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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {127}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I just had a talk with one of those wild-eyed Socialists.

UNCLE SAM—Hem!

B.J.—Why, those Socialists are crazy.

U.S.—Hem! Hem!

B.J.—What do you imagine they are after?

U.S.—The earth and the fullness thereof. Do you want anything less?

B.J.—No; I too want everything within sight; but I don't want it insanely; I want it like a sensible man.

U.S.—And don't the Socialists?

B.J.—Why, no, man! They go like crazy loons about it. They want too much all at once; they want it all at once.

U.S.—And how do you want it?

B.J.—I want it one thing at a time.

U.S.—For instance.

B.J.—I would want the railroads first.

U.S.—Next?

B.J.—The telephone.

U.S.—Next?

B.J.—The mines, and so forth.

U.S.—And that is what you call sensible?

B.J.—Don't you?

U.S.—Let's see. Suppose you marry—



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B.J.—I am married!

U.S.—And that you wanted a child.

B.J.—I have several of them.

U.S.—Suppose then that some wiseacre came who heard you say you wanted a child and were to call you “wild-eyed,” a “loon,” a fellow “who wanted too much and all at once”—

B.J.—But I don’t; I didn’t; I only wanted one child at the time.

U.S.—Exactly. Yet suppose such a wiseacre said that that was wanting “too much at a time” and “all at once,” eh?

B.J.—How could he?

U.S.—And that he counselled you to go about it like a “sensible man,” and take first a nose, next a right toe, next an arm, next an ear—

B.J.—What nonsense you do talk!

U.S.—You are sure that were nonsense and that that wiseacre was everything but sensible?

B.J.—Why, of course, no man who knows anything about the human body would make such a suggestion.

U.S.—Why?

B.J.—Because if a child were born piecemeal it would be born dead.

U.S.—And for that same reason only a crazy loon and a wild-eyed crank will expect that the capitalist class could be plucked one feather after another, and the co-operative commonwealth born piecemeal.

B.J.—Then you don’t believe in evolution?

U.S.—Just because the Socialists are evolutionists and not lunkheads who use the word without knowing what it means that they take no stock in the one thing at a time idea.

B.J.—But evolution does not mean a sudden change.

U.S.—Evolution means growth and birth. The child grows and forms itself, evolves, before it is born; then the period of birth comes, sudden, if you like to call it so; evolution proceeds and follows the child down to its dissolution. Every step, from the moment it was conceived, down to that when it sinks into its grave is a step in evolution;

some stages are more rapid, “sudden,” as you call it; others slower. Yet the whole is evolution.

B.J.—But when did this Co-operative Commonwealth start, would its appearance now not be sudden?

U.S.—No more than a child’s.

B.J.—What, when did it start?

U.S.—Your question denotes how little you understand the question.

B.J.—I guess I understand it. I have read all the Socialist works.

U.S.—Nay, nay, good friend. You have not read them. If you had you would know that the Socialist Commonwealth is not an invention. Its advent is prophesied from the fact that co-operation in production is now forced and commended to mankind by machinery.

B.J. (*with eyes opening wide*)—Oh!

U.S.—In the womb of time this child has been evolving for at least one hundred years. The time of birth is at hand—

B.J.—And will it be decreed with one stroke of the pen?

U.S.—Another proof that you don’t know Socialist philosophy. It cannot be “decreed” with one stroke of the pen. No doubt, one by one the people’s land and instruments of production will be decreed into the people’s hand. That is not the point. The point is that the political party that will do that decreeing, i.e., that will conquer, will be only that party that will demand the whole Co-operative Commonwealth. Hence the principle of the class struggle. The revolutionary stage of this human evolution will not manifest itself until the economic class interests of the proletariat gain supremacy. This age of ours portends a new birth, the birth of a new social order; it can be ushered into existence only by those who have a conception of the whole. Those who see it piecemeal will botch it up.

B.J. (*scratches himself behind the ear*)—Guess I had better read up and post myself before I start talking.

U.S.—Bravo!

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

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