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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {371}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—Did I understand you to say last week that you could still get another fall out {of} Director of the Mint Roberts and the paragraph in which the St. Louis paper quotes him approvingly?

UNCLE SAM—I think I said so. Suppose you read that paragraph once more.

B.J.—Here it is (reads):

“Director of the Mint Roberts made a good point in an address delivered last week. ‘It is the common error of those who attack the existing order of society,’ he said, ‘to treat of distribution as of more importance than production. But the real problem is to get more from nature. Careful statisticians have estimated that the total production of wealth for even so efficient a population as that of the United States including the yield of the soil, the output of the mines and all the earnings of capital scarcely exceeds \$2 a day for every person engaged in gainful occupations.’ An equal division all around at the close of each day would greatly disappoint the socialistic theorists. Mr. Roberts points out that the amelioration of conditions must come from increased production.”

U.S.—The first hole I shot through that was—

B.J.—To show that it stood upon a principle of morals that would disgrace an Apache Indian, in that, granting the premises to be right, that only \$2 could be produced per capita, the theory of the man is to reconcile us to the idea of pinching want for the workers, despite the fact that the idlers roll in luxury.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—That was it. And the second shot—

B.J.—Oh, that ripped a still bigger hole into the thing. It made mince-meat of the theory here implied that the share of us working people depends upon the size of production. You showed that, under this Mint-Director-Roberts system of Capitalism, all increased production falls to the exploiting capitalist, while we workers only reap an increase of misery.

U.S.—You got it straight. I then shot a third hole—

B.J.—Yes. The third hole showed that the truer Roberts' statement was to the effect of that production was to-day small, the harder he knocked himself on the head. This system of capitalism dooms large numbers of people to idleness, or unproductive and useless labor, besides restricting the area of productivity. So that to defend capitalism on the strength of its small production was to try and profit by one's own wrong.

U.S.—That was it. Now I'll fire a fourth shot and finish up Master Roberts. He says that "an equal division all around would greatly disappoint the socialistic theorists, and that what they should see to is how to increase production, that being of more importance than distribution."

B.J.—Isn't that so?

U.S.—Wait a minute. What is implied in that statement? Isn't it implied that the Socialists consider distribution only, that production don't bother them, and that what they are after is an "all around division?"

B.J.—Yes; that's what's implied.

U.S.—Well, that understanding of Socialism Roberts sucked out of his own thumbs; it is a pure fabrication; there is no truth in it.

B.J.—You don't say! Then the fellow, not content with insinuating falsehood as to the other points, lies downright on this point?!

U.S.—That's the size of it. "Division" is the last thing the Socialist thinks about. He wants concentration. The larger the concentration the better it suits him. Remember, the Socialist is a collectivist.

B.J.—Why, that's so!

U.S.—Consequently, what is uppermost on the Socialist's mind is, not distribution, but production. Collective or co-operative distribution is palpable

nonsense—

B.J.—That's so!

U.S.—Co-operation applies to production. The Socialist, accordingly, demands concentrated and co-operative labor, the means of production, that is, the capital being public and collective property. To-day, we have COLLECTIVE labor and PRIVATE ownership; this antagonism between the method of production and the system of ownership blights both production and distribution. If the machinery of production is owned as collectively by the people as production has to be carried on, then production would be many times larger, and, as a result of the system of collective ownership, distribution would be just. That's Socialism, and that's what Socialists are after.

B.J. remains in silent contemplation.

U.S.—What are you thinking about?

B.J.—I'll tell ye. I was thinking about this: the title of that Roberts is not the right title for the man.

U.S.—What's his title?

B.J.—Director of the Mint.

U.S.—What should be his title?

B.J.—His title should be: "A Mint of Blunders by Which to Demonstrate the Falseness of Capitalist Reasoning, and the Correctness of Socialist Reasoning."

U.S.—I agree with you. The fellow is a perambulating lump of stupidities.

B.J. (holds up the Roberts paragraph from the St. Louis paper, tears it into shreds, and blows the shreds away)—There: they are not worth keeping.

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