

Program and Organization of the International Working Men's Association

La Question Sociale

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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asked his authorization to reprint the pamphlet, Malatesta accepted, on condition that it would be published as a "historical document," with a new preface he would write.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 Internationalists¹

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 exposition 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)²

Considering:

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

¹ This preface is preceded by an ironic disclaimer addressed to the board of censors, which we have omitted.

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.

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;

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 protection, 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.³

It was a vague, incomplete program that identified rather than resolved problems, that did not fix the Association's position 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 anticipated.

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

³ The phrase about the International's aim is taken from the first of the International's provisional rules.

the politico-social constitutions 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 orbit 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 persecutors.

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 or proven themselves patently bourgeois and reactionary, while the International has increasingly been enriching its program with all of the findings of social science and has hoisted its redemptive colors ever higher. It has taken the lead of Revolution and become a foretaste of the new civilization that must sprout from the ruins of this old bourgeois world.

What is the secret behind the International's success? What lies behind the vast powers of expansion and assimilation that, in a few years, have turned the International into the terror of the privileged and the hope of proletarians?

The International was born spontaneously from the womb of the people, and even as it answered the most heartfelt needs and the most ancient instincts of the oppressed masses, it was, from the outset, founded upon exclusively humane principles, upon a realistic philosophy that probes the true nature of human society and espouses ideals consonant with nature's laws of existence and growth. It carried within, in germ, the whole of the philosophical and social revolution encapsulated in its program today.

Acknowledging that the *worker's economic dependency upon the owner of raw materials and of the instruments of labor is the prime cause of all servitude*, the International, right from inception, took as the foundation of its program sociology's most important truth, the very foundation of socialism, which is that the economic question overshadows every politico-social issue, and that the economic emancipation of workers is the only way that justice and the common good can triumph.

Affirming that the emancipation of the workers should not tend to establish fresh privileges but rather to abolish all class rule and establish equal rights and duties for all, the International recognized that the real and complete emancipation of the working class is not achievable unless the whole of humanity is set free, and so it mirrored the feelings of solidarity that had developed in men's hearts down through the ages, despite a thousand obstacles. And by virtue of its universalism, as well 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, 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 burden. This new, wiser, more humane character in man's struggle 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 between 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 instruments 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 offspring or his friends and he helped divide humankind into two castes: one caste of haves, born with an entitlement to live without 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 circumstances, who manages to ascend to a more humane life and, sometimes, to property. Authority began with man's brutal oppression of woman, child and weaker fellow man, and culminated in the establishment of governments, whereby, through regulation, social privileges and social injustices—first and foremost, property rights—are enshrined and championed.

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 impoverishment. Wedded to the sentiments of hatred and the racial, national, religious, commercial, familial rivalries, spawned by the antagonistic 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 deploring.

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 success and to point the way to effective remedies.

Just as, in nature, organic forms derive their origins and basic 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 sustenance, 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 making 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, authority, and religion.

Authority, which is to say political power, will be rendered useless and impossible since, with sheer brute force being now 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 obstructions in the form of the poverty of the masses and the interests of governments. It will observe the most utter respect for freedom of conscience, but will do everything it can to ensure that the poison of religion is not injected into the minds of children; it will bring about the destruction of anything that might uphold the habit of worship in the people; it will wage a war to the death on the Church and priest who may attempt, through their guile, to hold the people under the yoke of religion; and above all, it will highlight the contradiction between the people's true interests and those of the peddlers of religion.

MORALITY. — Human morality and the International's morality have nothing to do with the religious and bourgeois morality that teaches rulership to some and subjection to others, and a narrow, anti-social selfishness to one and all. True morality is the science of what is good for humanity, what most benefits each and every one of us; and it advances and changes as social science progresses.

If, as we shall attempt to show, the revolution is the *sine qua non* of humanity's well-being, the first principle today, the premier moral duty is to cooperate whole-heartedly with the advent of the social revolution.

