

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 3, NO. 70.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1902.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

A COMIC PREDICAMENT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

COMIC is the predicament of those capitalists who are expansionists, but free traders at the same time. They are willing to give the Filipinos the water cure so as to “enlarge the area of freedom,” and, in so far, they are in with the Republican party; but their other interests are for free trade, and, in so far, they read themselves out of the Republican and into the Democratic party. A decidedly toodles picture of this humorously contradictory, and contradictorily humorous position is drawn by the *New York Times* of itself in the following editorial:

HE NEEDS A LONGER POLE.¹

I want to see Congress take the tariff off trust-made articles whenever it is so that competition has ceased. That is something Congress can do. If President ROOSEVELT would advocate it he would propose something practical. But you can depend on it, if he advocates something practical, and the trusts think he is in earnest, he will not get the Republican nomination.—Representative LIVINGSTON of Georgia.

The lowest trust persimmon hangs about fifteen feet high. President ROOSEVELT stands under the tree jabbing and thrashing away at it with a nine-foot pole. You see the pole bend and you hear it whiz. But it fans the empty air. He never touches the persimmon. Of course not. You can't bring down a fifteen-foot persimmon with a nine-foot pole.

So long as the President continues his assault upon the trust persimmon with the nine-foot pole of a Constitutional amendment the owners of all the persimmons on the tree will continue to regard his operations with amused indifference. But if he should take up the long and effectual pole of tariff revision you would see them all begin to jump up and down and holler. There would be instant and dire hubbub among them, for the removal of the Dingley duties on trust-made products would revoke the franchise to commit extortion

¹{*The New York Times*, September 6, 1902.}

now practiced by many of the trusts and combinations, and furnish a remedy for some of the chief abuses from which they make the people suffer.

Then indeed he would become the advocate of “something practical.” Then, certainly, we might expect to see within the Republican party powerful influences exerted against his nomination.

So inherent are contradictions in capitalist society that even the individual capitalist bristles with them. When capitalist society is itself caught in these contradictions the result frequently is a catastrophe; when the individual pillar of capitalism is seized with the affliction, the result is fun—to the onlooker.

**Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded October 2006**