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DIALOGUE

## UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {71}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**B**ROTHER JONATHAN—To the devil with that Sugar Trust!

UNCLE SAM—So say I, if you mean the stockholders.

B.J.—Let us smash it!

U.S.—Nary a smash.

B.J.—I thought you agreed it was a bad thing.

U.S.—So I do, if you mean the stockholders.

B.J.—What is the difference? Is not the trust itself a bad thing?

U.S.—In what way is it bad?

B.J.—This Sugar Trust, for instance, closed thirteen refineries!

U.S.—Good!

B.J.—Good?

U.S.—Yes.

B.J.—You are joking.

U.S.—I am not. Have we now less sugar than we need?

B.J.—I think not.

U.S.—If to-day, with an increased need for sugar, all the sugar needed can be produced with thirteen refineries less, is it not a proof that those thirteen were superfluous?

B.J.—I won't deny that.

U.S.—Is it not a proof of former wastefulness and present economy in production?

B.J.—I may grant that, too.



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U.S.—Does it not follow that energies and wealth that were formerly wasted in the production of sugar, being now saved, can be turned into other channels in which they may be needed?

B.J.—Nor that would I deny.

U.S.—All that being so—waste being stopped, wise economy being established and thereby forces set free to stimulate new production—I maintain the Trust is good.

B.J.—I was simply giving you rope when I granted what I did—

U.S.—And now I am hanged.

B.J. (laughing)—You don't believe it? I'll show you.

U.S.—Let her rip!

B.J.—All the advantages you mentioned, and which I granted, are only one side of the question.

U.S.—Is there another to it?

B.J.—Like in all other cases, when you look at the other side in this case you will see such disadvantages as to wholly make up for the advantages which you showed up, and still have a large balance against the advantages.

U.S.—Hurry up and show them.

B.J.—Do the surviving refineries employ as many hands now as did they together with the thirteen that were closed?

U.S.—No, indeed.

B.J.—Did the surviving refineries employ the hands that were thrown out of work when the thirteen refineries were closed?

U.S.—They may have employed a few of them; the bulk lost their jobs.

B.J.—Do you think that 100 men were thus thrown on the street?

U.S.—Yes; and 500—

B.J.—You admit 500—

U.S.—Yes, and more. Considering everything, not less than 2,000 men were thrown out of work.

B.J.—Are these men now living in clover?

U.S.—I guess they are starving.

B.J.—Now, I got out of you all I want.

U.S.—What good will it do you?

B.J.—I'll show you. Do you mean to say that the advantages in economy on the one hand and the increased productivity of wealth on the other can compensate for the suffering of 2,000 men thrown out of work?

U.S.—Whose fault is it that these men are famishing?

B.J.—The Trust's.

U.S.—Not at all.

B.J.—Whose, then?

U.S.—The men's themselves.

B.J.—W-h-a-t?

U.S.—Yes! You admitted the great gains there are in the concentrated production brought on by the Trust?

B.J.—I did and do.

U.S.—Without that, production could not be carried on upon the large scale that is wanted?

B.J.—Guess not.

U.S.—The evil we find going hand in hand with that blessing is the increased number of the unemployed?

B.J.—Exactly.

U.S.—Only for that evil you would admit concentration of production was a good thing.

B.J.—Yes, I would.

U.S.—Now, answer me this last question; around it everything else turns: “Is the evil in this case something that cannot be separated from the good?”

B.J.—W-e-l-l—

U.S.—I'll answer for you. “No!” The evil CAN be separated. It is not necessary that hunger should go hand in hand with increased production.

B.J.—How would you prevent it?

U.S.—By removing the cause.

B.J.—And what may that be?

U.S.—The private ownership of the means of production. Through that poverty

commences, and it increases at the rate in which fewer and fewer persons get possession of the machinery of production—

B.J.—And then?

U.S.—If the whole people in their collective capacity owned the instruments of production, through their central administrative organs, then the evil would stop.

B.J.—How?

U.S.—Because production would be carried on for use, and not for profit, as it is under private ownership.

B.J.—And if fewer and fewer hands are needed?

U.S.—Instead of dismissing them, the hours of work would be reduced all around.

B.J.—That would be fine!

U.S.—And are not the workers to blame if things continue as they are?

B.J.—I don't quite see that.

U.S.—Have not the workers the overwhelming majority of votes—

B.J.—I grant you all! You are right from start to finish.

U.S.—The day the workers vote for themselves, instead of voting for the Democratic and Republican parties, that day they go in a body into the Socialist Labor party, and thereby vote themselves into power, that day the evil will be removed and only the blessing will remain.

B.J.—I agree with you.

U.S.—The Trust is a good thing; it is in the line of evolution; we must help evolution along and place the trust in the hands of the nation.

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

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