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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {334}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (rubbing his hands)—Isn't this a most interesting campaign?

UNCLE SAM—In what way?

B.J.—Why, in the number of issues involved! There are in this campaign scores of issues, each one more interesting than the other.

U.S.—Did you ever read about or see how pickpockets manage their trade?

B.J.—I have read many pickpocket stories. Don't know what particular trick you mean.

U.S.—Did you ever hear of a pickpocket picking a man's hat off his head, and walking away with it?

B.J.—Not pickpockets. They don't do that. Other thieves may steal hats; pickpockets don't.

U.S.—What are pickpockets after, particularly?

B.J.—They are after money, valuables in one's pockets.

U.S.—We might, then, say that there is a certain issue between a man with money in his pocket and a pickpocket, eh?

B.J.—Yes; there is a burning, a live issue between the two—

U.S.—What issue would you say that was?

B.J.—The pocket issue.

U.S.—The pickpocket's platform would have as its one plank a demand for free access to the man's pocket, would it not?



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B.J. (smilingly)—That’s about it.

U.S.—And the man’s platform would have a demand for keeping out the pickpocket’s hand, not so?

B.J.—Guess so.

U.S.—There would not be one word to be found about hats, eh?

B.J.—No; not one word.

U.S.—Now, when a pickpocket wants to operate upon a man’s right-hand pocket, what does he do, go straight for it?

B.J.—Oh, no. Now I know what you meant by asking about the hat. What that pickpocket would do would be to tip the left-hand side of the man’s hat.

U.S.—For what purpose, do you imagine?

B.J.—Why, of course, for the purpose of calling the man’s attention away from his right-hand pocket.

U.S.—The tactics of the pickpocket would, accordingly, be to raise a false issue, eh?

B.J.—That’s just it.

U.S.—Would you call that false issue an “interesting issue”?

B.J.—Not much.

U.S.—Now, apply these common-sense views to the conduct of the old parties. If you do, you will appreciate the “interestingness” of their “issues.”

B.J.—Are they pickpocket issues?

U.S.—That’s a good name for them. As a pickpocket’s real issue is to get his hands into your pocket, so is the real issue of the Demo-Rep party to keep its hands in the pockets of the Working Class. As the pickpocket keeps his issue dark, so does the Rep-Dem party keep its issue dark. As the pickpocket raises false issues to draw attention away from what he is after, so does the Dem-Rep party start false issues to draw attention away from what it is really after.

B.J. looks incredulous.

U.S.—Do you imagine that the Democrats are sincere when they talk against the Trusts?

B.J.—No, I must say I don’t! The leading Democrats are Trust magnates.

U.S.—And do you imagine that the Republicans are sincere about the glory of

our flag?

B.J.—No, I must say I don't! I know they have allowed British gun-boats to stop our ships on the high seas, search and detain them.

U.S.—There you have it. There is nothing in those old party issues. The only issue before the American people to-day is whether the present system of Capitalism that robs the Working Class shall continue? The Rep-Dem party wishes the system to continue, the Socialist Labor Party demands its abolition. In order to conceal this real issue we have the Expansion and Anti-Expansion, Imperialist, Trust and Anti-Trust issues, and scores of such others. They are pickpocket tricks. Clap your hands to your pockets; don't let yourself be turned away from the real question. Keep your mind on it. Vote for Malloney and Remmel. Vote straight the Socialist Labor Party ticket.

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