Revolutionary Catechism

Michail Bakunin

1866

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Introduction

While there are many inclinations of the libertarian direction of Bakunin's thought before and after his escape from Siberia in 1861, it was not until the period between 1864 and 1867, when he lived in Italy, that his anarchist ideas took final shape. This period marks the last step in Bakunin's transition from revolutionary nationalism to the mature revolutionary anarchism expounded by him toward the end of his eventful life.

In 1864 Bakunin founded the secret International Revolutionary Association (better known as the International Fraternity) which published its program and statutes in 1865–66 in three related documents: *The International Family*, the *Revolutionary Catechism*, and the *National Catechism*, in which Bakunin outlined the basic tenets of his doctrine. They are, as H. E, Kaminski writes, "the spiritual foundation of the entire anarchist movement…" As Bakunin's ideas evolved, he modified some and elaborated others, but never departed from the fundamental principles defined in these documents. They were reproduced in the original French in Dr. Max Nettlau's definitive biography of Bakunin. Nettlau made fifty copies of them which he deposited in the principal libraries of the world. They were then included in the excellent anthology of the anarchist movement, Ni Dieu, Ni Maître, edited by the noted libertarian-socialist historian and sociologist Daniel Guérin. In his introduction Guérin remarks that these texts are "…the least known and the most important of Bakunin's writings … they should not be confused with the *Rules That Should Inspire a Revolutionist*, written much later in 1869, during Bakunin's brief association with the young Russian nihilist Sergei Nechaev whose credo was 'the end justifies the means.' …The men who, in Italy, founded the Fraternity with Bakunin were former disciples of the republican nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini, from whom they acquired their fondness for secret societies. They left their mentor because they rejected his Deism and his purely 'political' conception of the revolution as bourgeois and devoid of social content…"

It is necessary to point out that when dissent is outlawed, revolutionaries are forced to organize secret societies. Bakunin was not alone; everybody conspired — the Poles, the Italians, the Russians, the Blanquists, and the nascent unions camouflaged as social clubs.

Like all radicals at that time, Bakunin believed that the fall or death of Napoleon III would precipitate a new revolution, a new 1848. He directed all his energy toward safeguarding the expected revolution from the mistakes which had led to the collapse of the revolution of 1848. Despite the encouraging revival of the socialist and labor movements, Bakunin saw that the workers were still very far from attaining the necessary revolutionary consciousness. To imbue the masses with this consciousness and to prevent the deformation of the revolution, Bakunin felt that the only alternative was to organize the secret International Fraternity. Bakunin was convinced that this kind of vanguard movement was indispensable to the success of the Social Revolution; that the Revolution must simultaneously destroy the old order and take on a federalist and anarchistic direction.

The Revolutionary Catechism is primarily concerned with the immediate practical problems of the revolution. It was meant to sketch out for new and prospective members of the International Fraternity both the fundamental libertarian principles and a program of action. The Revolutionary Catechism does not attempt to picture the perfect anarchist society — the anarchist heaven. Bakunin had in mind a society in transition toward anarchism. The building of a full-fledged anarchist society is the work of future generations.

The Revolutionary Catechism indicates that Bakunin did not at first favor the direct expropriation of those sectors of private industry which did not employ hired labor. He expected that with the abolition of the right of inheritance, private ownership would disappear within a generation, to be gradually superseded by workers' productive associations. He feared that an immediate massive expropriation might find the workers unprepared to take control. This would leave the way open for a bureaucratic administrative apparatus. It would lead to a worse evil, namely, the restoration of authoritarian institutions. The fact that Bakunin called for the destruction of all oppressive institutions does not mean that he favored premature changes in certain areas. However, some years later he included expropriation in his program when the workers demanded it.

In touching on the constructive potentialities of cooperative workers' associations, Bakunin speculated that in the future mankind would not be politically organized into nations. National frontiers would be abolished. Human society would be organized industrially according to the needs of production. In view of the existing situation, it was not a matter of immediate concern and he merely mentioned it in passing. Later on, this idea occupied a key place in Bakunin's anarcho-syndicalist program for the International.

