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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {210}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I heard a magnificent sermon last Fourth in my church.

UNCLE SAM—By whom?

B.J.—By the Rev. Cornelius Higginbotham-Spoopendyke. The man is quite a Socialist.

U.S.—That chap is as much a Socialist as a sow is a horse.

B.J.—You seem to think nobody is a Socialist but you.

U.S.—I would be sorry indeed if my conversions went no further than that. But you take for a Socialist every one who coquets with Socialism.

B.J.—Not at all. You seem to think Socialists are much rarer than they are in fact. Fact is, all our citizens are Socialists to a degree.

U.S.—How was that again?

B.J.—Just so. Is not co-operation the ultimate aim of Socialists?

U.S.—Let's say it is.

B.J.—Well; everybody co-operates with everybody else, whether conscious of the fact or not. And that is why I say that all our citizens are Socialists to a degree.

U.S.—And now that you have given your reason, I see whence proceeds your error.

B.J.—Don't they co-operate?

U.S.—Yes. The hen that grubs zealously for her food; that religiously sits on her eggs, produced with the sweat of her brow, and hatches out a brood of chicks; that



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fattens herself and her little ones—does she work, or don't she?

B.J. (a smile flitting over his mouth)—Guess she does work.

U.S.—And the cook, who, in the summer's heat and the winter's cold, spares no pains to sharpen his knife; who laboriously dives into the chicken-coop, goes through a sort of "blind man's buff" experience, captures a chicken, cuts her throat, "dresses" her, cooks and eats her—does he work or don't he?

B.J.—I should say he does.

U.S.—And her work and his work tended to a common purpose—the comfort of the cook, eh?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Did she and he co-operate?

B.J.—W-e-l-l—

U.S.—Did she and he co-operate, yes or no?

B.J.—I-d—

U.S.—Yes, or no?

B.J.—Well, yes.

U.S.—Yes. Now, how much good does that kind of co-operation do the chicken?

B.J.—The chicken—

U.S.—Yes; how much good does that sort of "co-operation" do the chicken?

B.J.—Not any that I can see.

U.S.—Suppose I were to tell you that the chicken and the cook are both co-operating with each other, whether conscious of the fact or not—what would you think of that?

B.J.—I refuse to answer.

U.S.—Then I'll answer for you. You would say I was cracking a joke. And that is what all those do who, not understanding the terms they use, talk about everybody co-operating now with everybody else. The "co-operation" of the two classes, capitalist and working class, is the co-operation of the hen that works to fatten the capitalist and of the cook who "co-operates" by appropriating the hen's work and eating her up. When Socialists talk of co-operation they mean the overthrow and ending of such rascality; they mean the uprooting of such "co-operation"; they mean the establishment of a social system under which the machinery of production is owned collectively, and, as a result

thereof, the fruits of co-operative labor are the property of and are enjoyed by the producers. You will perceive that this sort of co-operation is a horse of a different color, it is not the continuance but the upsetting of the present co-operation.

B.J.—According to this I was all wrong.

U.S.—Yes, and your Rev. Cornelius Stick-in-the-Mud is a “co-operator” of the stripe of the cook above mentioned, a sort of “co-operator” whose life Socialism will make extremely burdensome.

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

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