

The People.

VOL. IX, NO. 2.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 1899.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {288}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I wonder why it is the Socialists must season so benign a principle as theirs with the sauce of hatred.

UNCLE SAM—Do they?

B.J.—Why, certainly they do. Don't you know that they preach class hatred?

U.S.—No, I don't; and what's more I know they don't. We are organized in our union, aren't we?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Why do we do so?

B.J.—Because, if we didn't, the employer would skin us worse than he does now.

U.S.—So then you admit there is a class conflict between us workingmen, and the employer.

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—And is the fact that we recognize the fact a seasoning of our organization with the sauce of hatred?

B.J.—No; but—

U.S.—No "buts." The Socialists do not season their benign principles with the sauce of hatred, but only with the sauce of common sense.

B.J.—Will you deny that the Socialists are always saying that they aim at the conquest of power by the working class?

U.S.—No; I won't deny that; on the contrary, I admit it and approve of it.

B.J.—Very well; and what, pray, do you call that if not seasoning a good principle



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with hatred, class hatred? How can one class win without an other losing?

U.S.—It simply can't be done; right you are in that!

B.J.—Now, how can you deny that that sort of thing is a seasoning of hatred. Classes are bad things; where they exist rows, conflict, hatred must be. What would be the use of wiping out one class by setting up an other?

U.S.—Now you begin to talk sense.

B.J.—There, then, you agree, don't you? that this setting up one class and setting down of an other keeps up class rows and hatreds.

U.S.—I fully agree that to set up one class and set down an other, and keeping up class distinctions don't set us further on the road towards a humane existence.

B.J.—Well, I'm glad to hear you say so. That's all I meant.

U.S.—No; that's not all you meant.

B.J.—What else could I mean?

U.S.—What you said was that the Socialist aim of bringing the working class into power was a seasoning of hatred because class conflicts are bound to continue if the thing is merely the bouncing of one class and the enthroning of another.

B.J.—That's just what I said.

U.S.—And, if that means anything, it means that the victory of the working class would be similar to the victories of all other classes: a change of oppressors.

B.J.—That's it!

U.S.—And that is wrong.

B.J.—How so?

U.S.—If you drop a lighted parlor match into a box of gun-powder, it will explode, eh?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—And if you drop a lighted common sulphur match into that box—

B.J.—It will explode likewise.

U.S.—Does it follow from that that, whatever you drop into that box, an explosion will follow?

B.J. ponders.

U.S.—If you drop a tumbler-full of water into it?

B.J.—No, no explosion will then follow.

U.S.—And the gun-powder's explosive powers—

B.J.—Will be at an end thereafter.

U.S.—Just so in this gun-powder social system that our race has been living in. The successive victories of the several classes were so many lighted matches of different composition dropped into it; “explosions” had to follow; that is, class distinctions, with all the conflicts and hatreds thereby implied, had to continue. Why? Because the programme that each of these previous classes brought along with it, and had to bring along with it obedient to the law of its own existence, was a class war programme; it was so because they all were based upon a principle that necessitates class war; that principle was the PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF THE THINGS NEEDED TO EARN A LIVING BY. With the working class it is otherwise: the programme that it is bound to bring along with it is the PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF THE THINGS NEEDED TO EARN A LIVING BY. Thus the victory of the working class necessarily means the abolition of class distinctions, the wiping out of class wars, the doing away with class hatreds, the laying of the only foundation possible for “Peace on earth, good will among men.” Catch on?

B.J.—Somewhat.

U.S.—Thus the Socialist's principles alone are the principles that are not seasoned with hatred but are seasoned with love; all other political and economic movements, on the contrary, whatever their name, whatever their pretences, are the ones that are seasoned in hatred; each and all of them cling to the PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF THE THINGS NEEDED TO EARN A LIVING BY, consequently, all start from, are built upon, the source of all class hatred. Think this over.

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

Uploaded February 2009

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