

# Anarchist Geographers and Feminism in Late 19th Century France: the Contributions of Elisée and Elie Reclus

Federico Ferretti

*School of Geography  
University College Dublin*

**ABSTRACT:** Women were part of the political and scientific networks that contributed to Elisée Reclus' enterprise of the New Universal Geography and built the "Antiauthoritarian International," although they have been generally neglected by historiography. During the French Second Empire (1852-1870), Elie and Elisée Reclus collaborated with some of the most famous French militant women and feminists, like Louise Michel, Léodile Champseix (known under the masculine pseudonym of André Léo) and Noémi Reclus, including creating and participating in a league for women's rights. This paper aims to clarify the working of these networks and their specific intersections with geography in the period of the 1871 Paris Commune and in the following ten years of exile, mainly through an analysis of correspondence by Louise Michel, Léodile Champseix and the members (male and female) of the Reclus family. My main hypothesis is that the collaboration between feminist militants and anarchist geographers, questioning patriarchy, endorsing 'free union' and mixed education, anticipated several features of successive anarchist feminisms, and that its study can be a useful contribution to a "Feminist Historical Geography."

## Introduction

This paper addresses the relations between the network of the anarchist geographers, especially the brothers Elie Reclus (1827-1904) and Elisée Reclus (1830-1905), and the French feminists and militants Léodile Champseix-Béra, alias André Léo (1824-1900), and Louise Michel (1830-1905). Both Léo and Michel were pioneers of radical feminism, as acknowledged by a rich French and international literature, which is progressively rediscovering these figures, particularly in relation to the 1871 Paris Commune.<sup>1</sup>

My main argument is that nineteenth century anarchism and feminism shared common roots within French milieus, firstly those of the republican and socialist opponents to the Second Empire (1852-1870), then those of the Paris Commune (1871), and finally those of the post-Commune exile. In this sense, I argue that the Reclus brothers, geographers, and two of the founders of the anarchist movement, were also involved in feminist issues that paralleled the social engagement of women such as Léo, Michel, and Paule Minck (1839-1901), and that the circuit of anarchist geographers played a key role in establishing relations between anarchism and feminism, drawing on a common engagement with secular education,<sup>2</sup> in the affirmation of the individual emancipation for all human beings, both women and men, and in shared social networks.<sup>3</sup> I suggest that anarchism, generally underestimated and almost completely missed in important works on the 1871 Commune's women (see for example the work of Gay Gullickson<sup>4</sup>), was, on the contrary, very influential before and during the Commune as well as in its aftermath. As Kristin Ross notes, figures of left/libertarians like Léo and the Recluses are to be reconsidered not only as 1871 militants, but also as protagonists of the wide spreading of "the thought that was produced in the 1870s and 1880s."<sup>5</sup> These ideas, according to Ross, aimed to build a completely

new world starting with the transformation of daily life, what Eugène Pottier and Gustave Courbet defined as “the communal luxury.”<sup>6</sup>

Geography was influential in this cross-pollination between anarchism and feminism. First, because the collaboration among the various actors was built around the publishing networks of the Reclus brothers and entailed a shared worldview that included an anti-colonialist stance by the Recluses and Louise Michel.<sup>7</sup> Second, because the city of Paris, and in particular some of its neighborhoods, were the place in which these networks were constituted, underlining the relevance of places for the construction of geographical and political knowledge.<sup>8</sup> Ackelsberg and Breitbart discuss a similar neighborhood base within the spatial dimensions of women’s radical activism in the Barcelona strikes of 1917-19.<sup>9</sup>

The circuit of anarchist geographers established around the networks of the Reclus brothers, originally centered in Paris, realized some of its major outputs in Switzerland in the 1870s and 1880s. There, exiled French *Communards* like the Recluses and Gustave Lefrançais (1826-1901) met with other political exiles like the Russians, Pyotr Kropotkin (1842-1921) and Lev Mechnikov (1838-1888) and the Ukrainian, Mikhail Dragomanov (1841-1895), who were Elisée Reclus’s main collaborators on his *New Universal Geography*. In this nineteen-volume geographical encyclopedia, the anarchist geographers sought to render science politically relevant through popular education and to spread the principles of human unity and international solidarity; this scientific enterprise paralleled the participation of its protagonists in the Anti-Authoritarian International in Switzerland, the first anarchist organization in history.<sup>10</sup> As I explain below, the Reclus brothers’ association with feminists also conditioned their geographical and ethnographic works.<sup>11</sup>

Drawing both on the international literature that is rediscovering the links between anarchism and geography,<sup>12</sup> and on works on feminist geographies and historical geographies,<sup>13</sup> I base my argument on primary sources such as diaries, correspondences, and published works of the protagonists. In the first part of my paper, I reconstruct the social networks of Michel, Léo, and the Reclus brothers during the Second Empire according to their correspondence. In the second part I analyze their relations in the framework of the 1871 Paris Commune, mainly relying on the diary of Elie Reclus and on Louise Michel’s works. In the third part I examine the international networks of the protagonists in exile, focusing mainly on the proposition of “free union,” by which the Reclus family scandalized the French bourgeoisie of the Third Republic; I argue that it was the direct consequence of earlier debates and collaborations between anarchists and feminists. It is worth stressing that, at that time, socialism and anarchism were definitions, which did not necessarily correspond to a political opposition, anarchism being part of the wider socialist field. Thus, I use the term socialism not in opposition to anarchism, but to identify the wider field of social struggles in which the aforementioned radicals (women and men) were involved, identifying then the specific moments in which anarchism and other socialist currents stood in opposition to each other as the century progressed.

### **Women and associations: revolutionary ideas in Second Empire’s Paris**

Élisée Reclus, an author still little known in the English-speaking world, was nevertheless a very central figure in geography in his time. A student of Carl Ritter in Berlin, he spent most of his career outside of France (mainly in Switzerland and Belgium) due to political persecution. Nevertheless his mammoth geographical works *La Terre (The Earth)*, 1867-1868, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle (New Universal Geography)*, 1876-1894 and *L’Homme et la Terre (Men and Earth)*, 1905-1908, are considered milestones in the development of human geography, and recent studies have shown that they had, at that time, a much larger impact than the works of the most famous French

university geographers, like Paul Vidal de la Blache.<sup>14</sup> Together with his brother Elie, Elisée also played a major role in the foundation of the international anarchist movement.<sup>15</sup>

André Léo (masculine pseudonym of Léodile Béra-Champseix) was a journalist, a novelist, and a feminist/socialist militant. Married to the socialist Grégoire Champseix (1817-1863), she was exiled with him in Switzerland after the 1848 Revolution and came back to France only in 1860. Léo always stressed that her relation with Champseix was a marriage of love and a happy union. In her first novels the unhappiness of conventional marriages based on economic interest and the proposal of an alternative behavior for individuals were the central themes. The first one, *Un mariage scandaleux* (*A Scandalous Marriage*), published in 1862, for which she adopted the pseudonym based on the names of her two sons, André and Léo, was the occasion for her to get in touch with the Reclus brothers, then in Paris; her unpublished correspondence with them and with their wives, partially surviving in the Amsterdam International Institute of Social History, are precious sources to reconstruct their relationship. The first documented contact is an 1862 letter from Léo to Elie Reclus, acknowledging him for his book review of *Mariage scandaleux*, published in the important journal *Revue Germanique*. In his review, the eldest of the Recluses noted a series of points that have been hailed more recently by contemporary critics such as Barbara Giraud, who considers *Un mariage scandaleux* as one of the first expressions of Léo's political program on public education, women's freedom and hygiene.<sup>16</sup> The novel is the story of a young bourgeois teacher, Lucie, who marries Michel, a peasant to whom she gave classes. Such a union reversed both social conventions and social hierarchies, as a bourgeois woman was not allowed to freely choose her husband from a lower class, and many in society looked askance at both literate peasants and women. A literate peasant was a subversive, and, according to Cecilia Beach, "reading was equally dangerous for women. Not only did it take them away from their domestic duties, but it also troubled the[m]."<sup>17</sup>

Elie Reclus stressed the non-conformist character of the novel, stating that: "We had seen kings marrying young shepherdesses, but no fairy tale had imagined bourgeois marrying shepherds.... No bourgeois maid had ever renounced wearing her feather hat!"<sup>18</sup> Léo, in her letters, acknowledged Elie Reclus as her "benevolent judge" and proposed to put him in touch with Jenny d'Héricourt (1809-1875), inviting both to her house. "She will be enchanted to meet you, and I to receive you in my home for the first time.... My husband will be happy to be introduced to you."<sup>19</sup> Héricourt was a French republican feminist participating in the 1848 Revolution and strongly opposed to the masculinism displayed by radical men such as Jules Michelet (1798-1874) and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865). Léo remained a friend and correspondent of the Recluses, and of their wives Fanny L'Herminez-Reclus (1839-1874) and Noémi Reclus-Reclus (1826-1904),<sup>20</sup> until her death in 1900. Léo's second novel, *Aline Ali*, on which Elisée Reclus congratulated her in his 1869 letters,<sup>21</sup> was the story of a woman who chose to not marry and to work as a people's teacher: another case of the literary mobilization of Léo's political agenda through fictional lives of non-conformist and non-conventional women.

