

EDITORIAL

## A DOMESTIC “MONROE DOCTRINE.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE outlines of the domestic (labor) policy of the Wilson Administration have been rapidly uncovering during the last few days.

First, Representative Underwood informed the opposition in the House that if the men, from whom the opposition brought the message that the effect of the new tariff will be to compel the lowering of wages, endeavored to carry out their threat, they would find that there was a bureau of this Government that would walk into their offices and find the reason why.

Then followed Senator John S. Williams and, again from the floor, amplified Representative Underwood’s words by mentioning the Bureaus the machinery of which would be set in motion if the protected manufacturers endeavored “to grind labor in the interest of Republican politics.”

And now comes Secretary Redfield, and, in language truly frank, so frank that it is said to have “flabbergasted” the National Association of Employing Lithographers to whom the words were addressed on the 14th instant at Washington. He mentioned one after another the Departments, or Bureaus, which will walk right into the office of any manufacturer who “reduced wages.”

When Monroe pronounced the doctrine which goes by his name, Great Britain owned, in the American hemisphere, as she does now, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Canada; France owned Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guayana; Holland owned the Dutch Guayana and sundry “Leeward Islands”; Denmark owned St. Thomas; Russia, Alaska; Spain owned Cuba and Porto Rico; and so on. The Monroe Doctrine announced that the Government at Washington would respect these possessions, but that any effort to extend them would be considered—well, an “unfriendly act.” In short, the Government at Washington would respect the “status quo” of foreign

occupation in America; but, if the “status quo” be extended, then the wheels of the Departments of War and of the Navy would start moving.

What is the announcement that the Wilson Administration makes with regard to wages? The announcement is this: The Administration will respect the “status quo” in wages, however low, however intolerable, the Administration will respect that status, will not interfere. But if manufacturers should attempt to improve upon the existing status by further reductions, then the wheels of three Bureaus will begin to revolve, with consequences easily to be imagined.

The only difference between the Wilson and the Monroe Doctrine is that the latter looked to our foreign, the former looks to our domestic affairs. For the rest the two doctrines are structurally false, in so far as that they offer no solution to an evil.

European powers have no business on American soil: of course, the “status quo” should not be extended: but that is not enough: the “status quo” should be destroyed: to tolerate the “status quo” was to legitimize the baneful principle of colonial subjection. The evils thereof we are now experiencing with the Philippines.

As with the “status quo” that Monroe handled, so with the “status quo” that Wilson is now dealing with. Wages are a badge of slavery: of course the “status quo” should not be extended by cutting deeper into Labor’s share of the fruit of its toil: so far so good: but to tolerate the “status quo” is to legitimize the to-day baneful principle of capitalist domination: the “status quo” of wages may remain, yet the condition of the wage slave may even grow worse.

Monroe expected that America would speedily cast off its foreign dominators: his Doctrine was intended to aid the process. Does Wilson contemplate as much for his Doctrine? Does he expect it to aid the wage slave class in casting off its master and exploiter? If he does, let him take warning of Monroe. The Monroe Doctrine now is a cloak for the re-subjugation of even the soil and people, that is, the working class, of the United States.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)