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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {261}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—You Socialists are not practical.

UNCLE SAM—Just teach us how to be so?

B.J.—Now, I'm as good a Socialist as you, but I won't nail myself fast on a dogma.

U.S.—This nailing of oneself fast on a dogma is about the worst thing a man could do.

B.J.—I should think so; and that's just what you Socialists do.

U.S.—Inasmuch as to which?

B.J.—You maintain that only your S.L.P. can bring any help—

U.S.—Just so.

B.J.—There you have it! And I maintain that we can get there through the other parties as well—

U.S.—What!

B.J.—And I'll prove it.

U.S.—That's the way to talk. It is refreshingly rare to find a man who will attempt to prove his assertions, especially when, as in your case, he talks nonsense.

B.J.—We'll find out if it is nonsense. The Democratic party is much nearer to the people than the Republican party; will you deny that?

U.S.—Speak on, man; speak on!

B.J.—Well, the Democratic party IS. And as a proof of it, at the last municipal election it quite strongly inclined towards the workingman and the Socialist



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

programme—

U.S.—W—h—a—t—?

B.J.—Just what I said. And I'll prove it. Don't Socialists want municipal ownership of railroads?

U.S.—In a manner, we do.

B.J. (triumphantly)—Well, that's just about what the Democratic party in this city declared for.

U.S.—And enforced it?

B.J.—Well, they have not had a chance.

U.S.—If I promise you one dollar and have no chance to give it to you, does that justify my taking a dollar out of your pocket?

B.J.—Why, no!

U.S.—And if I did, would my promise to give you a dollar be enough to base a claim upon that I am your friend?

B.J.—Surely not, after you not only do not give me the promised dollar, but take a dollar away from me.

U.S.—And that's just what your Democratic "friend of the workingman" did.

B.J.—How so?

U.S.—The Brooklyn Bridge, with its cable cars, was municipal property, was it not?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Well, now, the Democratic administration of this city virtually turned that municipal property into private property.

B.J.—How so?

U.S.—I'll tell you. It opened the bridge to the private trolley lines; these now run over it; thereby the bridge was given away to private enterprise of capitalists. And what was the effect? Now that all these trolley cars run over it, we, the former employés, have had our wages reduced, and some lost their places outright.

B.J.—You don't say so!

U.S.—I do. There were 56 conductors discharged just as soon as these private trolleys went over the bridge; and our wages, the wages of those who remained at work went down and their hours of work went up. Formerly we earned \$2.76 in an eight-hour

day; now we are allowed only \$2 in a ten-hour day, and worse is threatened. Did your Democratic party prove a friend?

B.J.—No, I must admit it didn't.

U.S.—Instead of keeping its word, it made things worse still for us.

B.J.—Yes; that's so; but would the Republican party have done any better?

U.S.—Why, no! Republican or Democratic party, they're crows of one nest—the nest of the capitalist class. No good can come from either. If we workingmen want salvation, we must win it by a party of our own class, the Socialist Labor party; we must win it by ceasing to be voting cattle for the capitalists, and voting for ourselves.

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

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