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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {294}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (looking very sad)—What's the use of it all? What's the use of it all! In that way you people will never be able to make converts.

UNCLE SAM—What way? What people?

B.J.—What people?—You Socialists. What way?—By abusing and attacking folks.

U.S.—Hem! Something must have been hitting you. Somebody must have been stepping on your corns, eh?

B.J. (sluggishly)—I know this much: It is easier far to catch flies with molasses than with vinegar.

U.S.—True, thou sublime wiseacre, true! By the way, and by way of illustration, What were you doing in the woods yesterday with that double barreled shot-gun of yours?

B.J.—I was out hunting snipe.

U.S. (mimicking B.J.'s voice and manner at the start of the conversation)—What's the use of it all? What's the use! In that way you never will be able to get anything!

B.J.—What way?

U.S. (still mimicking B.J.)—I know this much: It is easier far to catch sardines with a net than with buckshot.

B.J. (amazed)—Of course!

U.S.—And why don't you, then?

B.J.—Why, for the simple reason that I was not out on the hunt for sardines but on



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the hunt for snipe.

U.S.—Just so, thou “Professor of the Art to Convert People.” When you want to catch sardines you take a net and not a double-barreled shot-gun; but when you want to catch snipe you would be an elaborately equipped ass to use a net, eh?

B.J.—Of course!

U.S.—So with us Socialists. If what we are after were flies, then, indeed, would you be right to say we should use molasses. But we are not out for flies; on the contrary, we care nothing for flies; we don’t want them. What we are after is MEN. Do you catch on?

B.J.—Hey?!

U.S.—MEN, you block-head, MEN is what we are after! You reason like all the addle-pated. When you say that molasses catches more flies than vinegar, you turn reasoning upside down; you imply that it is a settled question that what the Socialist wants is “flies.” If your premises were right your conclusion would be obvious. But your premises are wrong. We DON’T want flies; we DON’T look for that; on the contrary, one of our mottoes is: “Shoe-fly {Shoo-fly?} don’t bother us!”—We are in for serious, MAN’S work; accordingly, that which catches flies is not our weapon. Our weapon is and must be the hard, sound reasoning that enlists the co-operation of the strong. Flies can’t do the work for which we have to enlist men. Such flies, such caponed-cushioned wonderfulnesses as yourself are not what we are after; indeed our tactics are directed to keep out all flies.

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