

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {352}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (with a vindictive look in his eye)—We got him! We got him! He is now behind the bars! The scoundrel!

UNCLE SAM—Who? What?

B.J.—Alvord, the bank-thief. He is now caught and arraigned. He ought to be hanged and quartered, and then put together again and quartered once more!

U.S.—Oh, I see!

B.J.—Don't you see that such a scoundrel can't be treated too harshly?

U.S.—That is not exactly what I was "seeing."

B.J.—What were you "seeing"?

U.S.—I was "seeing" the reason why you were so put out.

B.J.—What "reason" were you seeing?

U.S.—You are probably a Republican, and you are wild about it that, by the capture of Alvord, a vote has been lost for McKinley.

B.J.—No, sir! I'm not a Republican!

U.S.—Oh, it comes down to the same thing! Then you must be a Democrat, and are furious at the loss of a vote for Bryan.

B.J.—It is not that that makes me wild, but to think of the hundreds of people who were robbed!

U.S.—Oh, you good man! How many people did Alvord rob?

B.J.—A large number.



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U.S.—Will a large number suffer by his robbery?

B.J.—Well—hem—yes—no—not depositors—hem—but the stockholders of the bank.

U.S.—And how many may that be?

B.J.—About a hundred of them.

U.S.—And these stock-holders are now in want and misery, I suppose, on account of Alvord's thefts?

B.J.—N-o! N-ot ex-actly.

U.S.—They are not in misery?

B.J. (resolutely)—No!

U.S.—Perhaps they are well off?

B.J. (meditatively)—Guess they are!

U.S.—Perhaps they are even affluent?

B.J.—A good many, most of them are.

U.S.—They have summer villas and winter residences, eh?

B.J.—Yes, they have that!

U.S.—And pleasure yachts?

B.J.—That too.

U.S. (turning sharp upon B.J.)—Where did they get it?

B.J.—Where?

U.S.—Yes, where? Do you know any of them who works?

B.J.—“Works”?! No, that gang don't work!

U.S.—And yet they have affluence. Where did they get it?

B.J.—Hem!

U.S.—They don't work and yet they are rolling in wealth. How can wealth be produced if not by work?

B.J.—It can't be produced by idleness.

U.S.—As it can't be produced by idleness, it must follow that, if idlers have it, they have what labor produced.

B.J. (out of humor)—Well, that's so!

U.S.—Consequently, the idlers stole it. Get out of that.

B.J.—I can't get out of it. But how did they steal it?

U.S.—Money is the liquid form of capital. Without capital, that is, the machinery of

production, man can not work. The man who is without capital has to submit to the terms of the man who has capital. In that way the man who has capital acts like a highwayman who covers the wayfarer with a pistol. The wayfarer must stand and deliver. So it is with the capitalist and the workingman.

B.J. looks savage.

U.S.—You look as tho' you would hang and quarter them also. That's wrong; dead wrong! It is the way you people act who look at things superficially. You want to hang and quarter one man because he stole, and now you look ready to hang a hundred others. No; hanging will not stand. Hang one or a score of thieves and leave the thieving system in existence, and new thieves will spring up, faster than you can hang them. The way to do is to deprive the robber class of its power to steal. If a highwayman attacks you, you try and take his pistol away from him. What we must do is to deprive the capitalist class of their pistol. That pistol is the capital that labor produced and the capitalist stole.

B.J. (pulling himself together)—Let's go and grab it away from them!

U.S.—There you fly off the handle again. The way to do is to march to the ballot box on election day. Beat down the capitalist class with the ballot of the Socialist Labor Party. Capture the public power, and, like civilized men, legislate into the hands of the people the capital they need to work with. Then thievery will be at end. Then no Alvords will rob bigger robbers, or bigger robbers enjoy the facility to rob the working class. On November 6, you vote straight the ticket of the Socialist Labor Party, the ticket headed Malloney and Remmel.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded March 2009

slpns@slp.org