the larger the demand, relative to supply, all the higher the price. Wages being the price of labor-power, the larger the supply in the labor-market all the lower will be the price, or wage: and the larger the demand, all the higher will be the wage, or price.

Now, then, the supply of labor-power is, and of necessity must rise ever and ever higher. As a consequence, the price, or wage, is bound to decline.

Again, with the exception of the railroad and other such industries which can not come under "protection," those industries that can command "protection" are among those in which mechanical perfection has made longest strides. In the measure that mechanical improvement is achieved, labor is eliminated. As a consequence, the industries that are generally found "protected" can draw upon a labor-market that is more over-supplied than the industries that have not reached high mechanical perfection.

The final consequences are:

1. That it is not “protection” that is to be charged with lower wages, but that it is improved mechanism of production which overstocks the labor-market, and thereby lowers wages;

2. That, as a matter of course, America being the country in which mechanical perfection in production has reached the highest pitch, in America wages are bound to be at lower ebb than anywhere else in the world.

Can a “tariff for revenue only” affect even remotely the laws that govern wages? As soon expect a plaster on a wooden leg to raise a blister.

High tariffs, low tariffs, no tariffs, wherever the same are banked upon the capitalist system of production, must flourish upon the back of an exploited working class. Where a wage slave class is the social corner-stone the share of Labor in its own product must be small. Finally, under such circumstances, the only way to even up the status of the wage slaves in all countries is to keep back mechanical improvement. Wherever mechanical improvement has reached highest development there wages will be lowest, and, will be lowest in those industries that are developed furthest.

Woodrow Wilson weeping over the low wages in America is a blind Cassandra moaning through the echoing halls of Priam’s castle.

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