

# The People.

VOL. VII, NO. 8

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MAY 23, 1897

PRICE 3 CENTS

THIRD EDITORIAL

## Sovereign's Utility.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he revelations made by the Hardy, Ark., *Morgan's Buzz-Saw* upon the conduct of Mr. James R. Sovereign accomplish infinitely more than finally to strike Mr. Sovereign's name from the list of honorable men, and giving him a lasting place on the list of labor and political crooks. All this had been done by the wide-awake before *Morgan's Buzz-Saw* had started the publication of his revelations. What the revelations now accomplish is to give forcible warning against loose forms of political organizations that mean to overthrow existing ones.

It is now made clear that Mr. Sovereign was a member of the People's party; that, as such, he had a voice in its councils; that, as such, he was put on the stump to urge the election of People's party candidates; and that, owing to all this, he was looked up to and quoted as a representative man of that party. That, all this notwithstanding, he exercised his influence against People's party candidates at the last elections, and in favor of rival Democratic ones; and that the mischief he did in that corrupt role was due wholly to the circumstance that the Democratic machine could tell the people:

"Here you have a Populist himself who is against the Populist candidate and in favor of ours; can you Populists and others now deny that our candidate is the better man for you?"

What the People's party suffered by the infamous conduct of Mr. Sovereign it has only itself to blame for. The fault lay with its own form of organization. The People's party has no organization properly speaking; what it calls its "organization" is like a heap of sand, with no more organization than that. All organization must be subject to disciplinary powers. Where there are none such there is no organization, and all the evils imaginary will follow. This is particularly the case with a political organization. If the People's party had been properly organized, Mr. Sovereign could have been yanked off the stump as a People's party speaker in short order, and whatever he then did or said against the party's candidates would have been stripped of all force or prestige.

Mr. Sovereign will not have lived in vain if his disreputable career should contribute its share to bring home to the members of the Socialist Labor party the absolute necessity of a solid, thoroughly disciplined organization, with powers to keep order while it insures freedom. In the fierce contests that lie before us with the forces of capital, every precaution must be taken to prevent scamps from officially parading with the mask of the party, and thus deceive the unwary, confuse the incautious and assassinate the party within its own house.

There is much utility in Mr. Sovereign's career. It furnishes an object lesson to accentuate the principle upon which the last national convention of the party met and settled each of the many questions that came up before it, and upon which the decisions of the convention were ratified by overwhelming majorities, to wit, the principle of:

“Progress with Order, and Order with Progress.”

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

Uploaded September 2003