

The People.

VOL. VIII, NO. 13.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 1898.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {259}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I find Socialists are uniformly against war; and yet they contradict themselves. In the same breath they say the war will do harm, they admit that it is intended to extend our markets.

UNCLE SAM—There is no contradiction in that.

B.J.—What harm will an extension of the markets do us? Are not large markets good?

U.S.—You put the question in a topsy-turvy way. The Socialist holds that this war is bad because it is promoted by our capitalists under the pretence that they want to drive out inhumanity from Cuba, and

that is false because if the driving away of inhumanity were their purpose they could have their hands full at home with themselves—

B.J.—That's all right, but when it comes to extending the markets they are doing good. Their ostensible purpose may be bad, but their actual purpose need not be so. If they want to extend our markets, I say, Go it!

U.S.—Do you imagine that if one has a good purpose in mind he will hide it, and give a good one {bad one?} as a pretext?

B.J.—Not likely.

U.S.—Their keeping secret that purpose of extending the markets looks fishy, to say the least, does it not?

B.J.—It may be so.

U.S.—Now, then, an extension of markets not only does no good but does positive



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

harm to the working class of the country that does the extending.

B.J.—That’s what I meant to hear about.

U.S.—England’s markets, are they extended or not by her Asiatic colonies?

B.J.—A good deal.

U.S.—If such extension did good, should not the English working class be marching upward in comfort?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Does it?

B.J.—I don’t know.

U.S.—It does not.

B.J.—How do you explain that?

U.S.—Easily. In Cuba, in the Philippines, in China, whither also our government is casting its eyes, labor is cheap, cheaper than here, dirt cheap in some of these places. The wants of the working class are so low that they are satisfied with hardly anything. If our working class, here at home, were willing to work for similar wages there would not have been this war. But ground down as are our wages, they have not yet reached the Malay or Mongolian low level. They will get there if we keep this capitalist class in office much longer; but our wages are not there yet. Our capitalists can not squeeze these wages down to the Asiatic level with one swoop. That has to come by degrees. They want lower wages. This they can get in China, the Philippines, Cuba. But if they set up their factories there now, they would find the Spanish and Chinese governments in possession and would have to submit to be bled by them. In that way they would lose in taxes, etc., more than they would gain in wages.

B.J.—Oho, I begin to see.

U.S.—How are they to get around the difficulty?

B.J.—By chasing those foreign governments away.

U.S.—In other words, by a war.

B.J.—And is that what they call extending the markets?

U.S.—That’s about it. With the Philippines, with Cuba, and with a slice of China in our hands, our capitalists could set up their factories there, and start to “give employment” to the natives. Where will we be at, do you imagine?

B.J.—The divvil, that’s tough!

U.S.—“Beloved fellow citizens,” the capitalists will then say, addressing us, “we would gladly continue to pay you the good (?) wages we now pay you; oh, we would consider our golden dreams realized if we could pay you higher wages; but we can’t; we must lower your wages; see here; out in the Philippines wages are 20 cents a day; factories are being set up there; we have to compete with them; if you do not adjust yourselves here to these conditions we shall be obliged to remove our factories thither. What say you, dear brother Labor?”

B.J.—Why, that’s just what they told us the other day when they lowered our wages on account of “the competition in the South”.

U.S.—Just so. And what happened? We struck, and lost. These capitalists will thus again claim “competition” as a pretext for lowering our wages; and they will put it so as to seem “abused infants”. The plan is thus to bring us down to Chinese conditions.

B.J.—And they call that “extending our markets”!?!

U.S.—This way: By manufacturing in the conquered Philippines their goods need not pay duty in America, America becomes the market for the Philippines. Thus “our” markets are extended, don’t you see: “Our” capitalists’ goods can come in free here.

B.J.—If that’s not a scheme!

U.S.—The workingmen who are now shouting for “Dewey’s great victory” will soon have cause to rue the victory. What Dewey has really done is to dump 7,000,000 Philippine cheap laborers right inside of our boundaries. How do you like it? Will you still whoop it up for the war?

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

Uploaded February 2008

slpns@slp.org