

EDITORIAL

A RED-HOT “WHY.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE constitution of the country and the constitutions of the several States, the constitution of Idaho included, guarantee a speedy trial to prisoners.

It is now nearly a year since Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone were kidnapped from their Colorado home and transported to Idaho, there to answer the imaginary charge of having been privy to and, therefore, guilty of the murder of ex-Gov. Steunenberg. One of the reasons, or excuses, or apologies for the kidnapping was the great anxiety of the kidnapers for a speedy trial. A year has passed, the trial is not yet—WHY?

When the “anxious-for-a-trial” prosecution (read persecution) began putting off the trial the excuse given was that the delay was due to “manoeuvres on the part of the defence,” which, having appealed to the Supreme Court of the U.S. from the decisions of the Courts below in the habeas corpus proceedings, thereby estopped the Idaho Court from getting into motion. Anybody who knows anything of law knows the reasoning is false. Nevertheless, the persecution faced it through; having the power, it put off the trial “until the U.S. Supreme Court shall have rendered its decision.” The Supreme Court has rendered its decision, and yet no trial—WHY?

When the U.S. Supreme Court decided to legalize kidnapping, all pretext for further postponements of the trial was removed. The persecution appeared in lengthy interviews in all its subsidized papers of the land saying they now were going to start the trial—soon, immediately, if not sooner; and they availed themselves of the courtesy of their subsidized press to inform the public that “the murderers would have a fair trial,” besides a speedy one; and that the evidence was overwhelming and convincing. Two months, almost, have elapsed since the U.S. Court decision, and since these rhapsodies against “the murderers,” and yet no trial—WHY?

Can it be that the persecution has not a shred of evidence—so little evidence that it is now resorting to arson, in order to account for the destruction of “evidence” that never existed—against the men whom it has sought to convict at the bar of public opinion through deliberate falsehood woven out of the whole cloth, by having them decried as “murderers”?

Can it be the persecution is mortally afraid that its own witnesses will break down, turn upon the persecution, and give away the conspiracy, as happened in Colorado with their precious Sterlings, Beckmans and Scotts?

Or can it be that, headed by the Governor of Idaho, the Capitalist Class of the land is bent upon re-rearing the institution of the Bastille, whither persons, displeasing to the powers that be, could, and henceforth again shall, be indefinitely held in durance, and thus virtually convicted, and sentenced to an indefinite period of confinement WITHOUT A TRIAL?

Whatever the answer to the WHY, it is a WHY that is rapidly growing red-hot.

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

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