

The International
Working Men's Association
I. W. M. A.

- Its Policy
- its aim
- its principles

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I

Origin of the I. W. M. A.

To be able to say what is the International Working Men's Association, founded in Berlin in 1922, it would be necessary to give, at first, a brief outline of what is commonly known, in the history of the international labor movement, as the *First International*.

This body — with its full name "The International Working Men's Association", — came to life as the outcome of a visit paid by French workmen to their British brethren, on the occasion of the International Exhibition held in London, in 1862, and of a meeting held, again in London, in 1864. It was, thus, the English workers that were the first to launch the idea of a Labor International.

This International Association held its regular conventions, and soon after its inception, fell under the control of Karl Marx and his followers. That is to say, that its tendencies were authoritarian and centralistic. Nevertheless, the ideas of Bakunin were always strong, especially within the latin sections of the International (Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain), and not until 1872 did the federalist principles of organization, which were those of Bakunin and his friends, take the upper hand in the councils of the International.

The machinery of State and Capital was put in motion in all the countries to counteract the influence of that body. Affiliation to it became illegal. Police persecution drove many of its members to imprisonment. Its press was being throttled at every step. It gave its last gasp in 1875.

Over fifty years passed since; yet, the spirit of that first International is alive up to this day among revolutionary workers, all the world over.

And the more labor gets invaded by State socialism and class coöperation, the more the sincere and conscious elements of the working class felt, and continue to feel, the need of an international link which would fight on all the fronts — locally, nationally, and internationally — against the encroachments of the State on the liberties of the people.

Already in 1913 — in London once again, — a first attempt was made to unite the various trade unions whose spirit of freedom and independence craved for outward expression in its willingness to struggle against State and Capitalism.

The world war broke mercilessly all such attempts.

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And then came, in 1917, the Russian Revolution.

With the bursting upon the world of this event of first magnitude, which not only hastened the end of the international slaughter, but changed the entire trend of world politics and economics, a great wave of enthusiasm and hope swept the labor world at large.

A regrouping of labor forces thus became inevitable. There was, at first, the sharp line of demarcation between those who still thought that class coöperation was the better road to solve the social inequalities, and those who, refuting them as misleading and anti-revolutionary, turned towards the slogans of the Russian Revolution — Free Soviets, decentralization of

State, the Land to the peasants, and the Factories to the workers — as the only road apt to lead to the integral emancipation of the working class.

Nevertheless, it soon became clear that the Russian Revolution, under the lead of orthodox Marxists — i. e. State socialists and centralists, — was fatally deviating from its straight course. The so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat", which was nothing else but the dictatorship of a political party, possessing the entire machinery of the State, *over* the proletariat, withheld from the working class of Russia any right of self-organization and proclaimed the intangibility and sacrosanctity of the Marxian State.

This meant, of course, the entire abolition of individual as well as collective freedom, autocratic Monarchy being superseded by autocratic government by Party Caucus.

The development of the Russian Revolution on these lines brought about, unavoidably, another sharp line of demarcation between, on the one hand, the revolutionary State socialist labor movement, as represented by the Russian trade unions wholly controlled by the Political Party (the Bolsheviks), in its turn controlling, or rather actually *being*, the State, and, on the other hand, the revolutionary *syndicalist* labor movement which, after the close of the war, developed in all European countries and, for a very short space of time, laid great hopes upon the possible effect of the Russian Revolution on international labor developments.

Thus, the working class was faced with a three-cornered tug-o'-war: *class coöperation*, *class subjugation* to a political party which controls the political and economic life of the country, and *class independence* from any political party, the working class fighting out its own salvation and organizing, through its own bodies, the political and economic system, free from any yoke — whether social, political, financial or religious.

The system of all-round oppression, elaborated and systematically carried out by the Bolshevik Party in Russia, has hastened the urgent necessity of an international linking-up of all truly revolutionary trade and industrial organizations of the working class in all countries.

This linking up was not needed for the selfish purpose of possessing yet another International. It was needed for the working out of a practical program for a world wide struggle against Capitalism, against the State which lends its entire machinery of police and army for the defence of Capitalism, and on behalf of the fundamental principles of reconstruction of Society on the antiauthoritarian basis of federalism, freedom at all stages, and solidarity.

II

Fundamental principles of the I. W. M. A.

It is with this purpose that the present International Working Men's Association has been founded in 1922, inspired by those same principles and those same ideals that underlined the activities of its forerunner, the First International, viz.: "*that the emancipation of the working classes must be the work of the workers themselves*".

The guiding principles of the I.W.M.A. are best set out in the ten definitions of Revolutionary Syndicalism adopted at its 1-st and 2-nd Conventions, and forming part of its general Declaration of Principles (for text, see *Appendix*).

These principles have been adopted unanimously by all the countries affiliated to the I.W.M.A. This, in itself, is of great portent. Each country has its own traditions, its own methods of work, its own outlook upon

events. Yet, the fundamental guiding lines remain the same for all. And if some revolutionary labor movements are not yet represented in the councils of the I.W.M.A., this is due to the fact that either certain misunderstandings have not, as yet, been entirely dissipated, or that wanton misrepresentation of the aims, policy and principles of the I.W.M.A. have not permitted the rank and file to obtain a plain straightforward and frank statement of the case.

