Program and Organization of the International Working Men’s Association

La Questione Sociale

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1884


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dence, and so on; or if they are all absent, each member carries on with his work as best he can, together with those comrades with whom he can meet, or on his own, until such time as changed circumstances make an attempt at re-organization possible.

In order to set a limit to the duration and damage done by such periods of dis-organization, as well as to intensify the flow of ideas and fellow-feeling around the association, all sections and all members should try to connect and correspond as much as they can with comrades elsewhere, within the bounds, naturally, of the requisite economy of effort and prudence.
and governments, and do not knowingly do injury to the work of the entire association or some branch thereof.

• The program, which is always under discussion and always open to whatever further debate or changes may be required to keep it up to date with science and the needs of the revolution, remains binding upon all members, at least in its essentials and all those parts, which, if tinkered with, would entail a different current line of practice. New ideas raised for discussion regarding the Association’s principles and performance, when in contradiction with accepted principles and practice and that may entail significant modification, are not to affect practice unless they have first successfully carried the day within the Association and been embraced, on the decision of all sections, as an integral part of the general program. Any who may decide that there is no need for them to sacrifice their own particular viewpoint or to wait until they win in later discussions, should quit the Association.

• The flag adopted by the International is red, framed in black.

The strife-torn conditions in which the International exists imply that, often, its organization cannot be regular, that sometimes it lacks all or some of its federal bodies, that correspondence is sometimes interrupted and that congresses sometimes cannot be held because of the police or whatever. This does not mean that the International has ceased to exist. If there is no international federal commission, then the national commissions correspond with one another directly; if the national commissions are missing, the provincial ones handle the correspon-
eration does the welcoming. Persons seeking admission to the Association will apply to the section or to one of the sections in their locality. The society shall forward the application to the nearest federal commission, which will pass the proposal to the sections and federations in its jurisdiction, or, in accordance with special regulations, shall provisionally decide on the application, referring the matter for a final determination to the congress.

• Any subscriber to the principles of the association living in towns where there is as yet no section in existence, can be admitted to a section in a different town or communicate their support to the nearest federal commission and give a moral undertaking to foster the establishment of a regular section in their town.

• Where the International has no presence in a region, those subscribing to its ideas should seize the initiative and launch a branch, which will then have to apply for admission and recognition, under the rules, through the federal commissions and congresses.

• The commissions handle correspondence and provide for all of the organization’s needs, by means of the dues payable by members and sections.

• No authority exists within the International. Other than in regard to any particular obligations assumed by persons and sections in coming together and federating with one another, they remain utterly autonomous vis à vis the International, and are at liberty to pursue their own activities on behalf of the cause as they deem fit, as long as they **abide strictly by the program, do not falter in their duty of solidarity in the struggle against the bosses**
from the same region usually band together into regional federations and so on. Every section is at liberty to make connections and arrangements with whichever sections it deems best, regardless of geography.

- Liaison between the various sections and federations is maintained by means of federal commissions made up of representatives elected by each section or federation. Such delegates wield no powers; they are duty-bound to enact the wishes of their mandatories, to whom they must answer for the carrying out of the mandate issued to them. They are elected for a fixed term, normally a short one, and are liable to be recalled at any point.

- From time to time, suitable delegates from the various sections meet in provincial, national, or general congresses or, in the case of sections made up of members plying the same trade, in corporative congresses. Those congresses, meetings of which will normally coincide with the expiration of the mandate of the relevant federal commissions in that department, evaluate the stewardship of the outgoing commission, appoint the incoming commission, discuss new ideas produced by or coming into the Association, thereby contributing to the ongoing elaboration of the overall program, and resolve on all interests held in common by the collectives represented. The resolutions, not being conducted under imperative mandates, are in no way binding until such time as they have been approved by the assemblies of the sections, and then are binding only upon those sections that endorse them, other than in the case of some special compacts and conventions.

- Any person or society subscribing to and defending the principles of the Association can be accepted into its ranks on the responsibility of whichever section or fed-

Editor's note

Translated from Programma e Organizzazione della Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori (Florence, 1884). The title page specifies that the pamphlet was issued by the editorial staff of the periodical La Questione Sociale. By the time this pamphlet was published, the International had practically ceased to exist, though there were local federations that still claimed affiliation to it. Even the London congress of 1881, which is considered the last congress of the federalist International, was rather an attempt to revive it. The present pamphlet should be seen in the same light. It was a proposal summarizing the views of Malatesta and his group, rather than a document collectively issued by an actual organization. When, in 1930, Malatesta’s friend and comrade Luigi Fabbri asked his authorization to reprint the pamphlet, Malatesta accepted, on condition that it would be published as a “historical document,” with a new preface he would write. “I would regret” he explained “if it was published as my work, without my preface, because in many respects I have changed my ideas and I would no longer want to take responsibility for everything that is said therein.” Unfortunately, that preface never saw the light of day.

To the Internationalists

Dear comrades,

We have tried to sum up our association’s fundamental principles, the ideals of which it dreams, and the paths by which it means to reach them.

We think we have faithfully interpreted your ideas and your intentions. In any event, we hope that this brief, hurried expo-

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1 This preface is preceded by an ironic disclaimer addressed to the board of censors, which we have omitted.
sition of ours will be such as to spark a lively exchange among you regarding the still controversial matters that must be the object of the deliberations of forthcoming congresses.

Should you wish to pass on to us your observations, we shall take these into account in a second, more comprehensive, more methodical edition, which we should like to be a collective effort with each of us bringing his expertise and experience to it.

Depend upon our devotion to the common cause.

The editors of the newspaper *La Questione Sociale*

**International Working Men’s Association Charter (London, 28 September 1864)**

**Considering:**

That the emancipation of the workers must be conquered by the workers themselves;

That the struggle for the emancipation of the workers means not a struggle for new privileges, but for equal rights and duties for all;

That the economical subjection of the man of labour to the owner of the raw materials and the means of labour lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms: political, moral, and material;

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2 This is the text of the preamble to the provisional rules adopted at the founding conference of the International. The preamble, drafted by Marx, constituted the fundamental declaration of principles that, after the split, both branches of the International would equally follow. Though it is not Malatesta’s text, we have preserved it for completeness, since Malatesta makes reference to it later. Where differences arise, we have adjusted the text to reflect Malatesta’s version.