To avoid misunderstanding, the reader should know that before anarchism became an organized movement, Bakunin and the anarchists in general used the term "State" and allied expressions in a twofold sense: with reference to the social collectivity or social order, and as designating the complex of repressive institutions exercising intrusive political authority over society and the individual. To avoid this confusion, anarchists today use the word "State" only in the second, negative sense.

Revolutionary Catechism

...

II. Replacing the cult of God by *respect and love of humanity,* we proclaim *human reason* as the only criterion of truth; *human conscience* as the basis of justice; *individual and collective freedom* as the only source of order in society.

III. Freedom is the absolute right of every adult man and woman to seek no other sanction for their acts than their own conscience and their own reason, being responsible first to themselves and then to the society which they have *voluntarily* accepted.

IV. It is not true that the freedom of one man is limited by that of other men. Man is really free to the extent that his freedom, fully acknowledged and mirrored by the free consent of his fellowmen, finds confirmation and expansion in their liberty. Man is truly free only among equally free men; the slavery of even one human being violates humanity and negates the freedom of all.

V. The *freedom* of each is therefore realizable only in the equality of all. The realization of freedom through equality, in principle and in fact, is *justice.*

VI. If there is one fundamental principle of human morality, *it is freedom.* To respect the freedom of your fellowman *is duty;* to love, help, and serve him is *virtue.*

VII. *Absolute rejection of every authority including that which sacrifices freedom for the convenience of the state.* Primitive society had no conception of freedom; and as society evolved, *before* the full awakening of human rationality and freedom, it passed through a stage controlled by human and divine authority. The political and economic structure of society must now be reorganized on the basis of freedom. Henceforth, *order in society must result from the greatest possible realization of individual liberty, as well as of liberty on all levels of social organization.*

VIII. The political and economic organization of social life must not, as at present, be directed from the summit to the base — the center to the circumference — imposing unity through forced centralization. On the contrary, it must be reorganized to issue *from the base to the summit — from the circumference to the center — according to the principles* of free association and federation.

IX. *Political organization.* It is impossible to determine a concrete, universal, and obligatory norm for the internal development and political organization of every nation. The life of each nation is subordinated to a plethora of different historical, geographical, and economic conditions, making it impossible to establish a model of organization equally valid for all. Any such attempt would be absolutely impractical. It would smother the richness and spontaneity of life which flourishes only in infinite diversity and, what is more, contradict the most fundamental principles of freedom. However, without certain *absolutely essential conditions* the practical realization of freedom will be forever impossible.

These conditions are:

A. *The abolition of all state religions and all privileged churches, including those partially maintained or supported by state subsidies.* Absolute liberty of every religion to build temples to their gods, and to pay and support their priests.

B. The churches considered as religious corporations must never enjoy the *same* political rights accorded to the productive associations; nor can they be entrusted with the education of children; for they exist merely to negate morality and liberty and to profit from the lucrative practice of witchcraft.

C. *Abolition of monarchy*; establishment of a commonwealth.

D. *Abolition of classes, ranks, and privileges; absolute equality of political rights for all men and women; universal suffrage.*[1]

E. *Abolition, dissolution*, and moral, political, and economic dismantling of the *all-pervasive, regimented, centralized State,* the alter ego of the Church, and as such, the permanent cause of the impoverishment, brutalization, and enslavement of the multitude. This naturally entails the following: *Abolition of all state universities:* public education must be administered only by the communes and free associations. *Abolition of the State judiciary:* all judges must be elected by the people. *Abolition of all criminal, civil, and legal codes now administered in Europe:* because the code of liberty can be created only by *liberty itself. Abolition of banks and all other institutions of state credit. Abolition of all centralized administration, of the bureaucracy, of all permanent armies and state police.*

F. Immediate direct election of all judicial and civil functionaries as well as representatives (national, provincial, and communal delegates) by the universal suffrage of both sexes.

G. *The internal reorganization* of each country on the basis of the *absolute freedom of individuals, of the productive associations, and of the communes.* Necessity of recognizing *the right of secession: every individual, every association, every commune, every region, every nation has the absolute right to self-determination, to associate or not to associate, to ally themselves with whomever they wish and repudiate their alliances without regard to so-called historic rights* [rights consecrated by legal precedent] or the *convenience of their neighbors.* Once the right to secede is established, secession will no longer be necessary. With the dissolution of a "unity" imposed by violence, the units of society will be drawn to unite by their powerful mutual attraction and by inherent necessities. Consecrated by liberty, these new federations of communes, provinces, regions, and nations will then be truly strong, productive, and indissoluble.

