

EDITORIAL

SURELY NO TRUST BUSTER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE address delivered by the Cabinet Officer, Secretary Redfield,¹ on the 14th of this month before the National Association of Employing Lithographers in session at Washington,² deserves frequent reference to.

Secretary Redfield assured his hearers that the investigations which the Wilson Administration will institute in the factories which reduce wages “will not be carried on in a trust busting spirit.”

The assurance was certainly sincere; it was, moreover, superfluous after the declarations that immediately preceded the assurance, namely:

“There is a belief that the reduction of wages is the easy resort of inefficient and the hall-mark of poor management. I believe it to be so. . . . The Department has undertaken to find out whether the facts do or do not justify the threatened reductions. Observe that, in saying the facts, one does not mean merely the facts as they are, but also the facts as they ought to be. Operating with bad equipment, with unscientific treatment of material, with antiquated methods, in poor locations, with insufficient capital, and generally ineffective management will not be esteemed a satisfactory reason for reducing wages.”

Why does any capitalist concern operate with “bad equipment”; why does it accommodate itself to a “poor location”; why does it forego the advantages of “scientific treatment of material”; why does it hobble along with “ineffective management,” and “insufficient capital”? Can it be because it likes to do so? Can the concern be suspected of not being aware that better equipment, etc., would be productive of greater returns? The answer is obvious—insufficient capital, wherewith to enter the competitive field properly equipped, prevents any and all such concerns from doing

¹ [Wm. C. Redfield, first Secretary of Commerce (1913–1919).]

² [See “Warned by Redfield on Tariff Reprisal,” *The New York Times*, May 15, 1913.]

as they would wish. The Marxian economic Law of Value decrees the doom of all such concerns. They can not possibly produce as cheaply as their better equipped competitors. They may resort to this, that, or the other shift, the reduction of wages among such shifts, but the end is the same—bankruptcy for themselves, and increased powers for their betters. Such is the economic-sociologic evolution, an evolution, moreover, which so long as it leaves the means of production in private hands to produce for sale, fatedly leads to all the evils that the Trust stands for—economic despotism and political corruption.

The policy of the Wilson Administration, so far as announced by Secretary Redfield, assuredly is no Trust-busting policy. It is a Trust-accelerating policy. It is a policy of governmental taking of Evolution by the hand; freeing the Trust from resorting to its peculiar and usually criminal accelerative measures; and, by preventing the small-fry concerns from reducing wages, drive them more quickly to bankruptcy, and enable the Trust{,} the giant private-capitalist-owned and collectively labor-operated industrial and agriculture concern, to go its way without running foul of the capitalist Criminal Code—a capitalist legal exploiter of the Working Class.

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