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Karl Marx an Paul Lafargue in Paris. London, Dienstag, 19. April 1870

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| London, 19 April, 1870.

Dear Paul-Laurent

I shall have you proposed by **Dupont**^a on Tuesday next.

Meanwhile I call your attention to the presence in your committee of **Robin**^b, **Bakunine**^c's agent who, at Geneva, did all in his power to discredit the General Council (he attacked it publicly in the **Égalité**^d) and to prepare la dictature de Bakounine sur l'**Association Internationale**^e. He has been expressly sent to Paris there to act in the same sense. Hence this fellow must be closely watched without becoming aware of having a surveillant at his side.

In order to **vous**¹ mettre au courant I must give you a succinct review of **Bakunine**^f's intrigue.

Bakunine^g does not belong to the **International**^h but for about 1½ years. C'est un nouveau venu. At the Lausanne Congress (September 1868)ⁱ of the **Ligue de la Paix et de la Liberté**^k (he was one of the executive committee of this International middleclass Association founded in opposition to the Proletarian International) he played one of the mountebank parts he delights in. He proposed a series of propositions, stupid in themselves, but affecting an air of swaggering radicalism **send(?)**² calculated to frighten les crétins bourgeois. In that way, being outvoted by the majority, he made his noising exit from the Ligue and had this great event triumphantly announced in the European

press. He understands la réclame almost as well as Victor Hugo^m qui, comme Heineⁿ dit, n'est pas simplement égoïste, mais Hugoïste.¹

Then he entered our Association^o—its Geneva branche Romande. His first step was a conspiracy. He founded “l'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste”^p. The Programme of that society was nothing else but the series of resolutions proposed by Bakunine^q on the Lausanne Peace League^r Congress. The organisation was that of a sect with its head centre at Geneva, constituting itself | as an International Association which was to have General Congresses of its own, which was to form an independent international body, and, at the same time, to be an integral member of our Internationale. In one word, our Association was by this interloping secret society by and by to be converted into an instrument du Russe Bakounine. The pretext was, that this new society was founded for the special purpose “à faire la propagande théorique”. Very funny indeed, considering that Bakunine and his acolytes know nothing of theory. But Bakunine's programme was “the theory”. It consisted, in point fact, of 3 points.

1) That the ~~xxx(?)~~³ first requirement of the social Revolution was—the abolition of inheritance, vieillerie St. Simon^siste, dont le charlatan et l'ignoramus Bakunine^t se faisait l'éditeur responsable. It is evident: As(?) If you have had the power to make the social Revolution in one day, par décret plébiscitaire, you would abolish at once landed property and capital, and would therefore have no occasion at all to occupy yourselves with le droit d'héritage. On the other hand, if you have not that power (and it is of course foolish to suppose such a power), the proclamation of the abolition of inheritance would be not a serious act, but a foolish menace, rallying the whole peasantry and the whole small middleclass round the reaction. Suppose f. i. that the Yankees had not had the power to abolish slavery by the sword. What an imbecility it would have been to proclaim the abolition of inheritance in slaves! The whole thing rests on a superannuated idealism, which considers the actual jurisprudence as the basis of our economical state, instead of seeing that our economical state is the basis and source of our jurisprudence! As to Bakounine, all he wanted was to improvise a programme of his own making. Voilà tout. C'était un programme d'occasion.

2) “the l'égalité des différentes classes”. To suppose on the one hand the continued existence of classes, and on the other the égalité of the members belonging to them, this blunder shows you at once the shameless ignorance and superficiality of that fellow who made it his “special mission” to enlighten us on “theory”.

3) The working class must not occupy itself with politics. They must only organise themselves by trades unions. One fine day, by means | of the Internationale^u they will supplant the place off all existing states. You see what a caricature he has made of my doctrines! ~~Xxxx xxx xxx(?)~~⁴ As the tranformation of the existing states States into "Associations["] is our last ~~qu(?)~~⁵ end, we must allow the governments, these great Trade Unions of the ruling classes, to do as they like, because to occupy ourselves with them is to acknowledge them. Why! In the same way the old socialists said: You must not occupy yourselves with the wages question, because you want to abolish wages labor, and to struggle with the capitalist about the rate of wages is to acknowledge the wages system! The ass has not even seen that every class movement as a class movement, is necessarily and was always a political movement.

This then is the whole theoretical baggage of Mahomet-Bakunine^v, a Mahomet^w without a Koran^x.

His conspiracy he went secretly on with. He had some affiliates in Spain and Italy, a few dupes at Paris and Geneva. Good old Becker^y was foolish enough to allow himself to be put forward somewhat in a leading character by Bakunine. He regrets his blunder at present.

The General Council was only informed and called upon to sanction the statutes of the “Alliance”^z after Bakunine^{aa} considered that concern as fait accompli. However he was mistaken. In an elaborate document the General Council declared the “Alliance” to be an instrument of disorganisation, and rejected ~~x-xxx(?)~~⁶ ~~xxx(?)~~ every connexion with it. (I shall send you the document.)