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that governments, rather than contemplating invasion of countries in the throes of revolution, will not know what to do to escape the encroaching revolution.

The sacred battalion of the revolution, the International will remain in the breach, always in the front ranks of the fighters as long as there is a single injustice or a single person whose unhappiness can be blamed on a fellow man.

**Organization**

The International is a free union of fighters with a common cause.

- Its name invokes workers, and by “worker” is meant anybody plying a useful trade who does not exploit another person’s labors. However, the International welcomes all who sincerely offer to contribute their efforts, be they victims of oppression yearning for redemption or deserters from the ruling class defecting to the people. Thus it has been said that in the International’s eyes anyone who toils at the destruction of bourgeois order is a worker; and in a sense, there is some truth in that; but it should not be forgotten that socialism, though it is the cause of all men, is chiefly the cause of the wage-earners who suffer most under the existing order; and that the revolution, while harnessing all contributions, looks to proletarians alone for its guarantees, in that these cannot be emancipated except through the achievement of social equality.

- The International is made up of many local or trades societies, which generally assume the name sections, but which it might please their members to refer to as circles, groups, corporations, etc.

- The various sections in a given locality normally band together into local federations; the sections and federations
of the revolution as being their very own and defend it to the bitter end.

A variety of organizational arrangements will be tried out: in one place there will be collectivism, in another it will be communism, in some more backward locations property may very well be split between the commune residents, but at all times and above all else, the social dimension will be a matter of concern to all, and everybody will be entitled to an opportunity to bring to bear upon collective life an influence in proportion with their capacity. If revolutionaries can thwart the formation of a government, if they manage to crush, possibly through the use of material violence, any attempt to resurrect private property, we can rest assured that, surrounded by thousands of experiments, wrangles and attrition, progress, at a greater or lesser speed, towards anarchist communism will be made; that being the only arrangement under which society will be able to achieve the peace and well-being it craves.

In the midst of all this turmoil, this upheaval from which a new world is to emerge, the International will have to actively invite, elicit, and monitor. Unless they are not up to their mission, it will be Internationalists who will set the boldest examples; it will be they, in their armed bands, who invade the recalcitrant areas, bringing revolution to them and encouraging or, sometimes, carrying out the expropriation. They will be the ones to take on the task of pushing the revolution as far as it will go, preventing the means of production and communication from being monopolized by those who operate them and giving encouragement to the ever-wider federation of communes and corporations; they will be the ones to watch out lest any party monopolize power or attempt a backlash.

It will be chiefly up to the Internationalists to help spread the revolution quickly through the civilized world. Taking as their springboard the first country to rebel, they will send equipment, men, and weapons to other countries, striving to ensure that the masses feel the contagion of example and to ensure

That the economical emancipation of the workers is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate;

That all efforts aiming at that great end have hitherto failed from the want of union and solidarity between the workers of the manifold divisions of labour and different countries;

That the emancipation of labour is neither a local, nor a national, but a worldwide problem, embracing all civilized nations and depending for its solution on their concurrence, practical and theoretical;

That the present revival of labour in the most industrious countries, while it raises a new hope, gives solemn warning against a relapse into the old errors, and calls for the immediate combination of the still-disconnected movements;

For these reasons

The International Working Men’s Association has been founded. This Association and all societies and individuals adhering to it acknowledge truth, justice, and morality as the basis of their conduct towards all men, without regard to colour, creed, or nationality, and consider their duty to claim the human and citizen’s rights not only for the members of the Association but for all those who fulfill their duties.

No rights without duties, no duties without rights.

**Preliminaries**

The International Working Men’s Association, was formed in 1864 in order to “afford a central medium of communication
and co-operation between Workingmen’s Societies existing in
different countries and aiming at the same end; viz., the protec-
tion, advancement, and complete emancipation of the working
classes,” and from the outset, acknowledged no program but
the general one set out in the charter cited above.\textsuperscript{3}

It was a vague, incomplete program that identified rather
than resolved problems, that did not fix the Association’s posi-
tion vis à vis the Society from which it arose, and was silent on
the matter of methods of struggle and means of action. It laid
down the principles, but did not set out their consequences,
which the bulk of its members may well never even have antic-
pipated.

At first glance, it might have seemed that this Association
was merely a larger-scale repetition of the Workers’ Societies
that, for many years, had been looking to cooperation, lawful
resistance or laws protective of labor for the emancipation
of the worker, without rebelling against the politico-social con-
stitutions of their several countries and without straying beyond
the confines of the bourgeois world. And indeed that appeared
so much to be the case that, in the International’s beginnings,
while the French government was trying to draw it into its or-
bit and make it an instrument of influence and corruption in
the ranks of the impoverished classes, the International also
received plaudits and encouragement from many influential
members of the Republican party. But, later, once its program
began to be expounded and to entail practical consequences,
these were among its bitterest enemies and most ferocious per-
secutors.

Compared to many organizations and political parties
of the time, the International seemed, to casual observers,
rather harmless and even anti-revolutionary. Since then, those
organizations and parties have either vanished without a trace

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elements of the human society, that will only become a living reality when, as the revolution spreads through an ever broader trade-to-trade and commune-to-commune agreement, a unity of interests and a unity of organization is achieved, covering the entire human race.

The International—whose membership will be mightily increased by the eruption of revolution and will carry on growing as the storm of revolution makes headway among the masses and awakens their latent or dulled faculties—will resist, by means of propaganda and force, the establishment of governments and formal authorities intent upon using the people’s might to foist their own wishes upon the people. Besides, it will deploy every iota of its influence to encourage and inspire all manner of ventures and activities.

Those assets that must become the whole of humanity’s common inheritance shall be directly under the control of those who are located within their reach—under the control of the commune, if they are consumer goods; under the control of the corporations, which operate them, in the case of instruments of production.

The peasants, who shall be encouraged to organize themselves into farmers’ corporations, shall take possession of the land. Banding together into corporations, workers plying the same trade are to take possession of the machinery, tools, and premises involved in their trade; thus, seamen will take over shipping, railroad workers the railways and so on. In addition, housing accommodation shall be occupied by the commune’s residents, and consumer goods gathered into public depots—their distribution organized quickly by the most willing and aptest volunteers.