For part of the 1860s, the Reclus brothers and André Léo lived in the same building in Square de Batignolles, in North-Eastern Paris, an area then recently annexed to Greater Paris by the Haussmann reformation in 1860. From some years, this address was familiar to many French and international socialists and others opposed to Napoleon III's regime.<sup>22</sup> The Batignolles neighborhood was also home to others in a network of scientists, militants, and educators strongly engaged in secular and rational education, including Ferdinand Buisson (1841-1932), the future founder of the French system of secular schools.<sup>23</sup> Ferdinand Buisson's brother Benjamin was also active in socialist networks, and their mother helped local militants escape from repression in the Commune's aftermath.<sup>24</sup> Benoît Malon and Aristide Rey, also lived in Batignolles: the latter

accompanied Elie Reclus in his mission in Spain in 1868-69 to try to link the French and Spanish Republicans.

Several works on the Commune and on the history of Paris state the importance of the integration of peripheral and proletarian neighborhoods like Batignolles, Montmartre, and Belleville as a factor in the concentration of an urban proletariat aware of its strength and very linked to its territory.<sup>25</sup> The neighborhood was the base of the Reclus brothers' first political experiences in radical circuits; Batignolles was one of the first French sections of the First International, which they joined in 1864.<sup>26</sup> In their house on Square de Batignolles, they inaugurated a weekly salon, the *Lundis Reclus*, where every Monday evening they received French socialist and republican *intelligentsia* such as Auguste Blanqui and political exiles like Alexandre Herzen and Mikhail Bakunin, including "a Basotho prince."<sup>27</sup> Their Monday salon continued when the Recluses moved to rue Feuilleantines (Fifth Arrondissement), closer to the publishers' neighborhood of Saint-Germain-des-Près, with their respective families in 1867.<sup>28</sup> Despite the move, they remained members of the Batignolles internationalist section, for which they helped edit, in 1871, the ephemeral journal *La République des Travailleurs*.

Between 1868 and 1869, the *Société de révéndication des droits de la femme* (League for the Claim of Women's Rights) was founded by André Léo, Louise Michel, Noémi Reclus, and other members of the Reclus family, including Elie and Elisée.<sup>29</sup> According to Alice Primi, this association, which organized a series of conferences in the Vauxhall Hall in the Tenth Arrondissement in Paris, was oriented towards a "socialist and universalist humanism,"<sup>30</sup> in which the struggle against patriarchy was not a struggle of women against men, but an important step towards the emancipation of the whole human kind. While the radicalism of these women was definitively confirmed by the Commune's experience, the letters sent in these years by Elisée Reclus to André Léo shed light on the close complicity between the male and female members of this association. In an 1869 letter, Reclus related to Léo, on a funny note, the essays of some anthropologists to demonstrate that the man's brain was bigger than the woman's. Reclus concluded sarcastically that this alleged scientific theory had no importance, considering the intellectual deficiency of some men, for instance the members of a recent political meeting who had resisted Reclus's defense of women's rights. "As a man, I should admit that, at the last meeting in rue Magnan, those who gave demonstration of their intelligence were not the men [accordingly, Reclus only liked female speakers that night]. It has been sad and ridiculous."<sup>31</sup>

Reclus also suggested international contacts for one Léo's projected publications on the rights of women,<sup>32</sup> and at her request for documents on the feminine question in England and in Germany, recommended she contact "Josephine Butler, in Liverpool, England,"<sup>33</sup> and "Mrs. Marwedel, in Hamburg. My brother will give you her address."<sup>34</sup> This correspondence underlines the role of the Reclus brothers – geographers, travelers and multilingual scholars – as references and contributors for all the Paris leftist networks of that time including feminist circuits; by furnishing international contacts for André Léo, they contributed both to early feminism and to the formation of socialist and left/libertarian French and international networks. The Recluses and Léo took part in the League for Peace and Liberty, a progressive association whose more radical members, including Mikhail Bakunin, later joined the First International. In a long letter, Reclus related to Léo his attempts, during the 1868 League's congress in Bern, to convince the other members to endorse women's rights. "They tried to stifle the question of women's rights: 'five minutes for chivalry, and that's already too much!' cried a pot-bellied man. But there we won, and the rights of women were acknowledged without any contraries."<sup>35</sup> Léo and the Recluses were also advocates for secular education. As Martine Brunet demonstrates, education was one of the main

battlefields for anarchists, feminists, and others with socialist tendencies who challenged both patriarchal education and the power of the Church.<sup>36</sup> Feminists such as Michel and Léo considered secular and public education as central to women's emancipation, providing instruction to both young girls and adult lower-class women, providing work for female teachers, and getting rid of the clerical influence deemed one of the main obstacles to women's emancipation. In Léo's novels *Aline Ali* and *Un mariage scandaleux*, both women protagonists are teachers involved in people's education. Similarly, public education was one of the main concerns for the Reclus brothers and for the first anarchists in the *Fédération jurassienne*, the Swiss section of the First International, like James Guillaume. It was not a coincidence that the Commune's administration was very active in the reorganization of Paris primary schools, in which both Michel and Léo took part.<sup>37</sup> In 1869, Léo and Elisée Reclus wrote a manifesto on people's education issues, the text of which survives in the International Institute for Social History, for the creation of a journal to develop literacy among French peasants. Their main argument was the centrality of the "struggle against ignorance" in order to "defeat the present regime."<sup>38</sup>

Finally, it is worth stressing the role that the female members of the Reclus family played in these networks: Noémie (herself a Reclus who married her cousin Elie, and was thus also Elisée's cousin) was an active member, with Léo and Louise Michel, in the foundation of the League for the Claim of Women's Rights and later in the Commission for Public Education of the Paris Commune.<sup>39</sup> The seven Reclus sisters (there were five Reclus brothers, even if I can only address Elie and Elisée's works here) were equally non-conventional women for the most part.<sup>40</sup> First, they were all educated, what was unusual for a traditional family from the French countryside at that time; some of them traveled abroad to serve as private teachers, especially for British families, and "at least three of them were excellent translators."<sup>41</sup> The most famous of them, Louise Dumesnil-Reclus (1839-1917), was also a writer, and the editor of Elisée's correspondence.

### **On the barricades: the Paris Commune**

The Recluses, Andre Léo, Louise Michel, members of the composite (left/republican, socialist and anarchist) opposition to Napoleon III's Second Empire (1852-1870), were active participants in the seventy-three days of the Paris Commune (March 18th – May 28th, 1871). The sudden defeat of Napoleon III's troops at the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War in August 1870 led to the proclamation of the Third Republic on September 4th, 1870. The continuation of the war against Prussia then became perceived, especially for French proletarians, as the defense of Republic against autocracy. During the Siege of Paris from September, 1870 to nearly February, 1871, the Parisian people, essentially socialist and republican, continued the war against Prussia to defend the new republic, organizing the Federation of the National Guard, a military group independent of the official French army, in which the chiefs were elected by the troops.

Parisians considered the capitulation of the "official" French leaders at Versailles to the Prussians in January, 1871 a betrayal. On March 18th, the French official army tried to seize the ordnance of the National Guard, partially paid by the voluntary taxation of Paris citizens, on the Montmartre hill. Parisians rose up en masse, taking the control of the whole city and compelling the army to retreat toward Versailles to protect the official government. For the next few months in which the Commune ruled, several social reforms were applied, including the protection of the tenants from landlords, in what many contemporary geographers consider the first urban revolution.<sup>42</sup>

The Commune also provided the space for the liberation of energy for female emancipation and activism. Women such as Paule Minck were active in the Clubs, discussion groups that constituted a great part of Paris public life during the Commune: they were political associations, centers of grass-roots and radical activism that took over churches, and held meetings in them

on matters such as family and secular education.<sup>43</sup> Other key figures in the history of French feminism, like Marguerite Tinayre (1831-1895), who later joined a more moderate socialism, were involved in the attempt to reform and secularize the school sector: under the Commune, Tinayre served as a school inspector in the 12th twelveth Arrondissement.<sup>44</sup> While the name of *The Union des femmes pour la defense de Paris et les soins aux blessés* (Union of Women for the Defense of Paris and Aid to Wounded) reflected the immediate need to protect Paris and the Commune, the organization, founded by Russian feminist socialist Elisabeth Dmitrieff (1851-1910), focused on women's labor and achieving long-term social and economic equality, including organizing producer-owned cooperatives.<sup>45</sup>

