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Letter from Russia

Nanitcha

April 13th 1905

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Petersburg, April 5th 1905.

Quickly I set out to write this reply to you, dear comrades, because I need to burn your letter, although it is so dear to me. It has been eight days already that my primitive freedom hangs by a thread, which is getting thinner and thinner.

This whole week i was a bit worried, awaiting a not so pleasurable visit. But fortune is on my side, the blow has not yet been struck. And I start to learn to be watchful. You think that the excess of oppression will make the spirit of revolt grow. I also believed that before coming back here and it is only now that reality has proven the opposite.

Maybe this has to do with the psychology of the Russian people, which is very strange to establish. I could give you a few traits of this psychology in a little article for the newspaper, but you will correct my terrible Franco-Russian, which is becoming more and more Russian because, without practice, I am forgetting how to speak French.

As for unpublished details, I am afraid I can tell you nothing new.

Your newspapers, I suppose, have told you what is happening here, even more than that.

I totally agree with you, we need to enter each head to abolish the idea, the meaning even of authority.

To consider each person as an individual, to speak their language, to help them walk by walking alongside them—that is free creation, that is the most productive work, although unnoticed.

Don't think that comrades here let themselves be hypnotised by the face of the republic, not at all; but, you know yourself that we can achieve nothing with ignorant people, with a herd. And if the people is a herd, as energetic as its leaders might be, what good will it achieve? But that is too sad, and we all had too many illusions.

I wish I could talk more about this, but I am in a hurry.

One last word. A few days ago, A few “anarchist rebels”, as they were called (they are only social revolutionists), were arrested. People say that in Paris 37 Russians were arrested, and that the Russian government demands that they be sent back here. What will your government do?! Is it true?!

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