

The People.

VOL. VII, NO. 32

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1897

PRICE 3 CENTS

SECOND EDITORIAL

Henry George.

By DANIEL DE LEON

The sudden death of Henry George, only four days before election, drew a heavy line across the reckoning of that capitalist conspiracy, and irreparably smashed that unhallowed capitalist political scheme that gave birth to his candidacy.

Henry George was in no wise a representative of the working class—class-conscious or otherwise—much less a forerunner of the Social Revolution. He impersonated {personified?} just the reverse of these. The approach of a revolutionary period is ever apt to heat into life the archest reactionists and reactionary ideas; and these then present themselves with such vehemence of language, such pathos of thought and in such revolutionary garb that they are liable to be mistaken for the ideas and the apostles of the Revolution itself, while, in point of fact, they are, at best, only the symptoms of these.

These circumstances made Henry George the subject and victim of a conspiracy concocted by the capitalist parties in the campaign that just closed. He was set up by them as a “people’s” { } as an “anti-boss”, “anti-monopoly” candidate, as a foe to all that the capitalist conspirators stood for. They calculated upon the popular, yet, to their own knowledge, mistaken impression that he was their adversary; they relied upon the attractiveness of some of his antecedents to draw to himself the swelling vote of the discontented, which they knew they were fast forfeiting, and which they knew was bound sooner or later to gravitate with full force toward the dreaded Socialist Labor party; they raised him as a joint shield for them all, and, incidentally, as a wedge against one another in their mutual and internal wrangles.

That Henry George was not what the capitalist papers were pretending in the campaign was sufficiently demonstrated by the presence of the infamous capitalist lackey, Judge Chas. H. Van Brunt, on Henry George’s “Democracy of Thomas Jefferson” ticket, together with this Van Brunt’s presence on the tickets of all the other parties of capital—Tammany, Low’s Citizens’ Union, and Tom Platt’s Republican. This fact demonstrated what Henry George’s leading theories and whole attitude had

sufficiently demonstrated to all careful observers. Nor did the fact pass unperceived. As the campaign proceeded George's campaign sank, despite all hysterical efforts, and indecent deceptions used by the capitalist press to blow life into it, and thereby seek to scuttle the Socialist Labor party.

That the Platt-Tracy-Low-Johnson scheme of swindle, to which the candidacy of Henry George was to serve as a mask, was becoming more and more apparent to the workingmen; that it was becoming clearer to Henry George himself; and that this knowledge was preying upon his mind, was graphically indicated by the description given of Henry George, as he looked twelve hours before he was smitten, by Alfred Henry Lewis:

“Henry George's eyes roved, his hair was tumbled, his face the theater of disorder. THERE WAS DESPAIR, TOO, IN HIS FACE, AS IF IN A DIM WAY HE LOOKED INTO A FUTURE BLACK WITH DISAPPOINTMENT.”

Peace to the ashes of Henry George. A benign Providence removed him before election day, the day, when, had he lived until then, he would have suffered the crowning mortification of his life—the sight of the evidence that his inane Single Tax theory had dwindled to nothingness, and that even with the most absurd, loud and huckstering system of booming, given him by the capitalist conspirators, and accepted by him, his name had ceased to be one to conjure by, and that his struggles to stem the tide of Socialism were misspent.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded November 2003