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DIALOGUE

## UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {316}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**B**ROTHER JONATHAN—The world seems to be going crazy!

UNCLE SAM—What about?

B.J.—You can't open a paper without your eye alights on the word "Socialism." It is "Socialism" here, "Socialism" there, "Socialism" everywhere.

U.S.—I should take that for a sign of increasing sanity.

B.J.—"Sanity!" There is something about you Socialists, I mean good fellows like you, that puzzles me.

U.S.—I may be able to unpuzzle you. What is it?

B.J.—You are so kind-hearted and yet so cruel. You mean to do the best for people, and you go about deliberately to do the worst for them; you mean them to be happy, and you seek to insure their unhappiness.

U.S. (*looks amused*)—In what way?

B.J.—You think I am fooling. I am not. You want the workingmen to enjoy the beatitudes of the Socialist Republic. Now, I admit that the Socialist Republic must be the most enjoyable abode for man possible.

U.S.—If that is so, in what way are we Socialists encompassing the unhappiness of this people.

B.J.—I was just about to explain that. Now, it so happens, that with all their troubles and miseries, the working people ARE contented. Their life is not a happy one; I



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admit that. Their life is not a noble one; I admit that, too. Nevertheless, in order to reach that point where they will be enjoying the happiness of the Socialist Republic, it is, first of all, necessary to render them discontented with their present lot. Without you do that you couldn't get them to move.

U.S.—Granted!

B.J.—So that, in order to reach the expected happiness of the Socialist Republic, you must begin by robbing them of their present happiness.

U.S.—“Present happiness”?

B.J.—Yes; that happiness that always attends contentment. And then, suppose you Socialists do succeed in establishing the Socialist Republic, and, along with it all the joys that you expect? Will the game be worth the candle to these poor workingmen?

U.S.—I most assuredly think it would.

B.J.—Let's see; the higher the plane on which man stands, all the more sensitive is he. A fly has less feeling than a mouse, a mouse less than a monkey, a monkey less than man. Man stands on the highest plane, but he has to pay dear for that, by being subject to tortures that the lowly fly knows nought of. Raise the lowly workingman to the giddy elevation of citizenship in the Socialist Republic, or Co-operative Commonwealth, and it will be to him as if you raised a fly from its present lack of sensitiveness, *i.e.*, unhappiness. Which is why I say you Socialists mean to impart happiness to the masses, and only lay the ground for their greater unhappiness. You must admit this.

U.S.—All is not said by looking at one side of a medal.

B.J.—Is there another side to this medal?

U.S.—Very much so. Man in the Socialist Republic is more sensitive, consequently, will be subject to sorrows not dreamed of by him to-day; consequently, will be unhappier. THEREFORE, it is wrong to work for the Socialist Republic. That's your argument.

B.J.—It is.

U.S.—Consequently, this must also follow: Life at the stage of human development is infinitely more sensitive, consequently, subject to pains not dreamed of by life at the stage of the fly development; THEREFORE, we should wish to be flies and not men. That is your position. Now, how much further back in the scale of development would you like man to go, so as to reach YOUR ideal state of happiness?

B.J. (*scratches his back head and looks puzzled*).

U.S.—The fly is a higher development than the oyster; hence the fly must be more sensitive; hence less happy; hence the ideal stage is back even of the fly. How far back would you want to go?

B.J. (*Remains mute*).

U.S.—Your silence is more eloquent than your speech. Yielding to the vanity of wishing to seem philosophic, you have taken a stand which, if it means anything, is an advocacy of retrogression, of Bestiality. Your silence shows that your better parts recoil from your pretence to philosophy. Aye, “better a century of Europe than a century of Cathay.” And now, as you stand there, silent and shamefaced, you will be able to explain to yourself what seems a miracle to so many, to wit, the serenity of Socialism and Socialists, and the placidity with which they plow their way across obstacles are all in seeming only. Socialism has all the trump cards.

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

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