

EDITORIAL

## HE WHO TAKES THE SWORD SHALL PERISH WITH THE SWORD.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**G**OMPERS, Mitchell and Morrison, sentenced to imprisonment upon the leading ground of “bringing about the breach of plaintiff’s existing contracts with others,” attest for the first time in their lives that these gentlemen have not lived in vain.

The severe sentences, pronounced by the Court, the Court declared was intended to be exemplary. The sentences are exemplary. They vindicate the moral principle that they that take the sword shall perish with sword.

Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison took the sword of the “Contract”; with that sword they smote the American proletariat.

The “Contract” is a sacred thing. Its sacredness lies in its equity. The pledge made and exchanged between peers is a bond that binds with cords of moral strength. For that very reason the pledge extorted by force and by fraud is null. For that very reason to apply the name of “Contract” to the product of force and fraud, extorted from workingman by capitalist, is a double desecration. It desecrates the “Contract,” by the vileness that is sought to be palmed off as “Contract”; it desecrates the moral sense itself that underlies the idea of “Contract.” It defiles the “Contract.”

Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison took the sacred sword of the “Contract,” and, instead of smiting therewith the capitalist desecrators of the equities of the “Contract”—instead of smiting therewith the capitalists, who, by fraud and the lash of hunger, extort pledges from Labor and then commit the infamy of pretending that such extortion is a “Contract,” and of demanding that the same be sacredly lived up to—instead of swinging the sword of the moral principle that underlies the “Contract,” of swinging it over the heads of the capitalist extorters—instead of that

Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison swung the sword over the head of the already sufficiently fettered proletariat, and preached to these and demanded of these that they bow in obedience to the “Sacredness of the Contract”—in fact driving them to bow before an obscene substitute, to the undoing of the proletariat, to the hamstringing of its powers, to the dislocating of its several limbs, to the incapacitating of it to move as one man, the alleged “Contract,” ever fettering enough of them to render unanimous action impossible.

The sword that Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison took is the sword that now they perish by—the Contract.

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May this be atonement enough. May it mark the turning of a long lane. May the retribution that overtook Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison heal the wounds which they, in ignorance, it is to be hoped, have inflicted upon the Labor Movement, and gather the shattered forces of the proletariat that they, in ignorance, it is to be hoped, have scattered. May enlightened experience and experienced enlightenment henceforth bind the proletariat of the land in a solid body, and guide its path to its liberation.

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

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