

The People.

VOL. VI, NO. 33.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1896.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {176}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (gleefully)—Just think of all the factories that are reopening! Don't it make your heart jump with joy?

UNCLE SAM—Only the hearts of the silly can do the jumping.

B.J.—Are not many people, just out of work, now at work again?

U.S.—They are.

B.J.—Am I silly, if happy to see these men again earning a living, and rescued from starvation?

U.S.—As far as they are again producing their daily crust, we may be happy. But take the whole scene in view, and there is more cause to grieve than to frolic.

B.J.—What whole scene?

U.S.—Man, take in the sight in full. The bosses of these factories wanted the election of McKinley. Did they go to their men and argue with them?

B.J.—They did in some places.

U.S.—Hardly worth mentioning. Bryan's victory did not suit the big capitalists—

B.J.—Very well—

U.S.—But to show the men why would have been to show up the bosses.

B.J.—Why so?

U.S.—No boss could, without knocking himself down, make the argument. He would have had to prove, in the first place, that labor could not be benefited by Bryanism. To prove that he would have to betray the fact that, so long as capitalism exists, labor is a merchandise, and like all merchandise, is bought and sold according to the supply and demand; that, if the supply of labor does not go down and the demand



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

does, the price of labor must decline; that machinery is ever throwing more men out of work, and is thereby both increasing the supply and reducing the demand; that, consequently, whether free coinage were introduced, or the gold standard were to remain in force, the wages of the working class were bound to go down. Don't you see what effect that would have had on the workingmen of the boss who really tried to disenchant his workers from Bryanistic allurements?

B.J.—It would certainly have caused them to drop away from Bryan.

U.S.—And at the same time have caused them to see that they had nothing to gain from McKinley, eh?

B.J.—Yes, they would have seen that, too.

U.S.—Would the bosses have made anything by that?

B.J.—Hardly.

U.S.—The bosses would not have advanced one inch upon that line; on the contrary, they would have taken the first step to enlighten their men upon the nature of the capitalist system. Consequently, they carefully abstained from doing that, but simply shut down. In this way they threw the men out of work, and gave them an object lesson, to wit, that the employes cannot live without the consent of the bosses. By giving this object lesson they avoided the enlightenment of the workers upon the workings of the capitalist system, and conveyed to them the false impression that labor depends upon Capital. The delight at the opening of these mills is an implied declaration of the workers that they admit they must depend on their bosses. Is that cause for gladness?

B.J.—No, indeed!

U.S.—To think that these bosses who stole both the plant and the profits from the workers, can now so use their stolen goods as to browbeat their employes into political submission is no cause for gladness. But this experience will tell in the end. In the end such “returning prosperity” as that will be understood to be “returning enslavement,” and will be knocked out.

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

Uploaded December 2007

slpns@slp.org