



DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {130}

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNCLE SAM—I am going to vote the Socialist ticket this election. What are you going to do?

BROTHER JONATHAN—I am going to stay home, save my shoe leather, and smoke my pipe in quiet.

U.S.—And do you think it is wise to leave the field free for the rascals?

B.J.—What's the odds? All political parties are corrupt.

U.S.—All those now in power.

B.J.—Yes. Those out of power are not yet corrupt; they were not yet in power; but after they are in they soon turn out just as bad as the one they put out.

U.S.—Does a new party immediately turn out just as bad as the one it put out?

B.J.—No; not immediately; but after a while. For a while it acts well enough; after a while it becomes just as corrupt. New brooms sweep clean, you know.

U.S.—I do, and that is just what you should remember and seem to forget. New brooms sweep clean; after they get old they are no good; would you for that reason go on using an old broom and not get a new one in its place, you wondrous smarty, would you?

B.J. (with a devil-take-him-I-am-caught look)—'Course not!

U.S.—What becomes of your notion that because new parties eventually grow corrupt therefore the old and corrupt ones should not be fought?

B.J. (with a good natured laugh)—In the “soupee.”



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—Very much so, and much worse so than you imagine. Your “corruption” argument is altogether false.

B.J.—Altogether!? Will you deny that corruption will creep into the parties?

U.S.—I won’t deny it; but you must be clear on what you mean by “corruption.”

B.J.—Corruption means corruption.

U.S.—The Republican party in its platform of 1860, when it conquered, took a firm position on the two leading issues of the day.

B.J.—Which?

U.S.—Slavery was one; it asserted “freedom was the normal condition” of this country, and thus pronounced against slavery. Union or disruption, was another; the South threatened secession; the Republican party pledged itself to uphold the Union.

B.J.—That’s so. I now remember.

U.S.—Did the party sell out these principles to the foe?

B.J.—Nixy!

U.S.—Then it was not corrupted away from its programme?

B.J.—No, sir!

U.S.—And before them the party that elected Polk was pledged to annex Texas?

B.J.—Yes, the slave holders wanted to extend the slave territory, and needed Texas.

U.S.—Did the party, when it won, sell out to the adversaries of slavery?

B.J.—Not much they did! On the contrary{,} they bribed the North into acquiescence.

U.S.—Then that party neither was corrupted away from its programme?

B.J.—N-o-o.

U.S.—In what respect and when did those parties become corrupt?

B.J. (slowly)—They—became corrupt in that they tried to make money at the expense of the people and took bribes—

U.S.—After they had carried through their programme unsullied?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Now look at the Republican and Democratic parties of to-day—

B.J. (throwing up his hands and clapping them to his nostrils)—Their corruption is undeniable!

U.S.—Are they untrue to the principles of their class, the capitalist class? Have they ever sold out to the workers? Have {they} ever turned against the robber class and aided the robbed?

B.J.—God knows they have not. But still they are corrupt like hell.

U.S.—Taking together all that you have said and admitted, it amounts to this: Parties never sell out their principles, i.e., their interests; they invariably adhere to these. Hence, as far as their interests are concerned, parties are incorruptible.

B.J. begins to open his mouth.

U.S.—The corruption you speak about is that which the old parties are now indulging in, not against their party interests, but in favor thereof. In other words, that which is called “corruption” in them is only an additional proof of their incorruptibility as far as their party interests, the oppressing of the workers, are concerned.

B.J.—Right you are!

U.S.—Now, then, a party like the Socialist Labor Party, whose interest it is to get rid of the oppression of the workers, cannot be corrupt {corrupted?} more than any of the old parties, as far as its interests go. It is bound to be true to them, as all parties are bound to be true to theirs.

B.J.—Guess I was in the “soupee” to a tremendous extent.

U.S.—Yea, yea; and more is to come.

B.J.—Is there any part of me still left in the soup?

U.S.—Yes, me boy. You said you meant to stay home and quietly smoke your pipe—

B.J.—I did.

U.S.—If you do, you will find that pretty soon you will not have “peace for your smoking.” Unless you and others come out and vote the Socialist Labor Party ticket, and put that party into power, p.d.q., the capitalist system will burn your house over your head.

B.J. walks away pondering.

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

Uploaded November 2007

slpns@slp.org