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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {122}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—Did you read about Wayland's failure with his Ruskin Socialist Community?

UNCLE SAM—I did.

B.J.—I now hope you will drop your Utopian notions about Socialism, come down from the skies and become once more a commonsense fellow.

U.S.—And so Wayland's failure proves to you that Socialism is Utopian?

B.J.—Decidedly; or, rather, it helps to prove it. Wayland's is not the first failure; all such Socialist communities turn failures.

U.S.—I know.

B.J.—Does not the proof of the pudding lie in the eating?

U.S.—Most assuredly—in the eating of the pudding, not in the eating of an imitation pudding made of shavings.

B.J. looks blank.

U.S.—Of course, you take Wayland's and all such communities to be pocket sample copies, so to speak, of a Socialist State. Now—

B.J.—I know—

U.S.—I have again and again shown you that all these communities are just the reverse—

B.J.—Yes, but—

U.S.—Just wait; are just the reverse of Socialism. So far from their proceeding from



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Socialist, economic and social principles, they start virtually as a denial thereof.

B.J.—I know, but—

U.S.—Socialism proves that collectivism is forced upon mankind upon an extensive scale, through machinery, rendering the people of large areas, of a whole nation, so completely interdependent as to establish the fact that a Socialist Commonwealth must be bounded only by a nation's boundary, and that even many a modern nation does not offer a basis broad enough for a Socialist State.

B.J. (very impatient)—Yes, yes! but—

U.S.—It follows that these picayune communities start wrong and are doomed.

B.J.—Yes, yes, yes! If you had allowed me to speak before, I could have saved you the trouble of going through that line of argument. I did not mean that at all.

U.S.—What did you mean?

B.J.—I meant that human nature is not made for Socialism. People will quarrel. Let the basis of your Socialist State be as broad as you please, the people will fall out and your Socialist State is busted.

U.S.—Oho! That's your notion!

B.J.—And a pretty good one it is.

U.S.—It is as foolish and proceeds from as much blindness to actual history as any notion I ever heard you utter.

B.J. (testily)—They won't quarrel, hey?

U.S.—Yes, they will. Did not the Whigs and the Jacobins in England quarrel like cats and dogs?

B.J.—They did.

U.S.—And the Huguenots and Catholics of France?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—And the Copperhead Bourbons here with us, did they and the Abolitionists not quarrel?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—We can go still further. Did not the Jacobins invoke foreign aid, and were they not ready to smash "heretic" England?

B.J.—Yes, they were.

U.S.—Their own country at that?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Did not the French Huguenots invoke foreign aid; were they not ready to smash “Popish” France?

B.J.—Yes, they were.

U.S.—Their own country, at that?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—And our Copperhead Bourbons, did they not try to get foreign aid to smash us all up?

B.J.—The rascals! Assuredly they did.

U.S.—And that our own country?

B.J.—They were traitors enough to do so.

U.S.—Well, now, without multiplying examples, these few that I have mentioned suffice to point to a certain law. It is this:

Wherever men are gathered, there will arise differences of opinion. On a national scale these differences crystallize into party aims and divide the people into political parties. The issues may and may not be deep reaching. If they are, the spirits become embittered and the losing party will be ready to sacrifice its own country. Like the false mother in the celebrated trial before Solomon, who, rather than have some one else keep the child, preferred to see it split in two, the defeated party may be and has often been ready to see its own country go down.

B.J.—Yes; but the countries did not go down.

U.S.—The wrangles in all these picayune alleged Socialist communities partake of political wranglings in nations. The reason why in national wranglings they do not usually bring on a breakdown, and do in these communities, proceeds from the material facts that the thing to be destroyed is so much weaker, and above all the stake that the wreckers have is so much smaller in these communities. If the Jacobites, the Huguenots, the Copperheads, could have carted off their property to foreign shores in larger quantities than they did, these respective nations might have gone down likewise.

Turn it over as you may: The fate of these alleged Socialist communities is no more “proof,” or disproof, of Socialism than the eating of a pudding made of shavings is

“proof” of The Pudding.

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