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EDITORIAL

BRYAN'S INSULT TO WORKINGMEN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“If he is a wage-earner, and you do not know how soon he may be, even if he is not now, is he safe when he is liable to be deprived of trial by jury, through the system known as government by injunction?”

This is one of the questions which [William J. Bryan](#) asked his audience in St. Louis on September 15. The question is a very pertinent one; indeed, it should engross the attention of every wage-worker in the land. The wage-workers in the State in which Mr. Bryan asked this question have strong reasons for being vitally interested in the question of “government by injunction.” They have time and again experienced its effect in Missouri.



WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN
(1860–1925)

Mr. Bryan has shown that he possesses all the quickness of a lightning change artist in adapting his speeches and “paramount issues” to the different localities he speaks in. In the Far West he talks as he did in 1896 about “[Free Silver](#),” “[16 to 1](#),” and the “[Crime of '73](#).” In the Near East, he ignores Silver and assails the Trust. This policy requires great effrontery; it requires a profound contempt for the intelligence of his listeners. But this St. Louis speech goes further in implied contempt for the wage-workers’ intelligence than any previous performance of this charlatan leader of the leading charlatan party.

In 1896 the platform of the Democratic Party contained a plank which strongly condemned government by injunction. In 1898 the same Democratic Party in Missouri renominated for the office of Judge one of the most notorious of all the injunction-issuing judges. He had been on the bench

for years, and had and had issued injunctions right and left against working men on strikes. His record was so malodorous in this respect that **John P. Altgeld**, the cheap demagogue who had inserted the "government by injunction" plank in the Chicago platform, felt it necessary to take the stump and advocate the election of this "government by injunction" judge, whom Altgeld and Bryan's "anti-government by injunction" party had renominated.

After this record of criminal humbugging, Bryan's question is one of the most deliberate insults possible to the intelligence of the wage-workers of the State of Missouri, in particular, of the nation at large, in general.

This **P.T. Barnum** of politics not only assumes that the workingmen like to be robbed and imprisoned without trial when they resist. Bryan credits the working class voter with less intelligence than a sow; a sow will remember even if it cannot resent an outrage. Bryan assumes that the working man neither remembers nor is capable to resent.

When one man deliberately insults another, the insulted man is justified in using a cowhide. Bryan stood before thousands of workingmen in St. Louis and insulted them flagrantly and publicly. They would be justified in dealing with him as one man deals with another who flings an insult in his face.

What are the wage-workers going to do with this political mountebank next November 6th?

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