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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {35-36}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—Poor Talmage!

UNCLE SAM—Why “poor”?

B.J.—Is his church paying?

U.S.—No.

B.J.—Has he not had to forego his salary for the last 4 years?

U.S.—Yes.

B.J.—Isn't that sad? Shouldn't he have our pity?

U.S.—Why didn't his church pay?

B.J.—Because it was heavily mortgaged.

U.S.—And why did the collections not run up high enough to wipe out the mortgage?

B.J.—Because the times are too bad.

U.S.—And why are the times bad?

B.J.—Because . . . well . . . because . . .

U.S.—Because of the existence of a murderous and robberous system by which a few idlers sponge up the people's substance!

B.J.—Well, yes.

U.S.—And is Talmage a friend or a foe of that system?

B.J.—I don't quite know.

U.S.—You ought to know. Have you ever heard him say a word against the plunder called “rent”? Have you ever heard him say a word against the plunder called “profits”, altho' the one and the other are condemned in the Bible as usury?

B.J.—I can't say I ever have.



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U.S.—No, indeed, you haven't. Not only has he not a word of condemnation for such sins, HE PRACTISES THEM HIMSELF. He himself draws rent, and he himself sucks up “profits”, or “interest”, i.e., Biblically condemned usury, on mortgages. Why should we pity him if bigger suckers than himself practise upon him what he practises upon others?

B.J.—In that case he is only getting a dose of his own medicine?

U.S.—Exactly; he upholds capitalism and is downed by capitalism. He who kills with the sword will be killed by the sword!

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BROTHER JONATHAN—Do you think the Wilson Bill will pass?

UNCLE SAM—“Will pass” what?

B.J.—The House?

U.S.—It may scrape through.

B.J.—And the Senate?

U.S.—Less likely.

B.J.—Then this tariff “issue” may yet continue to plague us?

U.S.—What is the difference whether the thing that plagues us is the tariff, or the silver, or any other capitalist “issue”? The trouble does not lie with the “issue”; the trouble lies with the working class. So long as they are silly enough to allow themselves to be diverted with false “issues”, false “issues” will continue to rain upon us, and the one is just as good or plaguy as the other.

B.J.—But what would you have the workmen do? These are the issues that come up.

U.S.—Verily, verily they “come up”, but they come up from the wrong quarter, and are then “taken up” by the workers. Let the workers set up their own issues—the collective ownership of the machinery of production—and stick to these issues, then will you see all the false capitalist issues drop and only Labor issues, genuine issues, engage the attention of the people.

B.J.—But will the workers ever do that?

U.S.—Undoubtedly they will; they are doing so now in increasing numbers.

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

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