H. *Individual rights.*

1. The right of every man and woman, from birth to adulthood, to complete upkeep, clothes, food, shelter, care, guidance, education (public schools, primary, secondary, higher education, artistic, industrial, and scientific), all at the expense of society.
2. The equal right of adolescents, while freely choosing their careers, to be helped and to the greatest possible extent supported by society. After this, society will exercise no authority or supervision over them except to respect, and if necessary defend, their freedom and their rights.
3. The freedom of adults of both sexes must be absolute and complete, freedom to come and go, to voice all opinions, to be lazy or active, moral or immoral, in short, to dispose of one's person or possessions as one pleases, being accountable to no one. Freedom to live, be it honestly, by one's own labor, even at the expense of individuals who *voluntarily* tolerate one's exploitation.

[1] Not in the state, but in the units of the new society. Note by Max Nettlau

4. Unlimited freedom of propaganda, speech, press, public or private assembly, with no other restraint than the natural salutary power of public opinion. Absolute freedom to organize associations even for allegedly immoral purposes including even those associations which advocate the undermining (or destruction) of individual and public freedom.

5. Freedom can and must be defended only by freedom: to advocate the restriction of freedom on the pretext that it is being defended is a dangerous delusion. As morality has no other source, no other object, no other stimulant than freedom, all restrictions of liberty in order to protect morality have always been to the detriment of the latter. Psychology, statistics, and all history prove that individual and social immorality are the inevitable consequences of a false private and public education, of the degeneration of public morality and the corruption of public opinion, and above all, of. the vicious organization of society. An eminent Belgian statistician [Quételet] points out that society opens the way for the crimes later committed by malefactors. It follows that all attempts to combat social immorality by rigorous legislation which violates individual freedom must fail. Experience, on the contrary, demonstrates that a repressive and authoritarian system, far from preventing, only increases crime; that public and private morality falls or rises to the extent that individual liberty is restricted or enlarged. It follows that in order to regenerate society, we must first completely uproot this political and social system founded on inequality, privilege, and contempt for humanity. After having reconstructed society on the basis of the most complete liberty, equality, and justice — not to mention work — for all and an enlightened education inspired by respect for man — public opinion will then reflect the new humanity and become a natural guardian of the most absolute liberty [and public order. Ed.].

6. Society cannot, however, leave itself completely defenseless against vicious and parasitic individuals. Work must be the basis of all political rights. The units of society, each within its own jurisdiction, can deprive all such antisocial adults of political rights (except the old, the sick, and those dependent on private or public subsidy) and will be obliged to restore their political rights as soon as they begin to live by their own labor.

7. The liberty of every human being is inalienable and society will never require any individual to surrender his liberty or to sign contracts with other individuals except on the basis of the most complete equality and reciprocity. Society cannot forcibly prevent any man or woman so devoid of personal dignity as to place him- or herself in voluntary servitude to another individual; but it can justly treat such persons as parasites, not entitled to the enjoyment of political liberty, though only *for the duration of their servitude.*

8. Persons losing their political rights will also lose custody of their children. Persons who violate voluntary agreements, steal, inflict bodily harm, or above all, violate the freedom of any individual, native or foreigner, will be penalized according to the laws of society.

9. …

10. Individuals condemned by the laws of any and every association (commune, province, region, or nation) reserve the right to escape punishment by declaring that they wish to resign from that association. But in this case, the association will have the equal right to expel him and declare him outside its guarantee and protection.

