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DIALOGUE

## UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {185}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**B**ROTHER JONATHAN—There is one thing about Socialism that I'll never be able to swallow.

UNCLE SAM—If it has come down to ONE thing, you are making progress: I remember the time when you had more objections to Socialism than there are hairs absent from the palm of your hand.

B.J.—Never mind that. I object to the COMPULSION that there is in Socialism. If you legislate the Co-operative Commonwealth into existence, those who don't believe in it would be compelled to submit, and that would be unjust, rascally, tyrannous; it would be oppression.

U.S.—Where were you coming from last 5th of July at 2 o'clock in the morning, when you were swaying from one side of the street to the other, to the tune of "I won't go home till morning," etc.?

B.J. (full of pride)—I had been celebrating the anniversary of our country's independence, with several other sons of the Revolutionary Fathers.

U.S. (grabbing him by the collar and shaking him almost to pieces)—You celebrant of injustice! you toaster of rascality! you minion of tyranny! Shame upon you, midnight reveller over oppression!

B.J. (disengaging himself)—Are ye gone daft?

U.S.—No, you hideous monster of condensed iniquity! Many and many were the colonists who doted on King George. 'Tis even said that a majority of them favored



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allowing him to walk over and trample the guts out of them. The Revolutionary Fathers didn't fancy playing the role of grapes at vintage; they peppered George's Red-coats out of the land, and unceremoniously hanged his native Tory spies; they established a country free from Georgism; and those who didn't like that and preferred to be lamb chops for George's breakfast table were compelled to join. And these Revolutionary Fathers, who did this compelling, YOU have been celebrating! (Giving him another shake.) Don't you realize the full depth of your injustice, tyranny, rascality and oppression-loving revelry?

B.J. (after recovering his breath)—Come, come! would you have preferred that our Revolutionary Fathers had allowed King George to—what was it you said?

U.S.—Trample the guts out of us—

B.J.—Just so, would you?

U.S.—Not I. But I'm a Socialist, one of those who would legislate the Co-operative Commonwealth into existence, even if any descendant of the old Tories would feel "compelled" to join.

B.J. (angrily)—The two cases are not parallel.

U.S.—Now you talk. If they were parallel you would not think it unjust to "compel," eh?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—Accordingly, compulsion, as you call it, is good or bad, deserves midnight celebrations or broad day denunciation, according as one has to choose between being squeezed to death, or being free and making others free, despite their love for slavery, eh?

B.J.—Just so.

U.S.—Then the question ceases to be one of "justice," etc., and becomes one of fact: are we to allow ourselves to be squeezed to death, eh?

B.J.—Yes, that's about it.

U.S.—It follows that, before talking of "injustice," and all that, you should show that the Socialists are wrong in saying that this capitalist social system is squeezing the life out of the people for the benefit of a small loafing capitalist class. Will you deny that?

B.J.—No, I can't deny that.

U.S.—Then your proposition amounts to this: “The Revolutionary Fathers, although they were in the minority, did a gerlorious thing to coerce the majority into freedom; but the Socialists, even if they get the overwhelming majority of our people to realize that they are being squeezed to death, and even if they awake in that majority a taste to be free, will be committing an act of injustice, of rascality, of tyranny, of oppression, to rear the Co-operative Commonwealth, because, forsooth, either a stupid or a vicious minority prefers to be squeezed or objects to being prevented from officiating as squeezers. Is that it?

B.J. (getting very violent)—To talk with you is like getting into a straight-jacket.

U.S.—Never mind the jacket. Rather the straight-jacket that will insist that 2+2 make 4, than the clown’s free-flopping cap and bells that would make out of 2+2 three, or six, or any other idiocy. Have I stated your proposition right, or is it wrong?

B.J.—The devil take you!

U.S.—Jonathan, Jonathan, take my advice and get betimes out of the ruts of our old Tories. There is yet time to discuss, there is yet time to argue and banter; but the time is at hand when the sheep will be separated from the goats; when the line will be drawn sharp; and then discussion will be at an end; every one will sleep in the bed he has himself prepared for himself. Remember that our glorious Declaration of Independence does not open with a discussion on the rights of men. It opens with a declaration that the Revolutionary Fathers hold certain truths to be SELF EVIDENT. Such another declaration, up to date, is in the air. It will soon crystallize into words graven with a sharp burin on granite tablets. Woe to those who stand in the way of truths that are self-evident to a revolutionary movement. Jonathan stop fooling—if your fat belly is dear to you.

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