

The People.

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EDITORIAL

Impaled

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Mr. Theodore Roosevelt may be considered a leading type of capitalist intelligence; at least capitalists could not very well go back upon him. It is not many years ago when he was pointed out as an evidence that a young man could be rich and yet clever, instructed, educated, etc. Now, let us measure and weigh this capitalist paragon.

In the last issue of the *North American Review* Mr. Roosevelt has an article upon Kidd's *Social Evolution*, to which we propose to return in later issues, but out of which we here wish to pick out a passage or two, to the end that our readers may be guided in forming a correct estimate of the thinking powers among the leading members of our rulers.

Says Mr. Roosevelt in one place: "The nations that make most progress may do so at the expense of ten or fifteen individuals out of a hundred." At another place Mr. Roosevelt is of the opinion that the progress proposed by the Socialists is "at the cost of the welfare of mankind."

In other words, human progress is not too dearly bought by a human sacrifice of 10 or 15 per cent., but when the percentage of sacrifice is larger it becomes too dear, and is dearest under the Socialist plan because it sacrifices "mankind."

Now, whom, what class, is it that Socialism would sacrifice, the capitalist or the working class? None, not even the most hardened capitalist, parson or professor, would claim that if the shoemakers, who are now crippled prematurely, owned their instruments of production they would not be immensely benefitted; or that of the typesetting machines were the property of the compositors they would not cease hungering; or that if the improved looms belonged to the weavers their condition would not alter for the better. The working class, being held down to the necessity of struggling sharply for existence, are sacrificed by the wholesale; the average life of

them is only 35 years, while sixty and more in the average life of those not so circumstanced. The Socialist plan would accordingly, by placing the machinery of production into the hands of the workers, remove from them that weight that, more than any other, drags man down—the struggle for a bare existence; accordingly, would be a progress-promoting movement, as far as the working class is concerned. But Mr. Roosevelt correctly argues that that progress that takes place at the sacrifice of mankind is not worth having. That is certainly so. Consequently, it is not enough to know that a certain thing will benefit some one; we must ascertain whether it will “sacrifice” anyone, and if so, how many; and what the proportion is between the benefited and the sacrificed ones.

Does the Socialist movement “sacrifice” nothing? Certainly it does. The capitalist, as a class and a social institution, is ruthlessly sacrificed. Socialism has no place for the capitalist; as capitalist—i.e., an idler and property holder—each individual member of present society must go! The question is how large a percentage of society is this class that would be inevitably sacrificed by Socialism; if it is larger than 10 or 15 per cent. of society the sacrifice would be too great, according to the Roosevelt standard, which, for the sake of argument, we are here willing to accept.

The census figures show that, in round figures, our capitalist class is just about 8 per cent. of our total population.

If Mr. Roosevelt has any self-respect, he must feel like hiding his head in the nearest ash barrel that his colleague, Col. Waring, may have overlooked on our streets. The man who is willing to sacrifice 10 and 15 per cent. of a population for the sake of progress, rears up against Socialism because it would sacrifice 8 per cent.! He swallows a camel and strains at a gnat.

Nor can Mr. Roosevelt escape with the dodge that he said Socialism would sacrifice “mankind.” That would may deceive the “marines,” but no thinking men. Socialism can sacrifice only the capitalist class. True enough, that class believes itself to be “mankind,” but what it believes does not change facts.

It may be cruel, but we cannot refrain from enjoying the sight of this paladin of capitalist intellect impaled upon the prongs of his own pitchfork. The sight is enjoyable and instructive withal.

[Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America](#)

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