

The People.

VOL. VII, NO. 41.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 1898.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {237}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I am a Socialist, but—
UNCLE SAM (mockingly)—How familiar that tune is.

B.J.—Familiar or unfamiliar, 'tis a true tune. I am a Socialist, but the Socialist Labor party is no good. I'm going to stay with the Democratic party.

U.S.—I thought the tune was familiar; there isn't a fakir in the land but hums it;—some with the variation of saying they are going to stay with the Republicans.

B.J.—That may be, but I'm no fakir for all that. I AM a Socialist; fakirs say they ARE Socialists, but they ARE NOT. But I am.

U.S.—Have you anything more to say?

B.J.—Yes; I have this more to say. The Socialist Labor party is no good—

U.S.—You said that once before.

B.J.—And I was going to tell you why it is no good.

U.S.—Let's hear.

B.J.—It moves too slowly.

U.S. opens his eyes.

B.J.—You won't deny that, would you?

U.S. looks at him.

B.J.—Now will you deny that?

U.S.—If you want to travel to a certain place, and there is only a stage coach to take



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you, would you call stage coach rapid travel?

B.J.—No; stage coach is slow travel.

U.S.—Would you say that the stage coach is too slow a way of traveling?

B.J.—If there is no other conveyance, I would not say that.

U.S.—Slowness and fastness are, accordingly, relative terms, are they not? The stage coach is fast travel if the alternative is to hoof it, eh?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—It is slow travel only if there is faster means of transportation available, eh?

B.J.—Yes; but what has that got to do with your S.L.P.?

U.S.—One more question, and I'll tell you. If you want to go to a certain place and the only transportation available thither is a stage coach, would you for the sake of fast traveling jump into a fast train that runs in the opposite direction?

B.J.—No, I wouldn't.

U.S.—And you wouldn't call the stage no good, eh?

B.J.—No; it is good enough for my ultimate purpose.

U.S.—And what would you think of the man who, wanting to go to that certain place, said: "The stage is no good; it is too slow; I am going to take the train—

B.J.—But there IS no train in that case!

U.S.—Just so. If he wants a train he would have to travel in the opposite direction. What would you say of that man?

B.J. looks suspiciously at U.S.

U.S.—I'll tell you: You would say of him either that he had not made up his mind where he wanted to go—

B.J.—Exactly.

U.S.—Or that he was an elaborate blockhead, gotten up regardless of expense. Would you not?

B.J. (hesitatingly)—Y—e—

U.S.—Out with it, yes or no?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—That's your case. Take your choice. Either you are not a Socialist and DON'T KNOW where you want to go to, or you are a Socialist, but being an elaborate blockhead

gotten up regardless of expense, for the sake of more rapid travel you are willing to be taken to where you don't want to go. The S.L.P. don't move very fast; true; but, Socialism-ward, there is NOTHING moving at all. The only other things moving, do move swiftly, but without exception they move away from Socialism, being, all of them, capitalist concerns. Now, what are you, a fakir who falsely claims he is a Socialist or a blockhead. (Gives B.J.'s hat a pull that brings it down over his eyes) . . . You may decide the question at your leisure.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded February 2008

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