To All Peasants and Workers of the Ukraine

Nestor Makhno

7 January 1920

To be transmitted by telegraph, telephone, or post to all villages, townships, districts, and provinces of the Ukraine. To be read in village assemblies, factories, and workshops.

Brother toilers! The Revolutionary, Insurgent Army of the Ukraine (Makhnovists) was called into being as a protest against the oppression of workers and peasants by the bourgeois-landlord authorities on one side and the Bolshevik-Communist dictatorship on the other. Setting itself the goal to fight for the complete liberation of the toilers of the Ukraine from the yoke of this or that power and to create a true soviet socialist order, the Insurgent Army of Makhnovists has fought persistently on several fronts to achieve these objectives and at the present time to finish the struggle against Denikin’s army, liberating district after district from every coercive power and every coercive organisation.

Many peasants and workers have raised the question: What will there be now? What is to be done? How shall we respond to the decrees of the evicted authorities? etc. To all such questions the final answer will be given by the All-Ukrainian Workers’
and Peasants' Congress, which must meet at once, as soon as the
workers and peasants are able to attend it. This congress
will discuss and decide all urgent questions concerning worker
and peasant life.

In view of the fact that such a congress will soon be con-
vailed, the Insurgent Army of Makhnovists deems it necessary
to issue the following declaration concerning the questions of
worker and peasant life:

1. All decrees of the Denikin (Voluntary) Army are hereby
abolished. Those decrees of the Communist authorities which
conflict with the interests of the peasants and workers are like-
wise abolished.

Note: In this connection, which of the decrees of the Com-
munist authorities are harmful to the toilers must be decided
by the toilers themselves in their village assemblies and in the
factories and shops.

2. The land of the gentry, the church and other enemies of
the toilers with all its livestock and equipment must be trans-
ferred to the peasants, who will live on it only by their own
labour. The transfer will take place in organised manner, ac-
cording to the decisions of peasant assemblies, which must take
into account not only their own local interests but also com-
mon interests of the whole oppressed labouring peasantry.

3. The factories, workshops, mines, and other means of pro-
duction are to become the possession of the working class as a
whole, which through its trade unions will take all enterprises
in its own hands, resume production, and strive to link together
the industry of the whole country in a single united organisa-
tion.

4. It is proposed that all organisations of workers and peas-
ants begin to create free workers’ and peasants’ soviets. These
soviet must consist only of toilers engaged in some form of
labour that is necessary for the national economy. Representa-
tives of political organisations have no place in workers’ and
peasants’ soviets, for their participation will transform the lat-
ter into soviets of party deputies, which can only bring about
the demise of the soviet order.

5. The existence of Chekas, party committees or similar coer-
cive, authoritarian, and disciplinarian institutions is impermis-
sible among peasants and workers.

6. Freedom of speech, press, assembly, trade unions and the
like is an inalienable right of every worker, and any limitation
of this right represents a counter-revolutionary act.

7. State militias, police and armies are hereby abolished. In
their place people will organise their own self-defence units.
Self-defence must be organised only by workers and peasants.

8. The workers’ and peasants’ soviets, the self-defence units
of the workers and peasants, and the individual peasant and
worker must not allow any counter-revolutionary manifesta-
tions by the bourgeoisie or military officers. Nor must they al-
low the emergence of banditry. Anyone convicted of counter-
revolutionary acts or of banditry will be shot on the spot.

9. Soviet and Ukrainian money must be accepted along with
all other kinds of money. Violators of this rule will be subject
to revolutionary punishment.

10. The exchange of goods and products, until taken over by
workers’ and peasants’ organisations, will remain free. But at
the same time it is proposed that the exchange of products take
place for the most part between toilers.

11. All individuals who attempt to hinder the distribution of
this declaration will be regarded as counter-revolutionaries.

MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND COM-
MAND STAFF OF THE REVOLUTIONARY INSURGENT
ARMY OF THE UKRAINE (MAKHNOVISTS)
7 January 1920