

The People.

VOL. VII, NO. 2.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 1897.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {197}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—Do you remember the talk we had last week?

UNCLE SAM—I think it was about ex-Governor Waite, of Colorado.

B.J.—Yes; I had been arguing that, because his supporters were bought off from him, it was useless to vote.

U.S.—I remember. And I showed you that that was no evidence of the ballot being useless, because the platform on which he stood invited corruption and made his supporters liable to be corrupted.

B.J.—Yes; that was it.

U.S.—And you granted finally that I was right. Are ye going to take it back again?

B.J.—No; that argument is sound. But I have another reason why voting is useless.

U.S.—Let's have it.

B.J.—Does the Socialist platform invite corruption?

U.S.—Guess not.

B.J.—The Socialist voters can't be bought off, can they?

U.S.—Guess not.

B.J.—Consequently they will vote the Socialist ticket, will they?

U.S.—Most assuredly.

B.J.—Now, will you deny that in many places the Socialist vote is simply not counted?

U.S.—I don't deny that.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—Now, will you be kind enough to explain to me what is the difference, as far as final results are concerned, whether the voters are bought off by the capitalists or whether they are not bought off, but are counted out? In either case the party falls through. For that reason I maintain that voting is useless.

U.S.—You reason now as falsely as you did before.

B.J.—Just prove it.

U.S.—There's counting out and counting out.

B.J.—I don't see it.

U.S.—You will if you listen.

B.J.—I'm all ears.

U.S.—Do you imagine that in any of the places where the Socialist vote was counted out the Socialists cast a vote large enough to carry the election?

B.J.—No; I certainly don't.

U.S.—Now then, these capitalists throw out a good number of our votes, not to keep our men out of that election, but to discourage us. Our men were beaten anyhow.

B.J.—Very well.

U.S.—This "counting out" is, therefore, not a counting out of your candidates, because they were anyhow not elected.

B.J.—True; but one of these days they will be elected, and then the counting out of the votes will be equal to the counting out of your candidates.

U.S.—There is where you err—

B.J.—I don't!

U.S.—Just wait. We know approximately our strength. All parties do. When our votes are now thrown out we care little. They are thrown out simply to discourage us. But we can't be discouraged. We move steadily on and grow. Every election brings us nearer to victory. We know it, even though we are not credited with our full vote. And we put up with it because we know that anyhow we were not yet elected.

B.J.—But how can you tell when you are elected?

U.S.—We can tell by the pulse of the movement. Now to the point. What the criminal capitalist class will dare to do with the votes of a movement like ours when the movement is yet weak, that criminal class will not dare to do when the movement is

strong, especially when it has triumphed at the polls.

B.J.—But if it does dare?

U.S.—There is no instance in history where a successful movement has submitted to being defrauded. One thing is to perpetrate petty fraud, like counting out a few ballots where the fraud would anyhow not affect the results; another thing is to perpetuate huge election frauds where the frauds would affect the result.

B.J.—There's something in that.

U.S.—A good deal. God help the capitalists if they dare throw out our votes when by doing so they will upset the fiat of the ballot. Criminal though that class is, it has the daring of the sneak thief only. It will recoil before such an act; and if it don't, it will be dealt with accordingly. The ballot is all right in the Socialists' hands and shot from the Socialist platform. Counting out will not do there when counting out would amount to anything. All the counting out to-day only fires us to increased activity. That day is at hand when no counting out will be dared. The vote of the Socialist movement is not a populist or similar rope of sand affair.

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

Uploaded January 2008

slpns@slp.org