

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 11, NO. 87.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1910.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

## IS SOCIALISM A PROPHECY?

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**S**CIENCE is organized facts. From the organization of facts flows a leading feature of Science—foresight.

The accuracy of the foresight imparted by Science is not perfect; can not be. The human mind may take in scores upon scores of facts, it can not embrace them all. Even if the conclusions, drawn from the facts that are grasped and organized, be correct, there still is inaccuracy resulting from the lack of allowance made for the numerous facts not known; hence, not organized; hence left out of the reckoning. From this it might seem as if there were no such thing as Science, seeing that absolute accuracy of foresight is not within reach of the human intellect.

All the same, the posture that denies Science is untenable. It is disproved by experience. The recent conflict of foresights, as exercised by the astronomical scientists on the occasion of the visit of Halley's comet, is an illustration in point. However divergent many of the foresights were in details, there was oneness in much that was substantial, and the correctness of which was verified. Astronomical Science foresaw, hence foretold the comet.

Similar experience and reasoning hold good on the domain of Sociologic and Economic Science. Ever leaving a margin for consequences that can not be foreseen for the lack of fullness of facts, Social Science can foresee certain facts with the substantial accuracy that Astronomic Science foresaw Halley's Comet; and Social Science, drawing its conclusions from those facts, foretells further and further events. Where the substantial accuracy of foresight ends and the more or less unreliable area of prophecy begins it is hard to tell. There may be much that partakes of mere prophecy in Social Science, and yet there remains a solid portion, thoroughly reliable.

Is Socialism a Science—with the consequence that its foresight is substantially

reliable? Or is Socialism a Prophecy—with the consequence that its prognostics are guesses, which may or may not prove true. The answer depends upon the broadness or the narrowness of area one may embrace in the term Socialism.

Circumscribing oneself to the narrow economic proposition, Socialism is a Science. From the gathered and organized facts upon which the Law of Value is planted follow certain inevitable conclusions:—the centralization of the productive powers in the hands of a few, the consequent dependence of the mass, accompanied by spreading and deepening pauperization. The facts, together with the immediate conclusions that flow from them, bestow a clear foresight—the inevitable breakdown of the present and the rise, upon its ruins, of a new Social Order.

Again, circumscribing oneself to another ethnologic proposition, Socialism presents itself also in the dignity of a Science. From the facts, gathered and organized upon this domain flow certain other inevitable conclusions, which, jointly with the facts that impart their direction, likewise bestow a clear foresight:—the inevitable doom of “political government,” or the “Political,” and its substitution with the Industrial State.

Socialists, though agreed upon these two foresights, do not all agree from that point on. The sights thenceforth scatter. The reason is obvious: larger and larger categories of facts have to be drawn upon, and in the selection and ranging of the same the same value is not attracted {attached?} to them by all hands. It is due mainly to the divergence of foresights, the consequent differences in tactics, and the sadly unavoidable conflicts of the divergence that non-Socialists are frequently heard to deny scientific weight to Socialism, and to pronounce it a Prophecy. Of these divergent foresights, the most fertile in divergence of tactics, together with the long train of consequent divergences, is the foresight concerning the role that the proletariat is called upon to play in the pending Social Revolution. Two foresights are the most prominent—

One, that the Movement will have to be centered upon the Working Class, all other classes and their subdivisions being hostile, certain to yield to the Movement none but individuals, the choicest of their members;

The other that the Movement will have to be centered upon the Middle Class, under whose leadership the Working Class will be emancipated, and the Revolution

accomplished.

It would seem, at first blush, that, however scientific the poise of a proposition may be, its Science must be radically defective, at least migratory, if further foresights, necessary for its realization can differ so radically. The conclusion is false. It is false because itself fails to take another important factor into consideration. That factor is whether the irreconcilableness of two divergences leads away or towards agreement.

Irreconcilable as the divergences under consideration are, it requires not much penetration to observe that the field upon which the two must perforce operate is a field bound to wear out, and eventually eliminate the one or the other, and, in the process to leave the survivor purified.

The conflict of the two divergencies just mentioned is bound to bring home, to those who pin their faith upon the Middle Class, the fact that, even if they be right{,} the Middle Class will be able to perform the mission they expect of it only to the extent that that Class plants itself squarely upon Working Class Interests; at the same time the conflict is bound to cleanse those who pin their faith upon the Working Class of the early superstition concerning the sacredness of the proletarian. The superstition being gotten rid of, by the latter, and experience having enlightened the former, the foresight will become common to both that their load star must be not Men but Principle—the Principle of Proletariat, or Working Class INTERESTS, to the exclusion of all others.

What is “Prophecy” in Socialism is not Socialism; what is Socialism is Science—a rock against which Roosevelt’s “New Nationalism,” along with Taft’s Aldrich-Cannonism, is bound to dash itself.

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Uploaded October 2011

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