

The People.

VOL. VIII, NO. 43.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 1899.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {280}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I know so many good-hearted men and women among the Socialists that, for their own sakes, I hope they will never live to see the victory of their party. That day must be a very sad day for them; they would find out how they miscalculated things; it would break their hearts.

UNCLE SAM—For instance?

B.J.—They overlook so many things. For instance: they overlook the scabs. Now, one little question punctures your Co-operative Commonwealth, so-called. What will you do with the scab, seeing there are so many of them?

U.S.—What—WE would DO—with the SCAB?

B.J.—Yes; what would you do with him?

U.S.—Do you know what a scab is?

B.J.—'Course I do.

U.S.—Define the thing.

B.J.—A scab?—Well, he is a man—Yes, a scab is—Why, everybody knows what a scab is; what's the use of defining him?

U.S.—Your difficulty in defining him shows the use of a definition. I'll help you out. A scab is a man, who either has no work or very poor work, and is willing to take the place that an other strikes against because that job, bad as it may be, is better than what he now gets.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—I'll accept that definition. It suits me exactly. What are you going to do with him in your Co-operative Commonwealth, so-called?

U.S.—If you accept the definition you must accept all that flows from it.

B.J.—So I do!

U.S.—Then you must accept the conclusion that there is to-day virtually a condition of famine for many in the country.

B.J.—I'll grant that; there is not enough for all; if you fill some starving mouths you must take away from others, and—

U.S.—Expose THESE to starvation?

B.J.—Just so; you would be robbing Peter to pay Paul, so to speak.

U.S.—You are going much too fast; but I'm glad I gave you rope because you have now made clear to me what it really is that troubles you. When you say "scab" you don't mean that. What you have in mind is a different question. You think there is not wealth enough for all:—

B.J.—Just so.

U.S.—Do you think so from the presence of the scab, who, being ready to take a poor job, shows he is starving;—

B.J.—Now you got it.

U.S.—And you conclude that, that being so, somebody MUST starve.

B.J.—Correct.

U.S.—Did you ever read about the \$2,000,000 outfit that old Leiter of Chicago just bestowed on his daughter, the Vice-Reine of India, Lady Curzon?

B.J.—No! Did he?

U.S.—Yes, besides her dower was about \$5,000,000.

B.J.—You don't say!

U.S.—And did you ever read about the \$15,000,000 dower that Anna Gould took to the French Prince of Castellane?

B.J.—The devil you say!

U.S.—And you probably never heard of the \$2,000,000 that Clara Barton of Detroit bought the Prince of Chimay with?

B.J.—Where did you get all that from?

U.S.—And you evidently don't know that we of America are supporting about 200 other precious heiresses in royal style abroad?

B.J.—That's news to me.

U.S.—Is it also news to you that our Astors in America give \$200,000 balls? That our Pierreponts spend in luxuries several millions a year, and so forth.

B.J. (greatly surprised)—You make my head swim.

U.S.—Now, do you imagine that all these precious loafers would starve even if 90 per cent. of this wealth, that Labor, and not they, produced were turned to the mouths now starving?

B.J. (recovering from his surprise)—No; they would not starve. But that don't alter the case. There are so many starving now that, even if all the super-abundance of the rich were transferred to the poor there still would remain wide-spread famine. What would you do with these starvelings in your Co-operative Commonwealth, so-called?

U.S.—You will admit that such a transfer would afford some relief?

B.J.—Yes, some.

U.S.—Well, to tell you what we would do with the scab in our “Co-operative Commonwealth, so-called,” I shall first tell you something else, that will also be brand new to you. What we Socialists are really after, is not so much the wealth these capitalists consume, but the machinery of production that they have robbed society of. That machinery of production (we call it “Capital”) is capable of producing an abundance for all. It does not do that to-day, because the robber class of capitalists don't find their account in allowing it to do so. Stripped from this private ownership that prevents machinery from being as productive as it can, and no longer needing the hordes of unproductive hirelings that capitalism breeds, no one need starve. He who will work will have the enjoyment of the abundance he produces. Where will the “Scab” be then? In our “Co-operative Commonwealth, so-called,” there will be left only the word “SCAB,” as a reminder of the dirty social system that we shall have overthrown.

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

Uploaded March 2008

slpns@slp.org