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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {363}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN turns up strutting proudly.

UNCLE SAM—You look as if you were carrying a chip on your shoulders.

B.J.—I feel very happy, anyhow.

U.S.—What about?

B.J.—About the signs of the times. We are just now seeing a phenomenon that demonstrates the tremendous growth of Socialism.

U.S.—And what phenomenon is that?

B.J.—The stepping of so many clergymen into the fold of Socialism. I've been keeping tally. There are now fifteen of them.

U.S.—That certainly is a good sign.

B.J. (looks startled by the admission and grabs U.S. with both hands)—Now, that does give me pleasure! I had misgivings that you would not look at it the way I do. You usually disagree with me—

U.S.—And knock you out too, eh?

B.J.—I'll admit you knock me out regularly. That's what made me suspicious of myself. But now I delight to see that you take my view. Let's rejoice together.

U.S.—Not quite so fast!

B.J.—Eh! Is there a drawback?

U.S.—At any rate, let me first know just what you are rejoicing over; I may agree with you, and I may not, as the case may be.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—I'm rejoicing at the growing strength of Socialism, as shown by the coming over of all these ministers.

U.S.—That does not yet clearly answer my question. Let's see. Do you consider that the joining of all these ministers adds strength to Socialism?

B.J. (clapping his hands)—That's it! These ministerial new recruits add strength to Socialism.

U.S.—Then I disagree, and can't join you in rejoicing. I shall have to wait until you have made your experience, and then I shall join you, not in rejoicing over, but in deploring the advent of these ministers.

B.J.—“Deploring”!

U.S.—Yes. You see it is this way: If the Socialist undertow were not strong these parsons would not join.

B.J.—Just so.

U.S.—Their joining is, accordingly, an evidence of increasing strength.

B.J.—That's what I say.

U.S.—And so say I. But the reason why I deplore their joining at present is an inevitable deduction of the above premises. It is the growing strength of the S.L.P. that attracts the parson to Socialism. Now, then, was that strength brought about or even promoted by parsonial politics or tactics?

B.J. meditates.

U.S.—No; that strength was brought about by the unflinching tactics of the Socialist Labor Party. To say that, is tantamount to saying that the growth was brought about by tactics just the reverse of those that parsons approve of, take to, or are sufficiently informed to espouse. The parson does not understand the class struggle. He takes no stock in the Trade Union question, least of all can he grasp it, and labor in those choppy waters. His “Unionism” consists in that false pretense of “boring from within,” which, you know, means to leave the economic movement in the hands of the Labor Fakirs. The parson, as a result, will take to “reforms,” “municipalization a la Glasgow,” “good government,” “lower taxes,” “cheapness,” “the consumer's interests,” and all such matters that can only serve to emasculate Socialism. What I say of the parson-class, holds good of the “intellectuals,” so-called, generally. Their whole training renders them alien to the policies that hew close to

the line of proletarian interests. At best, these folks only bring sentiment with them.

B.J.—Why! And I thought they could do so much good!

U.S.—So, then, you see that the joining of Socialism—AT A TIME WHEN SOCIALISM IS NOT YET ON THE HOME-RUN, AT A TIME WHEN SOCIALISM HAS YET ITS PATH TO HEW AND ITS BATTLES TO FIGHT—, the joining of it at such a time by such an element can only be a drag upon the Movement.

B.J.—But can't they add some weight to it? Could they in no way help the scales to tip in favor of Socialism?

U.S.—No. Upon that the pages of history speak with convincing eloquence. Such elements do not make the scales tip, they never have. All they do, all they have ever done, is to cause the scales, ONCE THEY HAVE BEGUN TO TIP, to come down with a hard thud. Due to this role, played by such elements in history, the superficial observer gives them credit for achieving things,—and that element is never loth to take credit for what it does not deserve.

B.J.—I'll think this over.

U.S.—One word more to aid you in thinking, or rather two:

1. Build upon the working class. Among that class alone do you find the materials whose minds are not affected by the strabismus of bourgeois reforms.

2. If any, not of this class, is fit for the plow of Socialism, he will prove it by joining the Socialist Labor Party. Never forget that it is in the fitness of things to find the parsons trooping into the Kangaroo camp.

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