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EDITORIAL

THE BRUSSELS CONGRESS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ON the 5th instant, Lucien Sanial departed for Europe, the accredited delegate to the International Socialist Labor Congress at Brussels from the Socialist Labor party of the United States, and, together with George McVey, of the Pianomakers' Union, from the United Federations of New York, Brooklyn and Hudson County, N.J.

At the very hour when the idle classes of European States are, through their officials, devoting their energies to insincere offensive and defensive alliances among themselves; at the very hour when, among these classes, military pageants constitute the main pursuit, and thought is bent upon destruction only; at the very hour when, even in the United States, in South America and in distant Australia, capitalism is raising the cry of national antipathies and fomenting for its own purposes hatred amongst men; at the very hour that class of the Proletariat—the long suffering victim, as it is destined to be the extirpator of class antagonisms and conflicts—is assembling in congress from all quarters of the globe under the folds of the red flag—the emblem of human brotherhood, and to the rallying cry of “Peace among Men on Earth.”

As the time draws near for the accomplishment of that social revolution that will in fact emancipate mankind, the international congresses of the Proletariat grow in importance. Since 1862, when the first seed was sown in London, to 1889, the date of the last gathering, the plan of campaign of the Proletariat has developed in aggressiveness, and its programme has expanded in comprehensiveness. The Brussels Congress will mark another epoch in this evolution. Itself both cause and effect, it is both landmark and sign-post. Its gathering, unheralded by drum or trumpet though it be, constitutes the greatest historic event of the year; its deliberations emanating from

intellect, human sentiment and scientific teaching as they do, will be of an import more worldwide than the clangous decrees of brute force of to-day; and they will be felt long after the latter shall have been lost out of sight and almost out of memory.

So far as the movement of the Proletariat itself is concerned, the Brussels Congress meets at the hour of a historic crisis. Never yet has the discontent been so general; never so numerous the outbreaks, nor extending over an area that virtually encircles the globe and stamps the movement, no longer theoretically but, actually with its distinctive international character. To promote this tendency that has now grown into an existing condition, to draw from it all the strength possible, to lead it into the proper channels without frittering away its vigor and direct its course toward the best results will be one of the most important tasks before the Brussels Congress. While existing national demarcations will determine the specific tactics of the Proletariat in each instance, like the condition of the field affects the evolutions of each army corps, yet never once should the ideal international end be lost sight of, or the occasion allowed to slip by, when, by timely upholding that ideal in such localities as may stand in greatest need of its invigorating influence, new impetus could be there imported to the movement.

Not upon military manœuvres before Windsor palace, reviewed by the Emperor of Germany in full panoply, nor at military banquets in St. Petersburg given to the French naval officers; not upon royal processions to Guildhall in London, nor upon imperial displays at the Prater in Vienna—ostentatiously gotten up as these may be, or lengthily commented on by an idle press—not upon them are the eyes of the world centered to-day, but upon the unostentatious gathering of men about to open at Brussels the second International Congress of the organizations of the Proletariat.

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