

The following article written by Henry George appeared in the Sacramento Daily Union signed by "Proletarian." Articles by George appeared in the newspaper from 1866 to 1870. This article appeared in Vol. 31, No. 4810, 28 August 1866

[For the Union.]  
THE NEW ORLEANS TRAGEDY.

Messrs. Editors : If there is an American who can read the meager accounts you have published of the massacre at New Orleans without clenching teeth and quicker breath, his heart never beat with the fire of the nation through its great struggle, he never felt the weariness of deferred hope, the agony of bitter defeat, or the triumphant joy of the glorious close.

Just think of it; the men who kept their faith amid the faithless; who were our friends through adversity and peril; who were persecuted and exiled for their adherence to our cause; whom neither bribes nor threats could swerve from their allegiance— butchered in cold blood, shot down like dogs, beaten and mutilated by a fiendish mob in a city to which we fought our way rough rebel guns, and have held by the strong arm of military power.

When, through the fire of the forts, our ships forced their way to the traitorous city, and the proud emblem of the republic flew again with glory in the place its dishonor, and every loyal heart was filled with the wild joy of triumph, who could have imagined— who, in the blackness of his heart, would have dared to assert—that when the long struggle was ended, and conquered treason had begged for life, in the fullness of our victory, our bitter enemies would be allowed to make good their threats and wreak their hatred on those who in time of need had been true to us, while, by direct order of the President, the national troops stood aloof and let them work their hellish will?

What can we say if these men curse us with a bitter curse, when this is the reward of their loyalty, this the return for their friendship? They had waited our coming as their deliverance, had hailed our victory as their recompense, had trusted to our power as their safety; and they find that in the plenitude of our magnanimity they are given as a peace-offering to their persecutors. Have there not already been sacrifices enough? Is the roll of martyrs not yet full? Is the daughter of the horse-leech not yet satisfied? Are not six hundred thousand graves enough; have the sufferings of Port Hudson and Andersonville and Belle Isle gone for nothing; has the blood of Lincoln been shed in vain, that we must leave the men who wrought such things free to work their will upon those for whose protection the nation's faith is pledged?

This is reconstruction with a vengeance— this is mercy that slays justice, magnanimity that forgets honor, reconciliation that gives caresses to its foes and leaves its allies to the fury of battled hate!

Who is responsible for this thing? Who has loosed the tiger chained at such cost and fanned into flame the fire that Butler stamped out?

PROLETARIAN.

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