

APPENDIX 3

“The International”

“The International” was written to celebrate the Paris Commune of March–May 1871. The words, as originally written in French, are by Eugene Pottier (Paris 1871); the music was composed by Pierre Degeyter (1888). The original version has six verses. This translation is taken from C. and E. Paul.

The International

Arise! Ye wretched of all regions
Arise! All bound in hunger’s chain!
Now reason stirs the worker’s legions,
for lo, the end draws on amain!
Away with wreckage of past nations!
Enslaved crowd, rise at the call!
The world shall change from its foundations;
We that are nothing shall be all.

Chorus:

The call to arms has sounded!
Close ranks the foe to face!
The Workers’ International
Shall be the human race.

We ask no aid from Gods or Caesars
From haloed saviour or from king;
'Tis we, 'tis we, the world’s producers,
Who to our own selves help must bring.

To free the spirit from its prison;
 To make the thief his gains disgorge,
 With mighty strokes we'll strike the iron
 Just taken glowing from our forge. CHORUS

The law supports the state's oppressions,
 Whilst endless taxes bleed us white.
 An empty word the rich man's duty,
 And empty word the poor man's right.
 Too long, too long, we've pined in wardship;
 Equality seeks other lights,
 For duties should attach to lordship,
 While duty's odious without rights. CHORUS

How hideous they seem in their splendour,
 These barons of mine and rail,
 Whose sole art has been but to plunder
 The workers who suffer and toil.
 What is ours to them we've been handing;
 Labour's fruit should to labour accrue;
 A full restitution demanding,
 The people ask naught, but what's due. CHORUS

With fumes of battle we've been drunken.
 Against our brothers we've made war,
 In mutual slaughter for our tyrants –
 'Down arms!' will take the soldier far!
 Perchance they're stubborn, these man-eaters?
 Would make us still for 'heros' pass?
 We'll find a good use for our bullets
 Against th' oppressors of our class! CHORUS

March onward, O, army of the toilers,
 Of all who work for daily bread!
 We'll give short shrift to the despoilers,
 Let them reign in the realm of the dead!
 On our flesh have these ever been feeding;
 Birds of prey since the dawning of days,
 Should they vanish, the sun, all unheeding,
 In reckless splendour still will blaze. CHORUS