

The People.

VOL. VI, NO. 11.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 1896.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {163}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—Here I have a little newspaper item that overthrows your whole Socialist theory.

UNCLE SAM—Let's have it.

B.J.—Here it is: "The bicycle craze is ruining the shoe stores, cigar stores, liquor stores, candy stores, clothing stores. The wheelmen are so numerous and have stopped investing in all these and many more things to get their wheels, that all these industries are suffering greatly." (Triumphantly.) There you have it! Overthrown, by Jericho!

U.S.—You call that "overthrown?"

B.J.—What else is it? Is it not your contention that the capitalist class is getting richer and richer?

U.S.—Exactly.

B.J.—Well, your contention is busted. Here is an evidence of a raft of capitalists going by the board—the owners of shoe stores, of cigar stores, of liquor stores, of candy stores, of clothing stores, and so forth.

U.S.—Let's suppose these are all capitalists—

B.J.—Are they not?

U.S.—Say they are. Who gets the wealth they lose? the working class?

B.J. (twirls his thumbs under his coat-tails.)

U.S.—You are stumped right here. All the wealth that is turned from the purchasing of all those industries falls into the lap of another, a capitalist industry,



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owned by big capitalists. The ruin of all these others, weeds out a lot of capitalists; but when these drop into the class of the proletariat they leave their wealth in the capitalist class, though in other hands.

B.J.—Yes—but—

U.S.—No “buts,” except this “but” that you are stumped even worse than you think. If 2 capitalists out of 10 became poor, the remaining 8 are richer, but the capitalist class is not richer, it has as much as it had before.—

B.J.—That’s just what I was going to say—

U.S.—And that’s just why you are stumped worse yet. All these retailers are not capitalists; some are and they would suffer without making the capitalist class any richer. But the great majority of these retailers are middle class men—would-be capitalists who try to compete with big retail capitalists. Now, the busting of all these middle class retailers throws their wealth into the hands not of the working class, but into the hands of the capitalists. Thus by this wholesale ruin of these retailers the capitalist class grows actually richer. Do you realize how stuck you are?

B.J. mops his face.

U.S.—But I’m not yet through with you.

B.J.—But I give in; let up, won’t you?

U.S.—Never a let up with a chap who puts his silly head in the tiger’s mouth of reasoning by attacking Socialist philosophy. (Holds B.J. back by the lapels of his coat.)—Now I, too, have a newspaper item. Read this:

B.J. (reading.)—“The factory of the Standard Cycle Works Company was closed by the Sheriff on judgments amounting to more than \$20,000. The failure is laid to the sharp competition and rate cutting.”

U.S.—Catch on?

B.J.—I catch on that there are some more concerns going up the fluke.

U.S.—The whole situation is this:

The wheel craze has turned away business from a large number of stores; these will find it harder and harder to get along, the weaker ones will go down, and the capitalist class will swipe in all that these others lose. The chief gainers by this will be the capitalists in the new industry of wheels manufacturing. But even among them it is not all “make.” Among them also the war of competition is going on and

the bigger swallows up the smaller—as happens now when the Standard Cycle Works Company goes up. Thus the capitalist class grows ever smaller and richer, while the capital-less class grows ever more numerous. Now, is Socialist theory overthrown? Honest injun, now!

B.J.—No; it isn't.

U.S.—There is no help for it but the overthrow of capitalism.

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

Uploaded December 2007

slpns@slp.org