I. *Rights of association* [*federalism*]. The cooperative workers' associations are a new fact in history. At this time we can only speculate about, but not determine, the immense development that they will doubtlessly exhibit in the new political and social conditions of the future. It is possible and even very likely that they will some day transcend the limits of towns, provinces, and even states. They may entirely reconstitute society, dividing it not into nations but into different industrial groups, organized not according to the needs of politics but to those of production. But this is for the future. Be that as it may, we can already proclaim this fundamental principle: *irrespective of their functions or aims, all associations, like all individuals, must enjoy absolute freedom.* Neither society, nor any part of society — commune, province, or nation — has the right to prevent free individuals from associating freely for any purpose whatsoever: political, religious, scientific, artistic, or even for the exploitation or corruption of the naive or alcoholics, provided that *they are not minors.* To combat charlatans and pernicious associations is the special affair of public opinion. But society is obliged to refuse to guarantee civic rights of any association or collective body whose aims or rules violate the fundamental principles of human justice. Individuals shall not be penalized or deprived of their full political and social rights solely for belonging to such unrecognized societies. The difference between the recognized and unrecognized associations will be the following: the juridically recognized associations will have the right to the protection of the community against individuals or recognized groups who refuse to fulfill their voluntary obligations.' The juridically unrecognized associations will not be entitled to such protection by the community and none of their agreements will be regarded as binding.

J. The division of a country into regions, provinces, districts, and communes, as in France, will naturally depend on the traditions, the specific circumstances, and the particular nature of each country. We can only point out here the two fundamental and indispensable principles which *must* be put into effect by any country seriously trying to organize a free society. *First: all organizations must proceed by way of federation from the base to the summit, from the commune to the coordinating association of the country or nation. Second: there must be at least one autonomous intermediate body between the commune and the country, the department, the region, or the province.* Without such an autonomous intermediate body, the commune (in the strict sense of the term) would be too isolated and too weak to be able to resist the despotic centralistic pressure of the State, which will inevitably (as happened twice in France) restore to power a despotic monarchical regime. Despotism has its source much more in the centralized organization of the State, than in the despotic nature of kings.

K. *The basic unit of all political organization in each country must be the completely autonomous commune, constituted by the majority vote of all adults of both sexes.* No one shall have either the power or the right to interfere in the internal life of the commune. The commune elects all functionaries, law-makers, and judges. It administers the communal property and finances. Every commune should have the incontestable right to create, without superior

sanction, its own constitution and legislation. But in order to join and become an integral part of the provincial federation, the commune must conform its own particular charter to the fundamental principles of the provincial constitution and be accepted by the parliament of the province. The commune must also accept the judgments of the provincial tribunal and any measures ordered by the government of the province. (All measures of the provincial government must be ratified by the provincial parliament.) Communes refusing to accept the provincial laws will not be entitled to its benefits.

L. *The province must be nothing but a free federation of autonomous communes.* The *provincial* parliament could be composed either of a single chamber with representatives of each of the communes or of two chambers, the other representing the population of the province, independent of the communes. The provincial parliament, without interfering in any manner whatsoever in the internal decisions of the communes will formulate the provincial constitution (based on the principles of this catechism). This constitution must be accepted by all communes wishing to participate in the provincial parliament. The provincial parliament will enact legislation defining the rights and obligations of individuals, communes, and associations in relation to the provincial federation, and the penalties for violations of its laws. It will reserve, however, the right of the communes to diverge on secondary points, though not on fundamentals.

   The provincial parliament, in strict accordance with the *Charter of the Federation of Communes,* will define the rights and obligations existing between the communes, the parliament, the judicial tribunal, and the provincial administration. It will enact all laws affecting the whole province, pass on resolutions or measures of the national parliament, without, however, violating the autonomy of the communes and the province. Without interfering in the internal administration of the communes, it will allot to each commune its share of the provincial or national income, which will be used by the commune as its members decide. The provincial parliament will ratify or reject all policies and measures of the *provincial* administration which will, of course, be elected by universal suffrage. The *provincial tribunal* (also elected by universal suffrage) will adjudicate, without appeal, all disputes between communes and individuals, communes and communes, and communes and the provincial administration or parliament. [These arrangements will thus] lead not to dull, lifeless uniformity, but to a real living unity, to the enrichment of communal life. A unity will be created which reflects the needs and aspirations of the communes; in short, we will have individual and collective freedom. This unity cannot be achieved by the *compulsion* or violence of provincial power, for even truth and justice when coercively imposed must lead to falsehood and iniquity.

