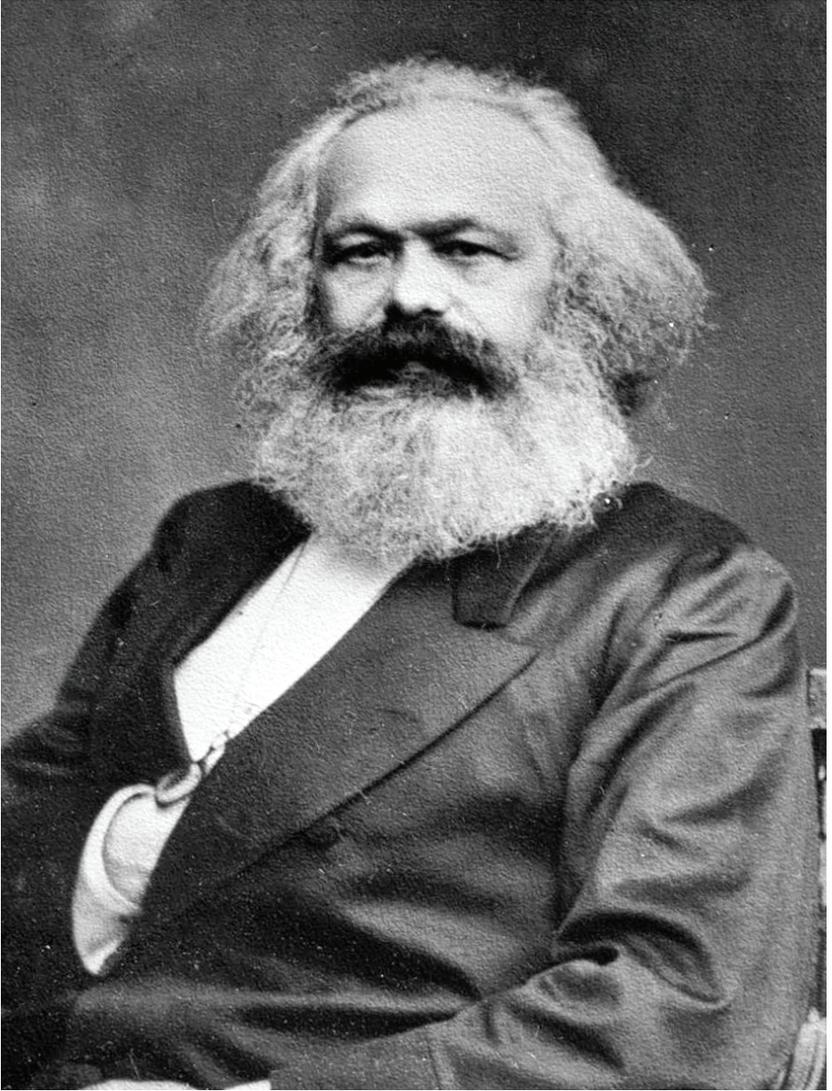


THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE

KARL MARX



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS



Karl Marx

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
Collection “Foundations” #25
Contact – flpress@protonmail.com
<https://foreignlanguages.press>

Paris, 2021

ISBN: 978-2-491182-81-6

This edition of *The Civil War in France* is a reprint of the First Edition, Second Printing, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1970.



This book is under license Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Contents

Introduction	1
<i>Frederick Engels</i>	
First Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Franco-Prussian War	17
Second Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Franco-Prussian War	27
Address of the General Council of the International Working Men' Association on the Civil War in France, 1871	39
I	39
II	52
III	61
IV	77
Notes	93
THE DRAFTS OF <i>THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE</i>	99
The First Draft of <i>The Civil War in France</i>	101
The Government of Defense	101
The Commune	145
1. <i>Measures for the Working Class</i>	145
2. <i>Measures for the Working Class, but Mostly for the Middle Classes</i>	146
3. <i>General Measures</i>	147
4. <i>Measures of Public Safety</i>	149
5. <i>Financial Measures</i>	151
La Commune	151
<i>The Rise of the Commune and the Central Committee</i>	151
<i>The Character of the Commune</i>	155
<i>Peasantry</i>	163

<i>Union (Ligue) Républicaine</i>	167
<i>The Communal Revolution as the Representative of All Classes of Society Not Living upon Foreign Labor</i>	167
<i>Republic Only Possible as Avowedly Social Republic</i>	169
<i>The Commune (Social Measures)</i>	170
<i>Decentralization by the Ruraux and the Commune</i>	175
[Fragments]	180
The Second Draft of <i>The Civil War in France</i>	193
1) <i>Government of Defense. Trochu, Favre, Picard, Ferry, as the Deputies of Paris</i>	193
2) <i>Thiers. Dufaure. Pouyer-Quertier</i>	197
3) <i>The Rural Assembly</i>	200
5) <i>Opening of the Civil War. 18 March Revolution. Clément Thomas. Lecomte. The Affaire Vendôme</i>	203
6) <i>The Commune</i>	211
7) <i>Schluss</i>	217
[Fragments]	220

INTRODUCTION
FREDERICK ENGELS¹

I did not anticipate that I would be asked to prepare a new edition of the Address of the General Council of the International on *The Civil War in France*, and to write an introduction to it. Therefore I can only touch briefly here on the most important points.

