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DIALOGUE

## UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {373}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**B**ROTHER JONATHAN—Oh, how cruel those Socialists are!

UNCLE SAM—Inasmuch as to which?

B.J.—And so inconsiderate!

U.S.—For instance?

B.J.—And they care not whither their Juggernaut car tramples down women, children, the widow or the weak!

U.S.—Are you sure?

B.J.—Yes, just think of it. Say that a lone widow has just one tenement house. The Socialists would take that away from her and let her starve.

U.S.—Where is that widow?

B.J.—Where?

U.S.—Yes.

B.J.—I don't know.

U.S.—Nor anybody else. That lone widow is a myth; and the whole yarn is a myth, and a very clumsy one.

B.J. fumbles in his pockets as if looking for the lone widow.

U.S.—The yarn is clumsy because, suppose that there is such a lone widow, whose only source of a living is a tenement, your position amounts to this: that it is better that one lone widow should live, than that scores of children should live.

B.J.—How so?



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U.S.—These tenements are death-traps. Ventilation is impossible without drafts. The space is so small that privacy, and consequently, decency is impossible. The body and the mind of the child in those pest-holes are undermined. The mortality of the children in tenements is something shocking. And those who survive are apt to be stunted in mind and body. Now, say you, “let it be; let the children die and grow rickety rather than remove that tenement and have the widow die!” The Socialist, on the other hand, says: “If there be such a ‘lone widow,’ such a cormorant, unable to live unless children be sacrificed wholesale, then let her be the one sacrificed, tear down her tenement, and, along with it the social system that sacrifices the toiling masses in order that the idle few may live in clover!”

B.J. looks knocked out.

U.S.—Now, who is the cruel fellow, the Socialist who would extirpate death-traps, or the fellow whose libel you repeat like a parrot?

B.J. keeps silent.

U.S. (poking B.J. in the ribs)—Lost your impudent voice? Answer!

B.J.—The cruel one is not the Socialist.

U.S.—No, not he. Neither is he the inconsiderate one. Just the contrary! Under your capitalist system, every new machine, being private property, brings on endless misery to many; and the misery it brings on is justified with speeches about “progress.” The Socialist Republic would not rest satisfied with wrenching from your “lone widow” capitalist system the weapon whereby it to-day cruelly treats the masses, and let her succumb. Having seen, and by the very fact of seeing, to the masses the Socialist Republic would afford your “lone widow” cormorant capitalists a chance to earn a decent livelihood and become useful members of society. Now, don’t be a parrot again.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)