An outstanding example of undefined relations with the I.W.M.A. are the *Industrial Workers of the World* of America

The I.W.M.A. had repeatedly appealed to the I.W.W. to clear up the matter as to its stand on international revolutionary labor problems and on international affiliation.

The whole case, on the side of the I.W.W., rested finally upon two cardinal points: First, that the I.W.W. were, in themselves, an international organization — its very name suggesting it — and that there was, therefore, no necessity of affiliating to another international body. Secondly, that the system of organization of the I.W.W. — in *industrial* unions — was opposed to the system of organization of the Syndicalists — in *trade* and *craft* unions.

Let us examine these two arguments.

Can the I.W.W. be considered an international body?

It is true, the I.W.W. is composed of workers of various nationalities; it is true that its language sections have their own papers, published in their respective languages. But we must remember that the fact of a considerable immigration to U.S.A. and the inevitable mixing of nations and races had induced many other labor bodies in America to proclaim themselves "International", using that word not in the sense of a union of various national, or geographical, units, but in that of a union of *individuals* happening to belong to various nations.

Thus, it came about that the *Industrial Workers of the World* do not actually unite the workers of the world, but just those of various nations of the world working within the political and geographical boundaries of the United States of America.

Had it been otherwise, the Canadian I.W.W., or the I.W.W. of Chile, could have had as much right to consider themselves an international body as those of the United States.

The I.W.W. is, therefore, a body composed of members belonging to various nationalities, but is limited, in its activities, by the frontiers of the United States. It is, therefore, a *national* body and not an *international* organization.

Whereas the I.W.M.A. is a body which, happening to have its executive seat in this or that country, includes the national organizations of various countries. As a matter of fact, the I.W.W. of Chile was an affiliated body of the I.W.M.A., from the very first day of the latter's foundation.

Now, as to the second argument, attempting to set up a contradiction between Syndicalism and Industrialism.

This argument is based on an utter misknowledge of the European labor movement.

It is true that, formerly, labor unions were built on the "trade" or "professional" index, *whether in America or elsewhere*.

The reorganization of Capital on an industrial basis having started, on a large scale, in America, it stands to reason that the working class of that country was first to feel the crying discrepancy between the forms of organization of Capitalism and those of Labor. The fight between these

two forces was unequal; it compelled the latter to reorganize its forces industrially, too.

The same process can be traced in Europe, at a slower rate, perhaps, just as the industrialization of Capitalism is also being carried out at a slower pace.

At present, almost all the unions affiliated to the I.W.M.A. are organized on an industrial basis.

All the Conventions of the International insist upon the necessity of reorganizing the revolutionary labor movement on that basis. One of the countries that had remained outside this scheme, and which had stuck to the "trade" union principle, was Spain. Yet, even there, at the Extraordinary Congress of the National Confederation of Labor, held in Madrid in June 1931, i. e. barely two months after the overthrow of the Monarchy, the reorganization of the revolutionary unions of Spain on the principle of Industrial Federations was carried by an overwhelming majority of the 600,000 workers represented at that Convention.

It is clear, therefore, not only from the resolutions adopted at the various Conventions of the I.W.M.A., but especially from the actual scheme of organization of its various affiliated bodies, that industrial unionism is one of the main planks of international revolutionary syndicalism.

Besides, it must be remembered that industrial unionism is not, in itself, a revolutionary plank. Thus, the Russian labor organizations which have adopted industrial unionism, are far from being revolutionary unions. Their complete subservience to a political party and to the Bolshevik State render them inevitably unfit to work out their own salvation. The same may be said about various other labor organizations in Europe.

III

Aims and Policy of the I. W. M. A.

What does the I.W.M.A. aim at, and what is its attitude towards the other existing international labor bodies?

Here again, we can do no better than refer to the "Aims and Objects of the I.W.M.A." that make up another chapter of the "Declaration of Principles" (see *Appendix*). It will be seen, upon perusal of that document, that the International is at any time ready and willing to participate in, or to initiate of its own accord, any wide international activity on behalf of the working class.

But such activity is, in practice, outside the scope of the other existing International bodies, such as the International Labor Federation (known as the Amsterdam International), or the Red Trade Union International of Moscow.

Both these bodies — whether internationally or nationally — have hung their fates unto the peg of political parties: in the first case, of the Socialist International and its branches in each country; in the second case, of the Communist International and Soviet Government. Under such conditions — i. e. when the working class and its labor organizations become but a tool and an electioneering platform, — no true revolutionary action by the working class itself, independently of political parties, will ever be supported by any of these Internationals.

The I.W.M.A. remains, therefore, alone in the field as a labor body striving, with its own means and methods, to work out its constructive program of social emancipation.