M. *The nation must be nothing but a federation of autonomous provinces.*[2]

N. *Principles of the International Federation.* The union of nations comprising the International Federation will be based on the principles outlined above. It is probable, and strongly desired as well, that when the hour of the People's Revolution strikes again, every nation will unite in brotherly solidarity and forge an unbreakable alliance against the coalition

[2] The organizational relations between the provinces and the nation will, in general, be the same as those between the communes and the province. Note by Max Nettlau

of reactionary nations. This alliance will be the germ of the future Universal Federation of Peoples which will eventually embrace the entire world. The International Federation of revolutionary peoples, with a parliament, a tribunal, and an international executive committee, will naturally be based on the principles of the revolution. Applied to international polity these principles are:

1. Every land, every nation, every people, large or small, weak or strong, every region, province, and commune has the absolute right to self-determination, to make alliances, unite or secede as it pleases, regardless of so-called historic rights and the political, commercial, or strategic ambitions of States. The unity of the elements of society, in order to be genuine, fruitful, and durable, must be absolutely free: it can emerge only from the internal needs and mutual attractions of the respective units of society…
2. Abolition of alleged historic right and the horrible right of conquest.
3. Absolute rejection of the politics of aggrandizement, of the power and the glory of the State. For this is a form of politics which locks each country into a self-made fortress, shutting out the rest of humanity, organizing itself into a closed world, independent of all human solidarity, finding its glory and prosperity in the evil it can do to other countries. A country bent on conquest is necessarily a country internally enslaved.
4. The glory and grandeur of a nation lie only in the development of its humanity. Its strength and inner vitality are measured by the degree of its liberty.
5. The well-being and the freedom of nations as well as individuals are inextricably interwoven. Therefore, there must be free commerce, exchange, and communication among all federated countries, and abolition of frontiers, passports, and customs duties [tariffs]. Every citizen of a federated country must enjoy the same civic rights and it must be easy for him to acquire citizenship and enjoy political rights in all other countries adhering to the same federation. If liberty is the starting point, it will necessarily lead to unity. But to go from unity to liberty is difficult, if not impossible; even if it were possible, it could be done only by destroying a spurious "unity" imposed by force…
6. …
7. No federated country shall maintain a permanent standing army or any institution separating the soldier from the civilian. Not only do permanent ,armies and professional soldiers breed internal disruption, brutalization, and financial ruin, they also menace the independence and well-being of other nations. All able-bodied citizens should, if necessary, take up arms to defend their homes and their freedom. Each country's military defense and equipment should be organized locally by the commune, or provincially, somewhat like the militias in Switzerland or the United States of America [circa 1860–7].
8. The International Tribunal shall have no other function than to settle, without appeal, all disputes between nations and their respective provinces. Differences between two federated countries shall be adjudicated, without appeal, only by the International

Parliament, which, in the name of the entire revolutionary federation, will also formulate common policy and make war, if unavoidable, against the reactionary coalition.

9. No federated nation shall make war against another federated country. If there is war and the International Tribunal has pronounced its decision, the aggressor must submit. If this doesn't occur, the other federated nations will sever relations with it and, in case of attack by the aggressor, unite to repel invasion.
10. All members of the revolutionary federation must actively take part in approved wars against a nonfederated state. If a federated nation declares unjust war on an outside State against the advice of the International Tribunal, it will be notified in advance that it will have to do so alone.
11. It is hoped that the federated states will eventually give up the expensive luxury of separate diplomatic representatives to foreign states and arrange for representatives to speak in the name of all the federated States.
12. Only nations or peoples accepting the principles outlined in this catechism will be admitted to the federation.

X. *Social Organization.* Without political equality there can be no real political liberty, but political equality will be possible only when there is *social and economic equality.*

A. Equality does not imply the leveling of individual differences, nor that individuals should be made physically, morally, or mentally identical. Diversity in capacities and powers — those differences between races, nations, sexes, ages, and persons — far from being a social evil, constitutes, on the contrary, the abundance of humanity. Economic and social equality means the equalization of personal wealth, but not by restricting what a man may acquire by his own skill, productive energy, and thrift.

B. Equality and justice demand only *a society so organized that every single human being will — from birth through adolescence and maturity — find therein equal means, first for maintenance and education, and later, for the exercise of all his natural capacities and aptitudes.* This equality from birth that justice demands for everyone will be impossible as long as the right of inheritance continues to exist.