I am prefacing the longer work mentioned above by the two shorter Addresses of the General Council on the Franco-Prussian War. In the first place, because the second of these, which itself cannot be fully understood without the first, is referred to in *The Civil War*. But also because these two Addresses, likewise drafted by Marx, are, no less than *The Civil War*, outstanding examples of the author's remarkable gift, first proved in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*,² for grasping clearly the character, the import and the necessary consequences of great historical events, at a time when these events are still in progress before our eyes or have only just taken place. And, finally, because today we in Germany are still having to endure the consequences which Marx predicted would follow from these events.

¹ Engels wrote this introduction for the third German edition (jubilee edition) of Marx's *The Civil War in France*, published in 1891 by the *Vorwärts* Press, Berlin, to mark the 20th anniversary of the Paris Commune. While pointing out the historical significance of both the experiences of the Paris Commune and the theoretical generalizations drawn from them by Marx in *The Civil War in France*, Engels also made a number of additions in the introduction to the history of the Commune, including references to the activities of the Blanquists and Proudhonists. In the jubilee edition Engels included two works written by Marx—the First and Second Addresses of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Franco-Prussian War. Other editions of *The Civil War in France*, published later in various languages, usually contained Engels' introduction.

At first, Engels' introduction was published with his approval under the title of "On *The Civil War in France*" in *Die Neue Zeit*, No. 28, (Vol. II), 1890-91. When it was published, the editorial board of *Die Neue Zeit* tampered with the text by changing the words "Social-Democratic philistines" in the last paragraph of the manuscript into "German philistines." It was evident from Richard Fischer's letter to Engels on March 17, 1891, that Engels disapproved of this arbitrary change. However, he kept the changed words in the pamphlet, probably because he did not want different versions of his work published contemporaneously. The present edition restores the original text.

Engels's introduction was published for the first time in Russian with Marx's *The Civil War in France* in 1893 in Geneva. In 1905 the "Burevstnik" Press in Odessa published *The Civil War in France* with Engels's introduction, both being translated from the third German edition of 1891 and edited by V. I. Lenin.

² See K. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Has that which was declared in the first Address not come to pass: that if Germany's defensive war against Louis Bonaparte degenerated into a war of conquest against the French people, all the misfortunes which befell Germany after the so-called wars of liberation³ would revive again with renewed intensity? Have we not had a further twenty years of Bismarck's rule, the Exceptional Law and Socialist baiting taking the place of the prosecutions of "demagogues,"⁴ with the same arbitrary action of the police and with literally the same staggering interpretations of the law?

And has not the prediction been proved to the letter, that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine would "force France into the arms of Russia," and that after this annexation Germany must either become the avowed servant of Russia, or must, after some short respite, arm for a new war, and, moreover, "a war of races—a war with the combined Slavonian and Roman races?"⁵ Has not the annexation of the French provinces driven France into the arms of Russia? Has not Bismarck for fully twenty years vainly wooed the favor of the Czar, wooed it with services even more lowly than those which little Prussia, before it became the "first Power in Europe," was wont to lay at Holy Russia's feet? And is there not every day still hanging over our heads the Damocles' sword of war, on the first day of which all the chartered covenants of princes will be scattered like chaff; a war of which nothing is certain but the absolute uncertainty of its outcome; a race war which will subject the whole of Europe to devastation by fifteen or twenty million armed men, and which is not raging already only because even the strongest of the great military states shrinks before the absolute incalculability of its final result?

All the more is it our duty to make again accessible to the German workers these brilliant proofs, now half-forgotten, of the far-sightedness of international working-class policy in 1870.

³ A reference to the wars of national liberation waged by the German people from 1813 to 1814 against the rule of Napoleon.

⁴ In 1819, after the wars against Napoleonic France, reactionary circles in Germany applied the name *demagogues* to people who took part in the opposition movement against the reactionary system of the German states and organized political demonstrations for the unification of Germany. The movement spread widely among the intelligentsia and student societies. The "demagogues" were persecuted by the reactionary authorities.

⁵ See K. Marx, "Second Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Franco-Prussian War," p. 26 of the present book.

What is true of these two Addresses is also true of *The Civil War in France*. On May 28, the last fighters of the Commune succumbed to superior forces on the slopes of Belleville; and only two days later, on May 30, Marx read to the General Council the work in which the historical significance of the Paris Commune is delineated in short, powerful strokes, but with such trenchancy, and above all such truth, as has never again been attained in all the mass of literature on this subject.

