

The People.

VOL. VII, NO. 7

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MAY 16, 1897

PRICE 3 CENTS

SECOND EDITORIAL

Utah is Good.

By DANIEL DE LEON

Among the States that some folks are considering to try the plan of “capturing it for Socialism,” and of there “establishing Socialism” in, is Utah. We earnestly recommend to these folks a careful study of the history of Utah. The history of no State outside of Utah will furnish a better light by which to discover the folly of the proposed attempt.

Utah was not the first place in which the Mormon colony let itself down. Moving with Brigham Young down from his native Vermont, it set up its tents and struck them at least twice before it reached Salt Lake. The history of Utah proper begins with these campings and decampings. What caused the last decamping and the choice of the Salt Lake region for the next settlement was the obverse and reverse of one and the same sociologic principle, to wit, that a revolutionary idea, or at least an idea subversive of some existing and ruling principle, can not maintain itself in a dominant political atmosphere that is hostile, and that such an idea must either overthrow the hostile political atmosphere in which it happens to start, or migrate to a place where itself can be sovereign. The dominant atmosphere within the settled territory of the United States was hostile to Mormonism, Mormonism did not attempt to change this, and, consequently, it chose for its last camping ground a spot outside of the United States, and which, though belonging nominally to Mexico, was too far away from settled Mexico to be affected by her.

If we go no further in the history of Utah we find ample warning against a scheme to “establish Socialism” on territory dominated by the capitalist government of Washington. But Utah’s later history furnishes further warnings.

With the purchase by the United States to the territory north and west of Texas, the Mormon settlement again came within the territory of an actively hostile and dominant power. From that moment its troubles began; the discovery of gold in California, with the subsequent flow of population thither, and the setting up of non-

Mormon settlements all around Mormonism increased the difficulty day by day, until finally Mormonism was dwarfed, and is now no longer a factor to be counted with.

From beginning to end, the history of Utah illustrates a principle against which Mr. Debs' latest plan will batter its head to pieces, just as his first plan—the A.R.U.—battered itself to pieces against the principle that a labor organization, that does not unite its members at the ballot box the same as in the shop, and for the overthrow of capitalism, can only lead to failure—as THE PEOPLE prophesied to him in two extensive articles published in 1893.¹

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

Uploaded September 2003

¹["Light is Breaking: Voices from Railway Employes," April 9, 1893, and "Railroad Men: What Their New Organization Portends—The American Railway Union," May 14, 1893—R.B.]