

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 4, NO. 252.

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 1904.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## THE ALABAMA SCHEME ON FOOT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**BOUT four years ago, a report was published in these columns of the convention, or rather, two conventions held in rapid succession by the miners of Alabama. The report was written by a miner himself who was there, and “knew all about it.” It was to this effect: Delegates had been elected. When they met the officers found them intractable. The scheme had been concocted between the officers and the mine owners to reduce wages. The delegates would not. Indeed, the temper of their constituents, when elected, was all but brotherly to Brother Capital. The rank and file had acted under sentiments that presupposed that, knowingly or unknowingly, they labored under strong doubts regarding the legitimacy of their alleged Brother Capital. They suspected the gentleman of having been hatched from a cuckoo’s egg in their nest. At any rate, they felt nowise friendly, least of all brotherly towards him. The labor leaders or fakirs, labored hard to work the delegates “around.” It was no go. Thereupon these leaders resorted to their powers—those powers that brand the vast majority of the pure and simple Union organizations as mere satrapies, with the labor fakir as the satrap who can do with the members as he will. They dissolved the convention; ordered another election; saw to it “by virtue of their powers” that a different brand of delegates was returned; met at that second convention; and there registered the will of the mine owners. That happened in Alabama. It looks as if the performance is now to be repeated in the north.

The bituminous miners’ convention, of which Mr. John Mitchell is the much praised president (by capitalist concerns) has been in session at Indianapolis. At the convention and at the meeting of the mine-workers and mine-owners delegates Mr. Mitchell landed by slow gradations down to the demand of the mine-owners for a reduction of 5 per cent. from the present scale of wages. Whether it is that such a

cut, now when the price of everything, bread included, is going up; or that the miners' delegates have begun to see through Mr. Mitchell;—whatever it be, the male widow of Senator Hanna labored in vain to convince them to cut their own throats. They would consent to no such, or any other cut, and the mine-owners left, realizing, as the despatches have it, that “they could do nothing with that convention.” Did the mine-owners therefore go home disheartened? Indeed not.

Here are some of the statements made by the homing mine-owners:

“Affairs look now more promising than ever. We have won over the officials.”

Again:

“The officials will now win over the miners. This will be done through a series of district conventions, at which the workers will be told of the unwisdom of holding out.”

Again:

“The rank and file will be asked to send UNRESTRICTED DELEGATES TO ANOTHER NATIONAL CONVENTION.”

So there we have the Alabama scheme in full course of operation. And how well posted these operators are upon what the plan of campaign is to be in pursuit of the goal to bring about a convention that will register the mine-owners' will!

The Mitchells are the decoy ducks of the capitalist class; their form of Unionism is but the hook and net with which to land the workingman limp as a fish on the capitalist's banquet table. The Labor Movement must smash both decoy-ducks and hooks and nets, and organize anew into bodies that are Trades Unions in fact and not in name, and whose structures may leave as little chance for the Mitchells to decoy-duck in as light in a shop gives burglars a chance to play their pranks.

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Uploaded April 2007

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