

The Congress of the Anti-authoritarian International

The participants to the Saint-Imier Congress

16 September 1872

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FIRST RESOLUTION

Position of the Federations meeting in Congress at Saint-Imier, with reference to the resolutions of the Hague Congress and of the General Council

Considering that the autonomy and independence of the workers' federation and sections are the first condition for the emancipation of the workers.

That all legislative and normative power given to the Congress would be a flagrant negation of this autonomy and freedom:

The Congress denies, in principle, the legislative power of all Congresses, be they general or regional, and does not recognize any mission other than that of presenting the aspirations, needs and ideas of the proletariat of the different localities or countries, in order that their harmonization and unification be realized as much as possible. However, in no case should a majority in any Congress be allowed to force its resolutions upon the minority.

Besides that, considering that the institution of a General Council in the International Workingmen's Association is, by its own nature and inevitably, likely to become a permanent violation of this freedom that should be the fundamental basis of our great Association;

Considering that the acts of the London General Council, now being dissolved, during the last three years, are the visible proof of the faults intrinsic to this institution;

That, in order to increase its power, initially very limited, it has resorted to the most despicable intrigues, lies, calumnies, trying to sully the reputation of all who dared to oppose it;

That, in order to reach the final fulfillment of its views, it has long since prepared the Hague Congress, in which the majority, organized on purpose, had no other aim than that of installing, within the International Association, the sway of an authoritarian party; and that, in order to accomplish that goal, it did not hesitate to trample on every bit of decency and justice.

That such a Congress cannot be the expression of the proletariat of the countries which were there represented; The Congress of delegates of the Spanish, Italian, Jura, American and French Federations, gathering in Saint-Imier, declares that it completely rejects the resolutions of the Hague Congress, and does not recognize, in any way, the power of the new General Council elected by the Congress. With a view to protecting their Federations against the governmental pretensions of this General Council, besides saving and further strengthening the unity of the International Association, the delegates have established the bases of a project for a solidarity pact amongst these Federations.

SECOND RESOLUTION

Pact of friendship, solidarity and mutual defence amongst the free Federations

Considering that the great unity of the International Association is not based on the artificial and always malicious organization of any centralizing power, but, on the one hand, on the real community of interests and aspirations of the proletariat of every country and, on the other, on the spontaneous and absolutely free alliance of the federations and free sections of all countries;

Considering that, within the International Associations, there is a tendency, openly manifested at the Hague Congress by the authoritarian party that is German Communism, to substitute its control and the power of its leaders for the free development and the spontaneous and free organization of the proletariat;

Considering that the majority of the delegates to the Hague Congress have cynically given up all the principles of the International Association just to follow the ambitious aims of this party and its leaders; and that the new General Council elected by that Congress and endowed with even larger powers than those it had received by the London Conference, threatens to destroy the unity of the International Association by its attacks on freedom;

The delegates of the Spanish, Italian, Jura, French and American Federations and Sections, meeting at this Congress have decided, in the name of these Federations and Sections, and subject to their definitive acceptance and confirmation, to make a pact of friendship, solidarity and mutual defence as follow:

The Spanish, Italian, French, Jura and American Federations and Sections, and all those who would like to become members of this alliance, will have amongst them regular and direct communication and correspondence, totally independent of any governmental control whatsoever;

When one of these Federations or Sections comes under attack in matters of liberty, either by a majority of a General Congress, or by the government or General Council elected by that majority, all the other Federations and Sections will declare themselves fully in agreement with that Federation.

The Federations and sections proclaim loudly that the making of this pact has for its principal aim the health of this great unity of the International Association that has been endangered by the ambition of the authoritarian party.

THIRD RESOLUTION

Nature of the Political Action of the Proletariat

Considering:

That seeking to foist a line of conduct or uniform political programme upon the proletariat as the only avenue that can lead to its social emancipation is an absurd and reactionary form of presumptuousness.