Historians such as Eichner and Gullickson have argued that Commune women found great obstacles not only among the conservatives, but also among their male fellow militants.<sup>46</sup> Yet there were important exceptions, namely the anarchist component of the Commune. The majority members in the Commune Council, called neo-Jacobins, were inspired by Auguste Blanqui's thinking, which drew on authoritarian practices on the model of the 1793 *Comité de Salut Public*, but the anarchist (*Libertaires*) men, though a minority, were generally sensitive to the feminist cause and close to the female militants. Moreover, many of the *Communardes* [French term for female *Communards*] were supporters of the libertarian "minority," like André Léo and Paule Minck. According to Kristin Ross, it was women aiming "to break down any equivalence or equation between revolution and the gallows" who were mostly responsible for the destruction of the guillotine, symbol of the 1793 Jacobin terror, on April 9th, 1871.<sup>47</sup>

Though it had been observed that "women carrying guns, sometimes in uniform, sometimes not, were a fairly common sight in Paris"<sup>48</sup> throughout the period of the Commune, women were generally enrolled as *cantinières* (cooks) or *ambulancières* (nurses). Léo, whose writing in the journal *La Sociale*, made her the most important female voice in publishing in the Commune's Paris, complained about some Commune leaders' underestimation of the revolutionary potential of women, arguing that women's official exclusion by the fighting functions within the National Guard weakened the whole cause. To make a revolution, she argued, the two halves of the exploited world, men and women, should be equally involved. "When the daughters, wives and mothers fight with their sons, husbands, and fathers, Paris will no longer have a passion for liberty, it will have a delirium. And the enemy soldiers will be forced to recognize that what they are facing is . . . an entire people."<sup>49</sup>

At the beginning of May, 1871, the newly-constituted Commune's *Comité de Salut public*, with its neo-Jacobin majority, approved a measure to keep women far from the battlefield, which was immediately boycotted by the *Libertaires*, who saw in this Committee the return of the Jacobin terror and of an authoritarian vein. Léo raged at this decision; according to Carolyn Eichner, Léo's speech accused the military elite males of a gender bias against the *Communardes*. I would argue that it was also an expression of the irreconcilable contradiction between the two spirits of the Commune, the authoritarian and the libertarian one. The latter was the one empathetic to women's claims; on this, we can consider Elie Reclus's *Diary of the Commune*. While Elisée was taken prisoner at the beginning of the military operations and couldn't participate in the events following April 3rd, 1871, Elie remained in Paris, where he assumed public charges on behalf of the Commune. He was appointed director of the National Library, where he tried to establish a program for popular education<sup>50</sup> and took part, from April 21st, in a commission composed of himself and five women, including his wife Noémie and André Léo, charged with extending primary education to young girls.<sup>51</sup> In his diary, Elie clarified his thinking on the question of the *Communardes* and his support of their cause.

For instance, on May 1st, 1871, concurrently with the establishment of what Elie Reclus called the "dictatorship" of the *Comité de Salut Public*,<sup>52</sup> an anonymous poster tried to discredit the

*Communardes*, accusing these women of being ready to negotiate surrender with the government in Versailles. The relationship between the women's cause and workers emancipation had often been a difficult one: as late as 1866, the International Workingmen's Association passed a declaration against female work, stating that women's role should be limited to family care. It is not a coincidence that the only IWA member who voted against and endorsed women's emancipation was Eugène Varlin (1839-1871)<sup>53</sup> leading figure of the *Libertaires* in the Commune Council and the main liaison in Paris for libertarian internationalists in Switzerland.<sup>54</sup>

The Union of Women for the Defense of Paris published an indignant response to the accusatory proclamation, which Elie Reclus endorsed in his diary: "The Union of Women does not believe in conciliation between the people and its hangmen. The women of Paris only ask to continue the struggle. The Commune, representing the internationalist and revolutionary principles, is doing the social revolution and the Paris women are well aware of that. They will prove before the entire world that they will be able, at the moment of the supreme danger, and even on the barricades, to give their blood for the victory of the people."<sup>55</sup> After praising Dmitrieff and the other Union militants, Reclus analyzed the previous months as a revolutionary period allowing the liberation of women's energies, in contrast to the Church's attempts to maintain its influence on them. He wrote: "The Church tried in vain to keep them on its knees and to anesthetize their spirits with the catechism; they have been awakened suddenly from obscure saints and unfathomable mysteries. Versailles bombarded Paris, and they were impassioned for their homes, for their husbands, sons and brothers; the sacred cause became that of revolution, of work, of free thinking, because the priest is now unpleasant. I do not hear any of them demanding the vote, but they claim with force the title of citizens and most important they act as citizens."<sup>56</sup> As an anarchist Reclus appreciated radical feminists' claims for social revolution, a unification of women's cause and revolutionary cause, over more moderate feminists' claims for suffrage and political rights.

Then, Reclus related the story of one of the first calls for fighting women, launched by Marie Curton in early April, after the first military clashes between Versailles and Paris. Reclus praised this call and reproduced its text: "We can be 15,000, we can be 100,000. Will they find a French general to order to kill us, one soldier to obey at the light of the sun? Our cries will win under the tumult of the war, because love is stronger than death. So, *citoyennes*, my sisters, let's meet in every neighborhood, in every street, in every house of Paris, at whatever hour we hear the call, well or badly dressed, let's go out all with our sons and march bravely side by side with our husbands keeping their hands. The one who is launching this message will give the example."<sup>57</sup> Reclus criticized the behavior of the male *Communards*, arguing that, by impeaching these women for actually practicing their revolutionary goals, they indirectly favored the enemy. "The outposts refused to let the women pass and the *Communardes* came back deceived: in Versailles, they all laugh about these incidents."<sup>58</sup>

Nevertheless, Reclus observed that the harder the struggle became, the more women took part de facto in it, even masked. As he wrote in his diary:

Many of them gathered the rifle of their dead husband, brother or lover. Some girls are disguised as men and fight in the avant-gardes. A brave woman, who quit the rest of her province to share the danger with her friends, but who still fights with her pen, Mrs. André Léo, spoke nobly to women: 'It is no more question of national defense. The battlefield is larger now, and concerns the defense of humanity, of freedom. Now the sort of [human and political] rights all over the world is in the Paris's hands. Now women's participation is necessary (...). Louise Michel, Mrs. Eudes, Mrs. Rochebrune, already gave the example. They inspire the pride and the admiration of their comrades of arms, whose braveness they redouble.'<sup>59</sup>

Reclus used this new figure of fighting woman to question the common literary stereotypes of women, mocking the mainstream novelists: "If this war continues, we will have certainly battalions of women: even the young girls will participate en masse, as Mrs. André Léo has already asked. Our [male] poets, novelists and moralists who, in matter of women, only know boulevard's girls, anorexic countesses, fainting marquises and rich ladies, will discover that in the people's rank a new generation of women not trained on the Church's knees is rising. They want to be free, and they already are."<sup>60</sup>

Acknowledging women's fundamental contribution to the Commune, Reclus emphasized other topics central to feminist theories of the time, namely the idea of revolution in personal



**Fig. 1.** Memorial plaque placed in Paris in honor of the Communardes (Rey, Gayat and Pépino, 2013).



and daily life,<sup>61</sup> raising issues like the free choice of a partner and the abolition of prostitution, which was also a part of the official Commune's program. "Paris owes to women its fierce attitude... The influence of the people's women is conditioning the government. In the proletarian neighborhoods, the number of weddings is much more considerable than in the annual average of the same period, because the mayors are less demanding for documents and formalities. On the other side, there are fewer weddings in the rich neighborhoods of Saint-Germain or Passy ... The vigilance committee of the 18th eighteenth arrondissement, including a Russian woman [Dmitrieff], voted unanimously a measure calling for the disappearance of prostitution from the public street, as well as the immediate disappearance of nuns from hospitals and prisons."<sup>62</sup> The *Communardes* saw measures against prostitution as part of the struggle against women's exploitation, and struggles against the Church formed a central link in the collaboration between feminists and anarchists.

