



DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {306}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (looking downcast)—It is awful, this disenchantment I have had with Mayor Jones; I had felt so sure he was a clever, sound, earnest, honest man, come to the deliverance of the working class.

UNCLE SAM—If you feel so thoroughly disenchanted, it will be superfluous to take up, as I promised you I would, that “beautiful” motto of his.

B.J.—No; I wish you would.

U.S.—How does that motto run again?

B.J.—“I claim no privilege for myself or for my children that I am not doing my utmost to secure for all others on equal terms.” You said that motto was fraudulent, as applied to and by him.

U.S.—Just so. Now, look here. Look down this street. It is clear of impediments, is it not?

B.J.—So it is.

U.S.—A fine clear field to run a race in, eh?

B.J. (eyes glistening)—No doubt.

U.S.—Now, suppose I were to fill your pockets with weights aggregating fifty pounds, and were to empty mine of all weighty articles; and that I then proposed to you to run a race down this street. What would you think of me, if, before starting, I declaimed to you the following poem:



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

“I claim
“No privilege for myself,
“Or for my children,
“That I am not doing,
“My utmost,
“To secure for all—
“Others on equal terms.
“The field is clear—
“Our terms are equal—
“Start!”

B.J.—I don’t think much of that poetry; it don’t rhyme, and has no metre.

U.S.—Bother about the rhyme and metre. That’s just like you; always drawn aside from the substance by the shadow. Drat the rhyme or metre! What do you think of the SUBSTANCE of the poem?

B.J.—As rotten as its metre!

U.S.—Correct, and why?

B.J. (holds up his left hand, spreads its five fingers, and keeps tally with the index of his right hand)—First, because it is a swindle to tell me the terms are equal for the race, after you have loaded me down with weights, like Mark Twain’s shotted frog;

Secondly, because you don’t need to “claim” any privilege over me; you already are in possession of the privilege, by being equipped for the race, while I am loaded down against it;

Thirdly, because your trying to race with me under such disadvantages to me and advantage to you, is just the reverse of your pretence that you are trying to secure for me the advantages that you enjoy;

Fourthly—

U.S.—You have done well. You don’t need to give any more reasons. They all apply to Mayor Jones and his motto:

First, it is a swindle for him to tell the people of Ohio that the terms are equal for the race between him and all others; he is equipped for the race, being well off; the rest of us, weighed down by poverty. He can and does spend money to get himself before the public and run for office; we haven’t money enough to keep the wolf from the door;

Secondly, it is a swindle for him to “claim” no privileges over us. He has those

privileges now. He need not claim them. It is the height of dishonesty to so conceal one's advantage. With the wealth Jones now has, the race for wealth and the pursuit of happiness is easy for him, impossible for us.

I need go no further.

Mayor Jones' tirade against political parties is a mischievous way of undermining the tendency, now seen everywhere, of the workingman's feeling that ORGANIZATION is a perquisite {prerequisite?} to accomplish anything.

Mayor Jones' "public ownership of all public utilities" is a fraud.

Mayor Jones' motto is clap-trap.

Vote the S.L.P. ticket!

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