Thanks to the economic and political development of France since 1789, Paris has been placed for the last fifty years in such a position that no revolution could break out there without assuming a proletarian character, that is to say, without the proletariat, which had bought victory with its blood, coming forward with its own demands after the victory. These demands were more or less unclear and even confused, corresponding to the state of development reached by the workers of Paris at the particular period, but in the last resort they all amounted to the abolition of the class antagonism between capitalists and workers. It is true that no one knew how this was to be brought about. But the demand itself, however indefinitely it still was couched, contained a threat to the existing order of society; the workers who put it forward were still armed; therefore, the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois, who were at the helm of the state. Hence, after every revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers.

This happened for the first time in 1848. The liberal bourgeois of the parliamentary opposition held banquets for securing a reform of the franchise, which was to ensure supremacy for their party. Forced more and more, in their struggle with the government, to appeal to the people, they had gradually to yield precedence to the radical and republican strata of the bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie. But behind these stood the revolutionary workers, and since 1830 they had acquired far more political independence than the bourgeois, and even the republicans, suspected. At the moment of the crisis between the government and the opposition, the workers began street-fighting; Louis Philippe vanished, and with him the franchise reform; and in its place arose the republic, and indeed one which the victorious workers themselves designated as a "social" republic. No one, however, was clear as to what this social republic was to imply; not even the workers themselves. But they now had arms and were a power

in the state. Therefore, as soon as the bourgeois republicans in control felt something like firm ground under their feet, their first aim was to disarm the workers. This took place by driving them into the insurrection of June 1848 by direct breach of faith, by open defiance and the attempt to banish the unemployed to a distant province. The government had taken care to have an overwhelming superiority of force. After five days' heroic struggle, the workers were defeated. And then followed a blood-bath among the defenseless prisoners, the like of which has not been seen since the days of the civil wars which ushered in the downfall of the Roman republic. It was the first time that the bourgeoisie showed to what insane cruelties of revenge it will be goaded the moment the proletariat dares to take its stand against the bourgeoisie as a separate class, with its own interests and demands. And yet 1848 was only child's play compared with the frenzy of the bourgeoisie in 1871.

Punishment followed hard at heel. If the proletariat was not yet able to rule France, the bourgeoisie could no longer do so. At least not at that period, when the greater part of it was still monarchically inclined, and it was divided into three dynastic parties⁶ and a fourth, republican party. Its internal dissensions allowed the adventurer Louis Bonaparte to take possession of all the commanding points—army, police, administrative machinery—and, on December 2, 1851,⁷ to explode the last stronghold of the bourgeoisie, the National Assembly. The Second Empire⁸ began—the exploitation of France by a gang of political and financial adventurers, but at the same time also an industrial development such as had never been possible under the narrow-minded and timorous system of Louis Philippe, with the exclusive domination of only a small section of the big bourgeoisie. Louis Bonaparte took the political power from the capitalists under the pretext of protecting them, the bourgeois, from the workers, and on the other hand the workers from them; but in return his rule encouraged speculation and industrial activity—in a word, the upsurge and

⁶ The monarchists in France were at that time divided into three dynastic parties: the Legitimists (see note 75), the Orléanists (see note 45), and the Bonapartists—adherents of Louis Bonaparte (Napoleon III).

⁷ The *coup d'état* of Louis Bonaparte, then President of France. He dissolved the National Assembly, and a year later proclaimed himself Emperor of France.

⁸ The *Second Empire* of France was the name given to the period of Louis Bonaparte's rule (1852-70) in distinction from the First Empire of Napoleon I (1804-14).

enrichment of the whole bourgeoisie to an extent hitherto unknown. To an even greater extent, it is true, corruption and mass thievery developed, clustering around the imperial court, and drawing their heavy percentages from this enrichment.

But the Second Empire was the appeal to French chauvinism, was the demand for the restoration of the frontiers of the First Empire, which had been lost in 1814, or at least those of the First Republic. A French empire within the frontiers of the old monarchy and, in fact, within the even more amputated frontiers of 1815—such a thing was impossible for any length of time. Hence the necessity for occasional wars and extensions of frontiers. But no extension of frontiers was so dazzling to the imagination of the French chauvinists as the extension to the German left bank of the Rhine. One square mile on the Rhine was more to them than ten in the Alps or anywhere else. Given the Second Empire, the demand for the restoration of the left bank of the Rhine, either all at once or piecemeal, was merely a question of time. The time came with the Austro-Prussian War of 1866;⁹ cheated of the anticipated “territorial compensation” by Bismarck and by his own over-cunning, hesitant policy, there was now nothing left for Napoleon but war, which broke out in 1870 and drove him first to Sedan, and thence to Wilhelmshöhe.¹⁰

The necessary consequence was the Paris Revolution of September 4, 1870. The empire collapsed like a house of cards, and the republic was again proclaimed. But the enemy was standing at the gates; the armies of the empire were either hopelessly encircled at Metz or held captive in Germany. In this emergency the people allowed the Paris deputies to the former legislative body to constitute themselves into a “Government of

⁹ Prussia was victorious in the war against Austria which was engineered by Bismarck. By excluding Austria from the German Confederation, Prussia secured the hegemony at the founding of the German Empire. Napoleon III remained neutral in the Austro-Prussian War, in return for which he hoped—in vain—to receive part of the territory of the German states, as promised by Bismarck.