All deeds and all material indicators of private ownership must be destroyed; the public debt record, destroyed; the land registry, mortgage deeds, notarial records, contracts, etc., all destroyed. All conventional bonds are to be annulled or de-
as its declaration that all are entitled to be treated in accordance with the principles of truth, justice, and morality, without distinctions as to creed, color, and nationality, it extended such solidarity to all peoples.

Affirming that the emancipation of the workers must be the workers’ own doing, the International showed that it understood that no ruling class has ever surrendered its privileges, no matter how much a proper understanding of its own interests might prompt it to do so—it never develops any such understanding by itself—and foresaw all the revolutionary needs that complicate resolution of the social question.

So—thanks to a few true precepts and to the instincts of the laboring classes, so widely represented in its ranks—within a short time, the initially timorous International has turned into the fearsome anti-parliamentary-revolutionary-anti-religious-anarchist-communist International, which intends to stand in the front rank of progress and is bent on destroying the whole social edifice of today, from the foundations up, so as to raise an architecture of peace, freedom and well-being upon the ruins.

In this pamphlet we shall not be rehearsing the stages through which the International passed prior to its espousal of the plainly socialist, revolutionary character that is its distinguishing feature today, for such scrutiny would take us far beyond what we have in mind to do; we shall try merely to set out, in brief, the conclusions at which the International has arrived thus far.

**Program**

Discounting any metaphysical notion, any other-worldly purpose, any mission imposed upon man by a chimerical God; focusing upon the purpose of human life here on earth, the latter cannot, as we see it, be anything other than happiness,

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bourgeois society; using the spoken and printed word to spread the message; encouraging workers to band together and resist the bosses; drawing attention to their program through agitations, attempted uprisings, and trials; by making use of both the government’s forced tolerance and its persecutions; issuing appeals to the oppressed masses and welcoming with open arms any deserters from the ranks of the bourgeoisie who come to fight the battle for justice and civilization alongside the people—by all these means the International gets on with its organizing and prepares the forces with which it will mount its final attack upon bourgeois institutions, gauges the enemy’s strength, and creates the climate that will make victory possible.

There is no way that we can foresee how the revolution will come about. It may be made directly by the organized forces of the International taking to the streets, or taking to the hills; or it may be sired by an uprising of a people irked by misery and frustration galore; it may come on the occasion of an attempt to institute a republic or some attempted restoration; or from a strike that spreads and triggers clashes; or because of some wars or dynastic crisis... Be that as it may, whether the International—with its own resources and those of other socialist organizations—confronts the enemy on the field of battle with some likelihood of success, or whether some circumstances or other leave it duty-bound to take to the streets right away, at that point less than ever must the International lose sight of its own program; less than ever should it agree to the compromises and horse-trading that would translate into its efforts being exploited by bourgeois revolutionary parties.

Tacit or open alliance with bourgeois parties unhappy with the established order may have its use when it comes to the material effort required to smash the army and police that stands which consists of the full and optimum development of our faculties; of achievement of the greatest well-being with the least quantum of pain possible. Society (itself the consequence of the search and need for well-being) can have no purpose other than satisfying the affective instincts growing inside our brains and the increase in and assurance of our happiness, of which it is, in any event, an essential pre-requisite.

It requires only a superficial glance at humanity’s current circumstances to see how society, as presently constituted, is ill equipped to accomplish its purpose. Humanity is divided into two large parts, the larger of which seems fated to labor, obey, and endure the greatest woes so as to afford the other a life of idleness and of meddling in other people’s wishes and dignity. Poverty, ignorance, corruption, prostitution, disease, criminality, an uncertain future, untimely death, wars, outrages, hatreds—these are but a few of the features that characterize the current face of the human consortium.

What lies behind such a ghastly circumstance? What remedies would the International seek to apply to it?

There is nothing that is outside of nature, nothing that cannot be made to conform to natural laws. Man is the highest organized state thus far attained by matter, the loftiest creature in the animal hierarchy, but that does not stop him being an aggregation of material atoms—still an animal—and, as such, subject to all the laws of chemistry and biology. Shaped by slow evolution under the dominion of natural laws, in the midst of the thousand vagaries of the struggle to survive against his environment in general and the other animals in particular, it is thanks to the spectrum of natural laws that we can fathom his past and his future. It is on the basis of the very same spectrum that we can glance ahead into his future and discover the conditions wherein he may achieve a higher degree of civilization and the well-being to which he aspires.

Scarcely had he arrived in this world than man, had to fight for his very survival; he fought other men as well as the rest of
nature, and it was a brutal kill-or-be-killed battle. Later, man
realized that the help of another man was of a thousand times
more service to him than that man’s death, and no longer was
battle intended so much to exterminate one’s adversary as to
bring him to heel; to reduce him to a slave and beast of bur-
den. This new, wiser, more humane character in man’s strug-
gle against his fellow man was the factor that determined the
high degree of civilization attained by man. It is, however, the
reason why such civilization is founded upon the subjugation
and impoverishment of the majority of men and is fated to sup
upon human blood and tears—until such time as the strife be-
tween men is effectively ended and that civilization has as its
foundation genuine, complete solidarity of the human race in
the struggle to bend nature to its needs.

Man’s struggle to subjugate his fellow man has had two chief
consequences: property and authority. Property arose when,
at daggers drawn with all the rest, each man seized whatever
portion of wealth he could; those who were not strong enough
or favored enough to claim their part of the loot were set to
work on another’s behalf, and, lacking the materials and in-
struments of labor, they had to endure the conditions imposed
by whoever held those materials and those instruments. The
entitlements he had awarded himself were passed on to his off-
spring or his friends and he helped divide humankind into two
castes: one caste of haves, born with an entitlement to live with-
out working; the other of proletarians whose lot from birth is
wretchedness; subjection; exhausting, unrewarded toil; and it
is only the odd one, in very rare instances and exceptional cir-
cumstances, who manages to ascend to a more humane life and,
sometimes, to property. Authority began with man’s brutal op-
pression of woman, child and weaker fellow man, and culmi-
nated in the establishment of governments, whereby, through
regulation, social privileges and social injustices—first and fore-
most, property rights—are enshrined and championed.
others, as well as for intelligent folk who have recognized
the trend in historical evolution and appreciate the huge,
immense benefits that the whole of humanity would derive
once, rather than expending the better part of his energies on
war, rebellions and repression, every human being works in
concert in pursuit of well-being for all.