That nobody has the right to deprive autonomous federations and sections of their incontrovertible right to decide for themselves and to follow the line of political conduct they deem best, and that any such attempt would inevitably lead to the most revolting dogmatism;

That the aspirations of the proletariat can have no purpose other than the establishment of an absolutely free economic organization and federation, founded upon the labour and equality of all and absolutely independent of all political government, and that this organization and this federation can only be the outcome of the spontaneous action of the proletariat itself, of the trades and crafts bodies and the autonomous communes;

Considering that no political organization can be other than the organization of domination to the profit of one class and to the detriment of the masses, and that the proletariat, if it wishes to take power, would itself become a ruling, exploiter class;

The Congress assembled in Saint-Imier declares:

1. That the destruction of all political power is the first duty of the proletariat.
2. That any organization whatsoever of a self-styled provisional and revolutionary political authority for the purpose of ensuring such destruction can be nothing but

another fraud, and would be as dangerous to the proletariat as any government now in existence;

3. That, shunning all compromise in the attainment of the Social Revolution, the proletarians of every land should establish the solidarity of revolutionary action outside of all bourgeois politicking.

FOURTH RESOLUTION

Organization of Labour Resistance - Statistics

Freedom and labour are the basis of the morality, strength, life and wealth of the future. But, unless freely organized, labour becomes oppressive and unproductive as far as the worker is concerned; and this is the reason why the organization of labour is the essential precondition for the authentic, complete emancipation of the worker.

However, labour cannot proceed freely without access to raw materials and the entire capital of society, and cannot be organized unless the worker, free of political and economic tyranny, gains the right to the complete development of all his faculties. No State, which is to say, no top-down government or administration of the masses, being of necessity founded upon bureaucracy, upon armies, upon espionage, upon the clergy, can ever bring about a society organized on the basis of labour and justice, since, by the very nature of its organization, it is inevitably impelled to oppress the former and deny the latter.

As we see it, the worker will never be able to free himself from the age-old oppression, unless he replaces that insatiable, demoralizing body, with a free federation of all groups of producers on the basis of solidarity and equality.

In fact, in several places, an attempt has already been made to organize labour in such a way as to better the conditions of the proletariat, but the slightest improvement has soon been gobbled up by the privileged class which is forever trying, without restraint or limits, to exploit the working class. However, such are the advantages offered by this organization that, even as things stand at present, people would not know how to do without it. Increasingly it integrates the proletariat into a community of interests, trains it in collective living and prepares it for the supreme struggle. Furthermore, since the free and spontaneous organization of labour is what should replace the privilege and authority of the State, it will, once in place, offer a permanent guarantee of the maintenance of the economic organism over and above the political body.

Consequently, by leaving the details of positive organization to be worked out by the Social Revolution, we intend to organize and marshal resistance on a broad scale. We regard the strike as a precious weapon in the struggle, but we have no illusions about its economic results. We accept it as a product of the antagonism between labour and capital, the necessary consequence of which is to make workers more and more alive to the gulf that exists between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, to bolster the workers' organization, and, by dint of ordinary economic struggles, to prepare the proletariat for the great and final revolutionary contest which, destroying all privilege and all class differences, will bestow upon the worker the right to the enjoyment of the full product of his labour and thereby the means of developing within the community his full intellectual, material and moral powers.

The Commission suggests that the Congress should appoint a committee charged to present to the next Congress a project of universal organization for resistance, and detailed statistical

tables about work which will throw some light on this struggle. The Commission recommends the Spanish organization as the best up to now.

FINAL RESOLUTION

The Congress proposes sending a copy of all Congressional resolutions, and of the 'Pact of friendship, solidarity, and mutual defence', to all the workers federations all over the world, and to act in concert with them concerning matters of general interest to all the free Federations.

The Congress invites all the federations who have come together to form this pact of friendship, solidarity and mutual defence, to consult immediately, together with all the federations or sections who would like to accept this pact, in order to define the nature and date of their international Congress, hoping that they will convene it no later than six months from now.

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