¹⁰ On September 1-2, 1870, a decisive battle was fought in the Franco-Prussian War in the vicinity of Sedan, a town in northeastern France, resulting in the complete rout of the French army. According to the capitulation terms signed by the French Headquarters on September 2, 1870, Napoleon III and more than 80,000 French soldiers, officers and generals were taken prisoners. From September 5, 1870 to March 19, 1871, Napoleon III was detained in Wilhelmshöhe, a Prussian castle near Kassel. The debacle at Sedan accelerated the downfall of the Second Empire. As a result, France was proclaimed a republic on September 4, 1870.

National Defense.” This was the more readily conceded, since, for the purposes of defense, all Parisians capable of bearing arms had enrolled in the National Guard and were armed, so that now the workers constituted a great majority. But very soon the antagonism between the almost completely bourgeois government and the armed proletariat broke into open conflict. On October 31, workers’ battalions stormed the town hall and captured part of the membership of the government. Treachery, the government’s direct breach of its undertakings, and the intervention of some petit-bourgeois battalions set them free again, and in order not to occasion the outbreak of civil war inside a city besieged by a foreign military power, the former government was left in office.

At last, on January 28, 1871, starved Paris capitulated. But with honors unprecedented in the history of war. The forts were surrendered, the city wall stripped of guns, the weapons of the regiments of the line and of the Mobile Guard were handed over, and they themselves considered prisoners of war. But the National Guard kept its weapons and guns and only entered into an armistice with the victors. And these did not dare enter Paris in triumph. They only dared to occupy a tiny corner of Paris, which, into the bargain, consisted partly of public parks, and even this they only occupied for a few days! And during this time they, who had maintained their encirclement of Paris for 131 days, were themselves encircled by the armed workers of Paris, who kept a sharp watch that no “Prussian” should overstep the narrow bounds of the corner ceded to the foreign conqueror. Such was the respect which the Paris workers inspired in the army before which all the armies of the empire had laid down their arms; and the Prussian *junkers*, who had come to take revenge at the home of the revolution, were compelled to stand by respectfully, and salute precisely this armed revolution!

During the war the Paris workers had confined themselves to demanding the vigorous prosecution of the fight. But now, when peace had come after the capitulation of Paris,¹¹ now Thiers, the new supreme

¹¹ This refers to the Franco-German preliminary peace treaty signed in Versailles on February 26, 1871 by Adolphe Thiers and Jules Favre on one side and Bismarck on the other. Under the terms of the treaty France agreed to cede Alsace and the eastern part of Lorraine to Germany and pay a war indemnity of five billion francs, while Germany was to continue occupying part of French territory until the indemnity was paid. The final peace treaty was signed at Frankfurt-on-Main on May 10, 1871.

head of the government, was compelled to realize that the rule of the propertied classes—big landowners and capitalists—was in constant danger so long as the workers of Paris had arms in their hands. His first action was an attempt to disarm them. On March 18, he sent troops of the line with orders to rob the National Guard of the artillery belonging to it, which had been constructed during the siege of Paris and had been paid for by public subscription. The attempt failed; Paris mobilized as one man for resistance, and war between Paris and the French government sitting at Versailles was declared. On March 26 the Paris Commune was elected and on March 28 it was proclaimed. The Central Committee of the National Guard, which up to then had carried on the government, handed in its resignation to the Commune after it had first decreed the abolition of the scandalous Paris “Morality Police.” On March 30 the Commune abolished conscription and the standing army, and declared the sole armed force to be the National Guard, in which all citizens capable of bearing arms were to be enrolled. It remitted all payments of rent for dwelling houses from October 1870 until April, the amounts already paid to be booked as future rent payments, and stopped all sales of articles pledged in the municipal loan office. On the same day the foreigners elected to the Commune were confirmed in office, because “the flag of the Commune is the flag of the World Republic.”¹² On April 1 it was decided that the highest salary to be received by any employee of the Commune, and therefore also by its members themselves, was not to exceed 6,000 francs (4,800 marks). On the following day the Commune decreed the separation of the church from the state, and the abolition of all state payments for religious purposes as well as the transformation of all church property into national property; as a result of which, on April 8, the exclusion from the schools of all religious symbols, pictures, dogmas, prayers—in a word, “of all that belongs to the sphere of the individual’s conscience”—was ordered and gradually put into effect.¹³ On the 5th, in reply to the shooting, day after day, of captured Commune fighters by the Versailles troops, a decree was

¹² Quoted from the report of the election commission of the Commune, published in the organ of the Commune, *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 90, March 31, 1871.