* * *

It is becoming more and more a truism that the Social Revolution will be a world upheaval, and not a local conflagration. International Capitalism cannot lead but to International Revolution, and although this will not happen simultaneously in all countries, a *state of social siege*, as it were, will be proclaimed by labor all the world over on the very first breakdown of Capitalism and State in any one of the foremost Capitalist countries.

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance for all revolutionary bodies to strain all their energies in favor of a joint international struggle on a common basis and on a common program of action.

The common basis must include the abolition of the State as central dictating body; the organization of the land and factories; of exchange between urban and rural units, of the system of production and distribution, — on federalist principles and methods, from below upwards, by the free and self-organized initiative of the smallest economic units, as against the principle of centralized organization from above downwards, by the compulsory dictates of central over local bodies.

The common program of action must include: The organization of a powerful net of Industrial Federations linked up by a national Federation or Confederation of Labor. The setting up, in each factory, workshop, or any agricultural or industrial unit, of control committees for the supervision of the employers' activities, of his book-keeping, of the methods of purchase and distribution of raw material and manufactured goods, of the taking on or the dismissing of hands, of the fixing of wages and hours of work, and of all other questions connected with the conditions of labor and of production. The setting up of national economic councils, united in an International Economic Council, which would prepare, thanks to the data supplied by the local control committees, a general plan of social reconstruction, nationally to begin with, and then, internationally. The practical, well thought-out preparedness for any emergency in any country by the call, at the critical and convenient moment, of a general insurrectional strike which would not so much paralyse Capitalism and State, as it would give the labor forces in the country the signal for the taking over of the entire industrial and economic life of the country, and rebuilding it on the new principles of free, federative socialism, unhampered by State, army, police, or exploiters and oppressors of any kind. The struggle, day in, day out, in an organized, forethought manner — and not in a desultory way — for the daily improvements of the present economic conditions of the working class. In the front rank of these demands should be the six hours' labor day as a maximum — with shorter hours in specific trades, — without any diminution of the standard living wage, and an automatic scale of increase of wages with every technical improvement of machinery which speeds up production and diminishes its cost.

Such are the main planks of the International Working Men's Association and of its national affiliated bodies.

The I.W.M.A. does not, of course, limit its activities solely to problems bearing an industrial character. It considers that the great proletarian family includes peasants and agricultural laborers on the same footing as town workers — whether manual or brain workers, — and brings its solution of the land problem jointly with that of the industrial problem.

The I.W.M.A. has its word to say on the social and cultural well-being of the proletariat, as well as on the danger wrought all the world over by Nationalism and Militarism. On all these problems the I.W.M.A. Conventions have worked out directing principles. (For some of the more important resolutions of the I.W.M.A., see Appendix.)

The International Working Men's Association is, at present, the one great revolutionary body, with ramifications in almost all the countries of the world, holding high the fighting banner of *organization of the Social Revolution* on the fundamental principle laid down by the First International, and which should be constantly kept before the eyes of organized labor:

THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKING CLASSES MUST BE THE WORK OF THE WORKERS THEMSELVES.

Appendix

I

Principles of Revolutionary Syndicalism

1. Revolutionary Syndicalism, basing itself on the class-war, aims at the union of all manual and intellectual workers in economic fighting organizations struggling for their emancipation from the yoke of wage slavery and from the oppression of the State. Its goal consists in the re-organization of social life on the basis of Free Communism, by means of the revolutionary action of the working class itself. It considers that the economic organizations of the proletariat are alone capable of realising this aim, and, in consequence, its appeal is addressed to workers in their capacity of producers and creators of social riches, in opposition to the modern political labor parties which can never be considered at all from the point of view of economic re-organization.

2. Revolutionary Syndicalism is the confirmed enemy of every form of economic and social monopoly, and aims at its abolition by means of economic communes and administrative organs of field and factory workers on the basis of a free system of councils, entirely liberated from subordination to any Government or political party. Against the politics of the State and of parties it erects the economic organization of labor; against the Government of men, it sets up the management of things. Consequently, it has not for its object the conquest of political power, but the abolition of every State function in social life. It considers that, along with the monopoly of property, should disappear also the monopoly of domination, and that any form of the State, including the form of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" will always be the creator of new monopolies and new privileges: it could never be an instrument of liberation.

3. The double task of Revolutionary Syndicalism is as follows: on the one hand it pursues the daily revolutionary struggle for the economic, social and intellectual improvement of the working class within the framework of existing society; on the other hand, its ultimate goal is to raise the masses to the independent management of production and distribution, as well as to the transfer into their own hands of all the ramifications of social life. It is convinced that the organization of an economic system, resting on the producer and built up from below upwards, can never be regulated by Governmental decrees, but only by the common action of all manual and intellectual workers in every branch of industry, by the conduct of factories by the producers themselves in such a way that each group, workshop or branch of industry, is an autonomous section of the general economic organization, systematically developing production and distribution in the interests of the entire community in accordance with a well-determined plan and on the basis of mutual agreements.