In the wake of the revolution, it shall be a moral duty incumbent upon all to display love and respect for one's fellow men, to protect the weak and the children, to work, to consider the interests of society in every individual action—in short, everything that science and experience has or may demonstrate useful to men.

SOCIETY AND SOVEREIGNTY. — Society, which has thus far been the forcible submission of men to a common regimen, organized in service of the interests of the ruling classes, ought to be the unsolicited outcome of the needs and gratifications that we all derive from being associated with one another, and should have, as its goal, greater well-being and increased freedom for all human beings.

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 equal entitlement of all to raw materials and the instruments of labor. No more authority, therefore, but rather spontaneous organizing from the bottom up, altering with every shift in interests and whim happening within the society; no more delegation of powers, but rather delegation of functions; no more government, but, rather, Anarchy.

WOMAN. — The subservience of woman to man ranks among the greatest injustices we have inherited from past ages; it is offensive to the spirit of fraternity and human fellowship and contrary to the true interests of man himself, since he is not going to be able to achieve a higher civilization nor enjoy any assurance of progress and social peace as long as one half of the human race is to be deemed inferior—and enslaved—and, at that, the very half to which it falls, on physiological grounds, to be the primary educator of upcoming generations.

For women, the International demands the very same freedom and guarantees of unhindered development as it does for men—in short, the completest social equality, and when it talks of the rights of *man*, that word is meant to apply to all *human beings*, regardless of sex.

If differences between the faculties of man and woman persist even after equality of circumstance has been achieved, they will give rise to differing functions and never to differing rights.

HOMELAND AND HUMANITY. — The dividing up of humanity into such a wide variety of *homelands* is also a by-product of the state of strife in which the human race has been living and still does. The International, which wants all men duty bound to think of themselves as brothers and to be held together by the close bonds of moral and material solidarity and to enjoy the world in common as their shared inheritance, yearns to amalgamate all homelands into one shared homeland, the world; and to banish from men's hearts the sentiment of patriotism, this being the exclusive or at any 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 than 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 term with no added politico-social implications, or men will always be striving to secure greater benefits for the countries where they enjoy greater rights or towards which they feel greater affection.

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 deplors 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 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 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 untilled; 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* 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 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.

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.

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 PROPRIETED.

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 themselves irresponsible victims of the society that they found as a splendid finished product. And painful because those soldiers engaged during the opening skirmish are virtually all proletarians forcibly wrenched away from their labors and their loved ones and, among them, there are many comrades of ours who shudder at having to don their despised uniforms. It is painful, but it is necessary.

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 social-

ism 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 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*.

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 con-

sciously 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* 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 or be it republican, the only function of government is to protect 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; inspiring love towards all men and the craving for a free and happy existence; drawing into its ranks all those who have best absorbed 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 laboring classes. As a class, the bourgeoisie is the enemy of the proletariat 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 bourgeoisie, 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 socialism 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 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 religion they once followed, all are brothers within the International, 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 opportunity that presents itself, must never lose sight of the ultimate objective and must gauge its every action on that basis.

All means are good and no way should remain untried, 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 advance those means useful in the preparation of the insurrection and apt to ensure its anti-authoritarian and anti-property tenor.

EVERYTHING THAT HASTENS AND EASES THE SOCIALIST INSURRECTION IS FINE; EVERYTHING THAT POSTPONES IT OR MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT OR TINKERS WITH ITS ANARCHIST-SOCIALIST CHARACTER IS BAD; this is the criterion by which the International is guided in its actions.

The agitations that help highlight the economic basis to the social question, that create a gulf between proletarians and the propertied, between bosses and workers, that affirm the righteousness and necessity of expropriation and violent revolution, enjoy the International's sympathy and support. Those agitations, however, that skirt the question and turn an essentially economic issue into a political one, as well as those that would have us believe that the economic ques-

tion can be resolved without touching political institutions; all agitations that encourage hope in improvement and emancipation through compacts and peaceful reforms, face the open and determined hostility of the International.