¹³ Engels is probably referring to the contents of the order issued by Édouard Vaillant, delegate of education of the Paris Commune, which was published in the *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 132, May 12, 1871.

issued for the imprisonment of hostages, but it was never carried into execution. On the 6th, the guillotine was brought out by the 137th Battalion of the National Guard, and publicly burnt, amid great popular rejoicing. On the 12th, the Commune decided that the Victory Column on the *Place Vendôme*, which had been cast from captured guns by Napoleon after the war of 1809, should be demolished as a symbol of chauvinism and incitement to national hatred. This was carried out on May 16. On April 16 it ordered a statistical tabulation of factories which had been closed down by the manufacturers, and the working out of plans for the operation of these factories by the workers formerly employed in them, who were to be organized in co-operative societies, and also plans for the organization of these co-operatives in one great union. On the 20th it abolished night work for bakers, and also the employment offices, which since the Second Empire had been run as a monopoly by creatures appointed by the police—labor exploiters of the first rank; these offices were transferred to the mayoralities of the twenty *arrondissements* of Paris. On April 30 it ordered the closing of the pawnshops, on the ground that they were a private exploitation of the workers, and were in contradiction with the right of the workers to their instruments of labor and to credit. On May 5 it ordered the razing of the Chapel of Atonement, which had been built in expiation of the execution of Louis XVI.

Thus from March 18 onwards the class character of the Paris movement, which had previously been pushed into the background by the fight against the foreign invaders, emerged sharply and clearly. As almost only workers, or recognized representatives of the workers, sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decidedly proletarian character. Either these decisions decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass solely out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class—such as the realization of the principle that *in relation to the state*, religion is a purely private matter—or the Commune promulgated decrees which were in the direct interest of the working class and in part cut deeply into the old order of society. In a beleaguered city, however, it was possible to make at most a start in the realization of all this. And from the beginning of May onwards all their energies were taken up by the fight against the armies assembled by the Versailles government in ever-growing numbers.

On April 7 the Versailles troops had captured the Seine crossing at Neuilly, on the western front of Paris; on the other hand, in an attack on the southern front on the 11th they were repulsed with heavy losses by General Eudes. Paris was continually bombarded and, moreover, by the very people who had stigmatized as a sacrilege the bombardment of the same city by the Prussians. These same people now begged the Prussian government for the hasty return of the French soldiers taken prisoner at Sedan and Metz, in order that they might recapture Paris for them. From the beginning of May the gradual arrival of these troops gave the Versailles forces a decided superiority. This already became evident when, on April 23, Thiers broke off the negotiations for the exchange, proposed by the Commune, of the Archbishop of Paris¹⁴ and a whole number of other priests held as hostages in Paris, for only one man, Blanqui, who had twice been elected to the Commune but was a prisoner in Clairvaux. And even more from the changed language of Thiers; previously procrastinating and equivocal, he now suddenly became insolent, threatening, brutal. The Versailles forces took the redoubt of Moulin-Saquet on the southern front, on May 3; on the 9th, Fort Issy, which had been completely reduced to ruins by gunfire; on the 14th, Fort Vanves. On the western front they advanced gradually, capturing the numerous villages and buildings which extended up to the city wall, until they reached the main defenses; on the 21st, thanks to treachery and the carelessness of the National Guards stationed there, they succeeded in forcing their way into the city. The Prussians, who held the northern and eastern forts, allowed the Versailles troops to advance across the land north of the city, which was forbidden ground to them under the armistice, and thus to march forward, attacking on a wide front, which the Parisians naturally thought covered by the armistice, and therefore held only weakly. As a result of this, only a weak resistance was put up in the western half of Paris, in the luxury city proper; it grew stronger and more tenacious the nearer the incoming troops approached the eastern half, the working-class city proper. It was only after eight days' fighting that the last defenders of the Commune succumbed on the heights of Belleville and Ménilmontant; and then the massacre of defenseless men, women and children, which had been raging all through the week on an

¹⁴ Georges Darboy (1813-1871).

increasing scale, reached its zenith. The breechloaders could no longer kill fast enough; the vanquished were shot down in hundreds by *mitrailleuse* fire. The “Wall of the Federals”¹⁵ at the Père-Lachaise cemetery, where the final mass murder was consummated, is still standing today, a mute but eloquent testimony to the frenzy of which the ruling class is capable as soon as the working class dares to stand up for its rights. Then, when the slaughter of them all proved to be impossible, came the mass arrests, the shooting of victims arbitrarily selected from the prisoners’ ranks, and the removal of the rest to great camps where they awaited trial by courts martial. The Prussian troops surrounding the northeastern half of Paris had orders not to allow any fugitives to pass; but the officers often shut their eyes when the soldiers paid more obedience to the dictates of humanity than to those of the Supreme Command; particular honor is due to the Saxon army corps, which behaved very humanely and let through many who were obviously fighters for the Commune.

* * *

If today, after twenty years, we look back at the activity and historical significance of the Paris Commune of 1871, we shall find it necessary to make a few additions to the account given in *The Civil War in France*.

