

Letter to Nikolay Platonovich Ogarev and Vladimir Michajlovich Ozerov

Mikhail Bakunin

April 5, 1871

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1. To Jean.

Here is a letter to *Varlin* for you.¹ I send it to you today in case, enflamed by our impatient friend Ross, you should decide to leave Paris before circumstances and especially financial means have allowed me to join you. On that subject, I have already written to Ross and to you yesterday. Return the letter to Varlin only from hand to hand. In all probability the Parisians succumb, but they will not succumb in vain, having accomplished their task, and posed the question; and they carry with them at least half of Paris. The provincial towns—Lyon, Marseille and others—are unfortunately in as bad shape as before, at least judging by the news that has reached me. The old Jacobins also worry me a great deal: Delescluze, Flourens, Pyat and their ilk, and even Blanqui, become members of the Commune. I fear that they push the Commune and make fall in the old rut of the slicing of heads and the attention to pockets. Then all will be lost. One and indivisible will lose all and be lost itself in the first place. The whole merit of this revolution is precisely to be a revolution of the laborers. That is what organization can do. Our friends, during the siege, have succeeded, and they have been able to do it, by organizing and in that manner they have put in place a considerable force, but our friends from Lyon and Marseille² remain outside. At Paris, too many energetic and capable men are concentrated, so numerous that I fear that they obstruct one another. On the contrary, in the provinces, there is no one. If there was still time, we would have to insist that Paris send as many truly revolutionary delegates to the provinces as possible. But how to do that when Cluseret has entered the Committee? Could this be true? If it is true, it can only be by a forceful coup. What a devilishly difficult situation! On the one hand, the police connivance of the Prussians with the French reaction; on the other hand, the idiocy of the province. Only the most desperate measures and the determination to destroy everything with itself can save the cause. I beg you, write me all that you know about Lyon and Marseille, as well as Paris. *Has James left or not?*

Why is my book published on such gray, dirty paper?

I would like to give it another title:

L'Empire knouto-germanique et la Révolution sociale.

If the printing is still not finished, change it. But if everything is already printed,³ let your title for the book remain.

Please send me right away all the printed sheets, in 20 copies, and mail a copy: to Alerini, to Marseille, to someone in Lyon, either to Richard or to Mme Blanc, to Sentiñón and Pellicer-Farga in Barcelone. Get their addresses, as well as that of Alerini, from Zhukovskij. Do Zhuk and Utin intend to go to Paris? Send me the *Egalité*. And what is happening with *Solidarité*?

If you leave, our friend Sacha, at least initially, will naturally remain in Geneva. I impatiently await your response.

¹ In the margin: You, instruct Varlin to read my letter and give it a reading yourself, if possible in the presence of some other good friends.

It would be good if we saw each other before you leave. Send some money, I will arrive after the 13th or 15th of April.

² In the left margin: And what is going on with Lazarev? Where does he fly with his beloved [apparently a flying machine he had invented]? Do you know anything about Postnikov?

In the right margin: As for Luginin, he claims that it will soon be [this way?] in Russia.

³ In the margin: more than two million troops and all have received arms; the soldiers are trained according to the new Prussian system; as for the officers, they are perfectly instructed. And what news of [Sergei] Nechaev and [Vladimir] Serebrennikov?

2. To Aga.

Come on, my friend Aga. Write back to me, if only one line. What do you think of the desperate movement at Paris? Whatever its result, it must be said that they are brave. At Paris is to be found what we have sought in vain at Lyon and Marseille: an organization and some men determined to go all the way to the end. It is likely that they will be defeated. But it is certain that from now on there will be no other existence France apart from the Social Revolution.⁴ The French State is dead for centuries. Over there, the revolutionaries are more feared than the five billions [war indemnity]; and so many different nations: 1. the peasants; 2. the workers; 3. the *petite bourgeoisie*; 4. the *grande bourgeoisie*; 5. the phantoms of the other world, the nobles; and 6. the eternal shadows, the vampire-clerics; 7. finally, the bureaucratic sphere; 8. the proletariat of the pen. Between all these nations, there is no solidarity, if there is not mutual hatred and patriotic phraseology. As for [Vladimir Fedorovich] Luginin, I am very pleased with him. I have unearthed in him the old *compagnon*, the familiar knight, the same *last Mohican* of the nobles, but today beset with concern for the cooperatives. As for my business, he has taken it in hand warmly, sincerely and with good grace and there are serious hopes that he will settle it. As for you, old friend, write. Today, I have telegraphed you, asking you to send me, to be paid for on delivery, two pounds of tea. So send them And how is my Angel Marie. How is her health, and yours? Write soonest.

Your,
M. B.

⁴ In the margin: more than two million troops and all have received arms; the soldiers are trained according to the new Prussian system; as for the officers, they are perfectly instructed. And what news of [Sergei] Nechaev and [Vladimir] Serebrennikov?

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