C. ...

D. *Abolition of the right of inheritance.* Social inequality — inequality of classes, privileges, and wealth — not by right but in *fact.* will continue to exist until such time as the right of inheritance is abolished. It is an inherent social law that *de facto* inequality inexorably produces inequality of rights; social inequality leads to political inequality. And without political equality — in the true, universal, and libertarian sense in which we understand it — society will always remain divided into two unequal parts. The first. which comprises the great majority of mankind, the masses of the people, will be oppressed by the privileged, exploiting minority. *The right of inheritance violates the principle of freedom and must be abolished.*

E. ...

F. …

G. When inequality resulting from the right of inheritance is abolished, there will still remain inequalities [of wealth] — due to the diverse amounts of energy and skill possessed by individuals. These inequalities will never entirely disappear, but will become more and more minimized under the influence of education and of an egalitarian social organization, and, above all, when the right of inheritance no longer burdens the coming generations.

H. Labor being the sole source of wealth, everyone is free to die of hunger, or to live in the deserts or the forests among savage beasts, but whoever wants to live in society must earn his living by his own labor, or be treated as a parasite who is living on the labor of others.

I. Labor is the foundation of human dignity and morality. For it was only by free and intelligent labor that man, overcoming his own bestiality, attained his humanity and sense of justice, changed his environment, and created the civilized world. The stigma which, in the ancient as well as the feudal world, was attached to labor, and which to a great extent still exists today, despite all the hypocritical phrases about the "dignity of labor" — this stupid prejudice against labor has two sources: the first is the conviction, so characteristic of the ancient world, that in order to give one part of society the opportunity and the means to humanize itself through science, the arts, philosophy. and the enjoyment of human rights, another part of society, naturally the most numerous, must be condemned to work as slaves. This fundamental institution of ancient civilization was the cause of its downfall.

   The city, corrupted and disorganized on the one hand by the idleness of the privileged citizens, and undermined on the other by the imperceptible but relentless activity of the disinherited world of slaves who, despite their slavery, through common labor developed a sense of mutual aid and solidarity against oppression, collapsed under the blows of the barbarian peoples.

   Christianity, the religion of the slaves, much later destroyed ancient forms of slavery only to create a new slavery. Privilege, based on inequality and the right of conquest and sanctified by divine grace, again separated society into two opposing camps: the "rabble" and the nobility, the serfs and the masters. To the latter was assigned the noble profession of arms and government; to the serfs, the curse of forced labor. The same causes are bound to produce the same effects; the nobility, weakened and demoralized by depraved idleness, fell in 1789 under the blows of the revolutionary serfs and workers. The [French] Revolution proclaimed the dignity of labor and enacted the rights of labor into law. But only in law, for in fact labor remained enslaved. The first source of the degradation of labor, namely, the dogma of the political inequality of men, was destroyed by the Great Revolution. The degradation must therefore be attributed to a second source, which is nothing but the separation which still exists *between manual and intellectual labor*, which reproduces in a new form the ancient inequality and divides the world into two camps: *the privileged minority*, privileged not by law but by *capital*, and *the majority of workers*, no longer captives of the law but of hunger.

   The dignity of labor is today theoretically recognized, and public opinion considers it disgraceful to live without working. But this does not go to the heart of the question. Human

labor, in general, is still divided into two exclusive categories: the first — solely intellectual and managerial — includes the scientists, artists, engineers, inventors, accountants, educators, governmental officials, and their subordinate elites who enforce labor discipline. The second group consists of the great mass of workers, people prevented from applying creative ideas or intelligence, who blindly and mechanically carry out the orders of the intellectual-managerial elite. This economic and social division of labor has disastrous consequences for members of the privileged classes, the masses of the people, and for the prosperity, as well as the moral and intellectual development, of society as a whole.

For the privileged classes a life of luxurious idleness gradually leads to moral and intellectual degeneration. It is perfectly true that a certain amount of leisure is absolutely necessary for the artistic, scientific, and mental development of man; creative leisure followed by the healthy exercise of daily labor, one that is well earned and is socially provided for all according to individual capacities and preferences. Human nature is so constituted that the propensity for evil is always intensified by external circumstances, and the morality of the individual depends much more on the conditions of his existence and the environment in which he lives than on his own will. In this respect, as in all others, the law of social solidarity is essential: there can be no other moralizer for society or the individual than freedom in absolute equality. Take the most sincere democrat and put him on the throne; if he does not step down promptly, he will surely become a scoundrel. A born aristocrat (if he should, by some happy chance, be ashamed of his aristocratic lineage and renounce privileges of birth) will yearn for past glories, be useless in the present, and passionately oppose future progress. The same goes for the bourgeois: this dear child of capital and idleness will waste his leisure in dishonesty, corruption, and debauchery, or serve as a brutal force to enslave the working class, who will eventually unleash against him a retribution even more horrible than that of 1793.

