

# The People.

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DIALOGUE

## UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {55}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**B**ROTHER JONATHAN—There are three things I do not understand; nay four that pass my comprehension.

UNCLE SAM—Which is the first?

B.J.—The attitude of the press on the strikers in the coke region and on the South Carolina rioters. The coke miners, who strike for living wages and refuse to be degraded to the level of brutes are called “rioters,” “incendiaries,” “murderers;” the South Carolina rioters who refuse by violence to obey the law are patted on the back. The two events are happening at the same time; they are reported along side of each other in the papers; and yet they are commented upon in such wonderful style. Is the world turned upside down and inside out?

U.S.—Nay, nay.

B.J.—How, then, do you explain this?

U.S.—Easily enough. *Punch’s* celebrated special constable, who says to the Chartist: “If I kill you, mind it’s nothing; but if you kill me, by George, it’s murder,” held the international language of capital, to wit, Right is Wrong when committed by the wealth producers; Wrong is Right when committed by the wealth spongers. And so it will continue to be until the wealth producers kick the wealth spongers out of the country the way you and I, Brother Jonathan, kicked King George III. and his whole crew out of the land. Is that clear?

B.J.—Yes.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—Which is the second?

B.J.—The term “Honest Labor.” I thought I knew what that meant; but I find it used by the damnedest lot of rascals—capitalists and professional workers—in a way that passeth my understanding.

U.S.—Neither is that difficult to explain. Do you not know that proverbially the devil hides himself behind the cross? and fishes are caught with bait? By styling the Labor fakirs “Honest Labor,” their cloven hoof may be concealed; by styling “Honest Labor” the gullies whom these fellows catch, the hook is concealed wherewith other gullies may be likewise caught.

B.J.—And does it work?

U.S.—It don’t work worth a cent! Which is the third?

B.J.—That the papers are pointing to the South Carolina troubles as proofs of the impracticability of Socialism.

U.S.—Yes and the Single Taxers crow in the same key. I notice, however, that they keep mum on our public schools, our fire departments, our Post Office; if the South Carolina Dispensary Law is Socialistic, which it is not, then our public schools, etc., also are, and exceptions, instead of disproving, confirm all rules.

B.J.—I know, but I don’t understand how these papers don’t see that.

U.S.—O; your trouble is that you imagine those papers and the people who shout with them to be intelligent. {But} they are not. They do not mean to lie about it; they are stupid enough to believe what they say. The explanation is simply UNFATHOMABLE STUPIDITY. And the fourth?

B.J.—That the Executive Committee of the so-called American Federation of Labor refused to appoint Thomas Morgan lecturer on a proposed lecturing tour to be now undertaken, and that in his stead it appointed that boodle-besmirched Frank K. Foster.

U.S.—Seeing that you correctly style that organization the “so-called A.F. of L.,” I fail to see why you can’t understand the preference given by its so-called Executive Committee to the boodle-reeking Foster. Morgan would not do: he might teach his audiences something; Foster will do; he is certain to teach them nothing. He will fling about pretty phrases; thoroughly confuse his listening workingmen; and then leave them in as good a condition as he knows how to be gobbled up by the capitalists. The

appointment of Foster is perfectly clear.

BROTHER JONATHAN and UNCLE SAM walk off arm in arm whistling the tune: “Woe, Emma, you put me in such a dilemma.”

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

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