

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {360}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—This corruption and bossism in political parties has become unbearable!

UNCLE SAM—So say I.

B.J.—Out in the State of Washington they have hit upon the boss plan to stop it.

U.S.—What is the plan?

B.J.—Very simple. In order to come on the ballot a candidate must have secured ten per cent of the signatures of his party.

U.S.—Hey!!!

B.J.—Don't you see? To-day, in order to get a nomination, there is log-rolling and all its corrupting accompaniments. The thing finally simmers down to the dictation of the bosses; and there you and I are: on election day we have no choice but Hobson's choice. We must choose between the machine candidates. We are practically disfranchised! Under this system of nominating, the people themselves make their selections. Off are the bosses! Ended is corruption in conventions! The reign of political purity is inaugurated!—

U.S.—And also the reign of the Fools' Paradise!

B.J.—How so "Fools' Paradise"?

U.S.—You mean it honestly, but you only repeat as a parrot what scampish idiots, and idiotic scamps say.

B.J.—I declare.

U.S.—See here. A constituency of 10,000 is nothing uncommon in the country; is it?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—How many are ten per cent of that?

B.J.—1,000.

U.S.—Now, put on your thinking cap. Will 1,000 men ever be likely to move by one



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common inspiration, and nominate the same man?

B.J.—'Course not!

U.S.—The matter, then, reduces itself to this: Organization will be needed, then as now. The organizations will nominate, and they will attend to the business of securing the needed percentage of signatures. As far as this feature of the new law is concerned, all that it would accomplish is to shove the organization work of log-rolling, corruption and bossism back one stage. The law would not, does not abolish the evil; it sweeps it, perhaps, out of sight into the corners; but there it remains, as active as now, and a comfort to fools only. Do you now see your Fools' Paradise?

B.J. remains stupefied.

U.S.—But this law is not merely the product of idiots, who imagine they can legislate the movements of masses upon the individualistic principle; in other words, who imagine they can eliminate the “organization” element out of mass-movements. This law is also the product of scamps.

B.J. looks up surprised.

U.S.—The moment such a large percentage is perpetually needed, the secrecy of the ballot is knocked on the head. It is an unquestioned principle that a secret ballot is needed, because an open ballot could not be used by employees. So that what your new law would accomplish is to place us workingmen even more hopelessly before a Hobson's choice of voting for candidates that are not nominated by our choice. Such large percentages of us would not dare to be known as the nominators of candidates that don't suit our employers. So there you have your Fools' Paradise complete.

B.J.—Then there is no hope for pure caucuses?

U.S.—Oh, yes; but not so long as the Capitalist system lasts. Nothing will stop bossism and corruption in politics but the downfall of the poverty-breeding capitalist class.

B.J.—Let's smash it!

U.S.—That motto is only one to frame a Pure Caucus law by.

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