The members of the Commune were divided into a majority, the Blanquists, who had also been predominant in the Central Committee of the National Guard; and a minority, members of the International Working Men’s Association, chiefly consisting of adherents of the Proudhon school of Socialism. The great majority of the Blanquists were at that time Socialists only by revolutionary, proletarian instinct; only a few had attained greater clarity on principles, through Vaillant, who was familiar with German scientific Socialism. It is therefore comprehensible that in the economic sphere much was left undone which, according to our view today, the Commune ought to have done. The hardest thing to understand is certainly the holy awe with which they remained standing respectfully outside the gates of the Bank of France. This was also a serious political mistake. The bank in the hands of the Commune—this would have been worth more than ten thousand hostages. It would have meant the pressure

¹⁵ Now, usually called “The Wall of the Communards.”

of the whole of the French bourgeoisie on the Versailles government in favor of peace with the Commune. But what is still more wonderful is the correctness of much that nevertheless was done by the Commune, composed as it was of Blanquists and Proudhonists. Naturally, the Proudhonists were chiefly responsible for the economic decrees of the Commune, both for their praiseworthy and their unpraiseworthy aspects; as the Blanquists were for its political commissions and omissions. And in both cases the irony of history willed—as is usual when doctrinaires come to the helm—that both did the opposite of what the doctrines of their school prescribed.

Proudhon, the Socialist of the small peasant and master craftsman, regarded association with positive hatred. He said of it that there was more bad than good in it; that it was by nature sterile, even harmful, because it was a fetter on the freedom of the worker; that it was a pure dogma, unproductive and burdensome, in conflict as much with the freedom of the worker as with economy of labor; that its disadvantages multiplied more swiftly than its advantages; that, as compared with it, competition, division of labor and private property were economic forces. Only in the exceptional cases—as Proudhon called them—of large-scale industry and large establishments, such as railways, was the association of workers in place. (See *General Idea of the Revolution*, 3rd sketch.)¹⁶

By 1871, large-scale industry had already so much ceased to be an exceptional case even in Paris, the center of artistic handicrafts, that by far the most important decree of the Commune instituted an organization of large-scale industry and even of manufacture which was not only to be based on the association of the workers in each factory, but also to combine all these associations in one great union; in short, an organization which, as Marx quite rightly says in *The Civil War*, must necessarily have led in the end to Communism, that is to say, the direct opposite of the Proudhon doctrine. And, therefore, the Commune was also the grave of the Proudhon school of Socialism. Today this school has vanished

¹⁶ This refers to Proudhon's work *Idée générale de la révolution au XIX^e siècle* (*General Idea of the Revolution of the 19th Century*), Paris, 1851. A criticism of the views expressed by Proudhon in this book was given in Marx's letter to Engels dated August 8, 1851 and in Engels' work, "Analytical Criticism on Proudhon's *General Idea of the Revolution of the 19th Century*" (*Archives of Marx and Engels*, Vol. X, pp. 13-17).

from French working-class circles; here, among the Possibilist¹⁷ no less than among the “Marxists,” Marx’s theory now rules unchallenged. Only among the “radical” bourgeoisie are there still Proudhonists.

The Blanquists fared no better. Brought up in the school of conspiracy, and held together by the strict discipline which went with it, they started out from the viewpoint that a relatively small number of resolute, well-organized men would be able, at a given favorable moment, not only to seize the helm of state, but also by a display of great, ruthless energy, to maintain power until they succeeded in sweeping the mass of the people into the revolution and ranging them round the small band of leaders. This involved, above all, the strictest, dictatorial centralization of all power in the hands of the new revolutionary government. And what did the Commune, with its majority of these same Blanquists, actually do? In all its proclamations to the French in the provinces, it appealed to them to form a free federation of all French Communes with Paris, a national organization which for the first time was really to be created by the nation itself. It was precisely the oppressing power of the former centralized government—the army, political police and bureaucracy which Napoleon had created in 1798 and which since then had been taken over by every new government as a welcome instrument and used against its opponents—it was precisely this power which was to fall everywhere, just as it had already fallen in Paris.

From the very outset the Commune was compelled to recognize that the working class, once come to power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just conquered supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against itself, and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any moment. What had been the characteristic attribute of the former state? Society had created its own organs to look after its common interests, originally through simple division of labor. But these organs, at whose head was the state power, had in the course of time, in pursuance of their own special interests, transformed themselves from the servants of society into the masters of society.

¹⁷ *The Possibilists* represented the opportunist trend in the French working-class movement at the end of the 19th century.

This can be seen, for example, not only in the hereditary monarchy, but equally so in the democratic republic. Nowhere do “politicians” form a more separate and powerful section of the nation than precisely in North America. There, each of the two major parties which alternately succeed each other in power is itself in turn controlled by people who make a business of politics, who speculate on seats in the legislative assemblies of the Union as well as of the separate states, or who make a living by carrying on agitation for their party and on its victory are rewarded with positions. It is well known how the Americans have been trying for thirty years to shake off this yoke, which has become intolerable, and how in spite of it all they continue to sink ever deeper in this swamp of corruption. It is precisely in America that we see best how there takes place this process of the state power making itself independent in relation to society, whose mere instrument it was originally intended to be. Here there exists no dynasty, no nobility, no standing army, beyond the few men keeping watch on the Indians, no bureaucracy with permanent posts or the right to pensions. And nevertheless we find here two great gangs of political speculators, who alternately take possession of the state power and exploit it by the most corrupt means and for the most corrupt ends—and the nation is powerless against these two great cartels of politicians, who are ostensibly its servants, but in reality dominate and plunder it.