The evils that the worker is subjected to by the division of labor are much easier to determine: forced to work for others because he is born to poverty and misery, deprived of all rational upbringing and education, morally enslaved by religious influence. He is catapulted into life, defenseless, without initiative and without his own will. Driven to despair by misery, he sometimes revolts, but lacking that unity with his fellow workers and that enlightened thought upon which power depends, he is often betrayed and sold out by his leaders, and almost never realizes who or what is responsible for his sufferings. Exhausted by futile struggles, he falls back again into the old slavery.

This slavery will last until capitalism is overthrown by the collective action of the workers. They will be exploited as long as education (which in a free society will be equally available to all) is the exclusive birthright of the privileged class; as long as this minority monopolizes scientific and managerial work and the people — reduced to the status of machines or beasts of burden — are forced to perform the menial tasks assigned to them by their exploiters. This degradation of human labor is an immense evil, polluting the moral, intellectual, and political institutions of society. History shows that an uneducated multitude whose natural intelligence is suppressed and who are brutalized by the mechanical monotony of daily toil, who grope in vain for any enlightenment, constitutes a mindless mob whose blind *turbulence* threatens the very existence of society itself.

The artificial separation between manual and intellectual labor must give way to a new social synthesis. When the man of science performs manual labor and the man of work performs intellectual labor, free intelligent work will become the glory of mankind, the source of its dignity and its rights.

J.

K. *Intelligent and free labor will necessarily be collective labor.* Each person will, of course, be free to work alone or collectively. But there is no doubt that (outside of work best performed individually) in industrial and even scientific or artistic enterprises, collective labor will be preferred by everyone. For association marvellously multiplies the productive capacity of each worker; hence, a cooperating member of a productive association will earn much more in much less time. When the free productive associations (which will include members of cooperatives and labor organizations) voluntarily organize according to their needs and special skills, they will then transcend all national boundaries and form an immense worldwide economic federation. This will include an industrial parliament, supplied by the associations with precise and detailed global-scale statistics; by harmonizing supply and demand the parliament will distribute and allocate world industrial production to the various nations. Commercial and industrial crises, stagnation (unemployment), waste of capital, etc., will no longer plague mankind; the emancipation of human labor will regenerate the world.

L. *The land, and all natural resources, are the common property of everyone, but will be used only by those who cultivate it by their own labor*. Without expropriation, only through the powerful pressure of the worker's associations, capital and the tools of production will fall to those who produce wealth by their own labor.[3]

M. *Equal political, social, and economic rights, as well as equal obligations for women.*

N. Abolition not of the natural family but of the *legal* family founded on law and property. Religious and civil marriage to be replaced by *free* marriage. Adult men and women have the right to unite and separate as they please, nor has society the right to hinder their union or to force them to maintain it. With the abolition of the right of inheritance and the education of children assured by society, all the legal reasons for the irrevocability of marriage will disappear. The union of a man and a woman must be free, for a free choice is the indispensable condition for moral sincerity. In marriage, man and woman must enjoy absolute liberty. Neither violence nor passion nor rights surrendered in the past can justify an invasion by one of the liberty of another, and every such invasion shall be considered a crime.

O. From the moment of pregnancy to birth, a woman and her children shall be subsidized by the communal organization. Women who wish to nurse and wean their children shall also be subsidized.

[3] Bakunin means that private ownership of production will be permitted only if the owners do the actual work and do not employ anyone. He believed that collective ownership would gradually supersede private ownership.

P. Parents shall have the right to care for and guide the education of their children, under the ultimate control of the commune which retains the right and the obligation to take children away from parents who, by example or by cruel and inhuman treatment, demoralize or otherwise hinder the physical and mental development of their children.

