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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {324}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (with dejected mien and large tear drops in his eyes)—Oh, how sad.

UNCLE SAM—What's the matter, old boy? Have you lost your last friend or your best girl?

B.J.—No; 'tis not that.

U.S.—Why, then, these weeps?

B.J.—I mourn over the tactics of the S.L.P.

U.S. (hilariously)—Oho!

B.J. (more tears flowing)—Yes; it breaks my heart and sets the fountains of my eyes flowing to see what I see and hear what I hear.

U.S. looks at him in mock sympathy.

B.J.—If you had heard what I heard last night you would not be snapping your eyes at me that way!

U.S.—Out with it! Relieve my breast with sad forebodings oppressed! What did you hear?

B.J. (emits three sighs, and drops six tears and gives two grunts)—Tell me, in the first place, is the S.L.P. intent upon keeping members away or upon gaining members?

U.S.—Upon gaining them!

B.J.—Well, now, I'll tell you what I heard. I'm a member, you know, of the "Bric-a-brac Club."

U.S.—I know.

B.J.—One of our members, our President—

U.S.—President of the Bric-a-bracs?

B.J.—If you look at me that way you will make me weep—



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—Don't, don't, tell me about your brittle Bric-a-brac President.

B.J.—He is the Reverend Dr. Obadiah Salvation Army. He was telling me how the aggressiveness of the Socialist Labor Party was keeping people away from it.

U.S.—From which it would be surmised that, if the S.L.P. were less aggressive, the Reverend Doctor would join it?

B.J.—Certainly.

U.S. (taking out of his pocket a sermon by the Reverend Doctor Obadiah Salvation Army and reading with one eye while with the other observes Brother Jonathan)—Socialism is un-Christian: Jesus in his parable commended the servant who took usury. The Bible orders the servant to obey his master, in other words, the Bible sanctions the subjection of servant to master; Socialism aims at the abolition of this sacred relation. Every Christian must enlist against Socialism, while he should seek to relieve distress.—How is that for a declaration on the part of one who “would like to join the Socialist Labor Party?”

B.J. looks as though he had swallowed a hot potato and it had gone the wrong way.

U.S.—Whom else have you heard?

B.J.—The Reverend Doctor, don't count; but there was also Prof. Twaddle-dee. He is a learned and good man and he would do anything to relieve the poor—

U.S.—Except getting off their backs.

B.J.—No, no; no exception. Every time that good man opens his mouth—

U.S.—He puts his foot into it—

B.J.—No, no, again. He talks sense; he is a great philosopher. Every time he speaks on this question of Socialism he is jumped upon by the S.L.P.; and he says that the aggressiveness of the S.L.P. is hurting it, and he is no ranting parson.

U.S.—From which it would follow that he wishes the S.L.P. prosperity.

B.J.—Certainly.

U.S.—And from which it would follow that he approves of Socialism?

B.J.—Of course.

U.S. (taking out of another pocket a lecture by the Professor and reading with one eye while the other observes Brother Jonathan)— “The world owes its progress to individualism; Socialism would destroy individualism. Individualism leads progressward; Socialism would take us back to barbarism.”—How is that for a

declaration from one who “wishes Socialism well” and “approves” it?

B.J.’s jaw falls.

U.S.—Eh! What did you say?

B.J.—Well, even so, if those two are no good, there is Mr. Abraham Isaac Schwefelbunde. I know he wants Socialism, and he, too, says you people are too aggr—

U.S.—Mr. Schwefelbunde? Why, he was expelled from the German Social Democracy for breach of trust—

B.J. (angered)—Is that so? (after a pause) Well, but there is also John N. Bogert.

U.S.—The David B. Hiller?

B.J.—Is he that? But then there is—

U.S.—Never mind what there is. I have heard enough. (Chucking Brother Jonathan under the chin, and wiping off Brother Jonathan’s tears with his coattail.) You sweet sugar plum of condensed treacle, you are wasting your sweetness on the desert air when you bestow it on such people as the Rev. Obadiah, Prof. Twaddledede, Mr. Schwefelbunde, John N. Bogert and the like. Of these, some do not positively want Socialism; others, even if they went down upon their knees and begged for admission, would not be allowed to come in and pollute us with their pollution. Were you to spend less time in weeping, and more in thinking, were you to give your sympathy to those who are fighting for, instead of those who are fighting against Socialism, were you to feel the blows given to us as keenly as you do those we give to the enemy and to the worthless, you would then join with me in roaring at the idea of the Socialist Labor Party trimming its sails for men it could not gain over if it would, or would not if it could. Your conduct is that of sentimentalism. It ever has flowers for a Carlyle Harris who murders his child-wife, but none for the bereaved mother of the girl. There is nothing more illogical, and hence more cruel than sentimentalism.

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

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