Against this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society—an inevitable transformation in all previous states—the Commune made use of two infallible means. In the first place, it filled all posts—administrative, judicial and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, subject to the right of recall at any time by the same electors. And, in the second place, all officials, high or low, were paid only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to anyone was 6,000 francs. In this way an effective barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the binding mandates to delegates to representative bodies which were added besides.

This shattering [*Sprengung*] of the former state power and its replacement by a new and truly democratic one is described in detail in the third section of *The Civil War*. But it was necessary to dwell briefly here once more on some of its features, because in Germany particularly the super-

stitious belief in the state has been carried over from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers. According to the philosophical conception, the state is the “realization of the Idea,” or the Kingdom of God on earth, as translated into philosophical terms, the sphere in which eternal truth and justice are or should be realized. And from this follows a superstitious reverence for the state and everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily since people are accustomed from childhood to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after otherwise than as they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its lucratively positioned officials. And people think they have taken quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they have rid themselves of belief in hereditary monarchy and swear by the democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy; and at best an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat, just like the Commune, cannot avoid having to lop off at once as much as possible until such time as a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to throw out the entire lumber of the state.

Of late, the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

F. Engels

London, on the twentieth anniversary of the Paris Commune, March 18, 1891

Published in *Die Neue Zeit*, No. 28 (Vol. II), 1890-91, and in the separate edition of Marx's *The Civil War in France*, Berlin, 1891.

The original text is in German
Translated from German

FIRST ADDRESS OF THE
GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WORKING
MEN'S ASSOCIATION ON THE
FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

In the Inaugural Address of the *International Working Men's Association*,¹⁸ of November 1864, we said: "If the emancipation of the working classes requires their fraternal concurrence, how are they to fulfil that great mission with a foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs, playing upon national prejudices, and squandering in piratical wars the people's blood

¹⁸ The *First Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Franco-Prussian War* was written by K. Marx between July 19 and 23, 1870.

On July 19, 1870, the day the Franco-Prussian War broke out, the General Council commissioned Marx to draft an address on the war. It was adopted by the Permanent Committee of the General Council on July 23 and unanimously approved at the session of the General Council on July 26, 1870. It was first published in English under the title "The General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the War" in the London newspaper *Pall Mall Gazette*, No. 1702, July 28, 1870. A few days later a thousand copies of the Address were printed in leaflet form. A number of British papers also printed the full text or excerpts of the Address. A copy was sent to the editorial board of *The Times*, but it refused to publish it.

The General Council decided on August 2, 1870 to reprint another thousand copies of the Address as the first batch had soon sold out and the number of copies issued had fallen far short of the demand. In September 1870, the First Address was reprinted in English together with the General Council's Second Address on the Franco-Prussian War. In this new edition, Marx corrected the misprints that had appeared in the first edition of the First Address.

The General Council set up a commission on August 9—consisting of Marx, Hermann Jung, Auguste Serraillier and J. George Eccarius—and instructed it to translate the Address into French and German and to disseminate it. The Address first appeared in German in *Der Volksstaat*, No. 63, August 7, 1870, Leipzig, the translation being made by Wilhelm Liebknecht. Marx revised this German version and retranslated nearly half of the text. This new German translation appeared in *Der Vorbote*, No. 8, August 1870, as well as in leaflet form. In commemorating in 1891 the 20th anniversary of the Paris Commune, Engels included the First Address of the General Council in the German edition of *The Civil War in France* which was published by the Berlin *Vorwärts* Press. The translation of the First Address for this new edition was made by Louisa Kautsky under the guidance of Engels.

The Address appeared in French in *L'Égalité*, August 1870, in *L'Internationale*, No. 82, August 7, 1870, and on the same day in *Le Mirabeau*, No. 55. The Address was also published in leaflet form in accordance with a French translation by the General Council's commission.

A Russian version of the First Address appeared for the first time in the *Narodnoye Dyelo*, Nos. 6-7, August-September 1870, Geneva. In 1905, the two Addresses were included in the Russian edition of *The Civil War in France*, which was translated from the German edition of 1891 and edited by V. I. Lenin (see note 49 of the present book). Later, the Addresses were published many times in Russian with *The Civil War in France*.

and treasure?” We defined the foreign policy aimed at by the International in these words: “Vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the laws paramount of the intercourse of nations.”¹⁹

No wonder that Louis Bonaparte, who usurped his power by exploiting the war of classes in France, and perpetuated it by periodical wars abroad, should, from the first, have treated the International as a dangerous foe. On the eve of the plebiscite he ordered a raid on the members of the Administrative Committees of the International Working Men’s Association throughout France, at Paris, Lyons, Rouen, Marseille, Brest, etc., on the pretext that the International was a secret society dabbling in a *complot* for his assassination, a pretext soon after exposed in its full absurdity by his own judges.²⁰ What was the real crime of the French branches of the International? They told the French people publicly and emphatically that voting the plebiscite was voting despotism at home and war abroad.