Elie Reclus, unable to serve on the barricades due to a wounded hand, found refuge in a secure house, and his last statement on the women's activities is dated in the night of May 22: "In the night, I came back by the Faubourg du Temple. An immense work of fortification is accomplished here: men dig trenches and women stand guard around with their bayonet rifles."<sup>63</sup> Women's massive presence in the final defense during the "Bloody Week" – the days between May 21st and 28th when Versailles troops entered Paris, massacring 30,000 to 40,000 Parisians, according to early sources like the book of Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray (no more than 10,000, according to Robert Tombs) – is widely acknowledged.<sup>64</sup> Louise Michel, allied at the time with the neo-Jacobin 'Majority' though became anarchist in the Commune's aftermath,<sup>65</sup> was part of the women's resistance on the barricades of Bloody Week. Her braveness and her dedication are part of the Commune's legend. According to her memoirs, many thousands of women during the Commune participated in political discussions, in military operations, and at least one thousand in the last defense, including some ex-prostitutes whom she had organized to join the Commune after prostitution was abolished. During her trial before the military court that judged the Communards after Bloody Week, Michel wanted to take blame for all of the Communards' violent actions, as a way of attempting to protect her fellow revolutionaries, and also denied the existence of the *pétroleuses*, women who allegedly set fire to public buildings, stating that, during Bloody Week, "women struggled like lions, but I was the only one who wanted to set fire."<sup>66</sup> Her accounts of women's participation in the final week's barricades shed light on their devotion to the Commune's defense. "Red flag at their head, the women had their barricade in Place Blanche; there were Elizabeth Dmitrieff, Mrs. Lemel, Malvina Poulain, Blanche Lefebvre ... André Léo was on the Batignolles barricades. More than a thousand women fought during that week."<sup>67</sup>

The Commune is considered by historians of French feminism as a watershed in the history of feminist movements. Before the Commune, the feminist milieus were characterized by a general opposition to the Second Empire and radicals like Léo and Michel were considered leading figures. According to a biography of French suffragette Hubertine Auclert (1848-1914), in 1870 "Léo's Société pour la revendication des droits de la femme and [Léon] Richer's Association pour le droit des femmes had together fewer than two hundred members."<sup>68</sup> At that moment, the main issue for political opponents was to get rid of Napoleon III, and only after the Commune the question of women's vote would become priority. A clear distinction among different tendencies (Anarchists and Marxists, radicals and reformists) was not still visible, and during the Commune Léo and Michel remained the most famous voices calling for women's emancipation.

In the Commune's aftermath, anarchist feminism was represented by Louise Michel; whereas, other groups of more moderate French feminists, like the one led by Marie Deraismes (1828-1894) and Léon Richer (1824-1911), worked on issues like reform of the marriage code and

the work code. Maïté Albistur and Daniel Armogathe defined this group as representative of “bourgeois feminism” as opposed by the radical feminist strands that would rise in twentieth century French workers’ movement.<sup>69</sup> Later, in the 1880s, Auclert split with Deraismes, with Auclert leading the suffrage movement; French suffragists considered Deraismes too moderate. Albeit more radical than Deraismes’s positions, Auclert’s ideas were still too moderate to Louise Michel, whose feminist anarchism did not consider the struggle for suffrage worthy. Anarchists were not concerned with suffrage at all, men or women, because it was a function within the context of the State and representative democracy. According to Stephen Hause, when Michel came back from her ten-year deportation in New Caledonia, she “remained *Droit des Femmes*’ honorary president until she and Auclert met for the first time in the fall of 1880, when they discovered that they disagreed utterly,”<sup>70</sup> for instance, on the question of suffrage and on the alternative between reformist feminisms (both Auclert’s and Deraismes positions could fit this definition) and an anarchist revolutionary position.

### **The Commune’s aftermath: Paris radicals scattered**

One example of the Recluses’ concern for women’s right to education and profession was their support for Mary Corinna Putnam (1842-1906), one of the first female students in medicine at the University of Paris, who lived with the Recluses through the Siege and the Commune. The daughter of the American publisher George Palmer Putnam, she appreciated the chance to be supported by non-conformist people like the Recluses.<sup>71</sup> “The Recluses are queer, but nice in their way,” she told her mother.<sup>72</sup> In these months, she was increasingly compelled by the Reclus tribe and its characters and celebrated the proclamation of the Republic with them.<sup>73</sup> Writing home on December 15th, 1870, she declared that: “My interest is immense in the events that are passing, especially since the republic, and as far as I myself am concerned, feel quite ready to die in its defense, especially if in so doing I could help the Reclus.”<sup>74</sup>

Putnam was more helpful alive than dead, fortunately. In the Commune’s aftermath, the government of the Third Republic executed, jailed, deported, and exiled, many participants. According to Robert Tombs, “nearly 40,000 people were rounded up, marched off to Versailles and held in camps [where] several hundred died.”<sup>75</sup> In the subsequent trial of around 12,500 people by special martial courts, “ninety-five men and women were sentenced to death [and] twenty-three, all men, were executed,”<sup>76</sup> while “the main result of the massive judicial repression was the transportation to a penal colony in new Caledonia of over 4,000 insurgents.”<sup>77</sup>

Putnam wrote to her parents with her concern about the fate of Elisée Reclus since his imprisonment,<sup>78</sup> and helped influence the ambassador of the United States, Elihu Washburne (1816-1887), a friend of hers, who interceded for Reclus’s liberation; Reclus also had earned support in the U.S. thanks to his writings against slavery during the American Civil War.<sup>79</sup> The international scientific world and Reclus’s publisher Hachette<sup>80</sup> also intervened on his behalf, and upon his release after nearly a year in prison, Elisée Reclus was exiled rather than deported. This meant that he was free to choose his country of destination and not obliged to the confinement in French oversea colonies.

Louise Michel was deported to New Caledonia, where she developed a sensibility very close to that of the Reclus brothers on non-European peoples, close to Benedict Anderson’s concept of “anti-colonial imagination.”<sup>81</sup> During her stay, she was among the rare deported Communards who fraternized with the Kanaks, served also as a schoolteacher for their community, and supported their 1878 anti-colonial insurrection.<sup>82</sup> According to Kathleen Hart, in New Caledonia, “other exiled Communards accused her of savagery when she tried to create a Kanak-inspired theater complete with an orchestra based on quarter tones, but their annoyance turned to indignation when she expressed support for the 1878 Kanak revolt against the French . . . Michel

sided with the island's indigenous inhabitants, symbolically tearing apart her red Communard scarf to share with them. She even showed the Kanaks how to cut the island's telegraph wires so as to prevent communication among the colonial administrators."<sup>83</sup> Hart envisages here mutual solidarity between colonial and gender oppression, arguing "both women and 'savages' were the victims of a form of othering that represented them in terms of separate body parts."<sup>84</sup> Even within the indigenous society with which she empathized, Michel found gender inequality and decried in her writings "the vanity of Kanak men who force women to transport goods while they walk empty-handed."<sup>85</sup>

André Léo managed to escape France and found refuge in Switzerland, like the Recluses. In Switzerland, the exiles participated in the activities of the *Fédération jurassienne*, which organized the 1872 Congress of Saint-Imier, where the "Anti-authoritarians" separated definitively from the Marxists.<sup>86</sup> Léo, Benoît Malon (who had become Léo's partner after the death of her husband), and the Recluses socialized with the Swiss anarchist James Guillaume, later a collaborator of Ferdinand Buisson in Paris on his project for secular education,<sup>87</sup> and with local anarchists like Adhémar Schwitzguébel and the Reclus's cartographer Charles Perron,<sup>88</sup> who hosted the couple at his home in Geneva.<sup>89</sup> Perron and Bakunin were editors of the internationalist journal *L'Égalité* (Equality), with which Léo collaborated until she and Bakunin had a polemical argument on revolutionary strategies, in 1869. Bakunin harshly accused Léo of being too moderate, and she stopped working with the journal; the Recluses sided with Léo and Malon.<sup>90</sup> According to Guillaume, the parties reconciled in 1872. Later, Malon abandoned his anarchist positions and became a Marxist, and he and Léo, who was more than 10 years his senior, separated.<sup>91</sup>

Paule Minck likewise abandoned anarchism to embrace Blanquism, and later adhered to the Marxist *Parti Ouvrier Français* of Jules Guesde, a far cry from libertarian socialism, without nevertheless giving up her feminism. Eichner notes the complexity of the evolution of *Communardes'* positions, arguing that "as much as Léo decried Blanquist authoritarianism, Minck came to celebrate it in the aftermath of the Commune."<sup>92</sup>

### **Free Unions: "marriage" of anarchism and feminism**

Perhaps most important for posterity regarding the Reclus family's feminism and its members' commitment to the idea that "personal is political" was their practice of the *union libre* (free union), which had a broad impact on the French and international press. Free union consisted of a simple ceremony where a couple invited friends and relatives to announce their "marriage" with neither religious nor civil sanction, "without priests and mayors," in name of the freedom of the individual sentimental sphere from social and institutional conventions. In France, official marriages entailed the stipulation of an official contract, harshly criticized by all the feminists of that time because it established the wife's subordinate position as a "perennial minor," in which married women were completely dependent on their husbands' consent for every legal and economic issue. Marie Deraismes called the marriage code "the long enumeration of all the humiliation and the serfdom that women must suffer all their lives long."<sup>93</sup>

