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Resolutions of the Congresses of Verviers

5 to 8 September 1877

Verviers Congress

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unions must propose, as their principal goal, the abolition of the proletariat, that is to say the abolition of bosses, taking possession of the instruments of labour and the expropriation of their owners.

On the value and social significance of communist colonies, etc.

The Congress considers communist colonies as incapable of generalising their activity, given the environment in which they operate, and consequently of achieving the social revolution. As a propaganda activity, the existence of these communist colonies does not matter because of the shortcomings they are too often subject to in present-day society, and they remain unknown to the masses just like the many attempts of this kind already made at other times. The Congress therefore does not approve of these experiments, which can keep the best elements away from revolutionary action. However, it believes that it is its duty to express its sympathy towards the men who, by dint of sacrifices and struggles, have sought to achieve socialism in practice by means of these attempts.

What should be the attitude of the proletariat towards political parties?

Considering that the conquest of power is the natural tendency for all political parties and that this power has no other goal than the defence of economic privilege;

Considering, furthermore, that in reality current society is divided, not into political parties, but rather by economic conditions: exploiters and exploited, workers and bosses; wage-workers and capitalists;

Considering, moreover, that the antagonism that exists between the two categories cannot cease by the will of any government or power, but rather by the united efforts of all the exploited against their exploiters;

For these reasons:

The Congress declares that makes no distinction between the various *political* parties, whether they call themselves socialist or not: all these parties, without distinction, form in its eyes one reactionary mass and it believes it is its duty to fight all of them.

It hopes that workers who still march in the ranks of these various parties, instructed by the lessons of experience and by revolutionary propaganda, will open their eyes and abandon the political path to adopt that of revolutionary socialism.

On the organisation of trade unions [corps de métier]

The Congress, while recognising the important of trades unions and recommending their formation on an international basis, declares that trades unions that have no other aim than the improvement of workers' situation, either by the reduction of working hours, or by the setting of wage rates, will never achieve the emancipation of the proletariat; and that trades

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In whatever country the proletariat triumphs, it is absolutely necessary to extend this triumph to all countries.

Considering that if social revolution is, by its very nature, international and if it is necessary that it spreads to all countries for its triumph, there are nevertheless certain countries which, because of their economic and social conditions, find themselves in a better position to produce a revolutionary movement.

Congress declares:

That it is the duty of every revolutionary to support morally and materially every country in revolution, as it is the duty to spread it, because only by those means is it possible to assure the triumph of the Revolution in the countries where it breaks out.

The tendencies in modern production from the point of view of ownership

Considering that modern mode of production tends, from the point of view of ownership, towards the accumulation of capital in the hands of a few and increases the exploitation of workers.

That this state of affairs, the source of all social inequalities, must be changed.

The Congress considers that the achievement of collective property, that is to say the taking possession of social capital by groups of workers, as a necessity; the Congress further declares that a socialist party truly worthy of the name must place the principle of collective property, not in some distant future, but in its current programmes and in its daily activities.