

## **The Basel labour movement organises an international socialist congress**

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The organisation of an international socialist congress posed enormous problems for the Basel labour movement. Previous congresses had for the most part been hosted by labour organisations in substantially larger cities. These not only had far more resources available to them, but were also under much less time pressure, as they were able to begin preparations many months or even years in advance. On the other hand, the Basel organisers could expect far greater cooperation from the political authorities, and particularly also from the church authorities. Furthermore, a large portion of the city's population – not only of the working classes – was sympathetic to the concerns of the congress, and demonstrated this by turning out in large numbers. It was therefore not only the concerted action of socialists from nations at enmity which made a profound impression across Europe. The accompanying events – particularly the peace rally at the cathedral and the pealing of bells (*Les cloches de Bâle*), but also the official welcome by the government and the assembly in the barracks yard – also contributed significantly to the powerful aura of the congress. For the city of Basel itself, the congress was one of the few events since the French Revolution to have given it a place in world history.