The first of the free union celebrations took place in 1870 in Vascoeuil, France, between Elisée Reclus and Fanny L'Herminez, after the death of Clarisse, Elisée's first wife, and it was attended by, among others, Léo and Malon, who later celebrated their free union in Switzerland in 1872.<sup>94</sup> If one could argue that many working class Parisians engaged in free unions, both because of their anti-clericalism, and because they either did not want to or could not afford to pay for a legal marriage. It is worth noting that the originality of these free unions was to be publically celebrated and valued as a political act. The most famous and scandalous free union ceremony took place in Paris on October 14th, 1882, where Elisée Reclus's two daughters, Magali (1860-1953) and Jeannie (1863-1897), celebrated their respective unions with two young men,

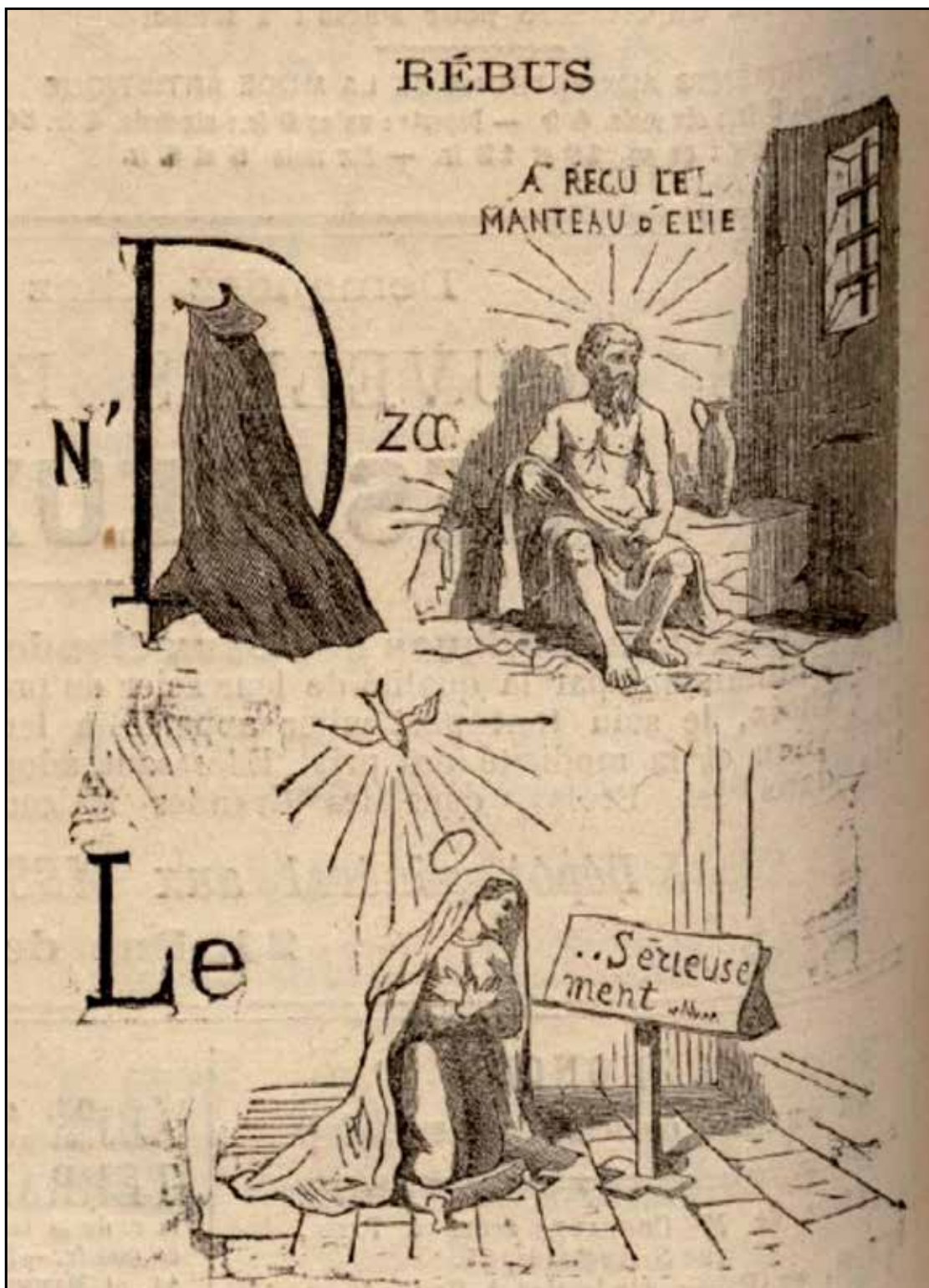
Paul Régnier (1858-1938) and Léon Cuisinier (1859-1887). On this occasion, Reclus published a discourse under the title of *Unions Libres*,<sup>95</sup> which scandalized the French conservative press no less than the “scandalous cohabitation” which this union implied.<sup>96</sup> In his pamphlet, Reclus firstly refused to claim any parental authority: “the only right we have on you is our profound feeling for you.”<sup>97</sup> He insisted on the free choice made by the two couples. “Among your parents, some had preferred a legal marriage; perhaps, in the heart of someone, some sorrow has accompanied the joy to see you linked together; but everyone has respected you, nobody tried to constrain you to follow his ideas . . . You are the masters of yourself.”<sup>98</sup> The final address by Reclus is an acknowledgment of these young people as not only biological, but also “spiritual” heirs. “We are tired, but you will continue our work, and other will continue after you . . . For you, it will not be enough to be happy, because your unions are not domestic egoism; you will redouble your virtues in dedication and goodness. You are good, please be even better, more sincere in practicing justice and stronger in claiming for the right.”<sup>99</sup>

The scandal in Paris was wide. Dozens of press articles appeared, containing mockeries in which free love was compared to free prostitution<sup>100</sup> or serious indignation about the contrast between Reclus’s universally recognized scientific contributions and his “unpopular” political positions.<sup>101</sup> What is significant is that all these conservative commentaries focused on Reclus and not on the free choice of his daughters and their partners, refusing thus to acknowledge, or even simply not understanding, his radical and concrete questioning of patriarchy. To the conservatives, Reclus was the “patriarch” so the responsibility of what happened was “objectively” up to him.

The scandal went international. To fully understand the repercussions of the free unions on the Recluses’ public image, it is worth noting a contemporary exchange between the secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, John Scott Keltie (1840-1927), and the anarchist geographer Pyotr Kropotkin, Reclus’s close friend and collaborator. Keltie, a British liberal open to scientific collaboration with anarchists like Kropotkin and Reclus but not especially radical on the political side,<sup>102</sup> wrote to Kropotkin declaring himself rather astonished that Reclus had “given away his two daughters to live with two men without obtaining any guaranties from the latter.”<sup>103</sup> Kropotkin’s answer focused first on disputing the concept of “giving” someone, namely on the possibility of disposing of a woman, in this case a daughter, as if she were a father’s personal belonging. Kropotkin insisted on the girls’ free choice.

[Reclus’s] daughters are very intellectual...girls who understand that the sanction of a *curé* or of a *maire* is not a guarantee for the happiness of marriage. I think that marriage is too holy a thing to be profaned by the admission of such breakers of the marriage’s holiness as the *curés* and the *maires* are. If not absolutely necessary for some practical reason, it never ought to be done. Marriage is a personal thing in which neither the Church nor the State has anything to see. The benediction of the *maire* or of the priest, is it a guarantee that the husband will be true to his wife? The facts show us the contrary. Prostitution is nowhere as immense as in the legal marriages: it has become an open scandal. If marriage is not holy for wishes, will it be holier from the benedictions of the *maire*?<sup>104</sup>

Kropotkin not only strongly endorsed free unions, but also developed his own arguments in favor of them, trying to convince his correspondent that the case for free union was well founded. In his letter, the Russian exile analyzed the arguments against the free union, including those in favor of a civil union with a mayor instead of a priest, coming to the conclusion that all legal sanctions of sentiments were to be refused. “The single argument of some value produced is the inheritance of the children from their parents. But Reclus’s daughters and their husbands are socialists. The father of one of them is rich, but the son has refused his richness and lives upon



**Fig. 2.** Rebus published by the journal *Le Monde illustré* 21 April 1883, p. 256. The solution was: "In spite of Elisée Reclus, marriage is a serious link to us" (*Ne déplaît à Élisée Reclus, le mariage nous lie sérieusement*). Many thanks to Christophe Brun for sending me this image.

his own chemical analyst's labor. The other is *ingénieur* and lives upon his labor too. They have, and will have, no property to secure to their children. I understand church marriage for religious people, but civil marriage is more hypocritical. The sooner down with it, the better."<sup>105</sup>

