



DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {271}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—Is it true what I hear that your Socialist vote was quite extensively counted out?

UNCLE SAM—And bought out, too.

B.J.—Well, will you now admit that your theory about “political action” is all wrong.

U.S.—Indeed not!

B.J.—I declare! What good will it do your party to go to the polls and vote when, however much it may increase, it will be counted out, or its voters will be bought out?

U.S.—The last part of your question reveals your misapprehension of the situation.

B.J.—It does?!

U.S.—Yes. So long as a revolutionary party CAN be counted out, it deserves to be counted out.

B.J.—Well, that’s great!

U.S.—A revolutionary party comes, not to keep things running in their former ruts, but to overturn them; to do that it must have more than ordinary power; so long as it CAN be counted out it has not reached that point of power, and it might as well be kept out.

B.J.—But say that you poll three times as many votes as the others, and still are counted out. That surely is not impossible?

U.S.—It is not impossible; but the doing of that would not help the enemy.

B.J.—How so?



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—Because the day we would have reached that point we would know it. We have not yet reached that point, and we know it. Despite all counting out, just see how our poll rises. One thing is to be counted out when you can't elect anyhow; another is to be counted out when you have {been} elected. A movement may put up and not suffer from the former; no vigorous movement will put up with the latter. When we shall have that tremendous majority that you speak of, woe to the law-breakers, woe to him who would lay felonious hands upon the fiat of the people. We won't be counted out when we are ready; bet your bottom dollar on that!

B.J.—Very well. But the workers are poor, are they not?

U.S.—Yes.

B.J.—The capitalist parties bought a pile of votes this year, did they not?

U.S.—They did.

B.J.—Now, then, seeing that the counting out process has its limits, as I will admit, suppose the capitalist parties forestall the necessity of counting out; suppose they take advantage of the poverty of the workers and buy their votes before hand. They surely have money enough for that?

U.S.—You are mistaken there, too. In the first place this buying out also has its limits; hundreds, even thousands of votes may be bought, but when it requires the buying of hundreds of thousands the thing is not so easily done, and a point is finally reached when enough can't be bought, and then it is of no use to buy any;

In the second place, the stronger the movement becomes, the more self-respecting will be the workers: with the growth of the movement, the marketable votes will decline;

Finally, even if all these reasons were to fail, nothing is lost. The growth of the movement implies the increase of the numbers of those who understand that Socialism is a necessity, and the workers' only salvation. Say that, after a sufficient number of these are found in the country, the capitalists were to buy up a majority, do you imagine that would be the end of it? Not much! Economic or industrial storms are bound to be more and more frequent. The capitalist class having debauched the ballot box, at any one of those industrial crises the masses may then be expected to rise; physical force will be resorted to; and, the people having been educated up to Socialism, they will not waste their energies, but will expend their physical force in the right direction. The only

difference then would be that the victory of Socialism would be precluded with capitalists' broken heads and broken necks; otherwise its victory would be peaceful, such as we try to make it.

B.J. looks approving and meditative.

U.S.—Don't you ever take a Socialist, much less the organized Socialist movement, for visionary. We know just what we are doing: we are educating the masses. THAT IS THE POINT. What do you imagine we want to be elected to office for? For the fun of the thing? No! To use that public office so as to cave in the head of this system of capitalist brigandage. If the capitalist class becomes so much more felonious as to try and save its neck by actually violating the sanctity of the ballot, why, then we will get there without the ballot.

B.J. and U.S shake hands, and arm in arm amble off whistling:

“We bring the Jubilee.”

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

Uploaded March 2008

slpns@slp.org