4. Revolutionary Syndicalism is opposed to every centralist tendency and organization, which is but borrowed from the State and the Church, and which stifles methodically every spirit of initiative and every independent thought. Centralism is an artificial organization from top to bottom, which hands over en bloc to a handful of men, the regulation of the affairs of a whole community. The individual becomes, therefore, nothing but an automaton directed and moved from above. The interests of the community yield place to the privileges of a few; variety is replaced by uniformity; personal responsibility by a soulless discipline; real education by a veneer. It is for this reason that Revolutionary Syndicalism advocates federalist organization; that is to say, an organization, from below upwards, of a free union of all forces on the basis of common ideas and interests.

5. Revolutionary Syndicalism rejects all parliamentary activity and all coöperation with legislative bodies. Universal suffrage, on bowever wide a basis, cannot bring about the disappearance of the flagrant contradictions existing in the very bosom of modern society; the parliamentary system has but one object, viz., to lend the appearance of legal right to the reign of lies and social injustice, to persuade slaves to fix the seal of the law onto their own enslavement.

6. Revolutionary Syndicalism rejects all arbitrarily fixed political and national frontiers, and it sees in nationalism nothing else but the religion of the modern State, behind which are concealed the material interests of the possessing classes. It recognizes only regional differences, and demands for every group the right of self-determination in harmonious solidarity with all other associations of an economic, territorial or national order.

7. It is for these same reasons that Revolutionary Syndicalism opposes militarism in all its forms, and considers anti-militarist propoganda as one of its most important tasks in the struggle against the present system. In the first instance, it urges individual refusal of military service, and especially, organized boycott against the manufacture of war material.

8. Revolutionary Syndicalism stands on the platform of direct action, and supports all struggles which are not in contradiction with its aims, viz., the abolition of economic monopoly and of the domination of the State. The methods of fight are the strike, the boycott, sabotage, &c. Direct action finds its most pronounced expression in the general strike which, at the same time, from the point of view of Revolutionary Syndicalism, ought to be the prelude to the social revolution.

9. Although enemies of all forms of organized violence in the hands of any Government, the Syndicalists do not forget that the decisive struggle between the Capitalism of today and the Free Communism of tomorrow, will not take place without serious collisions. They recognise violence, therefore, as a means of defence against the methods of violence of the ruling classes, in the struggle of the revolutionary people for the expropriation of the means of production and of the land. Just as this expropriation cannot be commenced and carried to a successful issue except by the revolutionary economic organizations of the workers, so also the defence of the revolution should be in the hands of these economic organizations, and not in those of any military or other organizations operating outside the economic organs.

10. It is only in the revolutionary economic organizations of the working class that is to be found the power apt to carry out its emancipation, as well as the creative energy necessary for the reorganization of society on the basis of Free Communism.

(Adopted by the First International Convention, Berlin [Germany], 1922, and by the Second International Convention, Amsterdam [Holland], 1925.)

II

Aims and Objects of the I. W. M. A.

The I.W.M.A. has the following objects:

a) To create, or, in those regions where they exist, to reinforce syndicalist organizations in all parts of the world, determined to fight for the destruction of Capitalism and the State.

b) To intensify the class struggle in the sense indicated above.

c) To prevent the infiltration of any political party whatsoever into the economic organizations, and to resist with firmness every attempt of any party to dominate the unions.

d) To arrive, when occasion demands, at temporary agreements with other proletarian trade unions and revolutionary organizations, with a view to undertaking common international action in the interests of the working class.

e) To fight against and to expose the arbitrary high-handedness of all Governments with regard to revolutionaries devoted to the cause of the Social Revolution.

f) To study the problems that concern the international working class, with a view to developing and directing international movements, or movements in groups of countries, for the defence and victory of the working class.

g) To undertake every work of assistance in case of great economic struggles or in acute conflicts with the open or secret enemies of the working class.

h) To further material and moral help to the class movements of every country where the direction of these movements is in the hands of the national economic organs of the proletariat.

The International does not intervene in the labor disputes of any country except when the latter departs from the general principles of the International.

(Adopted by the First International Convention, Berlin [Germany], 1922.)

III

The six hours' day

The third Convention of the I.W.M.A. finds that the unemployment crisis takes more and more the character of a chronic phenomenon, the world proletariat being its immediate victim.

The causes of unemployment are to be found in:

1. The development of methods of production.

2. The ceaseless growth of the sum total of workers, owing to the increasing use of female labor and to the influx of land workers to industrial centers.

3. The introduction of new methods of production in industry, resulting in a considerable increase of productivity.

4. The low wages and, as a result, the low purchasing power owing to which the consumption of increased quantities of manufactured goods is being hampered.

The Convention considers that the improvement of methods of production, which should have brought about a betterment of the workers' conditions, has so far served but the interests of the Capitalists. Although the I.W.M.A. is a convinced follower of progress in every field, the Convention is of opinion that this progress should, under no consideration, be obtained at the cost of human exploitation.

Having carefully examined the question of modernized methods of production, usually called rationalization, the Convention sees in these methods both an assault upon human dignity and an important factor of unemployment.

The Convention opposes the intention of Capitalism to create in all countries armies of unemployed to be thrown against those that work whenever the latter would attempt to take up the struggle for better conditions.

