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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {189}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—There was a Socialist meeting the other day that should damn the Socialists for ever in the eyes of the workers in this country.

UNCLE SAM—Did it fire bombs?

B.J.—No; it favored the importation of pauper labor.

U.S.—You are mistaken; what it did was to denounce the Lodge Anti-Immigration bill.

B.J.—What is the difference?

U.S.—A good deal. This Anti-Immigration bill is a fraud on the people.

B.J.—Do you call it a fraud on the people to relieve the labor market?

U.S.—That would not be a fraud; but to make believe one wants to relieve the labor market, and in that way gain the confidence of those in whose interest it is that the labor market be relieved, and armed with their confidence acquire power to overstock the labor market some more—that is the fraud.

B.J.—In what way is the Lodge bill all that?

U.S.—The labor market is overstocked to the compositors; did immigration do that?

B.J.—No; type-setting machines did.

U.S.—The labor market is overstocked to the cigarmakers; did immigration do that?

B.J.—No; the numerous machines did it.

U.S.—The labor market is overstocked to the weavers; did immigration do that?

B.J.—Why, no; the steam and automatic looms did it.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—And so we may go through the whole gamut of the nation’s industries. Machinery, born in the country, overstocks the labor market in one day more by displacement than immigration does in a month. Now, anti-immigration laws cannot, in the very nature of the thing, be enforced, and their violation is hard to detect; on the other hand, the injury done to labor by privately owned machinery could be remedied by the popular ownership of it. When a pick-pocket wants to rifle your right side pocket he tips your hat on the left; he thereby throws you off your guard on the right and has free play. These anti-immigration bills are of that nature. In the first place, it sounds plausible to impute the hardships of labor to immigration; on the other, the way to save all the good there is in the machine, and at {the} same time prevent its ravages among the workers, is not so clear. It is therefore the veriest imitation of the pick-pocket’s trick to beat the alarm against immigration. By doing that, even if immigration were wholly stopped, capitalist exploitation would continue unabated through the displacement of labor by the machine. The capitalists would have engaged the attention of the workers with a question that amounts to nothing, and would thereby draw their attention away from the real issue. Don’t you see the fraud?

B.J.—But doesn’t immigration do some harm? Won’t you take half a loaf rather than nothing?

U.S.—I would take a quarter of a loaf rather than nothing; but I refuse to accept two lumps of stone as large as a loaf each and called loaves for a loaf of bread. Who are the people who bring in the immigrants? Is it the workers?

B.J.—No; the capitalists.

U.S.—That being so, just think how they fool you with a stone that they call “half a loaf!” These very capitalists who want the immigrants are to be the ones to keep them out! They want the whole loaf of genuine bread that consists in your ballot, and they give you a law which, according to yourself, it is in their interest not to enforce! You are a fool, and they know it, and that’s why they keep on with their tricks to trick you out of your ballot.

B.J. looks crestfallen.

U.S.—Not the foreign laborer is the enemy you should guard against, that enemy is the capitalist class. The workers of all lands are your brothers. Vote the capitalist class

down and out.

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

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