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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {346}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—The campaign is almost over. I have watched it closely. I am filled with admiration for one feature of it: a grand feature—

UNCLE SAM—The feature of jingoism that the McKinley party has managed to keep up?

B.J. (contemptuously)—No! No!!

U.S.—Perhaps what fills you with admiration is the stupendous bunco game that the Bryan party has set up and has managed to keep up.

B.J.—You sneer at me. But, no: I mean none of that. The McKinley game of intoxicating the people with the rank whiskey of Jingoism to their own undoing I despise. The Bryan game of sailing, like a pirate ship, under the false colors of Patriotism and Labor I spew upon. Don't think so poorly of me as to believe I could be taken in with such fraudulent devices.

U.S. (looking interested)—What{,} then, is it that fills you with admiration?

B.J.—You may have taken me for a fool during this campaign. You probably mistook my silence. I was saying nothing, but, like Paddy's owl, I was doing a hell of a lot of thinking.

U.S.—Give me the benefit of it.

B.J.—The one feature of this campaign that fills me with admiration is the conduct of the Socialist Labor Party—

U.S. (pricks up his ears.)

B.J.—The conduct of the Socialist Labor Party is grand, it is sublime. Leonidas at Thermophylae is a pale comparison.—



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—You interest me highly.

B.J.—I watched the S.L.P. closely. Its existence, its program, its conduct, firm and unterrifiedly, boldly and unflinchingly hewing its way to the emancipation of the working class gave me each time the key to understand the every move of its many-colored foe.

U.S.—You surprise me! You must have been doing a hell of a lot of thinking!

B.J.—I know of no clearer illustration of the class struggle than this campaign furnishes: I never heard or read of a more luminous verification of the theory of material class interests; nor do I remember one instance in which the Beast of Property was more in evidence.

U.S.—Go on! You fill me with pride.

B.J.—In this campaign the Socialist Labor Party has, throughout, been the pivot on which everything turned.

U.S.—I know it; but what makes you think so?

B.J.—The course of the Old Parties has hitherto been a bare raising of irrelevant issues. The miseries produced by capitalism were dealt with by them on the same principle that corns would be dealt with by the swindler who would recommend an application of vaseline on the nose as a cure for the corn whose shooting pain in the toe set one crazy.

U.S.—Well put!

B.J.—But all that changed in this campaign.

U.S. listens attentively, expecting at every moment a Brother Jonathanic slip.

B.J.—All that changed during this campaign. Jingoism, "patriotism," etc., did figure; but none of that gave the key-note to the campaign. The issues raised by the Socialist Labor Party and firmly kept up before the public gaze, these were the issues that the Old Parties were constrained to consider and to devote the bulk of their time to.

U.S.—Correct again!

B.J.—Thus the Trust question has been to the fore, and likewise the Tax question. In both cases the Old Parties uttered the rottenest of rot, I admit; but no one posted on Socialist Labor Party literature and tactics could fail to notice that all the Old Parties' rot on these subjects had but one starting point, to wit, to escape the points raised by the S.L.P.

U.S.—But we didn't let them escape.

B.J.—I know the S.L.P. did not let them, and kept their noses to the grind-stone. And I know more. Aware of the fierceness of the contest, the S.L.P. spilled its blood in the attempt and, in the midst of the fray, succeeded in establishing a daily paper wherewith to do battle. The DAILY PEOPLE in this campaign has been a monumental phenomenon that for ever will attest to the determination and vigor of the Socialist Labor Party as the party of Social Regeneration.

U.S.—You ARE doing yourself credit, Jonathan!

B.J.—And I noticed also that the Old Parties, no longer relying upon the irrelevant issues that they formerly found sufficient; not trusting even upon the run-away arguments that they were using to off-set the strictly-sound S.L.P. arguments;—found it necessary to resort to the additional device of fomenting a bogus labor party—

U.S.—“Fomenting,” said you! Why, they did not “foment,” they actually did the setting up themselves.

B.J.—I know. They pulled the strings of material property interests; they cracked the whip over the backs of the little tax-paying saloon-keepers and grocery interests; they drew together the leprosy of the labor fakir brigade; with these as a nucleus they attracted the turpitudinous elements from all over the land; furnished them with a ticket and furnished them with the signatures to set their precious ticket on the ballot box.

U.S.—Why, you speak the words of inspired wisdom!

B.J.—I have watched this whole affair closely. The claim that the Kangaroo or Social Democratic ticket is set up by the Republicans against Bryan is to a very limited extent only. In Massachusetts the thing floats on the wings of the Democratic party, here on the wings of the Republican, and so on. The truth is that both the Democratic and the Republican party are the getters up of the Social Democratic swindle; and they got it up, not against each other, but in the fond belief that it would scuttle the Socialist Labor Party—the only party of labor that they know is to be feared.

U.S.—Bravo!

B.J.—And that is why I say that I am filled with admiration at the Spartan fight of the S.L.P., and that that fight is the only real feature of the campaign.

U.S. (giving B.J. the hand)—You are right. But possibly there is one flaw in your argument.

B.J.—Which?

U.S.—Your reference to the “Spartan attitude of the S.L.P.” may mean the right, but

may also mean a wrong idea. If by "Spartan" you mean simply a heroic attitude—

B.J.—I do!

U.S.—Then you are right. But if by "Spartan" you mean a futile heroism, like that of the Spartans of Thermopylae, referred to by you, where, despite all their matchless heroism, they went down, overpowered by overwhelming forces aided by treason;—if you mean that, then you are wrong. The S.L.P.'s heroism is the heroism that wins; that nothing can either bend or break. Every step taken by the foe (included {including?} their whipping the jackals of Property into the lines of a bogus labor and still more bogus Socialist party) can only bring strength to the Fighting S.L.P. The Fighting S.L.P. can progress only by having the lines made clear between the class that robs and the class that is robbed; between dishonor and honor; between moral leprosy and rectitude. The tactical work of the S.L.P., the sunken piers on which the Socialist Republic is to be raised can be nothing else than the unification of the working class. Now, then, that unification can only be aided by the pulling away from and standing up in open hostility to the S.L.P. of every element whose anti-Labor and unclean interests exclude it from our ranks. Right you are that the S.L.P.'s attitude in this campaign is one worthy of admiration. You can't admire it too much:

Hear it crashing, dashing, smashing;
See it splitting: watch it hitting
Freak and fakir, fool and tyrant,—cutting pathways for the free;
Always daring, never caring;
Scab and scoundrel never sparing—
Clear the gang-way for the Buzz-Saw of the Fighting S.L.P.

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