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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {251}

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNCLE SAM—You look gay with all those American flag buttons on you. Is this your birthday you are celebrating?

BROTHER JONATHAN—No; it ain't my birthday I am celebrating; I'm celebrating something much more important, I am.

U.S.—And what may that “something” be?

B.J.—That “Something” is nothing less than the evidence of solid patriotism that my country is displaying!

U.S.—And in what does that evidence consist?

B.J.—In what? Look around you. Don't you see high and low, rich and poor, capitalist and workingmen, women and men, young and old—

U.S.—Good heavens, make it short!

B.J.—All are moved by one spirit—

U.S.—What spirit?

B.J.—The spirit of patriotism, and determination to wipe Spain out of Cuba.

U.S.—You are too green to burn.

B.J.—Isn't there a stupendous unanimity on this score?

U.S.—I don't see it.

B.J.—Then, man, you must be blind; why, everybody says: “Away with Spain.”

U.S.—That's why I say you are green. There may be unanimity in saying: “Away with Spain!”; but to consider the saying to mean patriotism is absurd.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—What else does it mean?

U.S.—It means, A war with Spain gives us a chance to make money.

B.J.—Pshaw!

U.S.—Let’s see. Would a patriot help the enemy?

B.J.—Yes; to sink!

U.S.—But not to float, eh?

B.J.—’Course not!

U.S.—Can Spanish warships float without coal?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—To furnish them with coal would be the act of friend or foe?

B.J.—Of foe.

U.S.—Patriots, American patriots wouldn’t do that, would they?

B.J.—No.

U.S.—Of course not. Now, where are several Spanish warships coaling just now?

B.J.—I don’t know.

U.S.—Didn’t you read that they were coaling at Nova Scotia ports?

B.J.—Yes; I remember now. But Nova Scotia is not American territory; it belongs to blasted England.

U.S.—Then you have forgotten that the bulk of the Nova Scotia coal mines are the property of American capitalists, eh?

B.J. (drops his jaw)—Why, that’s so!

U.S.—Thus we have American “patriots” helping—for pay, of course, Spanish warships to float. How’s that for patriotism, Greeney?

B.J.—That never occurred to me.

U.S.—Now that you are reminded, you may perceive that “War with Spain!” is not a cry that necessarily rises from patriotism; you may catch on that it may rise from a different feeling; that it may rise from the desire to sell and make money. And that is the case now. Without war, in the instance of coaling for one, there is not the demand for coal that there would be with war. When these American owners of Nova Scotia mines cry “War with Spain!” they, for one, mean: “A chance to sell our coal, though that may cause the death of our sailors in the war.” So it is all around: The papers want war, that

means excitement, and more sales; and so forth. Mark you this (giving his ears a jerk): There is no such thing as patriotism in the heart of capitalism; “patriotism” is, with the capitalists, a swindle, and when workingmen are caught by the trick, it is a case of ignorance with them, not patriotism. Poor devils, they will have to bleed.

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

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