Unemployment would thus lead to the splitting up of the working class, to the weakening of its fighting power, to the flight of its members from the revolutionary organizations and to its becoming a tool in the hands of the politicians.

The I. W. M. A. pursues a different aim: that of giving work to every man, of raising the well-being and freedom of the workers, and to fostering in their minds the necessity of the struggle for their complete emancipation.

With a view of improving the unbearable conditions of the world proletariat, the Convention proclaims the urgent necessity of *lowering the hours of work*, a need that finds its practical expression in the demand for the *six hours' working day*.

The national bodies represented at this International Convention declare their readiness to initiate, in their respective countries, an intensive struggle for the six hours' day. This claim should be in the forefront of all demands put forth by the revolutionary labor movements, and most of their energies should be given up in favor of this claim.

(Adopted by the Third International Convention of the I. W. M. A. at Liège, Belgium, in 1928.)

IV

Economic problems -

The Fourth World Convention of the I. W. M. A. proclaims hereby that, in the working out of the revolutionary tactics of the working class in its struggle for the final emancipation from Capitalism, town workers and land workers belong to the same class of exploited and oppressed, and that the system of organization of the workers must be carried out on the same plane, whether in industry or in agriculture, whether in town or on the land.

A) Land Question:

1. With a view of bringing about a victorious social revolution, the organizing, preparing and participating of the agricultural and land workers and laborers is urgently needed on the lines of the fundamental principles and tactics laid down by the I. W. M. A.
2. This task is the more necessary as the revolutionary syndicalist movement, — in direct opposition to all political parties and labor bodies with socialist or bolshevist leanings which are represented either by the 2nd and 3rd Internationals, or by the International Labor Federation (Amsterdam) or the Red Trade Union International (Moscow), — refuses to allow any fraction of the proletariat to monopolize State power with a view of carrying out the functions of democratic or dictatorial governments.

It stands, on the contrary, for the abolition of any and every political or economic tyranny and aims at the true liberation of land and town workers by the setting up of a free society of organized producers. Such aim requires the revolutionary coöperation of workers on land and in town, and not the subordination of one to the other.

3. It is necessary, when carrying out the method of organization of the land workers, to take into serious consideration the complexity and variety of the peasant population, and that besides the wage slaves on the land, there are other sections of that population (small farmers and smallholders) whose product of labor is spoliated by the fiscal rapacity of the State and of the financial, commercial and speculative Capital.

4. As a consequence of the above, the I. W. M. A. sections must devote special attention to peasant propaganda, call out into being and develop agricultural laborers' unions which will bring together all the land wage-workers, as well as the smallholders and small farmers, the latter being organized in their respective sections, but being at the same time linked up to the other workers by a common bond of interests and solidarity against the exploiting front made up of big landowners, State and Capitalism. These unions will be federated, nationally and internationally, for the sake of solidarity as well as tactical, technical and ideological exchanges.

5. The program of these revolutionary land unions will base itself upon immediate demands being put forth, capable of improving the moral and material conditions of their members by means of the class struggle, but with the ultimate aim of suppressing, by a revolutionary upheaval, the capitalist system, and by establishing in its place a state of society which would render impossible the exploitation and domination of man by man.

6. These immediate demands will be set forth in accordance with the local, regional or national conditions. They must always aim at a systematic weakening of the positions of Capitalism, State and Landownership. With a view of the general development of this struggle and of assuring its efficacy, the Convention recommends the following measures:

a) the improvement of the standard of living of land workers by an *increase of wages* and by a *reduction of the hours of labor*; the latter must under no consideration, exceed the minimal number of working hours per day among industrial workers;

b) the abolition of land taxation and of mortgaged debts for properties under ten acres cultivated by their owners as their sole means of livelihood;

c) suppression of ground-rents, in cash or in kind, which the small farmers are being compelled to pay as farming rights to the big landowners;

d) expropriation, without any compensation, of the large estates (*latifundia*) and of the hunting lands, and sharing of these among the agricultural unions, the landless peasants and the unemployed laborers who agree to till and cultivate these lands under the control of the unions.

All such demands — to be supplemented by many others, according to local conditions — must be supported by intensive agitation and propaganda, by strikes, by active and passive resistance, thus awakening the villages from their lethargic sleep: also by a broad appeal to class struggle, and by giving the peasant masses, from the standpoint of organized labor, a revolutionary status. The organizations affiliated to the I. W. M. A. will lend to the peasant movement the widest practical and material help in its fighting activities.

7. The Convention is aware that, notwithstanding the importance and urgency of conquering better conditions within the very Capitalist system, this struggle for temporary improvements cannot be but a kind of forepost skirmish leading to the decisive battle in which the united action of the industrial and peasant proletariat will succeed in demolishing the Capitalist system with all its institutions of oppression and exploitation. The agricultural revolutionary syndicalist movement must, therefore, consider as its essential pivot for its activities:

- a) the revolutionary preparedness of the peasant masses;
- b) its constructive readiness for socialism;
- c) the economic coöperation between the small peasants and the small farmers.

