

# The People.

VOL. IX, NO. 14.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JULY 2, 1899.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

## UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {295}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**B**ROTHER JONATHAN—I've been reading a very silly pamphlet.

UNCLE SAM—Some Democratic or Republican affair?

B.J.—No; this time it was a Socialist affair.

U.S.—And silly?

B.J.—Yes. I don't mean to say that everything in it is silly. No. It has many good passages. But there was a decidedly silly warp that ran through the whole woof. Just think of Socialism in force! Why, the stimulus for work would be killed like a door-nail, and lie flat like a pancake. It is for that reason that I consider a Socialist pamphlet to be a silly thing.

U.S.—And would you mind explaining why you think Socialism would have that effect?

B.J.—Because if everything is provided for a man, he won't have to display any activity for getting it.

U.S.—Correct. But you have not yet proved even this case. 'Tis true that, if everything is provided for a man, he need not bother about getting—

B.J.—Just so!

U.S.—But you must first prove that under Socialism everything is so provided for the people that they don't need to bother about getting it. Now go ahead and prove to me that Socialism will provide things without people having to bother about them at all.

B.J.—Well, won't it provide everything that people need?



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—NEED? Under the Socialist Republic the people will have, not what they NEED merely, but LUXURIES to boot.

B.J.—Exactly, that's what I thought is the idea, and makes my case all the stronger.

U.S.—Suppose you mention some of these necessaries and luxuries.

B.J.—Among the necessaries: shoes, clothing, hats, food, housing, medicine.

U.S.—And among the luxuries?

B.J.—Everything else: pianos, concerts, operas, pictures, books, parks, libraries, baths, gardens.

U.S.—Any more of either?

B.J.—Isn't that enough.

U.S.—Very well; we shall be satisfied with that. Now answer me categorically: You have heard of hail dropping down from the skies, eh?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Did you ever hear of boots and shoes dropping down from the skies, eh?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—Or hats?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—Or beefsteaks and loaves of bread?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—Or houses fully furnished?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—Or quinine pills and St. Jacob's Oil?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—Or pianos?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—Or books, whole libraries and pictures?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—Nor concerts, parks, gardens, and baths?

B.J.—Nor that either.

U.S.—This being thus; these necessaries and luxuries, that the Socialist Republic has in its folds for the people, not being of the nature of hail storms that drop down from the skies, it follows that to enjoy them they must come from some other source, eh?

B.J. (puckering his brows)—Certainly.

U.S.—And what source do you imagine that must be, eh?

B.J.—What source?

U.S.—Yes, what source?

B.J.—W-e-l-l—

U.S.—Out with it!

B.J.—Well,—Labor!

U.S.—Yes; Labor. (Crossing his arms and beaming down upon B.J.) Now, if you are kindly enough disposed, would you mind enlighten{ing} me how it is possible for people to enjoy all these necessaries and luxuries in the Socialist Republic; all these necessaries and luxuries that require LABOR to produce, and yet not need any activity for getting them?

B.J. remains silent.

U.S.—I'm listening.

B.J. mumbles.

U.S.—Have you turned ventriloquist? The sounds I hear seem to come from the region of your belly. No answer? Not a sound even? Then, me gay sailor boy, let me tell you this: The pamphlet you were reading wasn't at all a Socialist pamphlet. You can't stuff me. You have been reading some political parson's or professor's slush; and, like an unthinking booby, you swallowed it like you would a country sausage. Wealth can not exist without LABOR; to have wealth to enjoy LABOR must have been exerted. The Socialist Republic is not a compendium of miracles. The stimulus to work will be there, infinitely more than to-day.

B.J.—More?

U.S.—Yes; I say more because the stimulus to work consists in the desire to enjoy wealth. To-day, it is sad experience that wealth is the product of labor but the reward of idleness, seeing that the idle capitalist grabs it all. Now go and throw your wondrous pamphlet into the fire.

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

Uploaded February 2009

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)