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Comrades in the Red Army, on the front line and in the home guard!

Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine

9 March 1920

The people of Ukraine, oppressed by Your commanders and commissars, and sometimes even directly by You under the leadership of these Commanders and Commissars, protest against such coercion: they waited for You as the liberators of the working masses from the yoke of the Denikinist gang of hangmen; but after Your arrival in Ukraine the groans, weeping and wails of the suffering people grew still louder. Executions everywhere, the burning of peasants' huts and even villages, everywhere pillage and violence.

The people have been exhausted and have no more strength to endure such arbitrariness; giving advance notice, they are asking You: will you stop in the face of these nightmares and realize whom, under the leadership of Your commanders and commissars, You are shooting? Who are you packing into the prisons and cellars? Is it not Your brothers, fathers and children? Of course it is. You do this oblivious to how the officers and generals of the old regime, profiting by their freedom

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and Your blindness, recline in soft easy chairs and order You to mock the poor people. And You, comrades, without a moment's hesitation, blindly carry out these orders. Is it possible you do not notice that they are setting you on the poor people, calling them counter-revolutionary because they protest the dictatorship of Trotsky's masters and his gang of communist accomplices who are smothering the revolution in the name of party power? Is it possible you do not see that the Ukrainian peasant cannot tolerate his yoke and, in spite of executions, is standing up for himself, destroying every obstacle and hurrying to lead the project of liberation to a conclusion? And he believes that among You, who are in the Red Army, the majority are his brothers, peasants the same as he, who are oppressed the same as he, and who, in the final reckoning, will take up his protest and join with him against the common enemy: the Denikinist gangs of the right as well as the commissarocracy of the left which clothes itself in the name of the people.

Comrades, see for yourselves, they are creating Chekas and punitive detachments in Belorussia and particularly in Ukraine. And who is helping them? You, Red Army men, and only You. Is it possible that your hearts do not bleed upon hearing the groans and cries of Your brothers, fathers, mothers and children? Is it possible that those illusory political freedoms have deceived you to such an extent that you are too weak to overcome the authority of the commissars and join with the peasants and workers in freeing themselves and all the people from oppression and violence? Is it possible You do not notice in Your ranks those who, owing to Your blood and lives, have risen over You, have taken power for themselves and thus really disgracefully tyrannize the people? Is it possible your hearts are not wrung when, under the command of these tyrants, You go to the villages and hamlets to punish the working people who are protesting the domination of your leaders? We believe that You will come to your senses and catch up, that Your shame is in silence. You will raise a protest

against the violence and oppression of the poor people. You will not permit Your commissars and commanders to burn the villages and hamlets and to shoot the peasants who rose for their rights. Let the peasants arrange their lives themselves, as they wish, and You continue to crush the Denikinist gangs, and along with them the commissar-rulers. Do not leave the front; continue the battle against those who wear the gold shoulder straps; do away with your commissars on the spot.

The revolutionary peasants and workers are wiping out the loafers in their ranks in the rear, those who are burdening and enslaving them. The revolutionary peasants and workers will not forget You and the day will come when they will all, as one, close ranks with You, and woe to all parasites and their helpers, all those who weigh upon them from without as well as those who arbitrarily rule over them in the rear.

Remember comrades, the people have recognized the deceit of the government being maintained by You. The people will rise against it and no army will withstand the masses who have consciously risen, who are fighting for total liberation. Join with them; they invite you as their own brothers. Remember that among those who have risen are Your brother-peasants and workers and upon meeting them do not perpetrate a slaughter. Let the commissars and commanders face the rebels themselves.

Let them stain themselves with the blood of the peasants and workers; all the guilt is on them and they will pay dearly for it.

Down with the gold-shoulder-strap gang! Down with their godfathers the commissarocrats! Down with man-made laws and the power of man over man!

Long live the unification of all the working people of the Red Army and the rebellious peasants and workers! Death to all who wear the gold shoulder straps! Death to all commissars and hangmen!

Long live the Social Revolution!

Long live the genuine, free soviet system!

Staff of the Insurgent Army of Ukraine (Makhnovist)

9 May 1920