8. Insofar as it concerns the revolutionary preparedness of the peasant masses, it is necessary to awaken and to maintain alive the spirit of revolt among the exploited elements of the rural population by proving to them, by clear and precise arguments and facts, that the main and sole cause of their misery and of their exploitation lies within the Capitalist and State system of to-day; that land taxation, usury and spoliation carried out by the commercial and financial kings, cannot disappear otherwise than by the abolition of Capitalism and of its pillar, the State; that the so-called land reforms, by means of which the State ingeniously attempts to demoralize the revolutionary spirit of the masses by dividing, among an insignificant number of poor peasants, small plots of land, are nothing else than demagogic tricks incapable of bringing a remedy to the poverty and distress of which millions of small farmers, smallholders and agricultural laborers suffer all the world over. This is sufficiently proved by the results of land reforms carried out, after the War, in 14 European countries. And finally, that the thorough emancipation of exploited peasants requires their self-organization into powerful revolutionary unions, so as to carry out efficiently a united struggle against all their exploiters and oppressors.

9. The constructive readiness of the peasants for socialism is the most important and most difficult task of revolutionary syndicalism on the land. The most important, — because, without it, the Social Revolution would not be able to live and would not have a socialist development; the most difficult, — because traditional and individual obstacles, cultural backwardness, instinct of property, and self-centered individualism could only be done away with by the organization of the peasant masses for a socialist purpose. The revolutionary syndicalist peasant movement can, and must, overcome these obstacles by a wide and incessant propaganda of its final aims, by a work of education which will have to develop, among the peasants, habits of collective solidarity, and will predispose them to collaborate unreservedly and in their own interests for the building-up of a true socialist state of society.

10. The Convention proclaims that the socialization of the land, of the agricultural implements and of its husbandry, of its exploitation and administration by the agricultural unions of land workers is the foremost condition for the setting up of a socialist economy which would guarantee to the working masses the entire product of their work. This fundamental idea is based upon the following considerations:

- a) The dividing up the land among the peasants, with its inevitable consequences — maintenance of private economic and commercial forms — practically excludes socialism and unavoidably leads to individual accumulation of wealth and to the restauration of Capitalism.

b) The exchange of produce between industrial and agricultural districts must be regulated, in the process of economic development of a revolutionary country, in a systematic manner, and must be organized independently of the risks and instability which necessarily arise out of individual production and which might, eventually, become dangerous for the success of the revolution.

c) That the collective cultivation of the land, providing that modern technical and mechanical machinery and methods will be applied, on a large scale, to agriculture, will lead, in a short space of time, to an increase of production which will help to ensure the successful development of the revolution, and of which the socialist community will fully benefit.

B) Economic Crises

Taking into consideration —

that the economic crises which break out periodically with disastrous effects upon the proletariat are inevitable under a Capitalist régime and will disappear but with the disappearance of that system itself;

that the character of the present economic crisis has brought about, following upon capitalist rationalization, an appreciable decrease of the purchasing power of the working class population, — decrease due to the wholesale dismissal of workmen;

that there is no remedy, under the Capitalist régime, against these economic crises, and that trusts and combines lead to an aggravation rather than to an improvement of conditions;

that the attempt to increase exports or to incite the unemployed to expatriate themselves could not act as deterrents to the crisis, but would just partially transfer the effects of the crisis from one country to another;

that the carrying out of certain works decided upon by the authorities (relief and distress work) might diminish the crisis, but would doubtlessly prolong it at the same time, and would but mean a waste of human energy;

that, similarly, State Capitalism as well as State Socialism are not immune from such economic crises, because they, too, are incapable to adapt production to consumption and are obliged to keep up the wage system;

the World Convention of the I. W. M. A. proclaims:

1. That the complete transformation of the capitalist economic order into a socialist economic order based upon consumption could, alone, avoid these crises by a direct adaptation of production to consumption. Such socialist economic order must rise out of federative economic unions, the basic units of which will have to be the concerns (factories, &c.) administered by hand and brain workers jointly.

2. This transformation could not be brought about otherwise than by a social revolution. But, with a view of defending oneself henceforth against the nefarious consequences of economic crises, the working class must:

a) defend its wages by means of direct action, and withstand any reduction of wages;

b) fight, in all rural and industrial concerns, for the right of nominating delegates or shop stewards who will have the duty to control the engagement and dismissal of workers and the safety of the concerns; to stem over-production. These measures would be the first step towards the introduction of trade union control over production. The nomination of such

delegates, and the carrying out of control duties will make it possible to fight efficiently unemployment and to demand work for all by the shortening of the working day.

c) attempt to obtain, through the delegates or shop stewards, an insight in the management of the works, by way of controlling the account books, the order lists, their fulfilment in the process of production and delivery, the preparation of the balance-sheet, thus being able of proposing measures for the considerable curtailment, even under present conditions, of employers' profits and the increase, accordingly, of the workers' wages.

The Convention insists that such control, the final aim of which remains the expropriation of Capitalism and the taking over of industries by the workers, must be carried out without any cooperation with Capital, as well as outside any control or participation of the State, but solely through the activities of the labor unions.

