

The



People.

VOL. VI.—NO. 6.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MAY 10, 1896

PRICE 3 CENTS.

SECOND EDITORIAL

WHO IS THE SCAB?

By DANIEL DE LEON

More than once have we shown that the lips of the “pure and simple” labor leader or fakir are the last place on which the word “scab” should find harborage. The scab is the product of capitalism. The concentration of industry and the perfection of machinery held in private hands, throw men out of work. Starving men, with starving wives behind them, and children wailing for bread or for the milk that the unnurtured mother’s breast refuses to yield, can ill be expected to lie down patiently and idly. They will grow desperate. One of the manifestations of their desperation is to underbid their fellow proletarians. Thus the scab crops up. The labor fakirs are directly responsible for the existence of this wretch. They are, or have been, the prop of capitalism. They are thus partners with capitalism in the manufacture of the scab. It is but a case of retribution when the scab undermines their unions. They are hoisted by a petard of their own hands. Their vaporings against the scab are idiotic.

But an incident that now comes to light brings the scab much nearer home to the labor fakir.

When the great Chicago railroad strike was on and a general strike of all workers was expected to aid the railroaders, Cigarmakers’ Union No. 14 of Chicago went out boldly and manfully. Immediately committees of the “scab” cigar shops of the city went to the strike committee of Union No. 14 expressing the readiness of all these “scabs” to go out, provided the A.F. of L. gave the word for a general strike. What at that moment was the attitude of “Union” President Perkins, of Gompers, of McGuire, of Lennon and of all these paladins of unionism? Did they recognize the solidarity of labor as these scabs did? No! They quaked in their boots; thought of themselves and their little jobs; little cared what happened to the railroaders; and did not even feel ashamed of the example held up to them by the men they had been

libeling as “scabs.”

Who were the scabs then, these so-called “scab” cigar makers or those so-called “union” officers?

**Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded October 2005**