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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {160–161}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—Damn those workingmen. They are always striking. Always up to some mischief.

UNCLE SAM—Do you imagine they strike for the fun of it.

B.J.—It does look that way some times to me; although I know that they don't do so for the fun of it. The fools imagine they can gain by it.

U.S.—I admit they are often—

B.J.—Often? Usually, always in error.

U.S.—Even if that were so the blame is not theirs.

B.J.—Whose is the blame? Mine, I suppose!

U.S.—Yours some times. Others' other times. The blame, in short, lies with you capitalists; if anybody is the fool it is you people; and if anybody is to be damned it should be you, the capitalists.

B.J.—Why, we do everything we can to prevent strikes.

U.S.—Sometimes you do, but sometimes you don't. You know well that when you want to break a contract, or when you want to stop work because your supply of goods is too large you simply instigate a strike. You get the labor fakir whom you keep in your pay to prod the men, and a strike follows. Whose is the blame?

B.J.—Well, that is an exceptional case. As a rule, it don't come that way.

U.S.—If it don't come that way exactly it comes virtually that way.

B.J.—All the other strikes proceed from the stupidity of the men.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—I have shown you, in the instance quoted{,} that the strike proceeded from you in fact. Now take this other instance. You keep the labor fakir in your pay to prevent Socialist agitation from entering the union. Socialist agitation would teach the workers how little there is in strikes. Being kept away from information and by your doing whose is the blame of your workers act ignorantly?

(U.S. turns B.J. around, grabs him by the collar and the seat of his pants, and gives him a kick that sets him flying.)

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BROTHER JONATHAN—If only the employers were less greedy, how beautifully they could get along with their workmen.

UNCLE SAM—And you think a little less greed would solve the Labor Question?

B.J.—That’s it exactly.

U.S.—There is John Jones who only has \$10,000 in his factory; do you think he can produce as cheaply as Richard Roe who works with a \$50,000 capital?

B.J.—N-n-o.

U.S.—Each piece of goods that John Jones produces costs him fully twice as much as each piece of goods that Richard Roe produces. Can John Jones compete with Richard Roe?

B.J.—Hardly.

U.S.—What is left for him to do but to reduce his cost of production?

B.J.—Nothing.

U.S.—Won’t he be driven to lower the wages of his employees?

B.J.—Hem!

U.S.—If he don’t would he carry on business?

B.J.—No!

U.S.—If he does—

B.J.—He is safe.

U.S.—Nixy. He is busted all the same, although his lease of life may be longer.

B.J.—But if he is busted anyhow, what help is there?

U.S.—The help there is for him is that he kick out the labor fakir he keeps salaried in the union. That is so much money saved.

Secondly, that he realize that he is doomed unless the Socialist Labor party wins. Because then competition will be abolished.

Third, that he aid his employees to realize their class interests and that, proceeding upon those class interests, they must conquer the public powers and thereby overthrow the capitalist system.

Finally, join his workers and shoulder to shoulder with them march under the banner of the S.L.P.

Thus, you will see, the “greed” question is no question.

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

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