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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {246}

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNCLE SAM—You look jaded—
BROTHER JONATHAN—Good reason for it. I've been running off my legs looking for a park.

U.S.—What do you want a park for?

B.J.—The Amalgamated Inter-District Council of the United Pretzel Varnishers, Shirttail Ironers and Buttonhole Pressers has just been organized by the A.F. of L. organizer; the organization is over 100,000 strong—

U.S.—Why, of course you can't get a park large enough to accommodate so big a crowd—

B.J.—No; that's not it. Of course all the members won't go. I don't expect that more than 25 people will be there altogether—

U.S.—Hem!

B.J.—Did you say anything?

U.S.—No; it was only a little dust that got into my throat.

B.J.—The difficulty lies in finding a UNION park.

U.S.—How so?

B.J.—I can find a park that employs union waiters, and union musicians, that sells union cigars and union bread, but not that also sells union beer.

U.S.—And such a park you say is non-union?

B.J.—Of course.

U.S.—In that case there is no such thing as "union beer."



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—(bristling up)—No “union beer” in existence!?!?

U.S.—No; not under the premises set down by yourself.

B.J.—I’d like to know how I, a good union man, could set down any principle whereby it becomes established that there is no such thing as “union beer”!

U.S.—Very easy to tell you how, and, moreover, to show you that your theory is correct.

If a park employs union waiters, but its musicians, cigars, bread, etc., is {are?} non-union, the park itself is non-union, eh?

B.J.—Just so.

U.S.—And if a park employs union waiters and musicians, but its cigars, bread, etc., is {are?} non-union, the park is still—

B.J.—Non-union.

U.S.—Just so. And if a park has union waiters, and union musicians, and union cigars, but non-union bread—

B.J.—The park is still non-union.

U.S.—Correct again. Finally, if a park has union waiters, union musicians, union cigars and union bread—

B.J.—That’s a union park, provided it does not sell some other non-union article.

U.S.—That’s it. Now, could you state the principle that underlies all that?

B.J.—It seems to me I see the underlying principle, but—

U.S.—Is the underlying principle not this: “A union concern must be one made up wholly of union matter.”

B.J.—That’s it exactly.

U.S.—If there is any ONE non-union thing in such a concern it is non-union, eh?

B.J.—Just so.

U.S.—Now, apply this principle to the beer, and you will see that there is no union beer in the United States.

B.J.—You surprise me.

U.S.—To be a union article, a thing must be wholly made up of union materials, eh? That’s settled.

B.J.—It is.

U.S.—Isn't malt a material that goes to making beer?

B.J.—Of course.

U.S.—How many malt concerns do you know that are union?

B.J. (looking disconcerted)—Damned few.

U.S.—That disposes of the union quality of the bulk of our beer.

B.J.—But not of all!

U.S.—I'm coming to the rest. Is not glucose one of the ingredients of beer?

B.J.—Why, yes.

U.S.—And how many are the glucose establishments that are union?

B.J. is seized with a violent fit of coughing.

U.S.—NOT ONE!

B.J.—You are right.

U.S.—For the same reason that a park, in which a lot of things are union, still remains a non-union affair if it deals in ONE non-union article, it follows that, even if a lot of things that go into the composition of beer are union, beer still remains a non-union article if ONE non-union matter goes into its composition. The beer drunk here is made up of glucose, which is non-union. That settles the question of the “unionism” of our beer.

B.J.—But—(and relapses into a puzzled look)

U.S.—I know what is in your mind. You are struggling with the idea that an article may be non-union and still not be a scab article. The shop in which it is made may never have been organized; that makes the article non-union, and yet not scab. Perhaps you think that that is the case with the glucose; and that, consequently, the beer that contains it need not be considered scabbishly non-union.

B.J.—Now, that's just my view.

U.S.—And there you err. It is one of the crimes committed by the brewers' organizations of the Kurzenknabes that, thanks to their ununionistic conduct, the glucose shops of the land HAVE BECOME SCAB CONCERNS. In the Duryea factory, notably, the glucose employees fought a stubborn fight; they could have won if the Kurzenknabe brewers had stood by them. But Kurzenknabe and his ilk looked out for themselves, were willing to handle scab glucose, and thus the glucose strikers lost. In

view of this, glucose is a SCAB article, and there is no such thing as “union beer.” Do you realize you are beaten, sir?

B.J. sighs and looks cheap.

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

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