



DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {317}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I understand the Socialists are about to start a daily paper?

UNCLE SAM—For once your understanding is right.

B.J.—Well, that's foolish!

U.S.—Why so?

B.J.—Think of the money needed to set up such an enterprise, and the efforts required to keep it up!

U.S.—That's all true: but the thing is needed. You won't deny, would you, that a paper that will unfalteringly and soundly preach justice is a good thing to make sacrifices for?

B.J.—I say so, too. But I think that if such a paper already exists, the sacrifice of setting up a new one is superfluous.

U.S.—No doubt. But there is no such paper. Such a paper is conspicuous by its absence.

B.J.—You may think so, but I don't. I'll admit that there is no one paper that stands out absolutely and all the time for the workingmen. But that is not necessary, especially if you consider the tremendous effort required to set up such an uncompromising labor daily. I think that there is hardly a daily you can mention that does not, knowingly or unknowingly, preach doctrines that materially help to educate the working people in sound justice.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—You have something up your sleeves. Cease talking abstractions. Give an illustration.

B.J. (*takes a copy of the New York Sun out of his pocket and reads aloud*):

“A remarkable difference between capitalistic employers and organized labor as it is at present inspired and controlled, is called up for consideration by an incident that occurred in Joliet last Tuesday.

“An employee of the Great Western Tin Plate Works, who happened to be president of the Amalgamated Association of Tin Workers, was discharged; whereupon 150 men, fellow unionists, quit work. As to their legal right to do this thing no one can question; but their act was the same as if the Great Western Tin Plate Works, being dissatisfied with one employee, had discharged all.

“It is proper to say that there is no known case of any employer of labor being guilty of an act so vengeful and unreasonable, so foolish in respect to business and so unfair to employees.

“Our advice to labor unions is to play fair with capital.”

Now, I claim that Labor can never come to its own unless it is clear-headed enough to perceive, and stout-hearted enough to enforce, sound justice. This little editorial is a calm and good-natured little lesson administered to Labor. In as much as it is that, it illustrates my point. Without the tremendous effort of starting and keeping up a daily themselves, the Socialists can, by supporting the capitalist press, educate the workers right along, and fit them for great things. That's what I mean.

U.S. *remains silent, as though expecting B.J. to continue talking.*

B.J.—Am I not right?

U.S.—Are you through with your argument?

B.J.—Yes, I am.

U.S.—I am sorry. I hoped you had some more to say. The more you talked the more thoroughly you hanged yourself.

B.J.—Hang myself!

U.S.—Just so. That *Sun* editorial attempts to show the injustice of 150 men quitting work because one of them is discharged; and the point is attempted to be clinched by the statement that such an act “was the same as if the company, being dissatisfied with one employee, had discharged all—”

B.J.—Isn't that comparison correct?

U.S.—It is; absolutely correct. So far so good. But the swindle comes in when the *Sun* asserts that "there is no known case of any employer of labor being guilty of an act so vengeful and unreasonable, so foolish and so unfair."

B.J.—Isn't that so? Do you know of any instance of an employer having done such a wrongful act?

U.S.—Yes; lots of instances; and you know them, too.

B.J.—I?

U.S.—Yes, you, and the *Sun* too. Did you ever hear the word "Lock-out"?

B.J. scratches the back of his head.

U.S.—What is a "Lock-out"?

B.J. looks silly.

U.S.—A "Lock-out" is that state of things that happens when an employer, being dissatisfied with one or a few employees, seeks to exercise pressure upon all by discharging all. It is a common occurrence. And you and the *Sun* know it. Will you deny it?

B.J. feels and looks too much knocked out to answer.

U.S.—I told you you had hanged yourself. The quotation you made from the *Sun* is an ideal one to prove the necessity of a daily Socialist paper. With "Justice" on their lips, the capitalists indulge in falsehood directly and by insinuation. They suppress the truth, mutilate it and distort it. This *Sun* article illustrates well the point: it brazenly ignores a certain well known capitalist rascality. By doing so it seeks to place Labor in a false light. It silently approves of an act that is done by Capital, but condemns its relative manifestation when indulged in by Labor. Justice is the last thing Labor can learn from capitalist dailies. It is time, it is high time, for the working class to have their own daily. No sacrifice can be too much to that end.

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

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