

Daniel De Leon

## **Editorial: The Pinkerton Dodge**

We are having the case of the *Alabama* claims over again.

The Geneva Arbitration Committee awarded to the United States in 1872 the round sum of fifteen million dollars payable by England as an indemnity for the damages done to United States citizens and property by the Confederate cruisers which had made British territory and waters their base of operations. The theory of England was that no indemnity was due to the United States because England had not aided and abetted the Confederate cruisers in their work of devastation; in other words, that she had observed strict neutrality. The answer of the United States was that England had not observed the requisite neutrality, in that she had aided and abetted the Confederate cruisers; and in proof hereof evidence was adduced showing that the cruisers in question, and notably the *Alabama*, were built in British yards and equipped for war with British arms and ammunition. England strove to avoid the consequences of this concrete charge; and she reasoned in this wise: *The ships were built in my yards, but they were not armed there; they left my ports unarmed; they took in their munitions of war after they had left my jurisdiction; they were equipped for warfare on the high seas.*"

This was the point around which the discussion hinged and the conclusion arrived at was this: "Even though the cruisers left the British ports unarmed, they, together with the munitions of war with which they were finally equipped, both left British ports for the purpose and with the intent and expectation of meeting somewhere and supplementing each other. By

*Daniel De Leon*

doing so they virtually left together. The method of leaving was simply calculated to allay suspicion; it did not change the intention. And that intention was a violation of neutrality". Upon this sound principle England was pronounced guilty, and damages were awarded.

The same dodge behind which England tried to hide her crime against the United States, and from behind which the United States pulled her with a firm hand, holding her up to public gaze as a malefactor, is now resorted to by the Pinkerton headquarters of pirates and brigands; and, still more wonderful to say, our public authorities are smiling approvingly at this dodge of the Pinkertonian criminals. These know full well that it would have been the most open of breaches of the law to send off an armed body from their various camps. Consequently, whether the facts be true or not, they are setting up the defense that the men were sent unarmed by one route, while the weapons went by another.

The principle that prevailed in the Case of the *Alabama* prevails here: Both men and weapons left from the same camp; the two consignments—men and arms—should, and so they did, meet somewhere; for that reason, constructively, they were sent off together; the method of their sending off was simply calculated to allay suspicion; it does not alter the intention; that intention was high treason against the United States.

The two cases of the *Alabama* and the Pinkertons run so far on parallel lines. Their ends should be alike. The Pinkertons cannot be spoken free without a repudiation of the high principles upon which the United States stood in the Case of the *Alabama*. As England was adjudged guilty, so must the Pinkertons.

The Pinkertonian bandits who are committing treason against the United States, together with their aiders and abettors, should be treated as they deserve. The facts are undisputed, the law is clear. Indict, try, sentence and execute them.

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