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Manifesto of the Neapolitan Workers' Federation

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Neapolitan Workers' Federation

1871

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The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader
Originally published as an undated flyer around the end of 1871.
The present translation is from the reprint in Max Nettlau,
Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia: dal 1864 al 1872 (Geneva, 1928).

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The Neapolitan Workers' Federation recognizes and proclaims the following principles:

1. All beings human in nature are equal and, since they all share the same rights and duties, there are *no rights without duties, no duties without rights*.¹
2. Since labor is a human necessity, there is a duty upon all to labor and everyone is entitled to enjoyment of the entire product of his labor.

¹ This was part of the preamble to the provisional rules of the International and was one of two sentences that Marx had inserted there as a concession to the moral language of members that followed the Italian republican Giuseppe Mazzini.

3. For that very reason, the instruments of labor and raw materials belong to the whole of humanity and everyone is entitled to make use of them in pursuit of his own activities.²
4. Every individual born is entitled to be reared, fed, and educated technically, comprehensively and equally by the collective to which he has ties, and that collective is under a duty to guarantee and uphold his freedom of choice in whatever area of expertise.
5. Union, association and federation between individuals and collectives should be voluntary and achieved from the bottom up.
6. To us, the implementation of this represents the authentic Emancipation of the Proletariat, that being the great—the only goal—towards which all of our efforts should be directed; these, ipso facto, being directed, not at the establishment of fresh privileges, but at the establishment of a universal equality of rights and duties.
7. Since the cause of labor recognizes no borders, has no fatherland other than the world, and cannot succeed without the unanimous agreement of all the world's workers, the *Neapolitan Workers' Federation*, founded upon the precepts of freedom and autonomy, stands with all those nuclei and Workers' Societies across the world that set themselves the same purpose as that for which it was established.³

² This point and the previous one, together, formulate collectivism, the belief in the common ownership of the means of production and the individual enjoyment of the products of one's labor.

³ As Max Nettlau notes, this point expresses membership in the International in a necessarily vague form because the International had been banned by the authorities in Naples. The points from the second to the fifth reflect Bakunin's ideas, while the others summarize items from the preamble to the provisional rules of the International.

The Federal Secretary: *Errico Malatesta*, student.

[The signatures of nine Federation members, including Carlo Cafiero, follow.]