

The People.

VOL. VI, NO. 44

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 1897

PRICE 3 CENTS

EDITORIAL

Senator Guy's Cruel Joke

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At the election of a United States Senator from New York, on the 18th instant, State Senator Guy, a Tammany man of the Purroy wing of that organization, bolted the nominee of the Democratic caucus, David B. Hill, and cast his vote for Henry George. Questioned upon his conduct, Senator Guy said:

“In the recent campaign Mr. George rendered heroic service to the Democratic cause, uniting the labor interests in the support of Bryan.”

The ridiculous claim that the “labor interests” were “united in the support of Bryan” deserves not much consideration. The working class are the overwhelming majority in the land. If “united,” their candidate cannot fail of an election. Bryan’s defeat and minority sufficiently refute the claim; they prove just the reverse. There is not much of a joke in this.

But it is undeniable that the Bryan campaign stirred deeply certain layers of the working class; and it is also safe to say that many a workingman who never before voted the Democratic ticket, was drawn to it in '96. The joke perpetrated by Senator Guy, and the cruelty thereof, lie in his attributing this effect to Henry George.

Whatever labor enthusiasm there was for Bryan came through the denunciation of the Courts and the arraignment in the Democratic platform of judicial iniquities. The working class in America has received its deepest wounds at the hands of our prostituted Judiciary. Men who stood up for them in Chicago and tried to unmask capitalist conspiracies and butcheries were made the victims of a foul judicial murder; and everywhere else in the land, the Courts have stepped forward whenever wanted, like veritable lackeys of Capital, and done its dirty work. “No Government by Injunction,” was a motto to conjure by; it was taken from the Democratic platform; and by whom was it put there? By John P. Altgeld, the man whose almost first official act as Governor of Illinois was to pillory the infamous crime called the “Trial of the Anarchists,” by demonstrating with documentary evidence that the jury was packed, the testimony fraudulent, and the conduct of the whole case a conspiracy against

innocent men. John P. Altgeld was the soul of whatever labor enthusiasm there was for Bryan; his individuality and his views were the only magnet that attracted the workers—who stood by the Democratic nominee—and of all men Henry George represents the exact opposite of all that the workers saw in Altgeld.

Not yet, nor ever, will the working class of this land forget the infamy with which Henry George eternally covered his name in September, 1887. The innocent victims of Gerry, Grinnell and Bonfield were awaiting the execution of the death penalty in Chicago; in every worker's mind there was a settled conviction of the men's innocence; from all parts of the country a cry went up for mercy or in denunciation of the impending outrage; the capitalists feared the popular anger and halted; one man there was who at that nick of time could consolidate the popular indignation and make it assert itself; he had received 68,110 votes for Mayor of New York the pervious year, after a campaign that was inspired by a revolutionary spirit, and it was feared that his support had grown; that man was Henry George—and at that critical moment he proved a bastard. Surrounded by a political household of adventurers and unprincipled jackals after pelf, where no doubt likes flocked with likes, Henry George was in '87 striving to become "respectable"; he imagined he had gotten from the proletariat all he could get, and was seeking to step up higher by making his peace with the robber class. The moment was propitious, and the man who previously had espoused the cause of the Chicago victims, and who subsequently, a paltry sum of money being involved, denounced the Judge who gave judgment against him as a "confirmed ass," now, life, innocent life being in danger, stood up in full sight of the whole country and bowed ostentatiously before Law. "A crime has been committed," he declared, "the Courts have spoken; we must respect the judgment." Two months later the Chicago judicial massacre was put through. Henry George blew into the nostrils of the butchers the assurance of impunity.

Senator Guy is a cruel jokist to impute Altgeldism to George. He thus revives the memory of George's treason to the working class in the strongest manner that is possible to do so, and reminds us of the deep and lasting hatred in which they hold the miscreant.

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

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