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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {132}

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNCLE SAM—You look pensive, Jonathan.

BROTHER JONATHAN—So I am.

U.S.—And why, pray.

B.J.—You see, there are so many parties in the field.

U.S.—What of that?

B.J.—They puzzle me; I don't know which to vote for. If I only knew which was the winning one.

U.S.—For you to vote it?

B.J. (brightening up)—Yes.

U.S.—And is that the way you vote?

B.J.—Would you have me lose my vote?

U.S.—No. For that very reason I am surprised you should be guided simply by the knowledge of which is the “winning” ticket to vote it. If you vote that way, you certainly don't vote for a principle, and then you certainly throw away your vote.

B.J.—I know just what you mean. You want me to vote the Socialist ticket. I won't. I won't throw my ballot into the gutter, as you have been doing for the last five years.

U.S.—You voted for the winning ticket last time?

B.J.—I did, and the Republicans got elected!

U.S.—And thereupon they sent the militia to Brooklyn to help the trolley companies break the law and keep your friends, the workers, at starvation wages. Was that voting at the stars?

B.J. (disconcerted)—Nay!

U.S.—I call that voting into the gutter, and call that throwing a vote away. And how



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did you vote at the previous election? Did you vote again on the winning side?

B.J. (trying to look happy)—I did, and elected the Democrats!

U.S.—And thereupon they sent the militia into Buffalo and the military into Chicago to murder your fellow wage slaves. Is that voting right?

B.J.—By Jericho, I have been missing it every time!

U.S.—Now, look into my eyes. Who voted into the gutter every time? Who threw his vote away right along? I, who voted against the rascals and helped {in} building up the party that is to wipe them out, or you who voted for them, you, who gave them the opportunity to outrage your brother toilers, you, who, by keeping your vote from what you know to be right have delayed the day of our emancipation? Tell me who lost his vote, you or I?

B.J. (drops his head with shame)—I did, I lost my vote!

U.S.—Aye, worse than lost it. You licked yourself and therefore you put yourself on the losing side.

B.J.—'Tis so. But tell me, how long will it be before you win?

U.S.—Just as long as men like yourself look at elections as though they were a race. So long as most workingmen do, the Socialist Labor party cannot win. But just as soon as you and the rest of workers realize that elections affect your bread and butter, then you will join us, we will win.

B.J.—But the Socialist growth is slow—

U.S.—Would you make it slower by hindering its growth?

B.J.—The people are so stupid—

U.S.—Would you keep them in stupidity by preventing the growth of the party that is to free them?

B.J. remains silent.

U.S.—The Socialist vote is like a light-house. The higher the light-house the broader the horizon it sweeps {and} the more people see it. The larger the Socialist vote, the more people will become aware of it; becoming aware of it, they will pick up courage, inquire into it, and join it. If you want to keep the people in ignorance and hopelessness, withhold your vote from us and give it to the enemy; if you want to inspire courage and hope into increasing numbers of despairing workers and hasten our day of deliverance,

join us at the ballot box! Let the S.L.P. have but 100,000 {votes} in the United States, and the social revolution that will free all of us from the tyranny of wage slavery will be on the home run.

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

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