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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {155}

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNCLE SAM—You seem to be happy; I see a flush of joy suffusing your cheeks, otherwise cadaverous, and a spark of light brightening up your otherwise lacklustre orbs.

BROTHER JONATHAN—Yes, I do feel somewhat elated; I have just sent in my application for membership in the Socialist Labor party—

U.S. (visibly surprised)—What! You!? Since when have you become a Socialist?

B.J.—I have always been a Socialist; I am as good a Socialist as you; but—

U.S.—I thought there was a “but”!

B.J.—But I don’t agree—

U.S.—With Socialist principles, eh?

B.J.—I don’t believe in that class struggle affair, for instance.

U.S.—I know you don’t.

B.J.—And I think it is harmful to the progress of Socialism.

U.S.—In other words, you consider it harmful to recognize facts and deal with them?

B.J.—What facts?

U.S.—The fact, for instance, that there is going on a class struggle in society; that each class proceeds from its class interests; that “justice” is different to each according to the class and material interests that each has; and that clearness



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

cannot be introduced into the conflict without clearness is had upon this fact.

B.J.—But I deny all that; there is no class struggle—

U.S.—Let it go at that, for the moment. Suppose there is none. How can you join a movement that is based on principles that you reject?

B.J.—Is your movement too narrow for a new idea?

U.S.—Leave that matter of a “New Idea” also aside for a moment. The fact is that you would be joining the movement and not the movement you. It is not asking too much of one who joins a movement that he subscribe to its principles.

B.J.—But its principles are absurd!

U.S.—In proof of which “absurdity” it is the only growing movement, while all your movements are like flashes in the pan and go up the fluke. I shall certainly oppose your admission.

B.J.—You are just like all of them, too narrow to take in a new idea!

U.S.—And what is your “new idea”?

B.J.—That the class struggle should be dropped.

U.S.—You call that a “new idea”?

B.J.—I do!

U.S.—Let me tell you a story: A Jew was once traveling on a lovely road in the West when suddenly a bullet whizzed one-quarter of an inch by his ear. He turned and saw a cow-boy running after him and making ready to fire a second shot. In approved Western style, the Jew threw up both his hands, and when the cow-boy got within speaking distance, this dialogue took place between the two:

“Hold on! Don’t shoot! What have I done to you?”

“Arn’t {Aren’t?} you a Jew?”

“Yes, what of it?”

“Well, you killed my Lord and Savior.”

“I? Why, no, man! I had no hand in it. That happened one thousand eight hundred and sixty odd years ago.”

“What?! As long ago as all that!? Why, I only heard of it just now!”

Do you see your beautiful outlines in that mirror?

B.J.’s flush leaves his face and his cadaverousness of old returns.

U.S.—You and all such as you who come to us with your “New Ideas” are no better than that ignorant cow-boy. Ignorant as he is the affair of Calvary was news

to him—a new thing. So with you people. If instead of doing like Indian fakirs, and contemplating your own navels and seeking to evolve facts out of your own inner consciousness, you informed yourself upon Socialist literature and upon the history of the movement, you would find that your “New Idea” is as stale as yesterday’s spilt beer. That it has come up before, that it has been tried by scatter brains like yourself and notoriety seekers like you, and that it bursted wide open. (Jamming B.J.’s hat down {down over?} his head{.}) Go to, with your “New Ideas”!

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

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