Arguments for free union were deeply developed by Elie Reclus. Elie, who after the Commune started to publish books and papers on ethnographic and anthropological subjects and was in touch with British anthropologists like John Lubbock,<sup>106</sup> was primarily interested in the institution of matriarchy, for which he delved deeply into works by John MacLennan and Johann-Jakob Bachofen.<sup>107</sup> Elie Reclus argued in his ethnographical works on the hunter-gatherer populations that the (alleged) matriarchal phase, which human societies would have experienced in their pre-history, corresponded to the establishment of sedentary societies and to a "softening" of customs, from the constant war to agriculture and peaceful activities.<sup>108</sup> In this sense, "woman was the first architect [and] the creator of primordial elements of civilization."<sup>109</sup> According to the anthropologist Chris Knight, this was something more than speculation: the anthropology of the first half of the 20th century abandoned ethnographic ideas on matrilineal kinship, considering these models too communist and collectivist (as did Friedrich Engels), and instead applied the European nuclear model of family to ancient or "primitive" societies. Knight finally argues that it was not until the 1970s that "hunter-gatherer ethnographers effectively demolished the patrilineal band model."<sup>110</sup>

Regardless of the scientific evidence that undergirded this set of nineteenth century anthropological theories, the Recluses understood free unions within the larger historical context of changing forms of marriage. Elie's brochure *Le mariage tel qu'il fut et tel qu'il est (Marriage as It Was and as It Is)*, written on the occasion of his nieces' 1882 free unions and published posthumously, presents a long-term history of the intimate relations between men and women, emphasizing the historical relativity of institutions like marriage. "Only recent scientific discovering rendered clear that the Universe is in perpetual transformation and thus that our social institutions, like the great cosmic phenomena, are modified by their reciprocal relations during the epochs: history and geology share common features; nature and humankind develop themselves in parallel and according to the same laws."<sup>111</sup>

It is worth noting that the anarchist geographers adopted an evolutionist approach in the scientific debates of that time, drawing on the theory of mutual aid, which stressed the importance of cooperation more than competition as an evolutionary factor, to challenge the so-called "social Darwinists."<sup>112</sup> In the evolutionist history of marriage presented by Elie Reclus, one finds a contrast between ancient forms of marriage and the modern proposals of social reformers. The first forms of marriage are envisaged at a time when this institution was allegedly a communitarian one and the women were the shared "war booty" of the tribe.<sup>113</sup> Not less barbarous, according to Reclus, who linked here his feminism to his anti-clericalism, was the celibacy instituted by the monotheistic religions, because the woman, "having been considered as inferior, was also charged with villainy and malice."<sup>114</sup> Reclus clarified that his critiques concerned the disregard for women showed by all religions and major civilizations of the past. "All the sects, including the Pythagorics, all civilizations, all the religions that we know, appeared on the world scene to kill one another, all agreed only on a point: disregard for women. Brahmans, Semites, Hellenics, Romans, Christians, Islamists ... everyone threw his stone against the disgraced and all they had their page in this history of shame and pain, of tyranny and suffering."<sup>115</sup>

From the past, Reclus shifted to his day, stating provocatively that in modern marriage there is also violence, but that this will not resist the strength of social transformation. "We do not exaggerate stating that women are still prisoners, that they are still oppressed by the patriarchy and that the kidnapping and the violence left indissoluble traces in present marriage . . . The process in which human kind has evolved over thirty centuries is still hostile to women. Hostile, uneven. But the system is collapsing; we are struggling against it, and since it is contested, it

will not resist for a long time.”<sup>116</sup> Reclus also traced a direct link between the equality in social relations and equality in what is called now “gender relations,” arguing that “there is no true friendship, no great love unless it is between pairs; social inequality generates in itself abuses, injustice and iniquities. Prohibition leads to revolt, subordination to insubordination.”<sup>117</sup> He pointed out the importance of personal and family relations for the betterment of whole society, leading to the necessity of free unions: “bad marriages corrupt families and consequently the whole community, like a cancerous blood corrupting the organs of the social body. The young couples who only think to associate their lives for love and solidarity . . . don’t marry before the authorities, and avoid every official sanction. They say: ‘we don’t want to begin our lives by an act that our conscience blames.’”<sup>118</sup> As for women who had entered into unhappy marriages, Reclus held that women should have a right to divorce, especially when the husband is violent. “If a husband reveals himself to be a villain, to brutalize his wife and make his sons suffer, thus, should the woman let him leave without regret, only asking him to never more come back.”<sup>119</sup> Here we find the core idea of “free union,” considered feminist because it freed women from the loss of their status as wives. According to Theresa McBride, public debates on divorce were very heated under the Third Republic. The right to divorce, established in 1792 during the revolutionary period, had been reversed in 1816 during the Restoration. The Vacluse senator Alfred Naquet’s (1834-1916) proposed divorce law, approved in 1884, responded to women’s associations’ strong requests for this right. Leftists endorsed this law, stressing its continuity with French “revolutionary” tradition of republican secularism. “The divorce bill was no less than the very emblem of republicanism by which the Third Republic could ‘reestablish the work of the Revolution.’”<sup>120</sup> It is worth noting that Naquet, during his youth, was acquainted with Bakunin, the Reclus brothers and other protagonists of the Commune.<sup>121</sup>

Concerning Elisée Reclus’s geographical works, feminist themes were constantly addressed all along his career, and the censure of his paper on women’s rights by denying its publication was even the reason for his rupture with François Buloz, the editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the first journal that published Reclus throughout the 1860s.<sup>122</sup> In the *New Universal Geography*, Reclus denounced systematically the exploitation of women workers in European industries, stressing the fact that they were paid less in the context of his critique of overall exploitations.<sup>123</sup> In *L’Homme et la Terre*, he analyzed the feminist movements of that time. Starting from the principle that all powers are linked (anticipating the contemporary concept of intersectionality) and “all the liberation movements”<sup>124</sup> as well, Reclus criticized the elitism of the first feminists, intellectuals whom he considered as too far from the cause of women workers. He invoked Michel<sup>125</sup> and Léo as examples of feminists who met the popular classes, including the lowest and most stigmatized social categories like the prostitutes, “giving active solidarity to their despised sisters against the shameful society’s justice.”<sup>126</sup> Reclus’s feminist sympathies in his geographical work, are clear, concluding in *L’Homme et la Terre*, “All women’s claims against men are right: the women workers’ claims for a pay equal to that of her male colleagues; the claims of the wife whose infidelity is considered as a crime whereas that of her husband is just a ‘little sin’; the claims of the female citizen who is excluded from public political action.”<sup>127</sup> It followed, then, that women should participate to the final uprising to obtain freedom and equality for all.

In another chapter in *L’Homme et la Terre* on libertarian and secular education, Reclus argues for women’s access to the profession of educator, a right which was questioned by the conservative and clerical societal sectors opposed to secular education. Both anarchists and feminists considered mixed-sex education an important challenge against clericals and conservatives towards the equality of rights, arguing, as did Reclus, “there is no plausible reason to differentiate the intellectual nourishment for the two sexes.”<sup>128</sup> Indeed, his cousin Pauline



Kergomard-Reclus (1838-1925), sister of Noémie Reclus, friend of André Léo and organizer of the nursery schools' system in France in collaboration with Ferdinand Buisson, was a leader in creating the country's first co-educational schools.<sup>129</sup>

### Conclusion: anarchism and feminism

Mona Domosh and Karen Morin have argued for the existence of different kinds of feminist historical geography, which as a field of study "rarely travels under its own name."<sup>130</sup> Here, I locate in feminist historical geography these crossed histories of geography and feminism. The case of the Reclus brothers demonstrates the importance of anarchism in the elaboration of a critique of patriarchy and an idea of revolution in daily life.<sup>131</sup> As with the women in their social and professional networks, the Reclus brothers believed that feminism was not a task only for women, but for all society. Similarly, feminist anarchists like Louise Michel struggled not only against patriarchy, but against all oppression and all exploitation. In the 20th twentieth century, anarchist feminists took up the ideas of free union shared by Léo, Michel and the Recluses.

This paper has shown the importance of the Reclus brothers for the establishment, during France's Second Empire, of national and international activist networks where women such as Michel, Léo and Noémi Reclus played active roles and where women's emancipation, along with more general anarchist and socialist themes, was one of the main issues. Collaboration among these activists took place in the field of public and secular education, where they advocated for women's access both as students in higher education and as teachers in a profession still often closed to them. The anarchist struggle against the intrusion of the Church and religion into daily life dovetailed with the feminist critique of the Church as an important basis of patriarchy.

