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Madame Léo and l'Egalité

Mikhail Bakunin

March 1869

We have inserted this letter all the more willingly because it eloquently summarizes the reasons that militate in favor of a rapprochement of the different democratic parties. We will take the occasion to explain ourselves once and for all on the subject.

We understand the lofty sentiment which has dictated the letter we have just read, but we cannot let ourselves be led by these impulses of the heart; we know too well that they have always managed to doom the people's cause, and we cannot, and must not forget what sad consequences the spirit of conciliation has had for the working class, for that class which, having always suffered, has always rebelled and have always been misled by too much confidence, by too much generosity, for that class which has so generously spilled its blood for the greatest profit of those to whom it has made concessions, for the bourgeoisie, who now oppress and starve it.

These lessons have been profitable. The workers, no longer letting themselves be led by their hearts, will no longer concede anything.

Every concession would have the effect of pushing back the complete emancipation of labor, and could produce only a par-

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tial liberation of the proletariat, the creation of a new class which, in its turn, would become oppressive.

That perspective, examined by the Congress of Lausanne, has been rejected: *All together or no one*, that has been the spirit of the Congress on that question. Now, that general liberation is only possible by radical means which exclude every possibility of compromise or concession; the Congress of Brussels has compromised, and that is why it has invited the *League and Peace and Freedom* to dissolve, manifesting in this way the will of the workers to break with the bourgeois democracy, and declaring, as it were, that the *International Workingmen's Association* can no longer recognize any politics but that which would have for its immediate and direct aim the radical liberation of the last of the destitute.

We will continue in our next issue.

We have received two letters, one from Mme. André Léo, the other signed collectively by four persons: Elie Reclus, Louis Kneip, A. Davaud and Albert, cobbler. These two letters are inspired by the same spirit of conciliation with regard to that fine bourgeois class which feeds on us so tranquilly every day, as if it was the most natural and most legitimate thing in the world, and by protest against the tendencies of our paper, because having displayed the flag of the frank politics of the proletariat it does not wish to consent to any deal. It is true, we hold deals in horror. Historical experience demonstrates to us that in all the political and social struggles they have always only served the possessing and powerful classes, to the detriment of the workers.

The lack of space does not allow us to insert these two letters. In the face of the coalition of bosses who threaten to starve us, we have nothing to say and do but to polemicize against bourgeois socialism.