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International Socialist Congress

Author(s): Clem. Edwards

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increase in the number of societies, but only of productive societies; substantial increases in members and capital; and large increases in trade, profits, and especially in investments. The figures are:

	Societies.	Members.	Shares. £	Sales. £	Profits. £	Investments. £
1894	1674	1,343,518	15,006,663	49,985,065	4,911,299	7,780,452
1895	1711	1,414,158	16,164,667	52,512,126	5,397,582	9,661,420

Taking productive societies only, but including the productive departments of the two Wholesales, we have:

	Societies.	Members.	Capital.	Trade.	Profit.	Loss.
1894	171	24,868	1,643,585	3,173,705	146,559	8,493
1895	210	25,805	1,914,920	3,820,257	161,823	1,565

Further, taking, to compare with these figures of co-operative productive societies as a whole, the figures published by *Labour Co-partnership*, for those productive societies which accept the co-partnership principle, we find:

	Societies.	Capital.	Trade.	Profit.	Losses.
1894	120	799,460	1,371,424	61,987	3,135
1895	155	915,302	1,859,876	94,305	2,296 ¹

We thus see that the recent growth of British Co-operation has been much more rapid on the productive side, and especially where the co-partnership principle is carried out. A further examination would show that the new societies in 1895 were almost all in Ireland, though Scotland and England show large growth of the existing societies. Lastly, the rate of mortality among productive societies has now become so small that the old cry 'co-operative production a failure' ought soon to become obsolete.

ANEURIN WILLIAMS

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONGRESS.

THE International Socialist Workers and Trade Union Congress held in London from July 26th to August 1st, is the fifth Congress of the kind since the collapse of the historic 'International' at the Hague in 1872. The others met in London in 1888, Paris 1889, Brussels 1891, and Zurich 1893. The present Congress was convened under the joint auspices of a special committee appointed by the Zurich Congress, and the Parliamentary Committee of the British Trades Union Congress. The basis of representation was that laid down at Zurich:—

'All trade Unions shall be admitted to the Congress, also those Socialist Parties and Organisations which recognise the necessity of the

¹ These figures of Loss are clearly inconsistent with those given above, which are the result of a more complete enumeration.

organisation of the workers *and* of political action.' Nothing was stipulated as to the proportion of delegates, nor was any definition given of what constituted a society, but each nationality had one vote only on questions of principle, regardless of the number of its delegates. Such a basis very naturally opened the doors to gross inequalities of representation, and in such an absurd anomaly germs of future trouble were inevitable. In principle it excluded all Anarchists and Anti-Parliamentarian groups, but admitted both without challenge if they came under the cloak of Trade Unionists. But, the principle decided, the duty still remained of saying in detail, nationality by nationality, what delegations came under the ban of excommunication. Let it be added that some hundred professed Anarchists and Anti-Parliamentarians came as delegates from a variety of Trade Unions; that another body came ostensibly representing Anarchist groups, in the hope that they might get the Zurich basis overthrown; that the delegates spoke at least a dozen different languages, varied by five times that number of dialects, and the result was easily to be foreseen. The first three days were almost entirely taken up with vainly deciding upon the principle of exclusion, and then upon who should and who should not be excluded. At the end of that time so loud and incessant was the din and so uproarious the proceedings, that the troublesome task was abandoned in sheer despair, and the officially 'excluded' delegates were permitted to remain unmolested in their seats until the end of the Congress.

Of the inequality of representation that naturally arose, one or two examples will suffice. The large and compact body of fully representative delegates from the German Social Democratic Party were only equal to the single delegate from an isolated Portuguese group. One Servian delegate was able to stultify the representative voting strength of one hundred and fifteen from France. But the *reductio ad absurdum* was reached when it transpired that by letter a small Australian Socialist group had deputed a London doctor of science to represent them, and over and over again this gentleman was able, with his single vote, to neutralise the entire vote of 475 cast by the whole of the British delegations. An analysis of the groups represented shows an even more ridiculous state of things. A small Berkshire Socialist society consisting of four members, had precisely the same weight as the railway workers with 12,000 members. Again, the Social Democratic Federation with less than 3,000 adherents had more than ten times the voting strength of the Miners' Federation with its huge membership of over 200,000. As a representative gathering therefore, the Congress was an utter farce. However, though it lacked representative value, it was not wanting in picturesque interest. There was scarcely a notable figure in the Continental Socialist movement absent, and with one or two exceptions the chief leaders of both the English Socialist and Trade Union movements were present. Delegates were also present from America.