Strikes, resistance societies, labor organizations; books, newspapers, talks, study circles; blows dealt to the authorities and the bosses—all of these the International approves and endorses.

Demands for and hopes vested in peaceful reforms, attempts at reconciling proletarians and bourgeois, election contests, parliamentary activity—these are things that the International looks upon as harmful, because they lull the people by empty illusions, are a distraction to the activities of the revolutionary party and serve merely to offer a comfortable haven to faint-hearts and traitors.

All of the bourgeois parties are the same to the International, and the latter confronts them all.

And so, by struggling against all the economic, political, religious, judicial, and pseudo-scientifically moral institutions of 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 guard over the common foe, and then only if there is a serious likelihood of not being subsequently overwhelmed by erstwhile allies. But once victory has been secured and the political authorities and their soldiery have been shoved aside, the parties who we have been fighting alongside, whether they are republicans or clericals, will be as much our enemies—indeed more so since they will represent a current threat—as the late government. And the International will wage war on them to ensure that they do not oppose expropriation and do not set themselves up as a new government, whether they should seek to do so openly or resort to the elections lie.

Even while the fighting is happening on the barricades, the International will have been encouraging the people to take over the masters' houses and throw open the food and manufactured goods depots to the public, with an eye to getting the masses to engage with the revolution right from the start, as well as making its socialist character plain beyond question. But once the all-consuming worries of battle are behind them—either because they have gained the victory or through their shifting of the theater of the struggle elsewhere—the chief concern of Internationalists, as well as of socialists in the broader sense, will have to be giving encouragement to the masses to assume direct, immediate possession—without the need for votes, decrees, or debate—of lands, housing, machinery; and every other instrument of labor; the mines, shipping, the railways, and every means of transportation; foodstuffs and manufactured goods—in short, of anything there is that might prove useful to man.

The communes, which is to say, all who reside in the same housing cluster, plus the crafts and trades bodies, that is, the gamut of those engaged in the same work, will be the two hubs around which the revolution will revolve, the two factors that will carry out the expropriation and from which the re-organization of production, consumption, and exchange will radiate. They will be the first representatives, the first tangible 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 destroyed, and the same goes for the currency and its replacements.

In the countryside, hedges, walls, and all boundary markers will be done away with, as long as they are of no use and only serve to indicate, delimit, and protect owners' rights.

The machinery and tools of each trade will, insofar as this is feasible, be removed from their present sites and gathered into large workshops, the purpose being to erase all sign or indication of private ownership and to make a start, from day one, on organizing work along collective lines.

All this through the unfettered and spontaneous actions of all men of goodwill, and of all the groups and all the committees that take on a task and carry it out through their own efforts and those of whomsoever they may attract to their side.

Similarly, through the good offices of freely self-organizing committees and groups, operating without a mandate or any official authorization, steps will be taken to ensure that all the corporations step up production, especially of basic necessities; exchange, roads, training, a postal service, care of the sick and of dependents will be organized; and work will begin on the compilation of statistics that will provide the working basis for organization of the society of the future, since, reckoning on the basis of consumer requirements, accumulated assets, and production resources, the swift satisfaction of everyone's needs can be ensured without wastefulness, imbalance, or crisis.

To be sure, many mistakes will be made and progress will often be tentative. There may well be instances of abuse, bullying, and unfairness, but since there is no established authority to endorse the mistakes and defend the unfairness and deploy society's powers against innovations and progress, the mistakes will be corrected and the unfairness stamped out thanks to the parties that will have been the makers of the revolution and will be loath to see its outcome misdirected, and thanks to the masses that, having tasted its benefits from day one, will think 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 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* 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 federation 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 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 correspondence, 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.

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La Questione Sociale
Program and Organization of the International Working Men's Association
1884

The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader, edited by Davide Turcato, translated by Paul Sharkey.

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