



DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {250}

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNCLE SAM—Fine news from Rhode Island.

BROTHER JONATHAN—Why fine news?

U.S.—Because the Socialists are making such fine progress.

B.J.—I don't see anything in that to rejoice at.

U.S.—Nothing to rejoice at when the class-conscious workingmen start on a straight march to the conquest of the public powers?

B.J.—To be frank with you, I don't see any beauty in that. The capitalist politicians are a rum lot, no doubt; there is nothing too bad that would not fit them; I admit all that. But, good heavens! are the workingmen, who were elected by the old parties to office so often, any better? They were just as corrupt, and they did not do a thing to improve the conditions of the workers. Would you deny that?

U.S.—No, I won't deny that.

B.J.—Then, why do you crow about Rhode Island?

U.S.—Just because you are right in saying that these workingmen were no good.

B.J. looks puzzled.

U.S.—You are puzzled at this statement? You would not be if you understood the difference there is between a class-conscious and a class-unconscious workingman.

B.J.—What of it?

U.S.—A good deal. A class-unconscious workingman does not understand that the



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capitalist system is a system that does good only to the capitalist class and does harm to the working class.

B.J.—Very well.

U.S.—Such a workingman holds to the capitalist theory that capitalism is eternal and good—

B.J.—Very well.

U.S.—Such a workingman has, however, wants. To satisfy them he must have some wealth. That wealth he can't get; the capitalist system keeps him from it and he does not penetrate the secret. Having wants to satisfy, nothing to satisfy them with, and not seeing that the reason of his distress is the capitalist system which his class can overthrow, he becomes a rascal, and, if elected, being elected on the capitalist platform, he does as bad by the working class as any capitalist politician.

B.J.—Yes, but—

U.S.—But the class-conscious workingman knows that the reason of his misery is the capitalist system, and that system can and will be overthrown. He also knows how to do it. When such a workingman is elected to office, you have not elected simply a belly that has to be filled, a back that has to be clothed, a head that has to be covered; you have elected a high principle incarnated in an intelligent body. Such a man will not be a crook; and when such men hold the majority of the government they will transform society from the pest-hole it is to-day to the paradise it can be.

B.J.—There is, I admit, a good deal in that.

U.S.—That's why Socialists denounce the workingmen who stand for election on the capitalist platform, and they applaud the vote cast for men—workingmen or others—who stand upon the class-conscious platform of the working class.

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