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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {149}

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BROTHER JONATHAN—Socialism is all right, but the tactics of the S.L.P. I cannot approve of.

UNCLE SAM—Do you know that that is one of the most familiar tunes to my ears; and it makes me smile smiles everytime I hear it.

B.J.—Why should you smile smiles?

U.S.—Because with its “deplorable” tactics the S.L.P. moves steadily forward.

B.J.—And would it not move faster with better tactics?

U.S.—That sort of reasoning is good enough in a Kindergarten, it sounds woefully silly among men, not infrequently it is dishonest.

B.J.—What’s there silly or dishonest about it?

U.S.—There is the silliness of it: With children it is necessary to argue upon fundamentals of conduct, with men such fundamentals must be taken for granted. It is dishonest to spend time, among men, in maxims and epigrams; their purpose is to conceal the real point.

B.J.—What point, for instance?

U.S.—For instance: You just asked me whether a movement that is moving could not move faster with better methods.

B.J.—Well?

U.S.—That’s an illustration in point of childish or dishonest argument. You want by implication to get your tactics, whatever they may be, to be considered better, but you



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will all along endeavor to avoid defining them.

B.J.—I don't.

U.S.—Well, what particular tactics do you suggest as amendment?

B.J.—I would not advertise the Labor Fakirs as the S.L.P. does. I would leave them alone. By advertising them you give them prestige.

U.S.—Well, let's take that up.

B.J.—Do.

U.S.—Do you know anyone who hates having his prestige increased and who would grow wild at you for so doing?

B.J.—No!

U.S.—If then, the S.L.P. assaults on the Labor Fakirs advertise these and add to their prestige, will you, wondrous logician, explain to me how it comes that these Labor Fakirs foam at the mouth every time we assail them, and threaten us with all sorts of dire revenges?

B.J. remains silent.

U.S.—One gun spiked! Now to the next. The Populist, Commonwealth, and other such movements in New York, never assailed the Labor Fakirs. Will you, twice wonderful logician, explain to me how it comes that these movements, and many other such, have gone under, have turned up their toes and lie now under the sword with the S.L.P. growing and dancing a fandango on their graves? If the S.L.P. tactics were bad, then the relation between corpse and dancers should be inverted. Speak up, thou tin can of condensed tactical wisdom!

B.J. remains silent.

U.S.—Second gun spiked! Now I'll move on your citadel and capture and rase it to the ground.

B.J.—mumbles to himself something to the effect that he has been making an ass of himself as usual.

U.S.—You have a pretty clear idea of what these fakirs are; haven't you?

B.J.—Yes; they are damned rascals.

U.S.—Good. Does the rank and file of the workers know that fact?

B.J.—Why, no!

U.S.—If they knew what a lot of scoundrels these fakirs are, would they trust them and allow themselves to be ridden by the gang?

B.J.—Guess not!

U.S.—Stick a pin there. Now take up another tack. Whom will the rank and file flock to, to him whom they trust or to him whom they mistrust?

B.J.—To him whom they trust, of course.

U.S.—And whom will they trust, him who failed to open their eyes, or him who sought to clarify their vision?

B.J.—Guess they will trust the latter.

U.S.—It follows from these two lines of inquiry that, in order to cause the rank and file of the workers to rally around the standard of the S.L.P., they must trust it; in order to trust it they must, by experience, find out that it has been a sound and truthful adviser. Day by day things will happen that they will not be able to understand unless assisted. By a constant harping upon the rascality of the fakirs, the rank and file will be able to put two and two together; perceive the truth and kick the fakir overboard. The amount of respect, love and affection that the S.L.P. is storing up for the Socialist movement in the hearts and heads of the workers by its constant war on the fakirs is a thing that intellectual noodles may not yet grasp, but which the S.L.P. does. A mushroom growth is not what we are after. Our growth is due to our tactics.

B.J. mops his face.

U.S.—Nor yet is this all. Do you imagine that every member or friend of the S.L.P. has time to post himself thoroughly on men and things?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—All these fakirs once were held in esteem by our people. If our people are kept uninformed upon the character of the fakir, they would be exposed to be poisoned by them. I know of more than one instance where our sympathizers innocently proposed a fakir for Labor Day speaker in their town, and it was some reader of our party press who, being posted, prevented the misfortune.

B.J.—I too know of an instance of that sort.

U.S.—Now, Jonathan, next time you open your mouth on these subjects, be sure and know what you are talking about first.

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

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