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Letter to Karl Marx

Mikhail Bakunin

December 22, 1868

December 22, 1868. Geneva

123. Montbrillant.

My old friend – Serno has shared with me the part of your letter that concerned me. You asked him if I continue to be your friend. – Yes, more than ever, dear Marx, because I understand better than ever how right you are in following, and in inviting us all to march on the wide road of economic revolution, and in denigrating those among us who would lose themselves on the paths of either national or exclusively political enterprises. I now do what you yourself commenced to do more than twenty years ago. – Since the solemn and public farewells that I addressed to the bourgeois at the Berne Congress, I have known no other society, no other milieu than the world of the workers. – My homeland now is the International of which you are one of the principal founders. – So you see, dear friend, that I am your disciple – and I am proud to be it. – This is all that was needed to explain my relationships and my personal feelings. – Let us pass on to other questions.

I read in your letter to Serno that we have posed the question falsely at Berne, by speaking of the equalization of classes and individuals. – That observation is perfectly fair with regard to the

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terms, with regard to the formula that we have made use of. – But that formula has been, as it were, imposed on us by the stupidity and final impenitence of our bourgeois audience. – They have been stupid enough to yield to us, without a fight, as it were, the terrain of equality – and our triumph has consisted precisely in the fact that we have been able to observe that they reject all the conditions of a real and serious equality. – That if what has made them, and still makes them, furious. – What's more, I admit wholeheartedly that we could have better expressed ourselves otherwise, if, for example, we had said: The radical suppression of the economic causes of the existence of the different classes, and the economic, social and political equalization of the environment and the conditions of existence and development for all individuals without difference of sex, nation and race. – I have send you in a bundle all the speeches, except one, that I gave at Berne – Herzen having asked me for permission to print them in the last Mohican, that is in the last issue of his Journal, which has ceased to appear for lack of public and readers, I had no reason to refuse him. – But I beg you to believe that there is absolutely no solidarity between him and me. – Since 1863 especially, all our political relations, and now even our private relations, have broken off. – He asked permission to modify in his own way the speech that I made at Berne regarding Russia, in response to the speech of my friend Mroczkowski, which you will find in Kolokol – I proposed, like all my friends of the Russian socialist democracy, of which I have also sent the program, incidentally written by me, as the condition of real, which is to say economic, social and political emancipation of the Russian and non-Russian peoples shut up in the Russian Empire – the radical destruction of that Empire – That is too much for Herzen and we have fallen out. – I also send you the Program of the Alliance that we have founded with Becker and many Italian, Polish and French friends. – On this subject we will have much to say to one another. – I will soon send you a copy of a long letter, – almost a pamphlet – that I wrote on the subject to my friend César

de Paepe – Now a few words on what is happening here. At Basle there is a considerable strike – which will probably have the result of adding 5000 members more to the International. – Geneva appears perfect. – We have had a great popular assembly, which has appointed a permanent Commission of Correspondence with Basle – I am on it. – Becker as well. – I have truly found here, among the workers, some magnificent men. – Give my regards to Engels, if he is not dead a second time. – You know that he has been buried once – and I beg you to give him a copy of my speech, and Eckarius and Jung as well.

Your devoted M. Bakunin

Please remember me to Madame Marx.