

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {334}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I feel very much perplexed since last evening.

UNCLE SAM—What happened to you?

B.J.—I happened to come across a Socialist Labor Party meeting.

U.S.—That, so far from causing you perplexity, ought to have served to sweep away some of the cob-webs that I know you cultivate in your cranium.

B.J.—It might. But I only got there towards the end, and heard only part of the argument.

U.S.—What part was that?

B.J.—The speaker proved that the issues raised by the Democrats and the Republicans were false pretences.

U.S.—Ah!

B.J.—He proved it by reading off the names of the directors and officers of leading corporations and trusts.

U.S.—What did he try to bring out?

B.J.—He brought out the fact that leading Democrats—whom we see during the campaign on the Bryan platforms whooping it up for the speakers who shout “Smash the Trust!” “Smash the Trust!”—are to be found cheek by jowl with Republican directors of trusts.

U.S.—And that’s so!

B.J.—Guess it is! He showed that all right.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—What is it that perplexes you?

B.J.—Don't you see? It is clear that these Republicans and Democrats only make believe they are divided; they are trying to cheat us with false issues; they are agreed,—

U.S.—Meseems you are not perplexed at all, but can see very clear.

B.J.—But I AM perplexed. Don't you see? Why on earth do these Democrats and Republicans go through the trouble of cudgeling their brains to invent “issues,” and go through the expense of campaigning when they are absolutely agreed? Isn't that perplexing?

U.S.—No.

B.J.—I declare!

U.S.—Say that you and I are two capitalists, each employing 100 men, how many capitalists and how many workingmen would that be?

B.J.—That would be 200 workingmen and 2 capitalists.

U.S.—Which is the proportion between workingmen and capitalists; is it not?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Now, say that, election being on, you and I came together and held this language: “We two are agreed; we are agreed that the present system of capitalism is the right thing; it keeps us on top and keeps our workingmen down; that suits us. Now, being agreed, don't let us bother about setting up false pretence issues. Let us set up our natural platform—‘Capitalism’—and let's agree upon one set of candidates.” Suppose we said and did so, what would be the result?

B.J.—Why, yes; I see! That would never do!

U.S.—Why not?

B.J.—Why, if we did that, our 200 workmen would take the tip.

U.S.—And do what?

B.J.—And, of course, set up their own ticket against ours.

U.S.—And what would happen?

B.J.—We would be soundly beaten at the polls.

U.S.—Just so. The workingman's ticket would be elected by a majority of 198 votes, and we two capitalists, with our cold minority of two votes, would be in the soup, eh?

B.J.—Very much so.

U.S.—Now, do you see why these capitalists set up their two opposing parties, with

false pretence issues, and seem to be deadly enemies?

B.J.—Why yes, of course! It never struck me before; and yet it is so clear!

U.S.—Perfectly clear. So long as the workingmen hold the ballot you will see these periodical sham fights. It is just on account of the nuisance and the expensiveness to the capitalists of these sham fights that they beat about ways to disfranchise the workers. And it is just on account of the yoeman work done by the Socialist Labor Party in counteracting the dividing policy of the capitalists, and in unifying the workingmen that the S.L.P. is so hated by that gentry. Are you still perplexed?

B.J.—Not a bit! I now see through the whole game. More strength to the elbow of the S.L.P.! Three cheers for Malloney and Rimmel!

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