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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {279}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (shaking his head dolefully and sighing to match)—'Tis sad, 'tis sad!

UNCLE SAM—Has the pest broken out among your friends, and carried them all off?

B.J.—That would be sad enough; but what I sigh over is, me seems, sadder still. (More sighs and more doleful shakings of the head.)

U.S.—Tell me all about it, old boy; I may be able to give you consolation—

B.J. (looking enraged)—YOU? Consolation from YOU? Why, you are as bad as any of them, if not the worst of the lot.

U.S.—Come! Come!!

B.J.—I'll show you. I have just seen THE PEOPLE'S "New Year's Greeting." And on it as an inscription: "Workingmen of all countries, unite!"

U.S.—Isn't that all right?

B.J. (impatiently)—I should say it WAS all right; but not on a Socialist Labor party picture.

U.S.—Hey!?!

B.J. (angry)—No; not on a Socialist picture! You Socialists don't act as if you want to unite the workingmen. You fight everything. One set of workingmen want free trade and, hang you, you have to quarrel with them; an other set expresses itself in favor of protection and you fall like a pile of bricks on them. (Angrier.) If an other, honest lot set



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up a party for free silver there you are jumping on 'em. (Still angrier.) If some good intentioned people organize an "Armory Party," why you begin to throw mud at them. You won't go together with anybody and you try to smash up everything. You jump upon everybody with hammer and tongs. You call that "uniting" the working class?

U.S.—Through?

B.J.—Yes, I am through.

U.S.—What's the matter with you is that you can't read English.

B.J.—I can't? Can't I?

U.S.—Exactly. You don't know what the word "unite" means.

B.J.— I don't? It means to bring together.

U.S.—And you understand by the command to bring the workingmen together that they CAN be brought and kept together on any issue?

B.J.—Why certainly, simply bring them together.

U.S.—See here. You are quite a shot, I know.

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Now, if you set a platoon of soldiers aiming at a target, which are the shots that will come together?

B.J.—Those that hit bull's-eye.

U.S.—Just so. And what shots will hit bull's-eye?

B.J.—Which?

U.S.—Yes.

B.J.—Those that are aimed correctly.

U.S.—Correct! If you want to have a lot of bullets fall together, they must be shot correctly. If so shot they hit the same mark; if not correctly shot they will fall apart. Accident may bring one, or two, or a few more together but these will fall apart from the bulk, and the bulk of them will fall far apart from one another. Bull's-eye is one spot, there the correctly shot ones unite; the whole immensity of space is there for the others and there will be as many spots hit by them as there are different spots in space. So with men. To come together, to be united, they must unite on what is right and correct. There is but one correct thing on which to unite. On an incorrect thing there is no unity possible because the incorrect things are as numerous as the spots in space that wrongly

aimed bullets may hit. Furthermore, to “come together” is of no use unless one can “keep together.” Error is so numerous that unity upon it is absurd. When, therefore, the Socialists call upon the workingmen to unite, they can not mean that they should come together on error. The Socialists know that enough men can not unite on any error, let alone stay together. THE great scatterer of the workingman is, therefore, not the Socialist who points out the right point and methods; the scatterer is he who fails to learn “how to shoot,” who interferes with those who are teaching this art, and who howls “unite,” “unite,” while he is in fact, knowingly and unknowingly, keeping the people apart. Now, my man, that’s all there is about it. You are misaddressing your sighs.

B.J.—But how long will it take to unite?

U.S.—Oh, that’s an other question. Admitting, as you must do, that the workingmen can not unite on an error, and that the only union possible is on the right principle and tactics, then you must admit that the conduct of the Socialists is the correct one. It is the only unifier possible. If they don’t bring unity about, nobody else will.

B.J. (sighing)—Well, that may be; but all this fighting—

U.S.—Is necessary. The issue is a life and death issue. The scatterers must be opposed; they must be fought; in proportion to their obstinacy and perversity they must be fought all the harder. They will howl, yes; we shall have to be severer than we would wish, yes; but never forget that it is the height of silliness to want your pound of meat and yet recoil before the drop of blood that the cutting produces incidentally. He who earnestly wants a thing, must want it despite accessories.

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

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