

EDITORIAL

BANQUO'S GHOST IN WASHINGTON.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHEN the Underwood tariff bill was submitted to the Democratic caucus of the Senate the principal objection urged was to the child labor amendment which proposes to exclude the products which are the result of the labor "wholly or in part of children" under the age of 14.

And why the objection? Was it because the objectors desired child labor in Europe? No the objection was on the ground of possible reprisals by foreign nations against products of cotton mills of the South, in which child labor is employed to a large extent.

In other words—the premise from which the party in power starts is not that child labor being, today, a social crime everything should be done to end the crime, but that, seeing the South is guilty of the crime, it will not do to punish the foreign fellow criminals because they might and probably would retaliate.

It were hard to pick out that particular source of revenue of the capitalist class that more than any other is damnable. Nevertheless, whether child labor is the most damnable of such sources, or not, certainly it is abreast of the worst. This crime now rises as a Banquo's ghost in the Democratic Senate caucus on the tariff bill. The party that is to establish the "New Freedom," as Woodrow Wilson promises;—the party that, no doubt, enjoys a matchless opportunity at least to wipe out some of the most iniquitous features of capitalist rule;—that party, in Senate caucus assembled, finds its striking arm palsied. Itself a supporter of child labor, its morals affect its pockets; its pockets its morals, and it rejects a clause the adoption of which would have vindicated its claims to loftiness of aspirations, but the rejection of which demonstrates that lofty aspirations and any capitalist party are incompatible magnitudes.

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