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Mikhail Bakunin

Our Program

[Program of the Russian Socialist Democracy, 1868]

1868

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Our Program

[Program of the Russian Socialist Democracy, 1868]

Mikhail Bakunin

1868

We want the emancipation of the people, their intellectual, economic, social and political emancipation.

I. The *intellectual emancipation* of the popular masses is indispensable in order for their political and social liberty to become complete and solid. Faith in God, the belief in the immortality of the soul, and, in general, all the idealist or supernatural utopias, necessarily based on a false principle, contrary to science, have been for the peoples a constant cause of slavery and misery. On the one hand, they have always served as a justification and support to all the enslavers of humanity, to all the exploiters of the labor of the masses; on the other, they have demoralized the peoples themselves, dividing their conscience and their being between two absolutely opposing tendencies: the one celestial and the other terrestrial, and at the same time depriving them of the energy necessary to win their human rights and give themselves a happy, free existence. It follows from this that we are francs partisans of atheism and scientific, humanitarian materialism.

II. We want the *economic, social emancipation* of the people, without which all liberty would be nothing but a vain word and a dis-

gusting lie. The economic situation of the peoples has always been the cornerstone and real explanation of their political situation. All the political and civil organizations, past and present, have for principal bases: the brutal act of conquest; the patriarchal right of the husband and father; the right of hereditary property, and the blessing of all these historic rights by the Church in the name of some god. The ensemble of all these things hierarchically coordinated is called the State. Thus, the inevitable consequence of every State constitution will always be the enslavement of millions of laborers condemned to a fatal ignorance, for the profit of a privileged, exploiting and so-called civilized minority. The State – that younger brother of the Church – is inconceivable without political, legal and civil privileges, which have a natural basis the economic privileges.

Desiring the real and definitive emancipation of the popular masses, we want:

- 1) The abolition of the right of hereditary property.
- 2) The complete equalization of the political and social rights of women with those of men and, as a consequence: the abolition of laws regarding the family, as well as that of religious, political and civil marriage, historical corollary of the right of inheritance.
- 3) The abolition of marriage, as a religious, political legal and civil institution, will immediately raise question of the education of children; their upkeep, from the moment when the pregnancy of the mother is determined the age of their majority; their education and instruction, equal for all at all degrees, from primary school to the highest developments of science in the more advanced schools; – scientific and industrial at the same time, and preparing the man as much for muscular labor as for nervous labor, – must fall primarily to the charge of society.

We pose as the bases of economic justice the following principle:

The earth must only belong to those who cultivate it with their own arms – and as all human labor is only productive insofar as it is associated,- we claim the land for the communes or rural associations;

as well as capital and other instruments of labor for the industrial associations, both based on the most complete liberty and on the perfect economic and political equality of the laborers

III. In the future, no political organization should be anything but a free federation of free associations, whether agricultural or industrial.

Consequently, in the name itself of the political and social emancipation of the popular masses, we desire the destruction, or if you prefer the liquidation, of the State – its radical extirpation, with all its institutions, whether ecclesiastical, political or civil, university, legal or financial, military or bureaucratic.

We want absolute liberty for all peoples, Russian and non-Russian, crushed today by the empire of all Russias; with the absolute right of each to manage their own affairs, and to govern themselves according to their own instincts, according to their needs and will; so that, federalizing from bottom to top, those among them who *desire* to become members of the Russian people, can create with it a truly free society, United federatively with other *similar* societies, who, taking for their basis the same principles, will freely organize together in Europe and in the entire world.

For us there principal foundations of our program will be obligatory. This is why we believe it necessary to announce that we will not accept articles in our newspaper, nor people among us, that are not *entirely* in agreement with us.

The development of the program will be the subject of a series of articles under the title: *How to Pose the Revolutionary Question*, and it, of course, will also be the content of our entire newspaper.