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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {223}

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNCLE SAM—This campaign in New York is a striking illustration of the class struggle.

BROTHER JONATHAN—That silly class struggle again! The Socialists deprive themselves of all the force there lies in noble sentiments. If they choose to, that's their business. But they have no business to deny the fact that others are moved by noble sentiments. Now, I'm going to vote for the Republican Tracy because he represents the noble idea of Americanism.

U.S.—Is not Tracy a leading stock-holder in the now consolidated Nassau Electric Co.?

B.J.—Hem, I think he is.

U.S.—And is not Tammany Sheehan's brother of that same corporation?

B.J.—Hem . . . hem; I understand he is.

U.S.—And is not Seth Low, through his brother, in that pie, too?

B.J.—Hem . . . hem . . . hem; I heard he was.

U.S.—And is not Henry George's manager, Tom L. Johnson, a high muckamuck in the identical concern?

B.J.—Hem . . . hem . . . hem . . .

U.S.—There seems to be something rasping in your throat. Now, then, is it true or not that the employés of that company are held down to starvation wages and long hours?



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—H-h-em . . .

U.S.—Is it true or is it not that the lower the pay of these employés and the longer their hours, the larger also are the dividends pocketed by Tom Platt's Tracy, Sheehan's Judge Van Wyck, Henry George's Tom Johnson and Low's Seth Low?

B.J.—H-h-h-em.

U.S.—Now deny, if you can, that material class interests are at the bottom of all these four candidatures, the class interests of the capitalist class.

B.J.—And will you deny that in none of those camps there is any sentiment?

U.S.—No; I won't deny that any more than I would deny that above a hot whiskey punch there is steam. But the whiskey punch is a necessary material foundation for that steam. No whiskey punch, no steam. So, whatever sentiment there may be in any or all of those four camps, it is only a fume of the material interests at bottom. The campaign to these gentlemen is essentially a campaign for their class interests.

B.J.—Very well; I shall yield that point. (With a triumphant air) But will you now dare to deny that you Socialists also look for your material interests, and that you are not all sentiment? Now, then!

U.S.—Of course I won't. Why, that's the very point I have been making. That's implied in the class struggle. Every class-conscious class stands upon its class interests. The capitalist is class-conscious enough; he stands on his class interests squarely; whatever sentiment is developed in his camp has the material capitalist class interests for its foundation. Likewise with the Socialists. They are class-conscious workingmen. They stand upon the material interests of their class. It is there that all workingmen should stand, and not, as they do now, stand mostly on the class interests of the capitalist class.

B.J.—Then, by your admission, you Socialists are no better than the others. While, I will admit, that it is more sensible on the part of you, Socialist workingmen, to stand on your own class interests and platform, the recognition that you, too, stand on material interests shows that the whole row is a dog-eat-dog affair: The capitalists want to promote their interests, and the workingmen want to promote theirs. Neither, accordingly, is superior morally.

U.S.—You would be right if the class interests of the working class required, like all

other class interests, the subjugation of other classes. That is just the feature of all class interests, except those of the working class; and it is the leading feature of the class interests of the working class to abolish all classes, that is to say, to abolish the system under which class rule is inevitable. Hence it comes that only the class interests of the working class are moral. So far from the conflict between the capitalists and the working class being a dog-eat-dog affair, it is the conflict between civilization, represented by the class-conscious working class, and dog, or hyena, represented by the capitalist class—and all its Platt-Johnson-Low-Sheehan political parties. I shall vote the S.L.P. ticket straight. I'll vote for Sanial for Mayor.

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