A few months later, the Comité Directeur of the “Alliance”^{ab} addressed a letter to the General Council to this effect: The great men were willing to dissolve their organisation and merge it into the Internationale^{ac}, but on the other hand, we were to declare categorically, Qui ou Non!, whether we sanctioned their principles? If not, there would be a public secession on their part, and we would be responsible for such a misfortune!

We answered^{ad} that the General Council was not the Pope, that we allowed every section to have its own theoretical views of the real movement, always supposed that nothing directly opposite to our Statutes was put forward. We hinted in a delicate way that we considered their “theory” to be a sham. We insisted that “l’égalité des classes” be changed for “l’abolition des classes”, what they did. We requested them to give us a dénombrement of their members, what they have never complied with. (You will also get this second document).

| Thus the Alliance^{af} was nominally dissolved. In fact, it continued to form an imperium in imperio. Its branches had no connexion at all with the General Council, but that of conspiring against it. It acted under Bakunine^{ag}’s dictatorship. He prepared everything to frapper son grand coup au Congrès de Bâle. On the one side, he made the Geneva Committee propose la question d’héritage. We accepted the challenge. On the other side, he conspired everywhere to discredit us and to have the ~~General Council~~ seat of the General Council transferred from London to Geneva. At that congress, ce saltimbanque figurait comme “délégué de Naples et de Lyon”. (at that latter place, Albert Richard^{ah}, otherwise a very active and wellmeaning youngster, is his acolyte.) Where the fellow got the money for all his secret machinations, ~~voyages(?)~~ travels, missions of agents etc remains to this moment a secret. Poor as like a church mouse, he has never in his life earned a farthing by his own work.

At the Congress he was baffled. After the Congress he commenced to attack us publicly by his private Moniteur, Le Progrès^{ai} (de Locle); edited by his valet James Guillaume^{aj}, a Swiss schoolmaster, and by the Égalité^{ak} (de Genève.) We allowed this to go on for some time, and then send a missive to the Federal Council of Geneva^{al}. (This document—copy of it—is in the hands of Varlin^{an}.) But before our circular arrived, the ~~General~~ Federal Council of Geneva, never friendly to Bakunine^{ao} and the Alliance^{ap}, had broken loose from him. Robin^{aq} et Co. were expelled from the Editorship of the Égalité. The Federal Council of ~~Geneva~~ the Swiss Romand Section made his pronunciamiento against the intrigues of the Alliance and its Muscovite⁷ dictator.

Meanwhile Bakounine^{ar} had left Geneva to reside at Tessin. His circumstances were changed. Herzen^{as} died suddenly. Bakounine, who had attacked him fiercely during the latter times (probably because he found Herzen’s purse shut against him), all at once became the fiery apologist of ~~xxx(?)~~⁸ Herzen in the French etc press⁹. Why? Because Herzen got¹⁰ (although a millionaire) received certainly annually for his “Cloche”^{at} a rather¹¹ and “propagande Russe” a rather large sum from the “Panslavistes démocrates” in Russia. Although a fierce enemy de “l’héritage” Bakounine wanted to inherit Herzen’s ~~posotion~~ position and salary. He succeeded by his panegyrics of the dead man. He had the “Cloche”, the subvention etc transferred to himself.

On the other hand there had grown up at Geneva ~~an-emigrant~~ a colony of Russian Emigrés, enemies of Bakunine^{au}, because they knew the | mere personal ambition of this very mediocre man (although an accomplished intriguer) and because they knew that in his “Russian” writings he propagates doctrines quite contrary to the principles of the Internationale^{av}.

On the #¹² The late Swiss Romand Congress at La Chaux de Fonds (5 April) this year¹³ was seized upon by Bakunine^{aw} and his moutons to bring about an open split. The Congress was¹⁴

split into two Congresses, on the one hand a Congress of Bakunites, proclaiming abstention from all politics, representing about 600 men; on the other hand the Congress of the Federal Comité of Geneva, representing 2000 men. **Outline**^{ax} (**an**/¹⁵ c'est un **des jeunes**¹⁶ Russes) dénonça publiquement les **dœ(?)**¹⁷ intrigues de Bakounine. His (**B's**)¹⁸ men have constituted themselves¹⁹ as a "federal Central Council" pour la Suisse Romande, and have founded their own organ "**La Solidarité**"^{ay}, **written** **edited** by Bakounine's valet de chambre, **James Guillaume**^{az}. The "**principle**" of that paper is "Bakounine". Both parties have appealed to the General Council.

Thus this **damned Muscovite**^{ba} has succeeded to call forth a great **public**²⁰ scandal within our ranks, to make his personality a watchword, to infect our **Workingmen's Association**^{bb} with the poison of Sectarianism, and to paralyse our action by secret intrigue.

