

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 6, NO. 261.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 1906.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

THROWN ON THE DEFENSIVE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Boise, Ida., *Idaho Daily Statesman* has been forced upon the defensive. After having, for several weeks, been howling in chorus with its fellow hyenas of the reptile capitalist press against Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, as though the Orchard-Adams “confessions”—the latest of the long series of shattered “confessions” at \$2 per—had already been proven true, that paper has begun to grow apologetic. The apologies amount to a retreat. A few hand grenades may hasten the paper’s gait backward.

The *Statesman* deprecates the language of the publications friendly to the accused. It is of the opinion the matter should be left to the courts to adjudicate, and that only thus could “the interests of even handed justice” be promoted. Even handed justice, forsooth! The theory of the law [and be it remembered that the capitalist press lies on its knees before the LAW in devotional devotion] is that a man is presumed innocent until his guilt is proven. The publications friendly to the arrested men maintain that they are innocent, their guilt not yet having been proven; the reptile press, subsidized by the Mine Owners’ Association, declare they are guilty before their guilt is proven. If expressions of views in keeping with the theory of the law are wrong, what shall be said about expressions of views that trample upon that theory? If the views of the publications friendly to the three men will “imperil the interests of even handed justice,” is it likely that the Mine Owners’ Association who has already consigned the men to the gallows, will promote “the interests of even handed justice”? Obviously not. The lawless capitalist press having sailed in to overthrow the LAW, which it affects to worship, every decent man will recognize all the greater need of standing by the Law, of standing by it with all the greater vim. No other method will be able to counteract the mischief which the *Statesman* and its fellow defiers of the law would set on foot.

The *Statesman* is particularly apologetic concerning the manner of the extradition proceedings in Colorado. It declares suavely that the manner was “in no sense unusual,” and with special unction it alleges that “there is probably not one case in forty” where the accused is given a hearing by the Governor from whose State the extradition is applied for, and is treated otherwise than these three men were treated. The *Statesman* knows that it is here insinuating a robust falsehood, all the more heinous because statistically true. Hardly one case of extradition in forty is against other than what may be called “strolling criminals.” In none of these thirty-nine cases does the criminal care for, least of all demand a hearing; in all of them he is a palpable runaway; in all he is a stranger in the town in which he is captured, certainly an alien in the State of the capture; finally IN NONE ARE THE ARREST AND PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED IN SECRET. As a rule the announcement of requisition papers being issued is made in the press long ahead of the arrest, night fall and the adjournment of the courts is not waited for, no special train, guarded by soldiers, is gotten ready, no effort is made to prevent the prisoner from communicating with his family and friends (he has none in these 39 cases, in the place of his capture). Such are the usual cases of extradition. Not one of these features attended the case of these men. Their case came obviously under the category of the one case in forty. They certainly are not “strolling criminals”; they are all residents of the State of Colorado and of the city of Denver; they there have their place of business; they are no runaways; they asked to communicate with their attorneys, the demand was refused; and in order to make assurance doubly sure, they were not arrested until after night fall, after the courts had adjourned, after the Governor had sneaked out of town, and after a special train had been gotten up under military escort to spirit them away so as to prevent recourse to all legal methods that might thwart the conspiracy. Such a proceeding is in every sense unusual; it has never before been resorted to in the history of the land; it is in violation of law and of decency; it bears the brand of Cain on its brow.

In sight of such practices; in sight of the proceedings being upon “confessions” of the sort that the Mine Owners’ Association has more than once purchased for \$2 and failed to convict its victims on; in sight of the fact that direct participation in the killing of Steunenberg by the three men, or such close complicity as would

amount to the same thing, is out of the question, seeing that Moyer was not in Idaho since last October, three months before the killing, Haywood not for a year and Pettibone not in five years; in sight of the fact that the scheme is to endeavor to fasten upon them the guilt of “remote complicity”; in view of the fact that “remote complicity” may be construed from the most innocent acts or words, and that when McKinley was killed some demented fanatics and vicious foes of Hearst sought to hold him guilty as “an accomplice” on the strength of certain words that his paper in this city used on the occasion of McKinley’s supposed indifference to the Goebel murder in Kentucky;—in sight of all these facts, vain is the endeavor of the Idaho *Statesman* to seek to apologize for the magistracy of its State and of Colorado. These have discredited themselves beyond redemption; along with them the reptile press of the capitalist class has covered itself with infamy. The two together have brought the country to the brink of social commotion. Only the friends of the three innocent men have by their intrepid and unflagging exposure of the facts and denunciation of the official and capitalist criminals made for real law and order. Only their conduct has stemmed the tide of social rupture. To them alone will credit be due if the country emerges from this crisis without a social catastrophe.

We greet as the first sign of the success of the publications, which the Idaho *Statesman* condemns, that that mouthpiece of the Mine Owners’ Association has, despite the supposed omnipotence of its brigand masters, found it at last advisable to explain, that is, apologize. *The People*, for one, feels encouraged to proceed as it has begun in this matter—turn on the light and keep it turned upon every step taken in the Colorado-Idaho affair. There will be more explanations; there will be more apologies; from being forced upon the defensive, the malign spirits, back of the Colorado-Idaho conspiracy against the Working Class and the safety of the land, will be beaten into a rout.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded February 2009

slpns@slp.org