

# The People.

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DIALOGUE

## UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {277}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**B**ROTHER JONATHAN—I happened to read the other day a labor paper, and do you know it made me feel very sad for you and such honest workingmen as you. I showed it to my friends at our Millionaire's Club, and all agreed that Socialist workingmen like you who try to raise your people are very much to be pitied.

UNCLE SAM—Well, that's becoming interesting. What was it all about that earned for me the pitying sympathy of your fellow labor fleecers.

B.J.—Well, that's all right. We ARE labor fleecers; I don't deny it, and I excuse {you} for telling me so to my face. Nevertheless, just read those labor papers yourself. See here, if you are living among a lot of wild cowboys, where the best revolver tells, would you unarm yourself and expose yourself to being shot?

U.S.—Not much. I wouldn't.

B.J.—Of course not; no sensible man would. Now here is what that labor paper had. It echoed violently the violent denunciations of the Excelsior Traction Company against the Consolidated Traction Company. The latter, as you know, has a franchise that is about to expire, and it wishes to renew it for a good long term; the former wants to extend its lines and wants the franchise for itself.

U.S.—Well, I suppose you have stock in the Consolidated concern and want to keep the profits, and keep the Excelsior stockholders out?

B.J.—That's it exactly. Now, I don't deny that I and my fellow Consolidated



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

stockholders are simply living fine on the backs of our employés.

U.S.—I am glad to hear you admit it.

B.J.—Nor do I deny that we have raked in enormous profits.

U.S.—Good!

B.J.—Nor yet do I deny that we want to keep the snap all to ourselves.

U.S.—Very well. What's your point?

B.J.—My point is that the Excelsior concern does not propose to change things for the better for the workingmen; what that concern is after is to get from us what we now get—

U.S.—Put the plunder into their own pockets, instead of letting it go into yours?

B.J.—Just so. Now, with that object in mind, what do they do? They issue broadsides at us against “Monopolies.” Think of it; they, who already have a sort of monopoly, and who strain after completer monopoly, they start howling against “Monopoly”!

U.S.—It certainly is a choice piece of capitalist fraud.

B.J.—You recognize that?

U.S.—Surely!

B.J.—Well, then, what does that labor paper do but reprint that fraudulent attack on “Monopolies,” and call upon the working people to “tear down monopoly” by adopting resolutions and sending them to the Board of Aldermen! Just think of the stupidity of it. If the Excelsior concern at least offered better wages, one might excuse these workingmen for being caught with bait; but not even such bait is on the Excelsior hook. And here they go and take the field against one monopoly simply to build up another. Now I call that stupid; such people have no sense; and when Socialist workingmen bother with the working class they are wasting their labors.

U.S.—Is that your point?

B.J.—Part of it. But my real point is this: You are wrong to run us capitalists down. We are not the bad people you imagine; we simply exercise the wisdom which you admitted there was in being well-armed among wild cowboys. Many of us capitalists would willingly help you, but these workingmen are too stupid to be helped, and therefore your class-struggle is all wrong.

U.S.—Was that your point?

B.J.—Yes; and a good one it is.

U.S.—A damned bad one, I call it.

B.J.—Hey?

U.S.—Let's stick to your cowboy comparison.

B.J.—Very well.

U.S.—Everyone is armed and practising at target shooting; consequently, whoever is among them must do likewise for self-protection.

B.J.—Correct!

U.S.—But would you say that your self-protection includes your doing everything to keep up, foment, incite and produce revolver-needing rowdyism?

B.J.—Well—no—

U.S.—And that is just what you do. I might take stock in your claim that there were good men among you, even if you skinned your workers to {the} bone; that I would consider the act of self-preservation in the competitive struggle. But you do worse. With your profits you start and support a lot of poisonous capitalist papers that keep the workers in just the deplorable ignorance that you mentioned; you hire and let loose among them a lot of reprobates who play the Labor Fakir and help to keep the blinkers of ignorance on their eyes; you endow a lot of professorial chairs to teach that Socialism is “un-American”; in short, instead of doing the things that would remove the ignorance of the workers, that you give as an excuse for your skinning them, you and your class do all you can to keep that ignorance alive so as not to lose your pretext for doing what in your heart you must feel to be wrong. The only hopeless task is to convert the capitalist class. We shall fight and we shall throw you down!

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)