

## **The Demonstration Culture of the Second International: A Case Study of the 1912 Basel International Socialist Peace Congress**

Kevin J. Callahan

The movement of international socialism prior to World War I overcame internal disunity and external obstacles by developing a new style of political culture and communication centered on mass-based demonstration. This culture consisted of a diverse repertoire of activities such as public display, political symbolism, the issuance of manifestos, massive antiwar rallies and the convening of impressive political spectacles. The purpose of this paper is to show how the 1912 Basel Peace congress and its concomitant mass-based demonstration campaign to avert war were emblematic of the Second International's broader demonstration culture. Three points will be addressed: firstly, the three types of demonstration – paper, international socialist congress as spectacle and mass meetings – of the Second International's political culture; secondly, application of these types of demonstration to the 1912 Basel peace congress; and thirdly, brief consideration of how the 1912 Basel peace congress impacted socialist peace politics on the eve of World War I.