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EDITORIAL

PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD WILL TO MAN.

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ON Christmas—the day of “Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men”—comes the report that the administration at Washington fears an outbreak in China. The situation is regarded as serious. It is held to be attributable to the exclusion of the Chinese from this country, and the subsequent boycott of American goods resulting therefrom. These are alleged to have produced an anti-foreign sentiment surpassing that of 1900 in general intensity and bitterness. While this theory sounds plausible, it is hard to conceive how so remote a thing from China as American Chinese exclusion can create a general and widespread anti-foreign sentiment in China. However favorable such a theory may be to those who want Chinese exclusion removed in order that they may secure abundant Chinese labor, it is impossible to conceive of millions of stolid men in China, remote from advanced means of communication and without any great national integrity and sympathies, becoming so excited over exclusion as to want to destroy all foreigners. One is apt to think that the Chinese, who are not entirely bereft of sense, would center their hatred on the Americans exclusively, while displaying great love and respect for the English, who have admitted them to South Africa and are now endeavoring to introduce them into Australia. That all foreigners are included shows that the cause of the trouble is not American, but universal. The fact is that all the foreigners, as represented by their respective capitalist classes, look upon China as “a good thing”; as a country with teeming millions who will make good markets for their surplus products. They, accordingly, without so much as “by your leave,” have seized China and divided it into commercial zones, each with a strategic port, in order that they might more easily exploit the country. In doing this they have imposed burdens and hardships on China, sacrificed the lives of its inhabitants by the thousands, levied customs on them, compelled them to sustain armed forces for their (the foreigners’)

protection, and otherwise treated them, not as the inhabitants of an empire, but as an auxiliary to foreign trade. The foreigners would have dismembered China, if they had dared. Its size and immense potentialities made them forbear. As it is, they have made an armed camp of the ancient Empire, by means of which they hope to maintain their control of it.

But China is waking up. It is dimly resenting the efforts to make it a grab bag with which the different sets of national robbers may stick their villainous arms and take therefrom, by mutual consent, either voluntarily or involuntarily given, whatever they may happen to fasten their ravenous claws on. China is beginning to perceive that it must arouse in self-defense against the combined forces that would fain subjugate and partition it off, to the promotion of their respective interests. And this perception, which is being hastened by the great wars of which it has been the objective, has, for the time being, caused China to vent its feelings on the “foreign devils” within its own borders. It is to be hoped that when China is thoroughly aroused, as it gives every indication of being within the next half century, this opposition will go no further. As it is, it is not pleasant, on this day of “Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men” to contemplate the prospects of bloody turmoil and war that the Chinese situation conjures up. And yet these prospects are likely to be realized as long as the system which makes the search for foreign markets, i.e., the capitalist system, endures. In fact, as the needs for foreign markets increase, as they do from day to day, so also increases the certainty of these prospects becoming actualities. What we must strive for then is not a mere mummery of the words, “Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men,” but a social system in which “Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men” will be a reality. Such a social system is Socialism. Under Socialism Labor will receive all it produces. There will be {no} need for foreign markets. As a result, for the first time, the age long dream will have a substantial basis, and there will be “Peace on Earth, Good Will to All Men.”

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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