Such control will give the working class the possibility to learn, by its own endeavors, without the employers' permission and, if need be, against them, the management and organization of industry from the socialist standpoint. The bringing about of such control depends, thus, solely upon the capacity for self-organization of the proletariat.

C) Rationalization:

In view of the fact —

that, in the modern development of industrial forces, the organized working class must exclusively bear in view the possibility of exploiting these to the benefit of the workers;

that the idea of technical improvements is, in itself, an idea which we must welcome;

that such improvements concern not only the mechanical technique, but also muscular and brain technique;

that, nonetheless, what is being called nowadays rationalization bears in mind only those technical improvements which benefit the Capitalists, and are, for this reason, detrimental to the working class;

that this capitalist rationalization, although increasing the employers' profits, lowers appreciably the workmen's standard of living, whether materially, physically or morally;

that the fundamental aim of rational improvement of methods of work and of industrial technique consists, by a more intensive production, in bringing about a considerable lowering of the cost of manufactured goods, and, therefore, an increased distribution of these goods;

that a wider distribution of wealth thus produced would call forth, in its turn, a still more intensive production, thus leading to a radical solution of the world unemployment crisis;

that the systematic organization of the workers is to study the technical improvements in production and distribution as well as the methods of rationalization, so as to be able to defend the interests and rights of the working class;

the World Convention of the I. W. M. A. places before the workers in general, and before its national sections in particular, the urgent necessity of the following measures:

1. The improvement, to begin with, of the methods of work of revolutionary syndicalism and the reorganization of its functions — from the factory committee up to the International — by the local unions and all intermediary stages, up to the Federations of Industries.

2. To create shop delegates and stewards whose duty it will be to furnish the technical research committees of the Industrial Federations with all data concerning the various improvements and modifications of working conditions which the employers may wish to introduce.

3. To set up, in each Industrial Federation, a Research Committee which will carry out control tests as to the desirability of improvements and changes to be introduced by the employers, and to decide whether such changes injure in any way the standard of wages, the hours of work or the general conditions prevailing at work.

4. To transmit all data obtained by the Research Committees of the various industrial Federations to the corresponding International Federations and, through them, to the International Economic Council of the I. W. M. A.

D) Shorter Working Day:

If it be true that the unemployment crisis cannot be otherwise solved than by the suppression of the Capitalist economic system, it is equally true that the introduction of a six hours' day as a maximum would contribute to draw into the process of production millions of unemployed, thus bringing about suitable conditions for a renewed moral, intellectual and material struggle against the bullwork of the present state of society, based on monopolies and oppression.

The six hours' labor day and the maintenance of the present wage level would be the best defence of the proletariat against the muscle-and-nerve exhaustion due to the increased tension of mechanical labor.

Bearing in mind that Capitalism and Reformism have tried all possible ways, during the last ten years, to put a stop to unemployment, and have failed to do so, the Convention is of opinion that one of the most important and urgent tasks of the labor movement consists in organizing the practical struggle as well as a most intensive propaganda for the conquest of the six hours' workday and the 33 hours' working week.

E) International Class Struggle:

The Fourth Convention of the I. W. M. A. sets forth that, during the last decade, great changes have taken place within the Capitalist system: concentration of Capital has further progressed, individual capitalism has developed into collective capitalism, numbers of employers who had, formerly, fought each other, have now joined hands and formed international trusts and combines.

The chief enemy of the working class is not, at present, so much the small manufacturer or tradesman, as the powerful national and international trusts. These are now controlling all the sources of raw material and all the world markets. They rule market prices, destroy foodstuffs and limit production so as to maintain high prices. Nor can lowering of prices, in periods of economic depression, bring any improvement in the living conditions of the laboring masses, as such falls of prices lead inevitably to more unemployment and, therefore, to a greater difficulty for the workers to satisfy their most urgent material needs.

The imperialist and capitalist policy must lead to an underconsumption on the part of the working population; this must, as a consequence, degenerate into a state of permanent semi-starvation.

But the workers resent the effects of this policy of capitalist highway robbery, not only in their capacity of consumers, but also in that of producers.

The proletariat must not blindly hand over its destinies to the management of capitalist profit-making national economy. If the workers wish to lead a victorious fight for their right to live, and for the fulfilment of their historic mission, they must raise, by an organized intervention, the level of their economic and social conditions, and oppose to international exploitation their own international solidarity of the exploited.

Fully aware that the struggle of the working class against international capitalism, whether for the sake of economic and social improvements, or in cases of reactionary onslaughts against any fraction of the world proletariat, must be carried out by methods of direct action undertaken on an international scale, the Fourth Convention proclaims the principle of the *International Class Struggle*.

As a means of furthering this international class struggle, it is necessary to build up International Federations of Industries whose task would consist of informing all concerned as to wages, hours of work, conditions of labor, &c. in all countries. In the case of a conflict with employers, these Federations would be called upon to enter the field in favor of direct action on an international scale, by e. g. international boycotts, international protest and solidarity strikes, and so on. In a struggle against international trusts or combines, the workers of all countries, in which branches of those trusts are open, will have to participate in a general movement of international solidarity.

