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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {364}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN.—It drives me clean out of all patience to think of the Socialist Labor Party men!

UNCLE SAM.—What have they been doing again to you?

B.J.—Why, they are people who can't be suited; nothing that you do for them pleases them; they are eternal kickers.

U.S.—That's grievous!

B.J.—I verily believe that they kick for the pleasure of kicking.

U.S.—Suppose you specify.

B.J.—Quite unnecessary! One Socialist movement after another has come up, and those S.L.P. men won't have anything to do with it, won't accept it! And it makes no difference how civil you are to them!

U.S.—I see now.

B.J.—Do you?

U.S.—If you want a coat and go into a clothing store, what is it that you will buy?

B.J.—A coat, of course.

U.S.—If the salesman brings you a pair of snow-shoes—

B.J.—I won't accept them!

U.S.—Even if he is very civil to you, and tells you that's just the thing for you?

B.J.—Even then. I would say it is a coat I want.

U.S.—And if he returns offering to sell you a finely embroidered night cap—



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B.J.—I'll tell him it is {a} coat I want, to go out {with,} not a decoration to go to bed with.

U.S.—Would you refuse him even if he smiled and was polite?

B.J.—Despite all his smiles!

U.S.—And if he came back again displaying a beautiful pair of Knickerbockers?

B.J.—I would shake him up and yell “Coat” into his ears.

U.S.—Would you be so rude as to do that despite his suavity?

B.J.—Yes. No amount of suavity will stick me with something I don't want.

U.S. contemplates B.J. from head to foot.

B.J.—Ain't I right?

U.S.—Now, tell me what answer would you make if that salesman were to say to you: “Sir, you drive me clean out of all patience; it is clear you can't be suited; nothing that I do for you pleases you; you are an eternal kicker?”

B.J. (visibly losing patience)—What I would do would be to grab the fellow by the collar and tell him that I was the one who was being driven out of all patience, and he was doing it. I would tell him that, either he is deaf and can't hear what it is I want, or he does hear, but is a confounded cheat who don't want to admit that he does not have what I want, and means to palm off upon me what I don't want. That's what I would say!

U.S.—Ditto, ditto would any S.L.P. man say to you.

B.J.—Hey?!?!

U.S.—Just so, and deservedly too. The S.L.P. demands the abolition of the wage system of slavery by the establishment of the Socialist Republic,—in short, Socialism.

B.J.—I know.

U.S.—Whereupon smirking salesmen approach the S.L.P. men with Glasgow plans of municipalization, which are to Socialism what snow-shoes would be to a coat.

B.J. scratches his head.

U.S.—These polite salesmen then turn up with tariff reduction plans, which are to Socialism what night caps would be to a coat.

B.J. scratches his head more intensely.

U.S.—Being again refused, these salesmen return full of smiles with referendum plans, which are to Socialism what Knickerbockers would be to a coat.

B.J.'s head seems to have the itch badly.

U.S.—Now, then, just as you would tell such a salesman, the S.L.P. men tell these reform-hucksters: “You are either deaf and can’t hear what it is that we want, or you are a lot of confounded crooks, seeking to palm off upon us your several one-legged hobbies as Socialism.

B.J. scratches his head with both his hands.

U.S.—Differently, however, from you, the S.L.P. men do not lose their patience. The other fellows do, and grow wilder with every demonstration of the imperviousness of the S.L.P. to humbug. The S.L.P. remains calm and firm, unflinchingly hewing open the path, solid and broad, for the triumphant passage of the Socialist Republic.

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