A large number of resolutions had been sent in upon an immense variety of subjects. These were grouped into eight divisions, and for each division a commission was elected consisting (where possible) of two delegates from every nationality, whose duty it was to consider them, weed out such as they thought well, and assimilate the remainder into a conglomerate report which they presented to Congress. The first to complete their labours—and this not until the fourth day—was the Agrarian Commission who declared that :

Agricultural depression is caused by capitalist exploitation, that it can only be removed by Socialism, that the varying systems of land tenure in the different countries make it impossible to formulate a general programme, that complete national autonomy, therefore, be allowed, and that to this end national statistical committees be appointed for the purpose of gathering and collating and internationally exchanging information. The British representatives upon the Commission, anxious for something immediate and definite, presented a minority report, in which they urged that palliative measures should be taken for the relief of the unemployed upon the land, and that agricultural teaching should be introduced into all schools. In connection with these reports an interesting discussion took place upon peasant proprietorship, and the almost unanimous opinion was expressed that it tended to retard the spread of Socialism in those districts where it was the chief system of land tenure. When the vote was taken the minority report was defeated and the majority report adopted by overwhelming numbers.

The report of the Commission on Political Action, which gave rise to a lengthy and animated discussion, recommended that :

This Congress understands political action as the organised struggle in all forms for the conquest of political power and its use nationally and locally in legislation and administration by the working class on behalf of their emancipation. The Congress declares that with the view of realising the emancipation of the workers, the enfranchisement of humanity and the citizen, and the establishment of the International Socialist Republic, the conquest of political power is of paramount importance, and calls upon workers of all countries to unite, independent of and apart from all bourgeois political parties, and to demand universal adult suffrage, one adult one vote, the second ballot together with the national and local referendum and initiative.

The report having declared in favour of Woman Suffrage, and the political autonomy of all nations, concluded with the declaration :

That, whatever the pretext, whether it be religious or in the interests of so called civilisation, colonial extension is only another name for the extension of the area of capitalist exploitation in the exclusive interest of the capitalist class.

The debate centred upon an amendment to delete the clause relating to action independent of bourgeois parties, moved by an English

trades unionist. This, though supported by the Fabian, Belgian, and a portion of the English Trades Union delegations, was defeated by a large majority, and the report as drafted adopted with acclamation.

Mr. Sidney Webb, L.C.C., introduced the Education Report in an exceedingly able speech that was largely tempered by his unique experience as Chairman of the London Technical Education Board. Among other things it set forth :

(1) That it was the public duty of each country to establish a complete system of democratically controlled education, 'extending from the Kindergarten to the University, the whole made genuinely accessible to every citizen by freedom from fees and by scholarships covering maintenance.' (2) That the school arrangements should include one meal a day in common, as in the *cantines scolaires*, without invidious distinction between rich and poor; and that adequate provision be made for the complete maintenance and education, according to the best methods, of all orphan or destitute children. (3) That the minimum age of exemption from school and for employment be raised to sixteen. (4) That the employment in night work, and dangerous or unhealthy trades, of any child under eighteen years of age be prohibited, and (5) that no employer be allowed to employ such a child for more than twenty-four hours a week; (6) that 'child' factory legislation at any rate be uniformly fixed by international agreement, and that the Congress observes the respective Governments have not yet fulfilled their promises at the Berlin conference, 'the British Government, in particular, still permitting child labour at the age of eleven,' and that (7) home work should be effectively regulated, employers being made responsible for outwork being done under proper conditions.

An amendment to paragraph 2 was carried in favour of universal free maintenance up to the university. Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, and Holland voted against this proposal. The report thus amended was adopted.

The Organisation Commission reported in favour of the establishment of a small permanent International Commission for the purpose of developing and assisting trades union organisations in different countries. The War Commission attributed wars to the capitalist system, and urged the establishment of international courts of arbitration, elected directly from the people, whose decision should be final. The Miscellaneous Commission contended for the fundamental right of freedom of speech, the press and combination; demanded a general amnesty for all political prisoners, and urged the establishment of municipal and trades union labour bureaux; but abandoned as hopeless the task of deciding upon the merits of any single language for international purposes.

The report which aroused the keenest interest was that of the Economic and Industrial Commission, introduced by Herr Malkenbuhr in an erudite speech. It began with an exhortation to the workers of all lands to strive continuously for the socialisation of industry under a democratic organisation, urged the need for international action in view of the disappearance of free competition by the creation of huge

monopolies, and recommended the establishment of an international agency to call attention to the movements of these corporations.