The Fourth Convention considers as immediate aims of international class struggle: the diminution of the hours of work, an internationally fixed standard wage and, as far as possible, equal conditions of labor; taking as scale of comparison the shortest working day, the highest wage and the best conditions of labor. The Convention is certain that by carrying out this program, considerable improvement of the conditions of the working class will be attained.

As to the future task of the international class struggle, it could only be carried out by a world social revolution aiming at the abolition of the capitalist social order and at its replacement by a free socialist society. In full concordance with this aim, the International Federations of Industries of the organized revolutionary proletariat must, henceforth, prepare themselves to the taking over and to the management of national economy on socialist principles.

(Series of Resolutions adopted by the Fourth International Convention of the I. W. M. A., Madrid (Spain), 1931.)

V

Nationalism

The Convention declares itself most emphatically against any and every nationalist theory or aspirations, and sees in them but a means of diverting the working class from its true path of emancipation and of placing obstacles to the development of a new social culture based upon freedom and socialism.

The Convention considers Nationalism nothing else than a result of the capitalist system of economic exploitation of labor and of the political subjection which, in the last resort, aims at upholding that system and

justifying its inevitable moral consequences. That certain outspoken nationalist tendencies, such as the "National Socialists" of Germany and other countries make use of socialist terminology for furthering their aims, thus misleading the workers and hiding their real intentions which are those of acting as protection shields to capitalism, — does not in any way modify that fact.

The Convention is of opinion that the creeping of nationalist ideas into the rank and file of the working class has been the more easily possible owing to the attitude of present day labor parties and their trade union following. These, because of their regular participation in bourgeois politics, have been so deeply imbued with bourgeois ideology, that they cannot be considered otherwise than forming part and parcel of capitalist States, defending, as they do, the so-called "national aspirations" which, in reality, are but the aspirations of the possessing class.

The Convention is convinced that an efficient defence of the interests of the working class can never be linked up with considerations of national frontiers; this is the more impossible that in every action, in any one country, the situation of the working class in all other countries must be taken in equal consideration. It is urgent to oppose against the capitalist world and the nationalist States the unity of organized labor in all countries, pursuing its own ethical principles and acting in its own interests, which lie far beyond State frontiers and embrace the entire world of productive labor. It is then only, that an International of Labor will be more than a platonic expression, and will become a live force capable of manifesting itself as a decisive factor for the emancipation of all exploited and oppressed.

The Convention considers that, for the organized working class of the world, the whole earth is to be considered as one economic unit, the natural wealth of which must remain at the disposal of all scientific and social groups, and to which all peoples and races have a free access. This is why the I. W. M. A. favors internationalization of all sources of raw material, and sees in this measure the only means for bringing about socialism by preventing the formation of new monopolies and of class-distinctions in human societies.

The Convention proclaims its opposition to any "race-theory" which found adepts, especially after the War. This new teaching, which divides humanity into chosen and inferior races, or into master-nations and slave-nations, is but an attempt, on the part of reaction, to justify social inequality — due to violence and exploitation — as a natural law of development.

The Convention is most emphatically opposed to any form of imperialism and to the brutal oppression of the so-called colonial peoples. It proclaims its fullest solidarity with the exploited of all countries and of all races, and is resolved to take all possible means to draw these peoples into the great brotherhood of struggling humanity.

The Convention proclaims that each and every human group has the absolute right to keep to its particular cultural and social idiosyncrasies. It sees in this the sole guarantee for an unfettered development of culture and civilization, and considers a federative system of social intercourse, based upon freedom and socialism, the true basis for such system of society.

(Resolution adopted by the Fourth International Convention of the I. W. M. A., Madrid (Spain), 1931.)

International Working Men's Association

Affiliated organizations

- Argentine:** Federación Obrera Regional Argentina
Belgium: Syndicaliste
Bolivia: Federación Local de La Paz
Brazil: Federação Operaria de Rio de Janeiro
Federação Operaria de Rio Grande do Sul
Federação Operaria de Bagé
Federação Operaria de Polotas y de Para
Bulgaria: Anarcho-syndicalist propaganda organization
Chile: Confederación General de Trabajadores
Costa Rica: Agrupación Obrera de Estudios Sociales
Germany: Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands (Anarcho-Syndikalisten)
France: Confédération Générale du Travail Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire
Guatemala: Comité pro Acción Sindical
Holland: Nederlandsch Syndicalistisch Vakverbond
Italy: Unione Sindicale Italiana (Emigration Committee)
Japan: Jiyu Rengo Dantai Zenkoku Kaigi
Mexico: Confederación General de Trabajadores
Norway: Norsk Syndikalistisk Federation
Paraguay: Centro Obrero Regional del Paraguay
Peru: Federación Obrera Regional Peruana
Poland: Anarcho-syndicalist propaganda organization
Portugal: Confederação Geral do Trabalho
Sweden: Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation
Spain: Confederación Nacional del Trabajo
Uruguay: Federación Obrera Regional Uruguayana