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SECOND EDITORIAL

Roosevelt a Type.

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The light in which Mr. Theodore Roosevelt—Patriot Rough Rider, Law-Breaking President of Police Board, Reformer, Capitalist—was left in last week is a glamour {glimmer?} that exposes, not him alone, not his class alone, not his special political party alone, but all that he, his class and both capitalist parties stand for.

Mr. Roosevelt was so roundly beaten in the political arena of this city thirteen years ago, that he abandoned all hope of political distinction—at least through the front door. He vanished from the surface; he became a cow-boy and a man-tracker, in which occupations in the West he spent his exuberant spirit for violence and cruelty. Suddenly he turned up again in this city. What attracted him?

The “Reform” tidal wave of '94 had risen above the horizon. The putridity of the openly organized crime of the city—Tammany Hall—was being laid bare by the concealed organized crime of the city—New York’s Capitalist Class. This was Roosevelt’s new or second chance; like the carrion crow, he scented carrion and hied him hither.

Of course, Roosevelt was active during the campaign; “Reform” succeeded in cheating the working people that it was better material than Tammany; it triumphed. Roosevelt was not a candidate for election: he had not re-acquired the confidence he lost in '86 of getting into office by the front door; but he got into office by the back door. The “Reform” Mayor Strong appointed him President of the Board of Police.

Once in the saddle, Roosevelt displayed all the qualities that had taken him to the wilds of the West: brutality, disregard of even the decent appearance of a public servant, and withal that visionary feature of weak minds, who imagine that a good thing never ends. He imagined he had a life-place; he considered “Reform,” and therewith his special brand of legalized crime, in for all time; and he acted on that principle. “Reform” went down three years later. Among the biggest nails driven into

its coffin were those driven by Roosevelt himself. The day after election he found himself virtually on the sidewalk of public office.

Then came a second revulsion. The first disappointment had sent him down to the cowboys, the second disappointment landed him into a subaltern office in Washington. Whatever expectation of future political opportunities for political rascality Roosevelt entertained, he expected nothing more from New York; if it was to come, it was to come from some other quarter. So firmly set was this belief, that when the New York assessors assessed him, he disclaimed residence in the New York State, claiming to be a resident of Washington, D.C. Not expecting anything more from New York, he was not going to pay taxes here; he joined the capitalist brigade of tax-dodgers.

Suddenly the war breaks out; Roosevelt rushes to the front; a judicious expenditure of money secures flaming notices of his “prowesses” in the front, backed by thrilling pictures—all of which, articles and pictures, were essentially the products of imaginative and venal brains. But the war fever took; Roosevelt became a hero; a boom was started for him for Governor of this State on the Republican ticket;—Roosevelt was willing.

Suddenly he is confronted with his tax-dodging affidavit. Having claimed residence in the D.C. only a year ago, he is not qualified for the Governorship of the State the very next year. It is unnecessary to follow or depict his and his fellows’ contortions, or the affectation of civic virtue on the part of his Democratic doubles at so heinous an offence as “tax-dodging.”

It is enough to contemplate the disgraceful light into which Patriot-Capitalism is placed. Viewed at from what side one may choose,—whether from the side of “Law,” or from the side of “Patriotism,” or from the side of “Honor,” Theodore Roosevelt’s name, his individuality and his class stand up to the eyebrows in turpitude.

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