

The People.

VOL. IX, NO. 7.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MAY 14, 1899.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {291}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (looking very wise)—I have a nut for the first Socialist whom I meet to crack.

UNCLE SAM—Suppose you try it on me.

B.J.—Good. Here it is: Is it not Socialist principle that bigger capital makes competition harder for smaller capital?

U.S.—'Tis.

B.J.—And if two big concerns pull together they will be able to pull down any one concern which neither could have coped with single handed?

U.S.—Just so.

B.J.—And that the upshot of it all is gigantic monopoly that, on the one hand, defies competition, and, on the other, deprives the workingman of his just share of production?

U.S.—Correct, again.

B.J.—Now this is my nut for you: Would not there remain, under any form of Government, a tendency towards just such tyrannous coalitions?

U.S.—Did you ever see one of Barnum's clowns turn a somersault backwards?

B.J.—Lots of times.

U.S.—Well, that's just what you have done now.

B.J.—What way?

U.S.—From your series of questions down to just before the last one, the conclusion was justified that you know the secret of why a big concern disables smaller ones from



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

competing with it—

B.J.—Well—

U.S.—To wit, the fact that the big concern can undersell the smaller ones—

B.J.—Well—

U.S.—On the further fact that the big concern can do so because of its ability to operate more perfected capital—

B.J.—Well—

U.S.—“Well,” “Well,” “Well.” You don’t seem to realize what such premises imply.

B.J.—What do they imply?

U.S.—They imply that the concentration of capital in private hands is predicated upon non-existence of still more concentrated capital in operation. Now, then, under Socialism, the best machinery of production will always be public property; that being the case, no better machinery can possibly be in private hands, and, accordingly, no private labor-grinding monopoly could arise. To say “Socialism,” and yet imagine the continuance of essentially capitalist conditions, is as silly as to say “Light,” and yet imagine the continuance of “Darkness.” So, there you are with your “nut.”

B.J.—Well, I see. But suppose the Socialist Labor Party in power, how would it go about to eradicate the Trust?

U.S.—“Eradicate” the Trust?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Why, man, you are more at sea than I imagined. Socialism does not want to “eradicate” the Trust. It wants to NATIONALIZE the Trust. Eradication means destruction; Socialism does not propose to destroy the Trust. The Trust is a good thing; it is an improved implement of production. What Socialism wants to destroy is the private ownership of the Trust.

B.J.—Well, that’s what I mean; how would the S.L.P. go about it?

U.S.—Here, my good man, you expect of me that I prophesy to you. That I can’t. The Cuban patriots did not propose to destroy Cuba, did they?

B.J.—Guess not.

U.S.—They proposed to destroy Spain’s private property in the island. Could they have foreseen the circumstances that finally determined the manner in which their

purpose was to be accomplished?

B.J.—N-n—o.

U.S.—So with the S.L.P. It will continue to educate the masses; drill them for the political struggle; lead them to the conquest of the public powers. Once in power, it will be as easy to the Socialists to legislate the Trusts out of the hands of their present holders and into the hands of the American people, as it is now easy to the Demo-Rep Capitalists to legislate, as they do, the property of the land out of the hands of the workers into the hands of the idlers. Think this over.

B.J. (scratches his head)—But—

U.S.—Do you feel a tremor in your knees?

B.J.—But if the capitalists fight?

U.S.—The sword of America is ample enough to bury every traitor who would raise an impious hand against the people's fiat expressed at the ballot box.

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

Uploaded February 2009

slpns@slp.org