The Paris Commune was a critical moment for French women's involvement in politics, though their engagement was countered not only by the Commune's adversaries, but also by a number of (men) Communards. As I have shown, the main exception, among males, were the *Libertaires* like Varlin, Malon and the Reclus brothers, and thus it was not a coincidence that the most influential (women) *Communardes* were akin to left/libertarians during the Commune, like Léo and Minck, or in its aftermath like Michel. After the Commune, they scattered all over the world, exiled from Switzerland to New Caledonia, but Louise Michel continued advocating for women's emancipation in her anarchist activism as did the women and men of the Reclus family in their practice and propaganda of free union.

This integration of anarchism and feminism is later seen in Emma Goldman (1869-1940), an influential anarchist in North American and European feminism throughout the 20th twentieth century, who knew very well the work of Reclus and Louise Michel and was close to Kropotkin.<sup>132</sup> Another example is the strong anarcho-feminist movement called *Mujeres Libres*, Spanish collectivization activists in 1936-1939, frequently addressed by later feminists such as Mary Nash, Martha Ackelsberg and Myrna Breitbart.<sup>133</sup> As recent literature shows, the legacy of early anarchist geographers like Elisée Reclus and Kropotkin, influenced the rediscovering of anarchist geographies in the 1970s and it is still influential today. My explication of the collaborative relationships between militant feminists and anarchist geographers in mid-19th century France adds an important chapter to this ongoing exploration of the roots of feminist and anarchist geographies.

### NOTES

1. Cecilia Beach, "Savoir c'est pouvoir: integral education in the novels of André Léo," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 36 (2008): 270-285; Cecilia Beach, "The literary culture of work-



- ers, women and peasants in novels by André Léo," *French Forum*, 36 (2011): 1-21. Frédéric Chauvaud, François Dubasque, Pierre Rossignol, Louis Vibrac, eds. *Les vies d'André Léo : romancière, féministe et communarde* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015) ; Alain Dalotel, *André Léo, La Junon de la Commune* (Chauvigny : APC, 2004) ; Carolyn Eichner, "'Vive la Commune!' Feminism, Socialism, and Revolutionary Revival in the Aftermath of the 1871 Paris Commune," *Journal of Women's History*, 15 (2003): 68-98; Carolyn Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004). Barbara Giraud, "Hygiène et éducation dans Un Mariage scandaleux d'André Léo," *French Forum*, 39 (2014): 81-95 ; Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany: State University of New York, 1984); Claudine Rey, Annie Limoge-Gayat, Sylvie Pépino, *Petit dictionnaire des femmes de la Commune de Paris, 1871 : les oubliées de l'histoire* (Limoges: Le Bruit des autres, 2013). Kristin Ross, *Communal Luxury* (London: Verso, 2015).
2. Beach, "Savoir c'est pouvoir;" Federico Ferretti, "Radicalizing pedagogy: Geography and libertarian pedagogy between the 19th and the 20th century" in Simon Springer, Marcelo Lopes de Souza, Richard White, eds, *The Radicalization of Pedagogy: Anarchism, Geography and the Spirit of Revolt* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016).
  3. Federico Ferretti, "Intelletuali anarchici nell'Europa del secondo Ottocento : i fratelli Reclus (1862-1872)," *Società e Storia*, 127 (2010): 63-91.
  4. Gay Gullickson, *Unruly women of Paris, images of the Commune* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996).
  5. Ross, *Communal Luxury*, 8.
  6. Ross, *Communal Luxury*, 45.
  7. Louise Michel, *Légendes et chansons de gestes canaques (1875); suivi de Légendes et chants de gestes canaques (1885)* (Lyons: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2006).
  8. David Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003); José Luis Oyon, Marta Serra, "Las casas de Reclus," *Scripta Nova* 421 (2012), retrieved from <http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-421.htm>; Charles Withers, "Place and the 'Spatial Turn' in geography and in history," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 70 (2009): 637-658.
  9. Martha Ackelsberg and Myrna M. Breitbart, "Terrains of protest striking city women," *Our Generation*, 19 (1987-88): 151-175.
  10. Christophe Brun, "Introduction" in Élisée Reclus, *Les grands textes* (Paris, Flammarion, 2014) ; Federico Ferretti, *Élisée Reclus : pour une géographie nouvelle* (Paris: Éditions du CTHS, 2014). Isabelle Lefort, Philippe Pelletier, eds., *Élisée Reclus et nos géographies, textes et prétextes*, (Paris: Éditions Noir et Rouge, 2013) ; Philippe Pelletier, *Géographie et anarchie, Reclus, Kropotkine, Metchnikoff* (Paris: Éditions du Monde Libertaire, 2013).
  11. This melding also influenced later anarchist feminism in the 20th century, like the Spanish movement Mujeres Libres and the work of militants like Emma Goldman.
  12. Federico Ferretti, "They have the right to throw us out: Élisée Reclus' Universal Geography," *Antipode, a Radical Journal of Geography*, 45 (2013): 1337-1355; Simon Springer "Anarchism! What geography still ought to be," *Antipode*, 44 (2012): 1605-1624; Simon Springer, "Why a radical geography must be anarchist," *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 4 (2014): 249-270. Richard White, "Explaining why the non-commodified sphere of mutual aid is so pervasive in the advanced economies. Some case study evidence from an English city," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 29 (2009): 457-472.
  13. Mona Domosh, Karen Morin, "Travels with feminist historical geography." *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 10 (2003): 257-264; Morin, Berg, "Emplacing current trends in feminist historical geography;" Gillian Rose, Miles Ogborn, "Feminism and historical geography," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 14 (1988): 405-409.

14. Ferretti, *Élisée Reclus*.
15. Pelleter, *Géographie et anarchie*.
16. Giraud, "Hygiène et éducation dans *Un Mariage scandaleux* d'André Léo."
17. Beach, "The Literary Culture," 2.
18. Élie Reclus, "*Un mariage scandaleux*, par André Léo, Librairie Hachette 1862," *Revue Germanique*, 19 (1862), 359.
19. IISH, Lucien Descaves papers, folder 646, A. Léo to Élie Reclus [1862].
20. IISH, Lucien Descaves papers, folder 610, Noémi Reclus-Reclus to A. Léo; folder 612. F. Reclus to A. Léo, folder 611.
21. IISH, Lucien Descaves papers, folder 611, Élisée Reclus to A. Léo, 91 rue Feuillantines [1869].
22. Oyon, Serra, "Las casas de Reclus."
23. Martine Brunet, *Ferdinand Buisson et les socialistes libertaires* (Lichères-sur-Yonne: M. Brunet-Giry, 2014); Ferretti, "Radicalizing pedagogy."
24. Brunet, *Ferdinand Buisson*.
25. Robert Tombs, *The Paris Commune, 1871* (London/New York: Longman, 1999).
26. Christophe Brun, "Élisée Reclus, une chronologie familiale: sa vie, ses voyages, ses écrits, ses ascendants, ses collatéraux, les descendants, leurs écrits, sa postérité (1796-2015)", *Raforum*, 2015, retrieved from <http://raforum.info/reclus/spip.php?article474>, 41
27. Brun, "Chronologie", 45.
28. Gary Dunbar, *Élisée Reclus historian of nature* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1978), 56.
29. Brun, "Chronologie", 74.
30. Alice Primi, "La Ligue en faveur des droits des femmes (1868-1870); un humanisme universaliste et socialiste," in Chauvaud, Dubasque, Rossignol, Louis Vibrac, eds, *Les vies d'André Léo*, 147-156.
31. IISH, Lucien Descaves papers, folder 611, Élisée Reclus to A. Léo [1869].
32. It was accordingly: André Léo, *La femme et les mœurs: liberté ou monarchie* (Paris: Au journal Le Droit des Femmes [1869]).
33. IISH, Lucien Descaves papers, folder 611, Élisée Reclus to A. Léo [1869]. Josephine Butler (1828-1906), was an early critic of the medical control on women's bodies, mainly thanks to her struggle against the English Contagious Diseases Act, which allowed the imprisonment in locked hospitals and the forced medicalization of any (lower-class) woman simply suspected of prostitution by the police authorities. See Jane Jordan, *Josephine Butler* (London: J. Murray, 2001) ; Frédéric Regard (ed.), *Féminisme et prostitution dans l'Angleterre du XIXe siècle : la croisade de Josephine Butler* (Lyons: ENS éditions, 2013).
34. IISH, Lucien Descaves papers, folder 611, Élisée Reclus to A. Léo, Orthez [1870?]. Emma Marwedel (1818-1893) was an important educator and feminist.
35. IISH, Lucien Descaves papers, folder 611, Élisée Reclus to A. Léo, 91 rue Feuillantines [1869].
36. Brunet, *Ferdinand Buisson*.
37. Michel, *La Commune*.
38. IISH, Lucien Descaves papers, folder 715, L'Agriculteur [1869]
39. Brun, "Chronologie", 47
40. On the complex Reclus's genealogical tree, see the special number "Élisée Reclus" published in 1998 by the journal *Itinéraire*.
41. Élisée Reclus, *Itinéraire*, 109
42. Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question: a Marxist Approach*, London: E. Arnold, 1977; David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, London: Verso, 2013.
43. Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades*.