Within the ranks of the International there is room for all
who are out to fight on behalf of the future, the outriders of the
brand new civilization. No matter what class they may come
from, nor the race to which they belong, nor the party or re-
ligion they once followed, all are brothers within the Interna-
tional, once a clean break has been made with the past and with
the present and the fight for human redemption resolved upon.

Today as on the day after the revolution, the International
rigorously shuns all compromise and all opportunism.

A party that is not out to massage petty personal ambitions
and particular interests by being the victor of the hour, but
wants to make an effective impact on human progress, even
though it leads an everyday existence and avails of every op-
portunity that presents itself, must never lose sight of the ulti-
mate objective and must gauge its every action on that basis.

All means are good and no way should remain untired, no
force remain idle when we are dealing with a mission as grand
as the one that the International Association has taken upon
itself. But clearly such means have to further the end, and
the pathways tried should lead towards the aim at which one
wishes to arrive.

The immediate object of the International is a simultaneous
uprising against the political authorities (with an eye to their
abolition) and against property-owners (with an eye to taking
wealth under common ownership), and so it must select in ad-
advance those means useful in the preparation of the insurrec-

Property and authority—wedded to religious beliefs, grown
out of the ignorance and fearful imagination of primitive man
back when he was first teetering on the brink of conscious
thought—have the source of their durability in the interests of
the privileged and in the brutalization caused by impoverish-
ment. Wedded to the sentiments of hatred and the racial, na-
tional, religious, commercial, familial rivalries, spawned by the
agonistic interests and innuendoes of priests and tyrants,
property and authority can be found in every aspect of social
life and are the root causes of all the woes we have been de-
ploring.

As we have already stated, if these woes are to be banished,
we must alter the principle by which human relationships are
presently regulated; the principle of strife must be replaced by
the principle of solidarity.

Many have tried and try still, all in vain, to banish or lessen
those woes with political changes and moralizing, but along
came socialism to provide the explanation for their lack of suc-
cess and to point the way to effective remedies.

Just as, in nature, organic forms derive their origins and ba-
sic sustenance from inorganic matter, so, in the social world
(which is nothing but the continuing development of natural
forms), political institutions and moral sentiments derive their
raison d’être from economic conditions.

If he is to survive, man needs sustenance above all else. The
manner in which he successfully finds food, the greater or
lesser roughness of the struggle that he is obliged to wage,
the greater or lesser ease of his victory, its greater or lesser
comprehensiveness, his more or less suitable sustenance, and
every other material condition of existence, dominate man’s
physiological existence and thus his entire moral and social
existence.

And just as work is the requisite means for acquiring sus-
tenance, and just as work requires materials and tools, so, if a
society is to be transformed, working conditions above all have
to be transformed along with the logistics of raw materials and
the instruments of labor.

In a society where the means of production are in the hands
of a few, those deprived of them are necessarily obliged to abide
by the conditions laid down by the few who have the power to
provide or withhold work, and are in a position to bestow or
deprive them of a livelihood.

What is the point of writing freedom, equality, and popular
sovereignty into statutes when a fetter much tougher than any
convict’s—hunger—hitches the free and sovereign people to the
chariot of the few who are blessed with the means of having
their wishes carried out, the property-owners? True freedom
is not the right but the opportunity, the strength to do what
one will—and freedom, in the absence of the wherewithal for
exercising it, is an atrocious irony.

What is the point of preaching brotherhood and love of one’s
neighbor when the proletarian has to fight for a crust of bread
and is obliged, each and every day, to compete for it with his
neighbor?

What is the point of preaching science when poverty dulls
wits, and the chimerical hope of paradise is the only thing mak-
ing this earthly hell bearable?

If all are to enjoy freedom and know happiness, if solidarity
is to stand in place of strife, the primary necessity is for private
ownership to be done away with; and that is the essential task
that the International has set itself.

Once all of nature’s bounty belongs to everybody and once
each of us has the right and the wherewithal to apply his efforts
to raw materials, then solidarity will have a chance of success
in this world, and man will be released from the three terrifying
nightmares grinding him down: economic subjection, author-
ity, and religion.

Authority, which is to say political power, will be rendered
useless and impossible since, with sheer brute force being now
or be it republican, the only function of government is to pro-
tect the privileged against the claims of the oppressed, and it is
only strong because people support it and furnish its soldiers,
mercenaries, and money; whipping up hatred of the oppressors,
whether they oppress by means of property or bayonets; inspir-
ing love towards all men and the craving for a free and happy
existence; drawing into its ranks all those who have best ab-
sorbed its propaganda and stand ready to commit themselves
to the emancipation of their brethren by braving persecution,
imprisonment, and death, wherever necessary; organizing the
laboring masses into trades associations based on the principle
of resistance and of attacking the bosses; giving priority at all
times to feeding the spirit of revolt.

But the International does not look exclusively to the labor-
ing classes. As a class, the bourgeoisie is the enemy of the pro-
letariat and rabidly attached to all the privileges and all the
injustices enshrined in the established institutions; but there
is a faction of it which, despite the poisonous influences of its
education and its privileged circumstances, has preserved its
kind heart and alert intelligence.

And the International looks to this fraction of the bour-
geoisie, which is to be found mostly among the student youth
and small proprietors, industrialists, and businessmen, who
are knocked about by competition and hurtling towards
expropriation and bankruptcy. The International says to them:
Socialism does not belong to a single class only; the largest
and surest number of its advocates can be found in the ranks
of the workers, because these suffer most from the current
arrangement, because, more than anyone else, they are in
need of emancipation and can only achieve that through the
emancipation of all, and because they are used to toil, which is
the pre-eminent factor in civilization and morality. But social-
ism is still an essentially human thing, and under its banner
there is room for all men of feeling who seek well-being and
freedom for all and who could not stomach the suffering of
organized communism; and having established the necessity for a revolution characterized by forcible expropriation of property owners by means of the masses’ directly assuming possession of all natural and man-made wealth; and through the abolition of all political authority, which is to say, of any formally acknowledged authority, we can summarise the practical action that the International brings to bear or means to bring to bear before, during, and after the insurrection.

