



DIALOGUE

## UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {304}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**B**ROTHER JONATHAN—Did you read the leaflet I gave you with Mayor Jones' address to the people of our State of Ohio and his platform?

UNCLE SAM—I did.

B.J.—And don't you think they are grand? Don't it strike you our working people of Ohio must be fools if they don't elect him?

U.S.—I don't.

B.J.—You stagger me! Didn't you read his scathing denunciation of political parties, showing that they are an unmitigated evil, and that none are needed.

U.S.—I did, and very carefully, too; and the first serious fault I would find with him is just those passages.

B.J.—And I thought them so beautiful and true! You must be mistaken!

U.S.—When reading those passages I thought I was reading a translation into very indifferent English of some pronunciamento issued by some Tyrant in the days of the Tyrants of ancient Greece. His address is in the identical vein, it proceeds from the identical motives, it aims at the identical goal, and it uses the identical methods of the {Tyrants.}

B.J.—The Tyrants!?!

U.S.—Yes, the Tyrants.

B.J.—You puzzle me; explain!



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—Let’s for a moment leave the Greek Tyrants aside, and take up first a preliminary question. Let’s first be clear upon what a “political party” essentially is.

B.J.—That’s soon done. A “political party” is a perpetuator of slavery, an organization for keeping people in galling bondage.

U.S.—You are a good parrot; that’s just what Jones says; and the readiness with which you echo his words proves their mischievousness: Words so takingly framed that they induce repetition without thought are of the most mischievous.

B.J.—Will you deny that these Republican and Democratic parties are perpetuators of slavery, organizations to keep people in galling bondage?

U.S.—Will you deny that the Republican and Democratic candidates for Governor in this our State of Ohio are a couple of rascals?

B.J. (quickly)—Of course, I won’t deny that!

U.S.—Does it follow from that that your pet Jones, who is also a candidate for Governor in this State, also is a rascal?

B.J.—’Course not!

U.S.—Consequently, candidates for Governor may be rascals in some cases, and in others not.

B.J. (cautiously)—Y-e-s.

U.S.—So, likewise, with political parties. The Republican and Democratic parties may be, ARE rascally; but that is no proof that rascality is of the essence of all political parties any more than the rascality of old party candidates for Governor is a proof that rascality is of the essence of all candidates for Governor.

B.J.—Granted.

U.S.—Consequently, the rascality that you justly impute to the old parties has nothing to do with the case. Were I to ask you, What is essential to a candidate for Governor? You surely would not answer: “To be a rascal,” would you?

B.J.—No!

U.S.—Notwithstanding rascality is so common among them?

B.J.—That notwithstanding.

U.S.—We are making headway. Now, some of the intellectual rubbish that your Jones has dumped on your mind being removed, let me return to my question: What is a “political party” essentially?

B.J.—I don't know that I could now tell.

U.S.—I'll help you. A "Political Party{"}" is essentially a body of men, organized for the purpose of accomplishing, through COLLECTIVE EFFORT, on the political field, that which, SEPARATELY, by INDIVIDUAL EFFORT, they cannot accomplish. Do you grasp that?

B.J.—I think I do.

U.S.—Let me make sure of it. Your Jones, we shall say, is an angel—

B.J. (with a smile at the corner of his mouth)—Well—no—not quite that. But he is a grand man.

U.S.—Very well, let's put it that way: he is a GRAND MAN. You will have to admit that he can't be the only GRAND MAN afloat in Ohio. If you deny that, you would be giving up your case all in a lump: The State would be on the highway to the damnation pow-wows if we had only ONE GRAND MAN in it. Hey?

B.J.—I admit that. We have lots of grand men in our Buckeye State.

U.S.—Fifty?

B.J.—Sure!

U.S.—A hundred?

B.J.—Certainly!

U.S.—Would you go it five hundred?

B.J.—I think that figure is safe.

U.S.—Very well; let's remain by that figure: Ohio has five hundred GRAND MEN, five hundred men each as good as the other, and fit to be our Governor.

B.J.—I say so too.

U.S.—Now we have in Ohio, in round figures, one million voters. How many of them do you believe mean well, and how many of them do you believe are confirmed rascals who would stand by bad candidates?

B.J.—There are not in this State more than 100,000 rascals; the well-meaning element is surely ten times as large.

U.S.—Shall we then say 900,000 good voters who would be glad to vote for a GRAND MAN and 100,000 scalawags who will delight to vote for a rascal?

B.J.—That's about it.

U.S.—Now, Jonathan—thou surely well-meaning, but pulled-by-the-nose

workingman—just put on your thinking cap and solve the following simple problem in arithmetic and social science:

“There are 900,000 good voters; there are 500 GRAND MEN to vote for; but the 900,000 are working separately, they are not nominating, or voting, or acting politically in a united way. On the other hand there are 100,000 scalawag voters, with 1 rascal to vote for, and those scalawags move, act collectively on the political field.—Question: What will be the result?”

B.J. puckers up his brows and looks intently into space, and his chest heaves.

U.S.—Can’t you tell?

B.J.’s chest heaves harder.

U.S. (laying his hand on B.J.’s shoulder)—Poor man; you’re evidently going through the pangs of thinking for the first time in your life. Let me give you a lift. The result would be this:

“The 900,000 good votes in an unorganized capacity, would scatter their votes over 500 GRAND MEN: on an average each of these would poll 1,800 votes. On the other hand, the 100,000 scalawags, acting organizedly, co-operatively, would plump their votes upon the 1 rascal. Net results: the rascal would win by an overwhelming plurality, the GRAND MEN would lie strewn over the political field, beaten out of sight!”

B.J. (whose chest has been heaving more and more violently, breaks out suddenly with the ejaculation)—UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL!

U.S.—You got it now. Yes, in union there is strength; in disunion there is weakness. That is the secret of Organization. A “Political Party” is essentially an ORGANIZATION. Organization may be good or bad according to the uses it is put to. But Organization is necessary to accomplish results. He who runs down “Political Parties” as such simply runs down Organization. He who does that with the workingmen simply seeks to leave them at the mercy of the rascals, who, no doubt, will continue organized. And that is what your Jones is doing.

B.J. puckers up his brow again.

U.S.—And that’s just what the Greek Tyrants of old did. They wanted no organization; they struck the attitude of the demagogue, and claimed to address themselves to the people direct; they, just as Jones, were a platform unto themselves; and, as the people, unorganized, are an utterly helpless mob, the Tyrants ruled as

tyrants. When ONE man, and not an organization, is the connecting link of masses of people, these become the abject slaves, HE becomes the most irresponsible of tyrants. That's what your Jones aims at, and he does it with the fly-paper tricks of the demagogue. Drop him as you would a hot potato. Place no trust in any man who is a law unto himself; place no trust in any man who is not bound to you by the bonds of organization.

B.J.—But some of the planks of his platform—

U.S.—They are even more fraudulent than I have shown you his pretence of political freedom to be.

B.J.—In what way?

U.S.—If you care to know, I shall take them up seriatim with you, next week when we meet again; I'm now in a hurry to go to work.

B.J.—I wish you would tell me.

U.S.—I shall; next week. In the meantime digest what I have told you to-day, and you will then see the rest all the easier.

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

Uploaded February 2009

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)