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EDITORIAL

REVIEW AND FORECAST.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AT the beginning of 1906, *The People* published an editorial article entitled "Review and Forecast." This article took up and considered the various cries of prosperity then uttered by prominent capitalists, cries that claimed, "Nothing can stop the progress of our country," "a year from now we will be beating the record of the present time," "This general and universal prosperity is of a permanent character," "Our next problem is to beat all other countries in the quality of our products." It was shown that these prosperity prophecies are without real value, and that, such is the exploitation of labor under capitalism, when Society seems most prosperous panic is nearest.

The article quoted Frederick Engels: "A crash becomes inevitable. . . . The paralysis lasts years . . . production and exchange are again set in motion. By degrees the pace is accelerated, it breaks into a trot, the industrial trot becomes a gallop, and this, in turn, increases to the headlong run of a complete steeplechase, of industry, commerce, credit and speculation, finally to land again, after breakneck jumps, into the ditch of the crash."

In conclusion the article said:

"'Nothing can stop the progress of the country'!?!? 'A year from now we will be beating the record of the present time'!?!? 'This general and universal prosperity is of a permanent character'!?!? 'Our next great problem is to beat all other countries in the quality of our products'!?!? In the classical language of the day once more 'Fudge.' We are on 'the headlong run of a complete steeplechase of industry,' etc., preparatory to landing, 'after breakneck jumps into the ditch of the crash.' And our next great problem is to get rid of capitalism and its recurring crises."

In how far this "Review and Forecast" was accurate may be gleaned from a perusal of contemporary capitalist newspapers. They are invested with a gloom that

is the precursor of disaster. They are, in the language of the street, “expecting something to drop.” The Philadelphia *Telegraph*, referring to “prosperity” in its relation to the financial system, says, “the strain is terrific.” The New York *Sun* declares, “The condition of all-around apparent prosperity is the most ominous disclosed in our annals.” *The World* refers to “the disquieting facts” which show prices to have increased in excess of wages, despite “prosperity.” It asks:

“What is the end? No period of prosperity ever approached permanency. If the cost of living pinches in a time of plenty, when nearly everybody is employed, how will it be when the lean years come?”

Obviously, these capitalist statements are at variance with those uttered only one short year ago. The progress of the country is apparently destined to meet with an abrupt halt in the near future. The boast about beating records is not heard in the land at present; while the permanency of prosperity is questioned in no uncertain tones; nay, prosperity is allied with the ominous in a matter that precludes all suggestions of escape from a collapse of the structure. In brief, these statements attest the prophetic soundness of Socialist reasoning. They introduce 1907 in a way that justifies the Socialist forecast of 1906—

“We are on ‘the headlong run of a complete steeplechase,’ etc., preparatory to landing, ‘after breakneck jumps into the ditch of the crash.’ And our next great problem is to get rid of capitalism and its recurring crises.”

The first day of the New Year is one of congratulation and well-wishing. While Socialists are prone to regard themselves as exclusively non-conventional, custom affects them more than they are likely to admit. Man is the creature of his own environment, especially in those things that do not involve a sacrifice of great principles. When these are at stake, man rises superior to his environment, to either alter or change it. So, on the eve of the New Year, *The People* extends its congratulations and well wishes to the members of the working class. *The People* congratulates them on the triumph of revolutionary unionism, as exemplified in the second I.W.W. convention; and on the increasing growth of Socialism as a distinctive power in American society, as shown in recent addresses. The

development of Socialist unionism and sentiment, despite reactionary machinations and the fluctuations of capitalist-counted ballots, is of deep significance, as they tend to promote the welfare and hasten the emancipation of the working class. *The People* wishes the working class well. We face a probable crisis. It will mean much suffering, if it comes, as it most likely will. Men will be out of work, savings will go, household belongings will be pawned, and soup-houses will dot the land. But, though dark and dreary are many days, the sun doth always shine. And so though we of the working class will suffer, the system that compels us to, will suffer also. Men will then behold once more, in all nakedness, its brutal hideousness. They will see the futility of capitalist unionism, capitalist politics, capitalist thought—in a word, of capitalism itself. And so seeing, they will turn to Socialist unionism, Socialist politics, Socialist thought—in a word, to Socialism itself. Come what may, the working class will triumph!

A Happy New Year!

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