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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {376}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—Do you know James Logan, a writer in the *North American Review*?

UNCLE SAM—I've heard the name.

B.J.—I think he knocks out the Socialist idea that competition is bad.

U.S.—He does, eh? And does he prove it?

B.J.—Yes, indeed. (Taking out a clipping from the *North American*, and reading.) This is what he says:

“There must always be competition. To stamp it out, were such a thing possible, would mean stagnation and death. It would mean that there was to be no further progress. If there were to be no prizes obtained, men would cease to put forth the effort which makes for progress and growth. If there were no larger prizes ahead for a young man than simply a day laborer's wages, the likelihood is that a good many would not put forth the effort to become anything more than a day laborer. We need competition if we would grow, but it ought to be honest and intelligent competition. Men need the stimulus of competition to do their best.”—I call this putting it plain.

U.S.—Why, your Logan is a jewel!

B.J.—He is right?

U.S.—No; he is a jewel because he himself puts his own capitalist head “in chancery,” so that the Socialist can punch it to pulp.

B.J.—“Head in chancery”! Socialist “punch it to pulp”! Guess you are



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undertaking too big a contract!

U.S.—No, indeed; a very easy contract. The man is dead easy. He has only 2 eyes? Well, I'll give him 5 black eyes.

B.J.—5 black eyes!

U.S.—The man who argues that competition must not be stamped out, can only mean that Socialism proposes to stamp out competition. Can he mean anything else?

B.J.—Of course, that's what he means.

U.S.—Now, here goes black-eye No. 1. Mr. Logan suggests a falsehood.

B.J.—Then Socialism does not propose to stamp out competition?!

U.S.—No; Socialism don't propose to stamp out a thing that already is stamped out, and that is being stamped out without Socialism's doing.

B.J.—You don't say!

U.S.—The truth is that Socialism rises just because competition is stamped out; only in the measure that competition is stamped out does Socialism grow. Socialism is the direct result of the downfall of competition.

B.J.—And who is it that is stamping out competition?

U.S.—The class, to curry whose favor, Mr. Logan writes for, and whose legs he thereby seeks to pull,—the Capitalist Class.

B.J.—The Capitalist Class is stamping out competition?!?!

U.S.—Yes. Can as many people compete in the weaving of cloth, now that the Northrop loom and its gigantic weaving factories have risen?

B.J.—N-n-o—

U.S.—They can't. So long as the loom was plain and simple, it was easily acquired; virtually everyone could compete. Since the machinery necessary to weave with has become the highly developed thing it is to-day, no one can produce it himself; and few are able to own it as their private property; consequently competition in weaving is crippled, if not done away with altogether. The competitors being few, they make "agreements between gentlemen" among themselves, and there you have monopoly. A few ruling the roost, the workers barred out and compelled to sell themselves into wage slavery.

B.J.—That's so! No competition there!

U.S.—Is it otherwise in the shoe trade?

B.J.—N-n-o——

U.S.—Is it otherwise in the transportation business?

B.J.—No!

U.S.—Is it otherwise in the hat, the furniture, the oil, the telegraphing trades?

B.J.—Guess not!

U.S.—The long and short of it is, in the bulk of the leading industries trustification has set in. Who says trustification, says “Competition stamped out.” A few dictate; the masses submit in various degrees of subjection. And this is the handiwork of Capitalism, and of Capitalism only. And it is by the very reason of this handiwork that Socialism rises. It points out the disastrous results of the thing. It shows that the reason lies in the private ownership of the machine. All the good that the machine and its concentration accomplish, is lost to mankind by the capitalist system of private ownership, which, by stamping out competition, at the same time that it places the productive powers in the private hands of a few, gorges these with affluence and starves the masses of the nation. Is it Socialism that would stamp out competition?

B.J.—Clearly not! Is Socialism then in favor of competition?

U.S.—Socialism is no noodle. It does not bother about “last year’s nests.” Socialism sees competition to be a thing of the past, “stamped out” by Capitalism. Socialism, accordingly, don’t bother about competition. Socialism only seeks an escape for the human race from the pickle that it is thrust in by Capitalism.

B.J.—How?

U.S.—Competition being gone by, and production being so much ampler under concentration, Socialism demands that the machinery of production be placed in the hands of the workers collectively. But this is a digression. The point is that the stamper-out of competition is, not Socialism, but Capitalism.

B.J.—And, noodle that I was, I always thought that the capitalists doted on competition.

U.S.—They do as much as protectionists dote on paying duties themselves.

B.J.—They like the other fellows to pay the duty!

U.S.—While they themselves try all the smuggling they can manage. So with

the capitalists: they like the working people to cut one another's throats, compete for a job, but they stamp out competition among themselves all they can.

B.J.—Well, I must say I like to see a black-eye well planted. Mr. Logan's article certainly got one from you and he deserved it. But what about the other black eyes?

U.S.—That next week.

B.J.—Don't forget!

U.S.—No; I won't.

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