[126x721]Unique WCP identifier: WCP222.222

Letter from Wallace, Alfred Russel to Wallace, Violet Isabel
Dated: 10 May 1891

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[[1]]

Parkstone, Dorset.

May 10th. 1891

My dear Violet

You certainly ought to have had some L.N. hacts to sell at the Demonstration. Another time when you are prepared to do so let me know, & I will write to our Sec[retary]. to send you some.

I am quite in favour of a legal eight hours day. Over-time need not be forbidden, but every man who works overtime should have a legal claim to double wages for the extra hours. That would make it cheaper for the master to employ two sets of men working each 8 hours when they had long jobs requiring them, while for the necessities of finishing contracts &c. they could well afford to pay double for the extra hours. "It would make everything dearer!" Of course it would! How else can you produce a more equal distribution of wealth than by making the rich & idle pay more & the workers receive more. "The workers would have to pay more too for everything they bought!". --

True again, but what they paid more would not equal their extra earnings, because a large portion of the extra pay to the men will be paid by the rich, & only the remainder paid by the men themselves. The eight hours day & double pay for overtime would not only employ thousands now out of work but would actually raise wages per hour and per day. This is clear, because wages are kept down wholly by the surplus supply of labour in every trade. The moment this surplus is used up, or nearly so, by more men being required on account of shorter hours, competition among the men becomes less, among the employers, for men, more - hence necessarily higher wages all round. As to the logic of foreign competition it is a logic only.
the political Economists agree, that if wages are raised in all trades it will not in the least affect our power to export goods as profitably as now. Look & see! And, secondly, the 8 hours movement is an international one & will affect all alike in the end. [[4]] There are some arguments for you! Poor unreasoning infants!!

I saw an advertisement of the Bol. Diagrams & so ordered them to be sent to you.

I am glad you saw the G.D.M. Wasn’ t that scrumptious? You might tell me who else you saw there. I shall be in London the 25th. but do not know yet if I shall stay. As that will be Monday I suppose you will be busy. The Nelusubiusu [?] seeds are not doing well. One died, one started, but for a week it has not grown, though in water at 80. I think they were too old. Do ask your friend to get me some seeds to sent as soon as they are ripe, which will probably be in June or July or August. There is just time for her to write about them. I have been working this last week from morning to night at Garden, greenhouse, letters &c. &c. There is a pretty little girl about 4 next door, Col[onel]. Nichols ‘ niece. They are great tennis players, & have set up their poles &c. in the ground.

Your affectionate Papa | Alfred R. Wallace [signature]

At 4 What time did you get the letter with your Ex [?] ticket? I sent it special by Train, & it should have reached you before 6. Be sure tell me. | A.R.W. [signature]

ENDNOTES

1. Text reads "Labour" in pencil at the top centre of page 1

2. ARW’s daughter, Violet Wallace (1869-1945)

3. The block of text from "tennis" to ARW’s signature is written vertically up the left margin of page 4

4. The block of text from "At" to the ARW’s initials is written vertically up the left margin of page 1

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Information about this transcript

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