

REPORT

## NOTES ON THE STUTTGART CONGRESS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

### I.

#### New Faces.

**I**T is not the European delegate who is more likely to perceive and seize the changes coming over the International Socialist Congresses; nor is his judgment in the matter the more reliable. The American delegate brings along a more truthful and sensitive photographic plate in his mind. We call these Congresses International. So they are in spirit, scope and aspirations. As a matter of fact, however more numerous non-European countries may be represented from Congress to Congress, and however larger each of these delegations may grow from gathering to gathering, the fact remains that these Congresses are still at the stage of a European "family affair." The members of a family are the least quick to perceive the changes that take place among themselves. It is so with these Congresses. Whithersoever the center of gravity of the Movement may eventually shift to, to-day it lies wholly within Europe; and what is more, whithersoever that center of gravity may eventually shift to, there will, to the end, remain a certain special center of gravity around which European affairs will turn. The multiplicity of geographically closely joined nationalities, each with its distinct traditions, and yet converging developments, renders the latter fact unavoidable. The delegates from the various European nationalities may come in actual contact at the International Congresses. They have, in point of fact, been in intimate psychologic contact all along. Their close territorial location has kept them all along within one mental sweep. In reality they are not strangers to one another: they are a family. Hence I feel confident they are less likely to perceive the changes going on among themselves than is an "outsider" coming from beyond the Atlantic, and moving in

their midst. Hence, in all probability, the European delegate to Stuttgart is not aware, surely not as fully aware as an “outsider,” of the new forces behind new faces that gathered at Stuttgart last August, or, rather, are now growing up in and projecting their profiles into the circle of the Movement in Europe. Of these new faces I shall here roughly sketch four, with regard to only one of whom—Herve—it is possible the Congress had some vague sense of the significance of his apparition.

### **Camille Huysmans.**

If the necessity for unity of international thought has been found so urgent as to give birth to the desire for an international language, even to the extent of setting on foot so stupendous an attempt as the creation of a new language, it must be admitted that an efficient International Secretary is the nearest substitute. Such a substitute is Camille Huysmans. I did not hear him read or speak Russian and Japanese, but would not have been surprised to see him do so. Huysmans is an extraordinary polyglot. This combined gift and acquirement gives the present International Secretary the opportunity to gain a proper grasp of the movement internationally—an important qualification for the office. Huysmans’ exceptional abilities have not neglected the opportunity. With the exception, probably an isolated exception, of the Socialist Labor Party movement in Great Britain, of which he has a mistaken conception, his insight into the intricacies of the Movement internationally is extensive. His joint work with De Bruckere on Trades Unionism gives evidence of a careful study and rather surprising stock of information upon American affairs. At the sessions of the International Bureau his views were frequently luminous.

Young in years; serious in thought, though replete with a homely humor that, considering he is a Belgian, makes me suspect a Walloon extraction; clean and direct in his conduct; wiry of build; keen of intellect; active and studious; inhaling and responding to the breath of a younger generation of on-coming stalwarts, without thereby dropping to the vulgar level of disrespect for the older war-horses;—Camille Huysmans is a new force that will leave its mark on the Movement.

**Gustave Herve.**

In the course of the debates in the Committee on Anti-Militarism Bebel said that Herve was but a revamped Domela Nieuwenhuis, only much more brilliant. Bebel erred. Whether Domela Nieuwenhuis, if cast into the younger years and social era of Herve, would be a Herve, that is, merely a more brilliant Nieuwenhuis, may be matter for paleontologic speculation. Certain it is that Herve is no more a Nieuwenhuis, and no less, than Verdi's music is a revamped Central African "tom-tom." Talented a man though Nieuwenhuis is, he is the product of the Antiquity of the Movement: Herve is the product of the Modern Movement. Nieuwenhuis's criticisms of the Social Democracy, or pure and simple parliamentarism, were essentially abstractions and crudities, blind gropings after a not clearly discerned light: Herve's position deals concretely with a problem that has become obvious. Under the separate heading of "Herveism" I shall consider his theory with its proper setting. Suffice it here to introduce the man.

Though the oldest of the four individualities I am here considering, Herve is strictly a young man, not in spirit only but in actual years. Short of stature, but not stumpy, his lithe figure and military bearing give the impression of an athlete—strength and flexibility. As this man's physique, so is his mentality. Quick and brilliant, pungent and collected, earnest and resolute, Herve is the embodiment of his Breton extraction—Loyalty, Indomitableness and Vivacity. Such a man—unless, like Gen. Hoche of the French Revolution and whose characteristics he somewhat reveals, his career is early truncated—cannot, if he would, and certainly will not, even if he could, fail very materially to affect, if not direct, whatever Movement he identifies himself with.

**Margarite Faas-Hardegger.**

Holding a place, quite her own, yet "bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh" of the notable quartet I am here sketching, Mrs. Faas-Hardegger was one of the most promiseful new figures at Stuttgart. Margarite Faas-Hardegger is a young woman and mother of two little children. She is Swiss; her home is Berne, where she fills the place of secretary of a national organization of labor. Inherent capabilities, which no adverse early circumstances could balk, enabled her to drill and to store

her mind with choicest information. Clever at her pen; speaking, reading and writing with elegance the three languages of her native Switzerland—German, French and Italian—besides no mean understanding of English; so well posted and so clear of mind as easily to grasp whatever new problem presented itself; and withal gifted with a virility of character that many a man may envy, Mrs. Faas-Hardegger's efforts in the Movement can not remain confined to the narrow boundaries of her own home. Hers is a figure promissive of international weight. In subsequent articles, especially upon the Trades Union discussion, I shall have occasion to return to the distinguished woman. The above, however cursory a glance, will give some idea of her interesting personality.

### **Robert Michels.**

Last, not least, is the instructor of political economy at the University of Turin, Italy—Dr. Robert Michels.

Michels is a German. Until recently his home was Darmstadt in Hessen. The sight of Michels gives an agreeable surprise. He who is acquainted with his literary productions is justified to expect to see an old book-worm. The annotations which accompany his writings, and greatly illumine them, are so numerous, and cover such a vast range of reading in almost all the languages of Europe that one insensibly drops into the notion that the man is a closet thinker. At the same time the aggressive virility with which his subjects are treated, above all, the subjects themselves—live, practical questions of organization and aggression—tend to convey a different impression of the writer. Acquaintance with him reconciles the seeming contradiction.

Michels is a young man who breathes the exhilarating, electricity-surcharged air of his generation. Of him it may be said that he has camped on the trail of the Movement in Europe, without neglecting, far otherwise, to keep in touch with the happenings outside. We do not cut out our life tasks for ourselves. They are cut out for us. Inversely to the Shakespearean dictum—our tasks are rough-hewn for us by circumstances; we shape them into final shape. With this explanation it is safe to say of Michels that he has grappled with the task that circumstances have rough-hewn for him, and he is valiantly shaping the same. That task is to sum up the

history of the Movement; to trace it back to its sources; to exhibit its present status; to point out the waywardness of its present course; consequently, to recall the Movement to itself. It goes without saying that such a task cannot choose but raise hostilities. The mountain-high facts—properly verified, and minutely referred to the corresponding documents, frequently down to the page—that accompany Michels' writings, notably his latest analysis of the German Social Democracy, are at once granite pillars for the superstructure of his bold conclusions, and breastworks, in self protection, against the assaults of those whom his array of facts are bound to incommode.

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