44. M. Albistur, D. Armogathe, *Histoire du féminisme français du moyen âge à nos jours* (Paris, Éditions des Femmes, 1977), 330.
45. Eichner, *Surmounting the barricades*, 69-95.
46. Primi, "La Ligue en faveur des droits des femmes," 152.
47. Ross, *Communal Luxury*, 23.
48. Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris*, 103.
49. Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades*, 101.
50. Ferretti, "Intellettuali anarchici nell'Europa del secondo Ottocento."
51. Brun, "Chronologie", 57.
52. Élie Reclus, *La Commune au jour le jour* (Paris : Schleicher, 1908), 240.
53. Albistur and Armogathe, *Histoire*, 332.
54. J. Guillaume, *L'internationale, documents et souvenirs* (Paris : Lebovici, 1985).
55. Reclus, *La Commune*, 261.
56. Reclus, *La Commune*, 261.
57. Reclus, *La Commune*, 263.
58. Reclus, *La Commune*, 263.
59. Reclus, *La Commune*, 264-265.
60. Reclus, *La Commune*, 305.
61. Ross, *Communal Luxury*.
62. Reclus, *La Commune*, 306.
63. Reclus, *La Commune*, 364.
64. Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray, *Histoire de la Commune de 1871* (Bruxelles: H. Kistemaeckers, 1876).
65. V. Fau-Vincenti, "Louise Michel," in Jean-Christophe Angaut, et al. *Les anarchistes : dictionnaire biographique du mouvement libertaire francophone* (Ivry-sur-Seine: Les Éditions de l'Atelier/Les Éditions Ouvrières), retrieved from [http://maitron-en-ligne.univ-paris1.fr/spip.php?page=article\\_long&id\\_article=24872](http://maitron-en-ligne.univ-paris1.fr/spip.php?page=article_long&id_article=24872)
66. Michel, *La Commune*, 353.
67. Michel, *La Commune*, 342.
68. Steven Hause, *Aubertine Auclert, the French Suffragette* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 21.
69. Albistur and Armogathe, *Histoire*, 358.
70. Hause, *Auclert*, 63.
71. Brun, "Introduction."
72. Mary Corinna Putnam Jacobi, *Life and letters of Mary Putnam Jacobi* (New York: Putnam, 1925), 206.
73. Putnam Jacobi, *Life and letters*, 259.
74. Putnam Jacobi, "Paris in 1870", 839.
75. Tombs, *The Paris Commune*, 180.
76. Tombs, *The Paris Commune*, 180.
77. Tombs, *The Paris Commune*, 181.
78. Putnam Jacobi, *Life and letters*, 279.
79. Soizic Alavoine-Muller, "Introduction," in Élisée Reclus, *Les États-Unis et la Guerre de Sécession : articles publiés dans la Revue des Deux Mondes* (Paris: CTHS, 2007): 7-44.
80. Ferretti, *Élisée Reclus, pour une géographie nouvelle*.
81. Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London: Verso, 2007).

82. Michel, *Légendes et chansons de gestes canaques*, 13.
83. Kathleen Hart, "Oral Culture and anticolonialism in Louise Michel's *Mémoires* (1886) and *Légendes et chants de gestes canaques* (1885)," *Nineteenth Century French Studies* 30 (2001): 107-108.
84. Hart, "Oral Culture and anticolonialism in Louise Michel's *Mémoires*," 108.
85. Hart, "Oral Culture and anticolonialism in Louise Michel's *Mémoires*," 117.
86. Marc Vuilleumier, *Histoire et combats: mouvement ouvrier et socialisme en Suisse 1864-1960* (Genève: Éditions d'en bas/Collège du Travail, 2012).
87. Ferretti, "Radicalizing pedagogy."
88. Federico Ferretti, "Pioneers in the History of Cartography: the Geneva map collection of Élisée Reclus and Charles Perron," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 43 (2014): 85-95.
89. Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. II, 171.
90. James Guillaume, *L'Internationale, documents et souvenirs (1864-1878), vol. I* (Paris, Stock, 1905), 150-151.
91. Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. II, 279.
92. Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades*.
93. Albistur and Armogathe, *Histoire*, 354.
94. Brun, "Chronologie," 53.
95. Élisée Reclus, *Souvenir du 14 octobre 1882. Communication personnelle* (Paris: Imprimerie Chamerot, 1882).
96. Brun, "Chronologie", 75.
97. Élisée Reclus, *Écrits sociaux* (Genève: Héros-limite, 2012), 238.
98. Reclus, *Écrits sociaux*, 239.
99. Reclus, *Écrits sociaux*, 240.
100. Albert Millaud, "L'apôtre de l'Union libre," *Le Figaro* (Paris), 30 octobre 1882, 1.
101. *Gil Blas* (Paris), 29 octobre 1882. 3.
102. Federico Ferretti, "The correspondence between Élisée Reclus and Pëtr Kropotkin as a source for the history of geography," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 37 (2011): 216-222. Gerry Kearns, "The political pivot of geography," *The Geographical Journal*, 170 (2004): 337-346.
103. Moscow - Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), Fondy 1129, op. 2, 1308, J. Scott Keltie to P. Kropotkin, 30 October 1882.
104. RGS-IBG Archives, Manuscripts CB7, P. Kropotkin to J. Scott Keltie, 6 November 1882.
105. RGS-IBG Archives, Manuscripts CB7, P. Kropotkin to J. Scott Keltie, 6 November 1882.
106. British Library, Ms. Add. 49644 f. 47, Élie Reclus to J. Lubbock, 1 March 1875.
107. Monique Peltre, "Élie Reclus et J. J. Bachofen: les hommes et la mythologie" in *Le texte et l'idée* (Nancy: Université de Nancy II, 1993), 43-77.
108. Élie Reclus, *Les Primitifs* (Paris: Chamerot, 1885).
109. Reclus, *Les Primitifs*, 68-69.
110. Chris Knight, "Early human kinship was matrilineal," in N.J. Allen, H. Callan, R. Dunbar, W. James, eds., *Early human kinship* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 75.
111. Élie Reclus, *Le mariage tel qu'il fut et tel qu'il est* (Conflans-Sainte-Honorine: L'Idée libre, 1924), 6.
112. Pyotr Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid, a factor in evolution* (London: Heinemann, 1902).
113. Reclus, *Le mariage*, 8.
114. Reclus, *Le mariage*, 13.
115. Reclus, *Le mariage*, 14.
116. Reclus, *Le mariage*, 17.
117. Reclus, *Le mariage*, 18.
118. Reclus, *Le mariage*, 18-19.

119. Reclus, *Le mariage*, 20.
120. Theresa McBride, "Public authority and private lives: divorce after the French revolution", *French Historical Studies*, 17, 747.
121. Christophe Portalez, *Alfred Naquet et ses amis politiques : patronage, influence et scandale en République (1870-1898)* (Université d'Avignon, PhD Dissertation, 2015).
122. Élisée Reclus, *Correspondance, vol. I* (Paris: Schleicher, 1911), 314
123. Élisée Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie universelle, vol. 4* (Paris: Hachette, 1879), 840.
124. Élisée Reclus, *L'Homme et la Terre, vol. 6* (Paris: Librairie universelle, 1908), 210.
125. Michel, after her return from New Caledonia, remained in touch with the Reclus family, continuing a militant collaboration. See E. Thomas, *Louise Michel ou la Velléda de l'anarchie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 372.
126. Reclus, *L'Homme et la Terre*, vol. 6, 210.
127. Reclus, *L'Homme et la Terre*, vol. 6, 210.
128. Reclus, *L'Homme et la Terre*, vol. 6, 448.
129. Beach, "Savoir c'est pouvoir"; Pierrefitte-Sur-Seine, Centre d'accueil et de recherché des Archives Nationales, Dossiers Éducation publique, F17 23588B.
130. Domosh, Morin, "Travels with feminist historical geography," 257.
131. Ross, *Communal Luxury*.
132. Emma Goldman, *Living my life* (New York: Knopf, 1931).
133. Martha Ackelsberg, *Free women of Spain: anarchism and the struggle for the emancipation of women* (Indianapolis: Indiana University press, 1991); Mary Nash, *Mujeres Libres, España 1936-1939* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1975).
134. M.M. Breitbart, "Impressions of an anarchist landscape," *Antipode* 7 (1975) 44-49.