The International today aims primarily to spread its principles, so that these become as widely known and understood by the people as possible, and so that the most intelligent and vigorous segments of the people may constitute that party, that army that will not only have to neutralize the material might that stands guard over the current institutions, but will have the task of ensuring that the revolution is authentically socialist and carried out to the advantage of all, rather than of some new classes or parties. They will have to be so attuned to the purpose in mind and the necessary means as is required to organise victory and guard against the backlash that might well ensue, due either to violence from without or disaffection within.

In quiet times, the main mission of the International includes drawing the masses’ attention to the wretched, undeserved circumstances of the workers; alerting them to the unfairness of such a state of affairs and the reasons for it; showing them that only common ownership can offer them a remedy and that as long as private property endures there can be no hope of any serious, lasting improvement, that, instead, poverty must inevitably become ever more widespread and all who, due to exceptional circumstances, may find themselves better off, are under the continual threat of tumbling into the common abyss; instilling into the people the lively impression that everything that exists belongs to all, especially to the workers and that the property-owners are thieves and oppressors who live off other people’s labors; getting it across that, be it monarchist powerless to impose itself in any lasting way, there will be no way any more for a few men to bend the masses to their will.

Religion will vanish since science has now banished metaphysical phantoms once and for all, and religion will no longer have the ignorance and woes of the masses upon which to fuel its continued existence.

Thus property lies at the heart of the social question and it need only be abolished for the way to be opened to all human progress. However, political authority stands guard over property—and in order to reach the property-owner, one has to walk over the body of the gendarme who defends him.

So political power and property need to be tackled and destroyed simultaneously. Doing away with property without abolishing government is impossible, and if the government were to be brought down without property’s being touched, it would swiftly be resuscitated under its old designation or some newer one.

And such a simultaneous abolition should be effected swiftly, by way of revolution. Staged abolition is not feasible, since property, in accordance with the principle that the stronger always grows stronger still, tends, as a result of competition or abetted by the spread of machinery, to become concentrated in the hands of an ever decreasing circle and to grow ever more oppressive; and, no matter how altered, political power, established by and for property-owners, never abdicates its essential mission, namely, to act in defense of property.

With the government overthrown and the property expropriated by means of revolution, how and by whom will the new society be organized?
Not by means of universal suffrage, for the greater number of the people, still being ignorant, still under the moral sway of the priest and property owner, would not, could not conceive of a society of free equals. And because universal suffrage, which is in theory the subjection of the minority to the majority, in practice, by the very nature of the mechanism itself, produces an outcome that, even when it has not been tampered with, does not represent the interests nor the wishes of the voters.

Not by means, either, of the dictatorship of a single or of several persons, because one or more individuals may well organize a brand new dominion, though not a society catering for the interests and enthusiasms of multi-faceted human nature; because privileged power is by its very essence a corrupter and would spew out the finest men; because, when it comes to revolution, starting by enforcing obedience to brand new rulers is not the right approach for an enslaved people; and, finally, because the better part of the people would neither seek nor countenance dictatorship of any sort.

So all that remains is the unfettered action of all the thoughtful heads among the people, the spontaneous initiative of all men of good will, the active intervention of the parties that have made the revolution. That is the Internationals’ favored approach.

Informed by these principles, let us briefly examine the main problems the International must grapple with in its reforming endeavors, and set its solutions alongside the current state of affairs.

RELIGION. — Qua belief in an immaterial being, creator and ruler of all things, religion ought to wither away along with every cult through which men’s ignorance and priests’ cunning have manifested themselves. The International looks to science to ensure such withering away once its propagation is freed of

Besides, whether the revolutionary principle is accepted or not, revolutions have always occurred, and we shall have more as long as society is rooted in slavery and wretchedness for the greater number. And before the centralization of property and the expansion of machinery can reduce the masses to a utterly brutish condition and render them incapable of the very thought of rebelling, a great social war will take place: everything portends it, and one would need to be as blind as a bourgeois not to see it. So the actual position boils down to this: either some conscious, organized party writes armed revolution into its program and targets the complete emancipation of oppressed humanity, conjuring up a civilization wherein violence is rendered forever pointless and impossible; or the revolution will be mounted by the angry masses with no clear consciousness of ends and means and directed more at persons than things. From that will assuredly come a hundred times as much bloodshed than is necessary; it will destroy the blessings of science and civilization, which the masses cannot appreciate because today, these being monopolized by the bourgeoisie, they are the instruments of their wretchedness—and, in the wake of ghastly massacres, it will throw up new and more brutal forms of oppressiveness, most likely flanked by the clerical backlash that is even now beginning to threaten.

Given the enormous amount of hatred and resentment that the bourgeoisie has managed to rack up against itself, given the condition of ignorance and abjection in which it has held the masses, only a consciously and resolutely revolutionary party can inject humanity into the revolution and make it a bringer of civilization.

**Practical Action**

Having established the goal that the International has set itself, namely, universal solidarity through freely, *anarchically*
whose moral and material might is entirely organized for their benefit.

How can we hope to defeat them without recourse to strong, radical measures?

It is pointless placing one’s hopes in universal suffrage, insofar as modern states, especially republican ones, claim to be founded upon the will of the people. Experience and logic dictate that extending the vote to a famished, ignorant people, is nothing but another weapon in the arsenal of the ruling classes, one that works wonderfully well as a guarantee against rebellion, by peddling to the slave the belief that he is the master.

In the face of this position, sentimentality is out of place. A choice must be made: we either accept the established order of poverty and ignorance for the vast majority, with its prostitution, crime, imprisonment, war, and periodical uprisings drowned in blood; or we embrace revolution that might cause great but fruitful hurts, which are a pledge of happiness to come; either we endure an order that, in a single day, claims more victims than the ghastliest of revolutions claims in its entire course; or embrace a disorder that will usher in the reign of peace for man.

Guided by love for all men, knowing that the blame lies with institutions rather than personalities, the International is nevertheless mindful that the revolution is warfare and that, in war, the overriding consideration is victory. Not driven by hatred, not with vengeance in its heart, but impelled by awareness of its purpose, the International wants inexorable revolution; not a stone must be left upon a stone of the injustices, crime, and prejudices by which the world is oppressed—and anyone or anything standing in the way of the great work of demolition must fall... or else the revolution will fall!