Q. Children belong neither to their parents nor to society. They belong to themselves and to their own future liberty. Until old enough to take care of themselves, children must be brought up under the guidance of their elders. It is true that parents are their natural tutors, but since the very future of the commune itself depends upon the intellectual and moral training it gives to children, the *commune must be the tutor.* The freedom of adults is possible only when the free society looks after the education of minors.

R. *The secular school must replace the Church,* with the difference that while religious indoctrination perpetuates superstition and divine authority, the sole purpose of secular public education is the gradual, progressive initiation of children into liberty by the triple development of their physical strength, their minds, and their will. Reason, truth, justice, respect for fellowmen, the sense of personal dignity which is inseparable from the dignity of others, love of personal freedom and the freedom of all others, the conviction that work is the base and condition for rights — these must be the fundamental principles of all public education. Above all, education must make men and inculcate human values first, and then train specialized workers. As the child grows older, authority will give way to more and more liberty, so that by adolescence he will be completely free and will forget how in childhood he had to submit unavoidably to authority. Respect for human worth, the germ of freedom, must be present even while children are being severely disciplined. The essence of all moral education is this: inculcate children with respect for humanity and you will make good men…

S. Having reached the age of adulthood, the adolescent will be proclaimed autonomous and free to act as he deems best. In exchange, society will expect him to fulfill only these three obligations: that he remain *free,* that he *live by his own labor,* and that he *respect the freedom of others.* And, as the crimes and vices infecting present society are due to the evil organization of society, it is certain that in a society based on reason, justice, and freedom, on respect for humanity and on complete equality, the good will prevail and the evil will be a morbid exception, which will diminish more and more under the pervasive influence of an enlightened and humanized public opinion.

T. The old, sick, and infirm will enjoy all political and social rights and be bountifully supported at the expense of society.

XI. *Revolutionary policy.* It is our deep-seated conviction that since the freedom of all nations is indivisible, national revolutions must become international in scope. just as the *European and world reaction is unified,* there should no longer be *isolated revolutions,* but *a universal, worldwide revolution.* Therefore, all the particular interests, the vanities, pretensions, jealousies, and hostilities between and among nations must now be transformed into *the unified, common, and universal interest of the revolution, which alone can assure the freedom and independence of each nation by the solidarity of all.* We believe also that the holy alliance of the world counterrevolution

and the conspiracy of kings, clergy, nobility, and the bourgeoisie, based on enormous budgets, on permanent armies, on formidable bureaucracies, and equipped with all the monstrous apparatus of modern centralized states, constitutes an overwhelming force; indeed, that this formidable reactionary coalition can be destroyed only by the greater power of the *simultaneous revolutionary alliance and action of all the people of the civilized world,* that against this reaction *the isolated revolution of a single people will never succeed.* Such a revolution would be folly, a catastrophe for the isolated country and would, in effect, constitute a crime against all the other nations. It follows that the uprising of a single people must have in view not only itself, but the whole world. This demands a worldwide program, as large, as profound, as true, as human, in short, as all-embracing as the interests of the whole world. And in order to energize the passions of all the popular masses of Europe, regardless of nationality, this *program can only be the program of the social and democratic revolution.*

Briefly stated, the objectives of *the social and democratic revolution* are: Politically: the abolition of the historic rights of states, the rights of conquest, and diplomatic rights [statist international law. Tr.]. It aims at the full emancipation of individuals and associations from divine and human bondage; it seeks the absolute destruction of all compulsory unions, and all agglomerations of communes into provinces and conquered countries into the State. Finally, it requires the radical dissolution of the centralized, aggressive, authoritarian State, including its military, bureaucratic, governmental, administrative, judicial, and legislative institutions. The revolution, in short, has this aim: *freedom for all, for individuals as well as collective bodies, associations, communes, provinces, regions, and nations,* and *the mutual guarantee of this freedom by federation.*

Socially: *it seeks the confirmation of political equality by economic equality.* This is not the removal of natural individual differences, but *equality in the social rights of every individual from birth*; in particular, equal means of subsistence, support, education, and opportunity for every child, boy or girl, until maturity, and equal resources and facilities in adulthood to create his own well-being by his own labor.

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Michail Bakunin
Revolutionary Catechism
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