It then went on to declare that many of the larger industries were already ripe for socialisation, and laid down the following programme of industrial reforms :—

1. Abolition of all tariffs, duties on articles of consumption, and exportation premiums.
2. International factory and labour protection laws. Whereas, in regard to the latter point, the resolutions of the Paris Congresses are reaffirmed, the Congress resolves temporarily to limit the palliative agitation to: (a) To demand the Legal Eight Hours Day; (b) to abolish the sweating system, and to introduce perfect legislative protection for the workers who do not work in factories, workshops, &c.; (c) The recognition of the unassailable right of combination and coalition of both sexes. The resolutions adopted at the Paris Congresses were: 1. The Legal Eight Hours Day, to which it is proposed to add that six hours' night work constitute an equivalent for eight hours' day work. 2. Abolition of child labour under the age of fourteen, and limitation of the working day to six hours a day for all between fourteen and fifteen. 3. Prohibition of night work, save in trades in which continuous running is a necessity. 4. Prohibition of night-work for both sexes under the age of eighteen. 5. At least thirty-six hours of complete leisure in each week. 6. Prohibition of those industries and methods of production which specially injure the health of the workers. 7. Abolition of the truck system. 8. The inspection of all industries—whether carried on in factories, small workshops, or at home—by paid inspectors, at least half of whom should be chosen by the workers. To accomplish this, economic and political action must go hand in hand.

The report, with the following amendments, was almost unanimously adopted :—

1. No woman to be allowed to work for six weeks before and after confinement, and to receive maintenance from a State Maternity Department during such term of prohibition. 2. The minimum age of child labour to be raised to sixteen years. 3. Wherever private employment fails, public employment should be provided at the public cost. 4. No restriction to be placed upon immigration. 5. The May Day demonstration to be a demonstration against militarism as well as in favour of the eight hours. 6. Mutual efforts to be made against 'alien' blacklegs in case of trade disputes. 7. Abolition of 'home work' whenever possible. 8. To include apprentices in unions, formed into a special group, and to give them a Socialistic and technical education.

With a slight verbal strengthening the Zurich Standing Orders were re-affirmed as the basis of the next Congress, which it was decided to hold at Berlin in 1899 or, in case the Kaiser objects, at Paris in 1900.

Upon the general results of the Congress it is perhaps too early to speak. To us in England the great significance of the gathering lay in the fact that the British Trades Unions were officially represented in large numbers for the first time since the dissolution of the old

'International.' They have at their own congresses declared emphatically in favour of the collectivist principles,¹ which they seek to apply along the lines of practical experiment. With revolutionary methods, however, they have no sympathy, and the mere repetition of pious platitudes, or indulgence in the luxury of idealistic abstractions, they contemptuously regard as an unpardonable waste of time. Moreover, severely drilled in the ways of democratic government within their own organisations, they deem a fugitive basis of representation as little less than child's play. Swamped as they were in all divisions therefore, and steadily elbowed out of all but the barest semblance of representation in the government of the Congress, they are at present naturally feeling very much irritated. Many of them even assert that they will never take further part in a purely Socialistic Congress. A good deal of this sore feeling will probably subside with time, but I am quite of opinion that, if the British Trades Unionists again take a considerable share in future Socialist Congresses, it will only be upon the distinct understanding that the present fluid basis of representation will be so altered as to give something like a proportional voting strength, if not delegation to the actual memberships represented. With such a change much would be done to correct the tendency to revel in futile generalities, which are after all but the product of executive irresponsibility and individual freedom from the control of those ostensibly represented.

CLEM. EDWARDS

THE ABSTRACT OF LABOUR STATISTICS, 1894-5.

IT may be worth while, now that this Statistical Abstract has reached its second year, to consider it in two ways; we may note to what extent it fulfils the general purpose of an abstract, and we may examine the general view of the condition and progress of the working classes presented by the figures it contains.

The purpose of a Labour Abstract is presumably to give, in the most compact form consistent with clearness, all the figures resulting from detailed investigations about any facts connected with labour; to serve as an accurate index to all labour statistics; and at the same time to treat this mass of figures as an organic whole, so that a correct general view is obtained of the facts dealt with. It must also be arranged so as to be of the greatest possible use to the amateur and to those busy in other directions, who may not have time or inclination to study the figures at their source; and for this purpose, the most essential characteristic is definiteness. An exact understanding of a list of figures is only to be obtained when the method of their collection and compilation is completely known, and for even a reasonably clear conception of their meaning a lengthy explanation is often necessary;

¹ See ECONOMIC JOURNAL, No. 20, vol. v., p. 636.