

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 1, NO. 32.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 1900.

ONE CENT.

FIRST EDITORIAL

## BRESCI-ISM IS BUT CAPITALISM IN RETAIL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**J**ust ahead of the felonious pistol shot, fired at King Humbert by Bresci,<sup>1</sup> the *Pittsburg Dispatch* gave proof, not of the mental weakness only, but also of the moral turpitude and downright criminality of capitalism. Indeed, it proved the close kinship between Bresci-ism and Capitalism.

Arguing that the Malthusian doctrine of population is correct, the *Dispatch* says: "The killing of a few million of Chinamen by us will do no harm." It would ease a population otherwise excessive.

Malthus contended that population increased faster than the means of subsistence; that more children were born than there was food for, and that the evil was counteracted by Nature, who killed off by famine, etc., those extra and unwelcome ones.<sup>2</sup>

The development of the machinery of production, with its harnessing of natural forces, since the Reverend Malthus laid down his so-called "law" of population, has shattered his theory so completely that thinking men to-day regard it as they do the theory that the earth is flat. We know that the production of bread stuffs, as well as other necessities for sustaining life, not only keeps pace with but increases faster than does population. The tables have been turned upon the cruel-stupid Rev. Malthus.

But the *Pittsburg Dispatch* improves on Malthus in the deductions it draws from his theory. Malthus was content to let Nature kill off the surplus human animals. Not so the McKinley organ. A few millions of people, whom famine has overlooked, or not yet overtaken, are to be killed off with gatling guns and other means of assisting Nature. Christianity and Malthusianism have, accordingly, been developed and improved to that point by the capitalist editors where famine is to be

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<sup>1</sup> [A reference to the assassination of King Humbert I of Italy on July 29, 1900, by an Italian-American anarchist named Gaetano Bresci.]

<sup>2</sup> [A reference to the Rev. Robert Thomas Malthus (1766–1834) and his 1798 book, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*.]

forestalled by murder, and assassination is to render starvation unnecessary.

Brutal and bloody-minded at home and abroad; yesterday excusing {the} slaughter of millions with that outworn blasphemy: “It is the will of God;” to-day repeating and extending the exploded dictum of a preacher;—they prate about the “Laws of Nature.” As ignorant as they are brutal, the capitalist class furnishes a clear photograph of itself in this revamped, revised and improved Malthusianism. Capitalism is wholesale Bresci-ism; Bresci-ism is but Capitalism in retail.

**Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded June 2005**