A revolution that falters is a revolution lost; and the only means of minimizing the bloodshed and destruction, without giving up success, is to strike hard and strike swiftly.
Sovereignty, credited these days either to anointment by God or to a majority among the people and, through them, their chosen representatives, and which, in practice, belongs always to whoever has secured themselves a privileged position, by force and property, is by nature vested in every individual and is inalienable. Like any common tyrant, the majority may have might on its side, but it certainly has no more right than any single individual.

Therefore it is only through the unanimous agreement of us all, through a harmony of interests and sentiments, and, at worst, through freely arranged compacts and by virtue of the law of nature, under which solidarity is the essential precondition for freedom, that the sovereignty of the individual can be reconciled with social peace.

GOVERNMENT. — Is the collection of persons, delegated or otherwise, who hold the sum of social forces in their hands and impose their will upon each and every one, on the pretence of making provision for public services and overall security.

In a harmonious society founded upon solidarity and the greatest possible satisfaction of everybody’s needs, in a society where the smooth running of public affairs is a condition of the smooth running of the private affairs of each of us, and where there are no lordlings to protect and no masses to be held in check, there is no reason for government to exist. Those governmental functions genuinely necessary or useful and that the government wields to the almost-exclusive advantage of the ruling classes, can be wielded directly by society for the benefit of all, since the government can only wield them if it can draw the necessary strength and capacities from within society.

Social organization should not be imposed by one or more men who hog power and wield it in the name of God or of the people, but ought to be an expression of the wishes of all (rather than of the majority), the outcome of the expansion and reconciliation of human interests and sentiments, starting from the

The privileged will never willingly surrender their privileges, even though surrendering them might be useful and necessary for them, too. The whole of history is there as proof of this: progress in the direction of equality and freedom has never been achieved without revolution; the strong have never made a concession to the weak that was not wrenched from them by the menacing coalition of the weaklings. On the night of 4 August 1789, the French nobles, seemingly voluntarily but actually deceptively, sacrificed their seigneurial rights. This was feasible only because of the precedent of the great feats of 14 July, when the people had dismantled the Bastille and because revolt was rumbling in Paris and in the provinces, and the nobles, quaking, had a sense of its terrifying energy.

No, the privileged will never yield, and the present stubbornness of governments and the bourgeoisie is there to prove it. The ferocious repression that has been their answer to every attempt from the proletariat, the reactionary fever by which the bourgeoisie is possessed now that socialism has emerged as a threat, plainly demonstrate that it is no less stupid and no less brutal than any privileged caste or class history has to show us.

The use of force, of physical force, is a necessity.

Governments have their hirelings, soldiers, cannons, prisons and vast resources with which to cow and corrupt; property-owners control the livelihoods of an entire population, have accessories in the priests who stultify the masses and school them in subjection, and are championed by governments
To sum up: the International is out to replace: God with SCIENCE; the State with the spontaneous organization of humanity upon the foundations of universal solidarity, which is to say, ANARCHY; the homeland with the UNITY OF THE HUMAN CONSORTIUM; private ownership with COMMUNISM; the Family with LOVE; Strife between men with the BATTLE AGAINST NATURE ON BEHALF OF THE HAPPINESS OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS. And in order to bring this ideal about, it reckons there is no option but the COMPLETE AND SIMULTANEOUS ABOLITION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY AND POLITICAL POWER, by means of REVOLUTION mounted against the Government and against the PROPERTIED.

The prime, essential objective, in the short term, is therefore: revolution. And since all words have been shrouded with misrepresentations and since there are those who, while purporting to be revolutionaries, have no desire ever to see the revolution made and who guile the people with empty hopes and ineffectual palliatives, we need to be clear in our explanations. The revolution that the International prepares and will make is an armed, violent revolution, what might be termed a recourse to material force for the purpose of destroying an order that is upheld by material force, and the replacement thereof by a brand new order whose very right to exist is forcibly denied. Its weapons are bands and barricades, rifles and dynamite, steel and fire, deployed for the destruction of armies, navies, fortresses, prisons, and anything that stands in the way of socialism’s triumph and compels the poor to put up with their sorry conditions.

For men of sensibility who have dedicated their entire lives to the good of humanity, it is painful to have to wade through blood before they can reach the promised land. Painful, especially when we know that man is the product of physiological heredity and of his cosmic and social environment, and that as a result, property owners as such, and the police and all who will be targets of the blows of the revolution are them-
rate preferential love for the land or the people where and into whom one was born, the claim to an entitlement in one’s homeland to more rights that those born elsewhere and which boils down to indifference, rivalry, and hatred vis à vis other peoples and thus to contention and war.

Initially, the homeland was restricted to the tribe and the city. With the establishment of modern states, with the concentration of powers, with the demolition of communal independence, the homeland has swollen to vast territorial units, fashioned more or less on a whim depending on geography, language, and governments. Thus bloated, the homeland is more artificial, but certainly no more justifiable than the communal homeland.

Those wishing to reconcile the notion of homeland with the comprehensively human outlook that has begun to prevail in science, say that the homeland is the link between the individual and humanity and is needed for the division of labor among men. Rather, patriotism is a serious impediment to brotherhood among men and flies in the face of a rational division of labor being applied across the full range of soil and climate conditions around the globe. Work in the world must be divided up according to the nature of the soil and climate, the ease of communications and outlooks of men, and such divisions do not coincide with the political and national divisions that homelands represent. The division of labor should vary in accordance with fresh discoveries, new roads, new production processes, new consumer needs, whereas the homeland remains or should remain relatively stuck between the hills and seas marking its boundaries. Division of labor renders one country mutually dependent upon another and patriotism claims that each individual country can survive by itself and for itself, since, in the event of war, it needs to be able to survive without looking to the foreigner. Division of labor requires complete reciprocation, and patriotism, of necessity, arouses rivalry, since either the division into homelands stays as a merely geographical

CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS. —Crimes are largely social in origin; most offenders are such because they are impoverished and ignorant, or because they have been mis-educated, or, generally speaking, because they cannot find an opportunity within society to deploy their resources and satisfy their needs other than by trespass against the rights of others. Furthermore, lots of actions held criminal today are so only because they offend against the privileges of those who have made or do make the laws, or because they run counter to established prejudices.

