

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {330}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I have attended political meetings of all parties in this campaign, and several things, two of them at least, have become perfectly clear to me

UNCLE SAM—I'd like to hear what those two are.

B.J.—The first is that every utterance of the Republicans on the good that the Trust is doing is false, and is false to their own knowledge.

U.S. nods his head.

B.J.—It is false that the Trust raises wages; it is false that the Trust incites competition. The Trust places at its own disposal such powerful capital that competition is destroyed. The destruction of competition is tantamount to an increase of the supply of Labor, inasmuch as the wrecked small traders become wage-slaves, and the increase in the supply of Labor means lower wages and more widespread want for the working class. This is one thing that has become clear to me, and the juggling with words and figures indulged in by the Republicans and their Labor Fakirs has helped to make it clear to me.

U.S.—Jonathan you make me feel proud. Why you do talk intelligently. Let me congratulate you.

B.J.—You just wait till I tell you what the second thing is that has become clear to me, you may not, then, feel so gleeful.

U.S.—I would be sorry for you; but, at any rate, let's have it.

B.J.—The second point is that you Socialists are a pig-headed lot of people—



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—You don't say so!

B.J.—I do. You nail yourselves fast to a dogma, and you can't budge. The Trust is a nuisance. The Republicans lie when they deny that. Now, the Democrats point out many of the ills of the Trust. They don't, I'll admit, point out all the ills. But what of that? They point out enough to show that the Trust is N.G., and they will smash it. Under those circumstances, I say, it is clear to me that you Socialists are wrong to stick to your own ticket. It's clear to me that you should vote for Bryan.

U.S.—Well, I did congratulate you too soon. You are the same old muddlehead.

B.J.—Prove it! Prove it!

U.S. (takes a penknife out of his pocket and opens it)—You see this penknife?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Now suppose I stick the blade into your eye—

B.J. jumps back.

U.S.—This penknife would be doing mischief, would it not?

B.J.—Guess so.

U.S.—Now, suppose you were to organize a body of men upon a programme that should demand the breaking of this knife into pieces and the leaving of me free and unpunished.

B.J. puckers up his brows.

U.S.—If you were to do that you would be committing an act of double stupidity:

1. It is stupid to want to destroy this knife on the simple ground that it puts out your eye. The knife can do good if put to proper use. It can do lots of good. By smashing it, you deprive yourself of the good it can do.

2. It is stupid to do away with the knife and leave me untouched. 'Twas not the knife that put out your eye, 'twas I.

To sum up, this knife does good or bad, according to the man who uses it. If a rascal uses it, it will do mischief; if a decent man uses it, it will do good. The thing to do is to wrench it from the rascal who uses it.

B.J. nods approvingly.

U.S.—Just so with the Trust. All the harm you say it does is true. But that harm is not inherent to and inseparable from it. The harm it does is due to the nature of the gang that owns it. The capitalist class—Democrats and Republicans—owns it. That class

is a bandit class; of course it uses the Trust as a scourge on the working class. But the Trust may do good. It is like an improved machine. So, then, to smash it is to deprive us of the good it may do, while leaving unpunished the bandits who now use it to our undoing. Your “clearness” is, accordingly, clear stupidity.

B.J. has an I-am-knocked-out-again kind of a look.

U.S.—You have got $\frac{1}{2}$ a light. Now get the other $\frac{1}{2}$. If you do you will realize that there is but one program for the intelligent workman to vote for,—that of the Socialist Labor Party; and but one ticket,—the one headed Malloney and Rummel.

B.J. (as he walks off)—Holy smokes! Didn’t he soak it into me again!

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