

# DAILY PEOPLE

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EDITORIAL

## PRESTON III.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A** NEW genealogy is forming in the land—the House Preston. The man with whom it may be said the “house” was started is Morrie Preston, now serving a life sentence in the penitentiary of Nevada on the charge of murder.

Preston was on picket duty for his Union in Goldfield when the employer against whom the strike was on rushed upon him with a lethal weapon—a gun. Preston drew his revolver and killed his assailant on the spot. The guilt or innocence of the deed depended upon the nature of the act the doer of such a deed was engaged in at the time. Was the act illegal? then, on the same principle that the burglar, who, upon being discovered, shoots and kills, the killing is an aggravation of the offence, is accentuated crime. Was the act engaged in at the time legal? then the killing is justified: it is an act of self-defence. If, then, Preston did a guilty deed, the act he was engaged in must have been a guilty one in itself. The court-directed verdict that convicted him of murder laid the cornerstone of the House of Preston. The verdict amounted to, and was intended to {be} a pronouncement of picketing, that is strike duty, a criminal offence. Similar decisions had been rendered before. They were but preparatory to the raising of the new house—a house that, from its first prominent victim, may be termed the House of Preston.

Preston II was furnished last year in this city during the waistmakers' strike.

The third of the line is furnished by the case of “Pink” Franklin in South Carolina. Franklin killed. How did he kill? The governmental answer is: “In resisting arrest.” If so he was guilty. Fact is his employer tried to keep him under peonage. In fleeing “Pink” exercised legitimate civic rights; and he exercised legitimate civic rights, which flowed from the first rights, when he shot his pursuer.

Boldly to enact a law that enters “picketing” on the list of crimes—that is more

than the bourgeois dare; frankly to enact a law that pronounces “peonage” legitimate—that is not in keeping with the chivalry of the Southern labor exploiters. To accomplish the same ends surreptitiously—that is the purpose of the move that is producing a new line of victims, a line that began with Preston I., and the third in succession now being “Pink” Franklin.

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