

The People.

VOL. III, NO. 49.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 1894.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {44-45}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—Don't you think the Socialist Labor Party is somewhat intolerant?

UNCLE SAM—No, why?

B.J.—I'll tell you. It calls the labor leaders fakirs because they won't join the S.L.P.

U.S.—Where did you get that from?

B.J.—That is what the labor leaders say.

U.S.—But their saying so does not make it so.

B.J.—But does not the S.L.P. call them fakirs?

U.S.—Whom, these professionals of the pure and simple stripe?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—It does.

B.J.—Well, there you have it. They are called fakirs because they won't join the party.

U.S.—Not at all; that is not the reason. There is mighty good reason to call them fakirs; their not joining the S.L.P. would be no reason.

B.J.—And what is the reason?

U.S.—There are workingmen who actually do still honestly indulge the superstition that the union and the strike and boycott are enough for all practical purposes; many a sincere worker holds this view; the blows he has received are not yet hard enough, and you know how difficult it is to rid oneself of a superstition if it once has taken hold.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—Yes, indeed, I do.

U.S.—Such workers and their leaders are looked upon rather with pity than contempt by the New Trade Unionists or Socialists; these never call them “fakirs,” but visionaries and illusionists.

B.J.—Well, then, whom do the New Trade Unionists call fakirs?

U.S.—But there are a good many others who have long since dropped the pure and simple superstition; who know that the industrial struggle of strikes and boycotts alone is not sufficient and that the workers must cast their ballots against both capitalism and capitalist candidates, but who nevertheless fight the S.L.P. with furious rage.

B.J.—Are these the ones the Socialists call fakirs?

U.S.—Yes, but not simply because they fight the S.L.P.

B.J.—For what other reason?

U.S.—People may entertain an honest conviction that, although a certain Labor party has the correct platform, still it is constituted in a manner that they object to, and is led by people whom they sincerely mistrust.

B.J.—You would not call them fakirs for that?

U.S.—No, indeed! So long as they are honest in such conviction they are no fakirs. But the test of their honesty is that they set up their own Labor party, a party having a bona fide Labor platform, organized in such way as they may choose, and led by such men as they may trust. That is the test. The workers who would do that are no fakirs; but those are fakirs, who, while calling themselves Socialists, and while objecting to the S.L.P., nevertheless deliberately abstain from setting up their own party. Such fellows are all around fakirs: they prove that they are dishonest in their opposition to the S.L.P., that they do not mean it well by Labor; that they are on the make even if they have to play into {the} hands of the capitalists by trading on their class.

B.J.—Such people surely are fakirs!

U.S.—And such are the “labor leaders” whom the New Trade Unionists and Socialists hold up with a pitch-fork to the well merited execration of the working class.

* * *

BROTHER JONATHAN—Have you seen *The Federationist*, the organ of Gompers and such?

UNCLE SAM—(Sighing and looking tired) Yes, I have.

B.J.—What do you think of it?

U.S.—Words, words, words! The same sort of rot, the same sort of slush that the Labor Movement has had dumped upon it so long by people who know nothing about it, and who love to hear themselves talk on the platforms and to see themselves in print. Words, words, words; unmeaning phrases and no facts!

B.J.—Was not that a fine article by Lennon?

U.S.—He had done better if he had given his idea of why his tailors' unions are melting away, and why the national organization does not dare to levy even the smallest tax for self-protection.

B.J.—What about Weissmann's article?

U.S.—He would have rendered a positive service to the bakers if he had given accurate figures upon their standing, and had touched upon the reasons why his New York bakers dropped from 1,100, that they were when he arrived here, down to barely 160 in good standing, and also how it came about that the New Trade Unionist or Socialist bakers, now numbering over 600 members, go about with his scalp on their belt.

B.J.—But Gompers, are not his editorials spicy?

U.S.—How much spicier and instructive would they not have been, instead of as now, purposeless, if he had explained the causes of the failures of the strikes at Homestead, in the mines, at Danbury, and everywhere where capital is strongly concentrated.

B.J.—Then you don't take much stock in *The Federationist*!

U.S.—None at all; it is still-born.

B.J.—Guess that's so.

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

Uploaded October 2007

slpns@slp.org