He hopes to be strongly represented at our next Congress. To direct ~~too~~ **to** himself the attention of Paris, he has opened a correspondence with the **Marseillaise**^{bc}. But we have spoken with **Flourens**^{bd}, who will put a stop to this.

You are now sufficiently informed to counteract **Bakounine**^{be}'s movements within our Paris branches.

My thanks to **Laurent**^{bf} for her letter^{bg}. Another time try to find an envelope for your missives which is not so easily opened.

A Propos. Look whether you possess still the article of the **Queen's Messenger**^{bh} on **Lord Clanricarde**^{bi}. We want it here and can get it from no where else.

Yours
Old Nick.

Erläuterungen

- a) Dupont, Eugène (1831-1881)
- b) Robin, Paul (1837-1912)
- c) Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- d) L'Égalité. Journal de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs. Section de la Suisse romande
- e) Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- f) Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- g) Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- h) Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- i) Der 2. Kongress der Friedensliga fand vom 21. bis 25. September 1868 in Bern statt, der 3. Kongress im Jahr 1869 in Lausanne. Siehe **D**^j: S. 173 Anm 6..
- j) [Zotero Link für: D](#)
- k) Ligue Internationale de la Paix et de la Liberté
- l) Heinrich Heine: Lutetia I./V. DHA. Bd. 13/1. S. 44: „Victor Hugo ... er ist ein Egoist, und damit ich noch schlimmeres sage, er ist ein Hugoist.“
- m) Hugo, Victor (1802-1885)
- n) Heine, Heinrich (1797-1856)
- o) Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- p) Alliance (internationale) de la Démocratie Socialiste

- q)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- r)** Ligue Internationale de la Paix et de la Liberté
- s)** Saint-Simon, Claude-Henri de Rouvroy de (1760-1825)
- t)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- u)** Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- v)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- w)** Mohammed (etwa 570-632)
- x)** [Zotero Link für: Koran](#)
- y)** Becker, Johann Philipp (1809-1886)
- z)** Alliance (internationale) de la Démocratie Socialiste
- aa)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- ab)** Alliance (internationale) de la Démocratie Socialiste
- ac)** Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- ad)** Siehe [Karl Marx: Le Conseil Général de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs au Bureau Central de l'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste. Circulaire du 9 mars 1869. In: MEGA² I/21, S. 118–119^{ae}.](#)
- ae)** [Zotero Link für: Karl Marx: Le Conseil Général de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs au Bureau Central de l'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste. Circulaire du 9 mars 1869. In: MEGA2 I/21, S. 118–119](#)
- af)** Alliance (internationale) de la Démocratie Socialiste
- ag)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- ah)** Richard, Albert Marie (1846-1925)
- ai)** Le Progrès
- aj)** Guillaume, James (1844-1916)
- ak)** L'Égalité. Journal de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs. Section de la Suisse romande
- al)** Siehe [Karl Marx: Circulaire du Conseil Général de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs au Conseil Fédéral de la Suisse Romande du 1 janvier 1870. In: MEGA² I/21, S. 159-165^{am}.](#)
- am)** [Zotero Link für: Karl Marx: Circulaire du Conseil Général de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs au Conseil Fédéral de la Suisse Romande du 1 janvier 1870. In: MEGA2 I/21, S. 159-165](#)
- an)** Varlin, Louis Eugène (1839-1871)
- ao)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- ap)** Alliance (internationale) de la Démocratie Socialiste
- aq)** Robin, Paul (1837-1912)
- ar)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- as)** Gercen, Aleksandr Ivanovič (1812-1870)
- at)** Kolokol (Колокол; deutsch: Die Glocke; franz. La Cloche)
- au)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- av)** Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- aw)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- ax)** Utin, Nikolaj Isaakovič (1845-1883)

- ay)** La Solidarité
- az)** Guillaume, James (1844-1916)
- ba)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- bb)** Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- bc)** La Marseillaise
- bd)** Flourens, Gustave (1838-1871)
- be)** Bakunin, Michail Aleksandrovič (1814-1876)
- bf)** Lafargue, Laura (1845-1911)
- bg)** Siehe Laura Lafargue an Karl Marx, 18.4.1870.
- bh)** The Queen's Messenger
- bi)** Burgh, 1st Marquess of Clanricarde, Ulick John de (1802-1874)

Kritischer Apparat

- 1)** über der Zeile eingetragen
- 2)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 3)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 4)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 5)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 6)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 7)** über der Zeile eingetragen
- 8)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 9)** über der Zeile eingetragen
- 10)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 11)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 12)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 13)** innerhalb der Zeile eingetragen
- 14)** über der Zeile eingetragen
- 15)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 16)** über der Zeile eingetragen
- 17)** Tilgung durch Streichung
- 18)** über der Zeile eingetragen
- 19)** über der Zeile eingetragen
- 20)** über der Zeile eingetragen