Once society is so arranged that the freedom and well-being of one is complemented by the freedom and well-being of another, once work itself turns into an outlet for the bodily need for exercise and activity, once one is loved and respected from birth and schooled in love and respect for others, there will be no more criminality deriving from society. And even those offences that sprout from more or less unexplored causes of cosmic or physiological derivation, will, as the sciences make progress and climatic conditions improve and a rational cure is administered to those showing any signs of mischievous tendencies, fade away, just as all or nearly all common sicknesses will vanish. But let us admit, however, that there will always be some who, for whatever reason, have a tendency to do evil, to trespass against the persons of others, who will to live without working, etc. In the light of science, such people cannot be held responsible because, in reality, they are merely sick, and society has no right to punish them; it does, though, have the right to defend itself from them and the duty to cure them. So it will, sometimes forcibly, ensure that those sick persons are denied the opportunity to do harm and will look to the curing of them as a matter of urgency.

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of the family, done away with; with children, the protection of whom is the sole justification for the family as such, entrusted to the care of society, there is no further reason for the present family as a union legitimized by society and made more or less indissoluble, to exist. Sexual relations should be wholly free and governed solely by love and fellow-feeling. The International calls for the abolition of all bonds that currently hamper freedom in love, be these enshrined in law or merely enforced by custom and social convention, so-called.

It will then be left to posterity to determine if exclusive and life-long sexual relations are inherent in human nature and individually and collectively useful, or rather, as many and varied as moral and intellectual relations.

Nothing can better determine what best suits the natures of man and woman than freedom itself.

INSTRUCTION AND EDUCATION. —According to the International, instruction should be delivered, under society’s responsibility, to all without distinction and so all of the wherewithal for study and pursuit of the sciences—e.g. libraries, museums, offices and experimental and research laboratories, lectures, etc.—should be made publicly accessible. Instruction should be comprehensive, which is to say, designed to harmoniously develop every faculty of mind and body; it should be both theoretical and practical, i.e. should teach knowledge and understanding as well as practicalities, and should be positive, which is to say, founded upon verified fact.

Education, of which instruction is the technical aspect, should derive not only from the school but from the entire social environment and should be designed above all to develop the sentiment of love and respect for people, to ensure the success of whichever habits and tastes best serve the general good and elevate the intellectual, moral, and material assets of the individual to the highest possible level.

The homeland not only does not bring the individual closer to humanity, it detaches him from it; it is not the spontaneous agglomeration generated by real, pertinent affections and needs, but is an aggregation spawned by conditions that no longer obtain, that is foisted upon man from his very birth; it is the past oppressing the present and the future.

The International wants to see all men amalgamated into one huge, organic whole—humanity—so it deplores and tries to render impossible strife between peoples. An Internationalist, compelled by circumstances to take part in such strife, is not guided by the interests of his native land, but by the interests of the whole of humanity and sides with this or that camp depending on the extent to which he reckons that the cause of revolution, emancipation, and human progress will be advanced or disadvantaged by its victory.

BACKWARD RACES. — The so-called civilized peoples either abandon the barbarous or savage peoples to their own devices or make their lives miserable.

In the view of the International, however, it should be incumbent upon the most advanced peoples, once these have lifted themselves out of poverty, to bring civilization to the backward races, demonstrating through their actions that they are the latter’s friends and making them taste the benefits of work, affluence, and freedom. And such a duty is also self-interest since, due to the barbarous circumstances of so many strains of humanity, a bottomless well of latent talents, which may well be different from our own and which might enrich our common inheritance, is left untapped; much of the earth’s surface remains effectively sterile, and civilization is forever threatened by a terrifying invasion that might drag it back into barbarism.
PROPERTY. — As we have already said, private ownership is to be done away with, as its abolition and that of all alleged rights deriving from it (rights of inheritance, etc.) are the prerequisite for the triumph of solidarity in human relations. Let us now say a few words about the organizational arrangements that are to take the place of the private-ownership system.

The International has long been collectivist; that is, it wanted the land, raw materials, the instruments of labor, in short, everything man uses in the pursuit of his activities and production, to be collective property, with everyone entitled to the use of them in his work, and for the entire product of labor—except for a quotient set aside for general costs—to belong to the worker, be he alone or in partnership.

Hence the formula to each according to his labors, or, which amounts to the same thing, to the worker the entire product of his labors; —let him that works eat and him that does not work not eat, except for those unable to work, in which case the incapacitated would have a right to receive from society the means to satisfy their every need.

But collectivism is open to many serious objections.

It is, in economic terms, wholly based upon the principle of the value of products being gauged by the amount of labor they require. Now that sort of definition of value cannot possibly be determined once one tries to take account not only of the time element or of some other outward attribute of labor, but also the overall mechanical and intellectual effort it demands. Furthermore, just as various patches of dirt are more productive or less productive, and the instruments of labor not all equally good, so each person would try to find the best soil or instruments by trying to reduce the worth of those worked by other people, just as he would try to talk up the value of his own products and downplay those of the others as much as he could. And so the distribution of tools and exchange of products would wind up being conducted in accordance with the

tion will be governed by consumer demand; and every advance in farming and industry would serve either to boost the amount of products for the good of all or to render work more amenable and to reduce the number of hours spent on it daily. Consumption will be free for everyone, the only restriction being, should it apply, shortages in the supply of products; those natural or man-made items not available in sufficient quantities to cater for all, would be utilized, with common consent, by the sick or others whose needs for them might be greater, or, at worst, allocated by ballot or by rotation. Exchange will be the operation whereby goods abounding in some countries are shipped to others where they are in short supply, and insofar as this is possible, the measure of well-being enjoyed around the globe will be standardized.

CHILDREN. —According to the International, children should be placed under the guardianship of all, and reared and educated by society as its shared issue so that they can be assured of the greatest possible well-being and physical, intellectual, and moral development, and made the most useful and happiest adults possible.

As long as the child is of too tender an age for him to be able to live usefully in common with others, his education should be entrusted to his mother, as long as she can be relied upon sufficiently. After that, the child should be removed, not from the affections and contact, but from the exclusive influence of his parents and educated by society in conjunction with other children.

In any event, preference must be given to whichever method experience may have shown best serves the children themselves and society as a whole.

