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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {239}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—It is all nonsense to imagine that the Socialist Labor party could ever win.

UNCLE SAM—Why nonsense?

B.J.—Well, don't you see, to win a party must have a strong organization; to be a member of an organization one must pay dues; to pay dues one must have money. Now, most people are too poor to have anything left for dues.

U.S.—Do these poor people, who are too poor to pay dues to a Socialist political organization, have any money to pay dues to either of the capitalist political parties?

B.J.—No, they have none, and don't pay any.

U.S.—And does that keep them from voting for the old political parties?

B.J.—Why, no; how could either of the old political parties have the big votes they got if the poor stayed away from them?

U.S.—And they win?

B.J.—Why, certainly!

U.S.—Now, if it is at all possible for you to keep two ideas in your head, will you have the kindness to explain to me for what reason is it impossible for the poor, who have no money to pay dues with to any political party, to vote for the S.L.P. and make it win, and yet it is possible for them to vote for the old parties and make them win?

B.J. remains silent.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—Knocked out, eh?

B.J. (gathering himself together)—Not quite. I'm knocked out only on the dues matter. I admit that, without paying dues to the old parties, the poor vote those tickets; consequently, without paying dues to the S.L.P., they might vote that ticket and put it through. The trouble with me is that I explained myself wrong. I didn't mean to say that—

U.S.—What did you mean to say?

B.J.—What I meant was that people are too poor to buy Socialist literature. As they can't buy that, they don't know what Socialism stands for, and, of course, keep on voting for the old parties.

U.S.—Hem!

B.J.—You don't believe me? Well, now, take my own case. After I have paid my rent, my butcher's and baker's bill, and God knows they are small, I barely have enough to buy clothes and shoes with. No, I haven't enough. Where am I to get money from to buy a Socialist paper. And above all, where shall I get the time to read. I have no time to read.

U.S. (trying to look sympathetic)—Well, that IS hard; these ARE hard times.

B.J.—You admit that?

U.S.—Of course; don't I see it? But this subject is too sad. By the way, do you know who won the prize fight yesterday?

B.J. (brightening up)—Yes; Jim Bangs; nobody would have thought it. But he did Jack Knocks brown.

U.S.—How did he do it?

B.J.—I'll tell you. Jack Knocks made a lunge at Jim Bang's smeller, whereupon Jim ducked, made a feint at Jack's right jaw, and with his left fist struck him square on the heart. 'Twas a master stroke! It took the wind clean out of Jack, he fell, and when time was called he could not yet get up, and his backers stepped up, and threw up the sponge. That blow puts just \$25,000 into Jim's pockets and gives him the championship.

U.S.—I don't believe it—

B.J.—What don't you believe?

U.S.—In the first place, I don't believe that Jim knocked out Jack; in the second

place, I don't believe that Jim could duck when Jack lets fly at his smeller; in the third place, I don't believe that Jim is the champion to-day; lastly, I don't believe, even if he won, that he got by it \$25,000.

B.J. (who all this while was looking at U.S. with astonishment, takes out of his right pocket "The Morning Blatherskite" and "The Bugle Blast of Nastiness," from his left pocket he takes out "The Evening Slush Bucket," "The Evening Sewer Squirter" and "The Evening Slop Jar." Holding these papers open at the places where the prize fight is described with pictures, he shoves them under U.S.'s nose)—There, now, read for yourself.

U.S. (shoving off the bundle)—You are caught like a woodcock in his own springe. You who claim you are too poor to buy Socialist papers, here you are buying five nasty capitalist sheets; you who claim you are too busy to read Socialist literature and educate yourself, here you are finding time enough to read full accounts of a brutal encounter—you deserve your chains, and a good deal more!

B.J.—And shall I have no fun?

U.S.—Have your "fun" as you call it. But don't throw the blame of your political ignorance and of the political ignorance of such as you upon your lack of money or the like. If the majority of the workingmen are of such miserable stuff as you, then, of course, it is impossible for the Socialist Labor party to win. But the blame lies not with your poverty, it lies with the low level of your mind, that takes not enough interest in serious matters, and that is pie for the capitalists to exploit in the shop and then to be buncoed out of your pennies by capitalist dirty sheets. But even there you are wrong. Not all the workers are like you. The majority will soon find its way to Socialist literature, and then—well when the crash comes, then you and such as you will be used by the capitalists, whose sheets you now read, as food for cannon. Good bye.

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