

The People.

VOL. V, NO. 11.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1895.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {113}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—It does make me tired to hear you run down the free coinage of silver. The money question is THE question. Any fool can see that. I think—

UNCLE SAM—You think you think.

B.J.—Do I?

U.S.—Thou dostest {?}.

B.J.—You are poor.

U.S.—I am.

B.J.—Now, stick your hands in your pockets. Do you find there anything?

U.S.—Nothing, I regret to say.

B.J.—Would you not be better off with a hundred dollars in there?

U.S.—Decidedly. And twice as well off and happier with two hundred.

B.J.—I knew you were a sensible fellow and could be talked to.

U.S.—Go on talking.

B.J.—Don't you see that with the present per capita of circulating medium it is out of all question that you and everybody else could have a hundred dollars, let alone two, in your and their pockets?

U.S.—I do, most assuredly.

B.J. (triumphantly)—Now, then, don't you see that the free coinage of silver, the immediate effect of which is to increase the per capita of circulating medium, will put money into our pockets? Don't you see—

U.S.—I see that you are a bigger fool than I thought for.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—A bigger fool because I want more money?

U.S.—No; but a bigger fool for imagining that an increase of the volume of money will raise your capita.

B.J.—Well, I do like that!

U.S.—See here. You are a workingman, not a capitalist.

B.J.—Just so.

U.S.—Isn't the per capita of pants in the country larger now than fifty years ago?

B.J.—Decidedly.

U.S.—Have the workingmen a larger per capita of pants now than then?

B.J. (thoughtfully)—No, they haven't.

U.S.—Who got the increased per capita?

B.J. (with increased thoughtfulness)—Why, the capitalists.

U.S.—And what the workingman got by the operation is an increased per capita of patches on the seat of his pants, eh?

B.J. (stroking the patch on his)—By Jericho! that's what he got.

U.S.—Isn't the per capita of shoes in the country larger now than fifty years ago?

B.J.—Decidedly!

U.S.—And have the workingmen a larger per capita of shoes now than then?

B.J. (still more thoughtful)—No, they haven't.

U.S.—Who got the increased per capita?

B.J. (beginning to look silly)—The capitalists, hang them! the capitalists!

U.S.—And what the workingman got by the operation is an increased per capita of wet feet through "holey" shoes, eh?

B.J. (trying to conceal the holes in his shoes)—That was his share, true enough.

U.S.—Isn't the per capita of hats larger now in the country than it was fifty years ago?

B.J.—Decidedly. And you don't need to knock me down with any more illustrations. The capitalists got the increased per capita—

U.S.—And the workers had to put up with an increased per capita of airholes in their hats, eh?

B.J.—Yes; I give in. This per capita business as a road to more wealth for the

workers is the tanelist {?} nonsense!

U.S.—It is, Jonathan. So long as the capitalist system is on foot, so long as the workers remain wage slaves, the larger the per capita of any good thing the larger will be the presence thereof in the hands of the idle capitalist class, and the larger will be the absence thereof in the hands of the toilers who produce it. The only increased per capita the workers will get, so long as the capitalist system lasts, is an increased per capita of misery. There is more misery now than fifty years ago. Of that the workers got their full per capita, and more, too.

B.J. (stamping the ground)—Damn it, I see it now!

U.S.—Increase the per capita of money, without first overthrowing the capitalist system, and the only result will be that the capitalist will have all the more money, and the workers, the fools who aided the free coinage capitalists into power, will have all the emptier pockets.

B.J.—No doubt; no doubt. Let's talk about something else.

U.S.—Very well. But before breaking off, let me remind you that some time ago I caught you kicking yourself. You said you did so because you had made an ass of yourself. Don't you think it is now seasonable that you repeat the process?

B.J.—Guess it is. (And he proceeds to do so.)

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

Uploaded October 2007

slpns@slp.org