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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {75-76}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—One thousand eight hundred regulars of the Federal army and navy are about to be let loose upon the railroad strikers in California. That will settle their strike!

UNCLE SAM—That may settle it.

B.J.—What, have you any doubt it will?

U.S.—Are you quite certain it will?

B.J.—Of course.

U.S.—Why?

B.J.—Just think of 1,800 disciplined soldiers, armed with repeating rifles, Gatling guns and what not, moving with military precision! Why, they can pulverize a mob 10,000 strong.

U.S.—That depends upon—

B.J.—Depends?

U.S.—Exactly.

B.J. (with impatience)—You talk like a greenhorn.

U.S.—It depends upon whether or no the revolution has been accomplished in the heads of the strikers.

B.J.—In their heads?

U.S.—Yes, whether they have been properly drilled by their leaders on the Social question.

B.J.—Can a knowledge of the Social question resist bullets and bayonets?

U.S.—Exactly; it is the strongest armor plate and withal the most effective weapon



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of aggression.

B.J. looks incredulous.

U.S.—If the strikers have been properly tutored by their leaders on the nature of the great issue with a part of which they are now in contact; if they have been made to realize that civilization is approaching one of its periodical crises; if they comprehend that the existing social system is obsolete; if they have been taught the dignity of their class, of the proletariat, and that theirs is the ennobling historic mission to usher in a higher state of civilization; if their eyes are open, if they know that no small or local or one thing is to be done, but that the question embraces nothing short of a social revolution; in a word, if the social revolution has been accomplished in their heads, then would their nerves be steeled and their hearts beat high with the unshakable consciousness of right; then would they feel strong, and they would be unconquerable.

B.J. (thoughtfully)—There is much in what you say. In that case, 1,800 regulars might not prove sufficient to scatter them.

U.S.—No; nor 18,000! Well organized workingmen, knowing the ground on which they stand, do not deport themselves like children; and, inspired by a high, invigorating aim, they would scatter all reactionary opposition like chaff before a cyclone.

B.J.—Well, has the revolution been accomplished in their heads?

U.S.—I don't know; the issue will show; if the revolution has not been accomplished in their heads, then no 1,800 regulars will be needed to overcome them. In that case a broomstick dressed in blue and brass buttons, with another broomstick in its hands, may suffice to overawe them.

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BROTHER JONATHAN—I consider it downright blasphemy on the part of the fellows in Chicago who wrote to Pullman, congratulating him on his “grand exhibition of the spirit of '76.” The “spirit of '76,” forsooth, in that rake-hell money bags!

UNCLE SAM—That's all right.

B.J.—The devil you say!

U.S.—“'76” had two spirits.

B.J.—“'76” had but one!

U.S.—There was the spirit of freedom that you and I battled for; and there was the

spirit of tyranny that opposed us.

B.J.—Even so, that writer to Pullman meant that this varlet was displaying the spirit of the “fathers.”

U.S.—Probably he is—of his “father,” or ancestor of revolutionary days.

B.J.—I can’t believe it!

U.S.—Well, I can. The trouble with you seems to be that you forget that there were traitor Tories in this country—

B.J.—By Jericho, there were—

U.S.—Those American Tories, you recollect, prayed during the war of the Revolution, not for George Washington, but for George III.; they hovered on the flanks and rear of our patriot army; they weakened by their acts every victory we won.

B.J.—Yes, indeed, and they aggravated every reverse we suffered—

U.S.—And George Washington had the necks of many of them wrung—

B.J.—Yes, indeed, and I remember to have seen quite a few of them gracing in a pendant attitude many a sour apple tree in Jersey.

U.S.—Ten to one, if you trace this Pullman back, you will run against one of those apple trees.

B.J.—Guess that’s so; like “father” like son.

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