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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {73-74}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I like the Socialists well enough but for one thing.

UNCLE SAM—And what is that?

B.J.—They won't help any movement that leads their way; they won't take one thing at a time; they want the whole loaf or none.

U.S.—Do you mean to say that if they could get half a loaf they would refuse it?

B.J.—I don't mean that.

U.S.—Do you mean to say that if they could get one thing of the many they are after they would refuse that?

B.J.—I don't mean that, either.

U.S.—Then what do you mean?

B.J.—Take, for instance, a movement for the nationalization of the railroads; do you imagine they would join that?

U.S.—I guess not.

B.J.—Well, there you have it; that is what I meant, and that is what I don't like in them.

U.S.—Would you support a movement to go to Europe across the Atlantic by rowing in that direction?

B.J.—Not so long as I am sane.

U.S.—Would you have supported a movement to march with an army for the capture of King George's Hessians one by one?

B.J.—Nary!



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U.S.—Would you have favored the idea of marching with one man to capture Cornwallis?

B.J.—No! What are you driving at?

U.S.—Now, then, for the same reason that you would not do any of those things, the Socialists won't go into any one-idea movement; and right they are.

B.J.—But to try to do any of the things you asked me about would be insane.

U.S.—So would the attempt to nationalize the railroad by a movement that demands only their nationalization.

B.J.—Insane?

U.S.—Yes, insane. Do you believe that only railroad magnates hold railroad stock?

B.J.—No; I guess most other capitalists hold stock of some kind in railroads.

U.S.—Do you believe only Sugar Trust magnates own stock in the sugar monopoly?

B.J.—No; Havemeyer testified that many others hold stock in his concern.

U.S.—Do you believe that only the directors of mines, of shoe factories, of express agencies, of telephone and telegraph companies, of Standard Oil, etc., etc., hold stock in each of those companies?

B.J.—I believe nothing of the sort. I know they all hold stock in all of them.

U.S.—Do you believe any of them would like to have his concern nationalized?

B.J.—Nixy.

U.S.—The attempt to nationalize any one of those industries would, seeing that all capitalists have stock in all or most of all, forthwith meet the opposition of all?

B.J.—Guess so; the scalawags would combine in one solid body.

U.S.—It follows that, by attacking one industry at a time, would not divide the enemy?

B.J.—No, it would not. I don't dispute that. It won't be any easier, as far as the enemy is concerned, to attack one industry than to attack all. You will have to fight them all, anyhow.

U.S.—Then nothing is gained by going for “one thing at a time.”

B.J.—Nothing is gained as far as the enemy's conduct is concerned.

U.S.—But—

B.J.—But a good deal is gained as far as the people is concerned.

U.S.—How?

B.J.—Don't you see it would be easier to make the people see the beauties of nationalizing one industry than to make them see the beauty of the whole co-operative commonwealth?

U.S.—To carry to victory a movement for the nationalization of one industry you would need the vote of the working class, would you not?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—If the movement is to nationalize the railroads you would need the votes of the miners, shoemakers, telegraphers, weavers, farm hands, laborers—

B.J.—Make it short; we would need the votes of all the workers.

U.S.—Would a striking weaver in Olneyville see the benefit to him of nationalizing the railroads as quickly as he would see the benefit to him of nationalizing the factory in which he works?

B.J.—N-n-o-o!

U.S.—Would a striking shoemaker of Lynn see the benefit to him of nationalizing the railroads or the Olneyville factories as quickly as he would see the benefit of nationalizing the shoe factory which, in the hands of the boss, is making him old at 30?

B.J.—N-n-o-o!

U.S.—Would a striking silk weaver of Paterson see the benefit to him of nationalizing the railroads or the Olneyville factories, or the Lynn shoe factories, as readily as he would see the benefit of nationalizing the silk factory that is grinding out his life?

B.J.—N-n-n-o-o-o!

U.S.—Carry this on with all other industries; what is the result?

B.J.—It looks blue.

U.S.—The result is that when you go with a proposition to nationalize one industry only you virtually deprive yourself of the aid of the workers in all others, all of whom you need.

B.J.—I never thought of that!

U.S.—To demand the nationalization of one industry is, accordingly, false tactics. You get, as you admitted before, the whole enemy upon you, and you keep the votes of

the bulk of the workers away.

B.J.—That is insane.

U.S.—And as the Socialists are not insane, they don't try such insane tactics. The nationalization of any one of the industries will be the work of that political party only that demands the nationalization of all. Once in power, it will take them up one by one. But it can't come into power except upon a whole-loaf platform.

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UNCLE SAM—I am curious to know a thing.

BROTHER JONATHAN—Which?

U.S.—Who furnishes the money for the New York *Populist*, the new organ just issued in New York city of the silver-mine barons?

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

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slpns@slp.org