

Daniel De Leon

Editorial: Socialism and Peace

The threatening war cloud, that the Balkan War is spreading over all Europe, has caused the International Socialist Bureau at Brussels to convene the International Socialist Congress in special session on the 24th day of this month in the city of Basle, Switzerland.

The subject for the consideration of the Basle Congress will be “The international situation and a common understanding for concerted action against war.”

In the meantime, the Bureau has issued, in the name of the Socialist International, the following manifesto:

“The International Socialist Bureau expresses its profound horror at the frightful massacres that are being perpetrated at this hour in the Balkan region, and the Bureau sends its most cordial greetings to the Socialists of the Balkans who, with heroic courage, have remained faithful to the Party’s Principles amidst the most difficult conditions.

“The Bureau recognizes the force of the reasons that animate the peoples of the Balkans to regain their independence, together with the guarantees that are required by all the elements in the peninsula. Nevertheless, the Bureau is convinced that that great object could have been gained without the necessity of war, without bloodshed, and without ruinous economic losses, had the problem not been twisted awry by the dynastic ambitions of the

Daniel De Leon

chiefs of the Balkan States, as well as by the intrigues and manoeuvres of the Powers, who have perfidiously paralyzed Turkey's efforts for the regeneration of the nation, with no purpose other than reduce the Balkan peoples to vassalage.

“Accordingly, it is in the progressive democratization and in the close union of all the Balkan States, Turkey included,—it is in the struggle against the agrarian oligarchy that the working classes of the peninsula have seen the solution of the problem.

“But,—thanks to the development of the covetousness and the brutalities of Europe;—thanks to the violent and traitorous moves in Morocco, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in Persia;—thanks to the alternate, or combined game of the Russian Tsar's intrigues and of the ambitions of the Austrian monarchy;—thanks to all this war broke out in the Balkans. Out of this war a general conflict may arise at any moment.

“The duty of all proletarians and of all the parties of the International is now greater and more pressing than ever. It is their duty, by the sinister light of events, to cause even the most refractory to grasp the profound causes of the existing regimen of insecurity, of brutality and of rapine that desolates the world.

“It is the duty of the proletariat, and all the parties of the International, that they hasten with all their effort the advent of Socialism, which, alone, will cause a lasting and well established order of things in international relations, now delivered over to capitalist anarchy, to the covetousness of financiers, to the furies of Jingoism, to the dark-lantern methods of diplomacy, and to the deeds of violence of reactionaries.

“At the same time it is the duty of the proletarians and all the parties of the International on the spot to oppose with all their might the extension of the war, and all self-seeking intervention which would only enlarge the area of hostilities.

“Let the proletariat stand up against the policy of war with all the power of proletarian organization, and with all the mass action at its command. Let it cry out with all its voices, let it indicate by all its actions, that it will not allow itself to be hurled into stupid and sanguinary conflicts.

“In order to give to the protest and to the action against war the greatest unity and efficacy possible, the International Socialist Bureau has decided to convoke an International Extraordinary Congress with the least possible delay.

Socialism and Peace

“The best preparation for the Congress will be a methodical and intense agitation, set on foot by all the Socialist and Labor groups against the manufacturers of conflicts. The approaching hours will doubtlessly be full of trials and responsibilities for the Socialist Party and for the Proletariat. They will know how to face such trials and responsibilities with the courage that our comrades have evinced even at the center of the conflict.

“Let the Rulers know that there will doubtlessly be danger for themselves in playing with fire. It will not be with impunity if they kindle in all Europe a formidable conflagration.

“Down with War!

“Long live the International!”

Thus, while the bourgeois declaim Peace, yet manufacture War; while clericalists pray with lip-service devotion for human brotherhood, yet bless the weapons of fratricidal strife; while the revived Spirit of Napoleon III—who proclaimed “The Empire means peace,” yet raided Italy and Mexico—has been re-incarnated in a Big-Stick Roosevelt, who declares “The Progressive party is peace”;—while, in short, at one side of the line, Hypocrisy reigns supreme, Slaughter being promoted under the pretences of Peace, it is on the other side of the line, in the Socialist camp only, that Peace is a cardinal principle, a religion, a goal earnestly, sincerely and devoutly pursued with all the intelligence at the command of the race.

Daily People, Vol. XIII, No. 138. Friday, November 15, 1912

Socialism and Peace

*A De Leon editorial transcribed and edited by Robert Bills
For the official World Wide Web site
Of the Socialist Labor Party of America, www.slp.org*

Uploaded October 7, 2001.