FAMILY. —With woman released from her subjection to man, which was the original root of the family; with the religious prejudices that have misrepresented the true nature of sexual relations, now banished; with private ownership and its concomitant right of succession that currently forms the real basis
society and at present, under the private ownership system, are regulated by the *competition* and *profit* principle, which is to say, by the interest of the individual pitted against all his fellows. As a result, production is in disarray; there is a glut in one area and scarcity in another; land lies untitled; mines unworked; natural or human resources are frittered away or left unproductive, maybe because the owner has no spare capital and cannot survive the competition or because he chooses a different use for his capital; sophistication of goods; continual crises that leave the workers swinging between over-work and a murderous idleness; no regard is shown for the interests of the worker and consumer, except insofar as these profit the capitalist; and increasingly serious strife between the worker and the boss.

When it comes to consumption, there is a dearth of that which the greater part of humanity most vitally needs, even when there is a glut of products.

In exchange, there is a vast number of useless intermediaries, fraud, monopolies, speculation, etc.

At all times and first and foremost, there is squandering of effort, tremendous suffering, no regard for the collective interest and even the notion of the private interest is ill served.

Such is the monstrousness of the current economic arrangement that abundance itself becomes a cause of suffering and any improvements in production methods, any new application of machinery generates an upsurge in misery. Indeed, every new machine deprives a certain number of people work and thus of bread, and a glut in a given commodity makes the labors of some of those who get their livelihood by producing it pointless. If, say, America produces a glut of wheat and it is imported into Europe, that wheat—strange to say!—adds to the famishing of European peasants, in that it makes their labors redundant to the landowners.

In the society advocated by the International, however, everything is regulated in accordance with man’s needs. *Production* law of supply and demand, which would imply a relapse into out-and-out competition, a reversion to the bourgeois world.

But above all else, collectivism is flawed in its moral foundation. Like bourgeois-ism, it is founded upon the principle of strife, except that it tries to restore equality between strivers at the starting point. Where there is striving, there must necessarily be winners and losers, and whoever scores the first victory gains certain advantages that almost always guarantee him further successes. Collectivism is impotent when it comes to bringing about that revolution, that thoroughgoing moral transformation in man, following which the individual will not do and will not be willing to do something that might harm others, and therefore it is untenable. It is incompatible with anarchy; it would require some regulating, moderating authority, which might well then become oppressive and exploitative, and it would lead initially to corporate ownership and then, later, back to private ownership.

For these reasons the International has decided, virtually unanimously, to embrace a broader, more consistent solution, the only one that allows for the comprehensive expansion of the solidarity principle: COMMUNISM. Everything belongs to everyone, everything is exploited for the benefit of all; each of us ought to do on behalf of society all that his resources allow him to do, and each is entitled to insist that society meet all of his needs, insofar as the sum of production and social forces allow.

But if it is to be feasible, communism requires a huge moral improvement in the members of society, plus a highly developed and deep-seated sense of solidarity that the thrust of revolution may well not be enough to bring forth, especially if, in the early days, the material conditions that encourage its development (to wit, such an abundance of production that each person may have his needs met in full without detriment to others, plus a working arrangement such as ensures that this is not burdensome) may not be in place.
Such contradictions can be remedied through the immediate implementation of communism only in those areas and to the extent that circumstances allow, while collectivism is applied to the rest, but only on a transitional basis. In the early stages, amended by the enthusiasm of a people bent upon a new way of life and driven by the mighty thrust of revolution, collectivism is not going to have time to make its damaging effects felt. However, lest it then relapse into bourgeois-ism, it is going to have to make a rapid evolution in the direction of communism. And it is here that action by a consciously communist party, action by the International, will be of crucial importance.

The International is going to have to lobby for communism everywhere, highlighting the advantages delivered wherever it may have been introduced and trying to bring under common ownership as many things as it may, and, above all, to call for communism’s immediate and wholesale implementation (in addition to those areas where it already applies, such as water, ordinary streets, lighting, public cleansing, etc.) in respect of housing, education, care of the sick, the rearing of children, and in staple foodstuffs, and then extend it gradually into every sphere of production.

WORK. — Work, as it is the primary necessity of human society, is also men’s first duty. It is to be regulated in accordance with the needs that are to be satisfied and the resources available and is to be made as comfortable and as attractive as possible and shared in such a way as to introduce as much harmony as possible between social usefulness and personal inclinations and preferences—to the extent where such work may no longer be the satisfaction of the physiological need to be active and exercise the organs. All useful labor is equally noble and entitles the laborer to have his needs met. Brainwork, the greatest delight of man and the thing that elevates him so much higher than his natural surroundings, ought not to be the privilege of a caste. Everyone has brawn as well as brain, and all should labor with brain and brawn alike; and society must see to it that everyone has the opportunity to develop and exercise all their faculties.

Once manual labor is no longer like a chain, to which the masses are bound, and no longer oppressed and scorned, care will be taken to simplify its processes, not, as is presently the case, in the interests of capitalist production, but in the interests of the laborer himself. The usage of all tools can be broken down to a few basic principles, and a small number of approaches, whereby a man will easily learn to turn his hand to a variety of trades; machines and scientific processes will do away with or improve unhealthy, repugnant, and onerous trades; and so, given the vast spectrum of human outlooks and preferences, it is to be hoped that each area of production will be willingly pursued by whoever has a natural predisposition towards it.

Still, let us suppose that there will be some tasks not susceptible to efforts to introduce improvements and to which nobody will feel that they are “called.” Well, if those jobs are genuinely useful and the benefits they bring make up for the onerousness in the doing of them, and if there is no one prepared to take them on, on the basis of either predisposition or self-sacrifice, then everybody will take them on; everyone can take his turn at them, by means either of some sort of conscript labor, or however it may be decided, but those jobs will be done by us all.

Once work is properly organized and performed in the interests of all, once the spirit of solidarity has grown and the idler been exposed to public disapproval, there will be none who refuse to work, except for the odd case attributable to pathology, which will up to medical science to try to cure or mitigate.

In the period of transition leading up to the new arrangements, revolution will be afoot and we must cope as best we can.

PRODUCTION, CONSUMPTION, AND EXCHANGE. — These three terms encapsulate the whole economic life of