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Statutes of the First International

The International Workingmen's Association

12 November 1864

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Considering,

That the emancipation of the workers must be the workers' own doing; that the workers' efforts to achieve their emancipation should not be geared towards the establishment of fresh privileges, but rather to establishing the same rights and the same duties for all;

That the worker's subjugation to capital is the root of all slavery; political, moral and material;

That, on that basis, the workers' economic emancipation is the great goal to which all political activity should be subordinated;

That all of the efforts made thus far have failed for want of solidarity between the workers of the various trades within each country, and of a fraternal union between the workers of various countries;

That the workers' emancipation is not simply a local or national issue, but rather that this issue is of concern to all civilized nations, its resolution being, of necessity, dependent upon their theoretical and practical collaboration;

That the mobilization under way among the workers of the most industrialized countries in Europe, by raising new expectations, has issued a solemn warning against lapsing back into old errors and recommends that all as of yet isolated efforts should be combined;

On these grounds:

The under-signed members of the Council elected by the gathering held in St Martin's Hall, London, on 28 September 1864 declare that this International Association, as well as all its affiliated societies or individuals will acknowledge that their conduct towards all men should be founded upon Truth, Justice and Morality, without regard to colour, creed or nationality.

They hold it a duty to claim the rights of man and of the citizen not just for themselves but indeed for any who live up to their obligations. No duties without rights, no rights without duties.

Statutes

1. An association is hereby established to serve as a central clearing-house for communications and co-operation between the workers of various lands aspiring to the same end, namely: mutual assistance, progress and the complete emancipation of the labouring class.
2. The name of the association shall be "The International Working Men's Association."
3. There shall annually meet a General Working Men's Congress, consisting of delegates of the branches of the Association. It will be incumbent upon this Congress to make Europe aware of the workers' shared aspirations: to lay down the definitive regulations of the International Association; to look into the best means of ensuring the success of its efforts and to elect the General Council of the Association.

4. Each Congress appoints the time and place of meeting for the next Congress. The delegates assemble at the appointed time and place, without any special invitation. The General Council may, in case of need, change the place, but has no power to postpone the time of the General Council annually. The Congress appoints the seat and elects the members of the General Council annually. The General Council thus elected shall have power to add to the number of its members.
5. On its annual meetings, the General Congress shall receive a public account of the annual transactions of the General Council. The latter may, in case of emergency, convoke the General Congress before the regular yearly term.
6. The General Council shall consist of workingmen from the different countries represented in the International Association. It shall, from its own members, elect the officers necessary for the transaction of business, such as a treasurer, a general secretary, corresponding secretaries for the different countries, etc.
7. The General Council is to establish relations with the various workers' associations so that workers in each country may be continually informed regarding the movements of their class in other countries; that an investigation may be mounted simultaneously and in the same spirit into social conditions; that the issues raised by one society which may be of general interest can be examined by all; and that whenever a practical suggestion or international difficulty might require action by the Association, the latter may act in a uniform fashion. Whenever it may deem it necessary, the General Council will take the initiative in drafting suggestions to be put to local or national societies.

8. Since the success of the workers' movement in each country can only be ensured through the strength that springs from union and association; and, on the other hand, the usefulness of the General Council is dependent upon its relations with workers' societies both national and local, members of the International Association will have to make every effort, each of them in his home country, to marshal the various existing workers' associations into one national association.
9. Every section has the right to appoint its own secretary corresponding directly with the General Council.
10. Everybody who acknowledges and defends the principles of the International Working Men's Association is eligible to become a member. Every branch is responsible for the integrity of the members it admits.
11. Each member of the International Association, should he move from one country to another, shall receive fraternal support from Association members.
12. Although united by fraternal ties of solidarity and cooperation, the workers' societies will nevertheless continue to exist in their own particular right.
13. The present Rules may be revised by each Congress, provided that two-thirds of the delegates present are in favor of such revision.
14. Everything not provided for in the present Rules will be supplied by special Regulations, subject to the revision of every Congress.