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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {169}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (twirling his hat with his right arm high up in the air)—Hurrah for Bryan and Sewall, or Bryan and Watson! Hurrah for the free coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1!

UNCLE SAM—I agree with what you say only in so far as “Bryan and Sewall” is the same thing as “Bryan and Watson.” But I can’t enthuse or hurrah with you for the free coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, which is the only thing the two sets stand for.

B.J.—If you don’t enthuse it is simply because you don’t understand what 16 to 1 means. Under that system we can all have twice as much money as now.

U.S.—Please explain.

B.J.—It means this: What would you rather have{,} 1 dollar or 2 in your pockets?

U.S.—2 every time; and I have a decided preference for 4 rather than 2.

B.J.—I thought so; so far so good. Stick a pin there.

U.S.—I have.

B.J.—Now, then, under the single gold standard, if a man has, say, 32 grains of silver and he takes them to the United States mint, the government will coin that for him into what?

U.S.—Into 1 dollar.

B.J.—Exactly; he will get just 1 thing called a dollar; ain’t it?

U.S.—Yes, sir.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—Now, then, under the free coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, a man with, say, 32 grains of silver can take that to the United States mint and the government will coin it for him into—

U.S.—2 things called a dollar.

B.J. (gleefully)—Now you got it. Don't you understand it now?

U.S.—No; you will have to explain further. I don't yet see how that will double the amount of money in our pockets.

B.J.—You are decidedly dull. Don't you see that if we take 32 grains of silver to the mint we will have 2 dollars coined out of it, whereas under the single gold dollar we could only get 1?

U.S.—WE? No, I don't.

B.J.—Why, you admitted it and saw it just a minute ago.

U.S.—What I “admitted” and “saw” a minute ago was that a man who has silver, can, under the free coinage at the ratio of 16 to 1, get for his silver 2 things called a dollar. But I didn't admit that we, you and I, for instance, could be among the lucky ones. See?

B.J. (in amazement)—Why not?

U.S.—I haven't got 1 grain of silver to my name, let alone 32, nor you either. How are WE going to perform the miracle of doubling the number of dollars in our pockets by your free coinage?

B.J.'s jaw falls.

U.S.—Have you any silver to take to the mints?

B.J. (despondently)—No.

U.S.—Have the 53 per cent. of our people who are the wage earners, wage slaves like you and me, dressed in barely enough of clothing, and with barely enough food, got any silver to coin?

B.J. (collapsedly)—No.

U.S.—Have the 39 per cent. of our people who make up the middle class, that class whose land and machinery of production is too small to compete with the big concerns and is ground to powder, have they any silver to coin?

B.J. (heaving a sigh)—No.

U.S.—Free coinage will double the number of things called dollars in the pockets of those only who have silver, eh?

B.J.—That's all.

U.S.—And you and I and the 92 per cent. of our people who have no silver in our pockets, will double that, I suppose? Twice no is no, ain't it?

B.J.—No more.

U.S.—92 per cent. of our population, you and I included, left out in the cold by your wondrous free coinage, as completely as if it weren't. Now who is to benefit by it? Who is to double the number of dollars in his pockets?

B.J.—Blamed if I now know!

U.S.—I'll tell you. (Speaking deliberately and poking Brother Jonathan under the third rib at every word.) THE—SILVER—MINE—OWNING—SKINNERS—OF—LABOR.

B.J.—By thunder, you're right! I'm going to vote for McKinley and sound money!

U.S.—Hold on! Don't fly off the handle! Don't jump from the frying pan into the fire!

B.J.—What, is sound money too wrong?

U.S.—It is no better, as far as the working class is concerned{,} than free coinage. We have had sound money all along; where are we? Down, down. The issue of silver and gold is an issue between the members of that 8 per cent. of our population that have stolen from us, the workers, the bulk of the wealth which we have produced, and who are now, both silver bugs and gold bugs, rioting in wealth and selling out the country to international capitalism. It is a fight of these two. The gold bugs want it all and the silver bugs want to down the gold bugs so that THEY may swipe all the fruits of our labor, and scheming politicians, like curs around their master's tables, are arraying themselves on either side to snap up some crumb.

B.J.—Good God! We are starving now under the gold system. I imagined that this free coinage would bring help. I now see it is a swindle. What help is there for us but to hang, poison, shoot or drown ourselves?

U.S.—What help? Every help in the world! Overthrow the system of which gold bugism and silver bugism are both shoots—overthrow the capitalist system, under which all progress, all growth goes to the capitalist class and leaves the workers poorer. Rally at

the polls around the banner of the Socialist Labor party, get every worker to do the same. Let the slogan be “Down with the capitalists, silver bugs as well as gold bugs!”

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

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