¹⁹ K. Marx, “Inaugural Address of the Working Men’s International Association” in *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1955, Vol. I, pp. 384-385.

²⁰ The plebiscite was conducted by the government of Napoleon III in May 1870 in an attempt to consolidate the tottering regime of the Second Empire which had caused widespread discontent among the people. The questions were so worded that it was impossible to express one’s disapproval of the policy of the Second Empire without at the same time declaring against all democratic reforms. In spite of the demagogic maneuvers made by the government, the result of the plebiscite indicated the growth of the opposition forces—1,500,000 people voted against the government and 1,900,000 abstained from voting. While preparing for the plebiscite, the government took extensive measures to suppress the working-class movement, ceaselessly slandered the workers’ organizations and distorted their objectives in order to frighten the intermediate stratum of society with the danger of “Red terror.”

The Paris Federal Sections of the International (Les Sections parisiennes fédérées de l’Internationale) and the Federation of Workers’ Unions (Chambre fédérale des Sociétés ouvrières) jointly issued a declaration on April 24, 1870, exposing the Bonapartists’ demagogic plebiscite and calling on the workers to abstain from voting. On the eve of the plebiscite the government arrested members of the Paris sections of the International on a police-concocted charge that they were plotting to assassinate Napoleon III. Armed with the same charge the government launched an extensive persecution of members of the International in other cities throughout France. Although the falsehood of this charge was thoroughly exposed during the trials which took place from June 22 to July 5, 1870, the Bonapartist court still sentenced members of the International to imprisonment on the ground that they belonged to the International Working Men’s Association.

Persecution of the International in France aroused widespread protests among the workers.

It has been, in fact, their work that in all the great towns, in all the industrial centers of France, the working class rose like one man to reject the plebiscite. Unfortunately the balance was turned by the heavy ignorance of the rural districts. The stock exchanges, the cabinets, the ruling classes and the press of Europe celebrated the plebiscite as a signal victory of the French emperor over the French working class; and it was the signal for the assassination, not of an individual, but of nations.

The war plot of July 1870²¹ is but an amended edition of the *coup d'état* of December 1851.²² At first view the thing seemed so absurd that France would not believe in its real good earnest. It rather believed the deputy²³ denouncing the ministerial war talk as a mere stock-jobbing trick. When, on July 15th, war was at last officially announced to the *Corps Législatif*, the whole opposition refused to vote the preliminary subsidies—even Thiers branded it as “detestable”; all the independent journals of Paris condemned it, and, wonderful to relate, the provincial press joined in almost unanimously.

Meanwhile, the Paris members of the International had again set to work. In the *Réveil*²⁴ of July 12th they published their manifesto “to the workmen of all nations,” from which we extract the following few passages:

Once more [they say,] on the pretext of the European equilibrium, of national honor, the peace of the world is menaced by political ambitions. French, German, Spanish workmen! Let our voices unite in one cry of reprobation against war! ... War for a question of preponderance or a dynasty can, in the eyes of workmen, be nothing but a criminal absurdity. In answer to the warlike proclamations of those who exempt themselves from the impost of blood, and find in public misfortunes a source of fresh speculations, we protest, we who

²¹ This refers to the Franco-Prussian War which began on July 19, 1870.

²² This refers to the *coup d'état* by Louis Bonaparte on December 2, 1851, which ushered in the Bonapartist regime of the Second Empire.

²³ Jules Favre (1809-1880).

²⁴ *Le Réveil*—organ of the French Left-wing Republicans, first a weekly, then a daily newspaper from May 1869. Edited by Charles Delescluze, it appeared in Paris from July 1868 to January 1871. From October 1870 it was opposed to the Government of National Defense.

want peace, labor and liberty! ...Brothers of Germany! Our division would only result in the complete triumph of despotism on both sides of the Rhine... Workmen of all countries! Whatever may for the present become of our common efforts, we, the members of the International Working Men's Association, who know of no frontiers, we send you, as a pledge of indissoluble solidarity, the good wishes and the salutations of the workmen of France.

This manifesto of our Paris section was followed by numerous similar French addresses, of which we can here only quote the declaration of Neuilly-sur-Seine, published in the *Marseillaise*²⁵ of July 22nd:

The war, is it just?—No! The war, is it national?—No! It is merely dynastic. In the name of humanity, of democracy, and the true interests of France, we adhere completely and energetically to the protestation of the International against the war.

These protestations expressed the true sentiments of the French working people, as was soon shown by a curious incident. *The Band of the 10th of December*,²⁶ first organized under the presidency of Louis Bonaparte, having been masqueraded into *blouses* and let loose on the streets of Paris, there to perform the contortions of war fever, the real workmen of the *faubourgs* came forward with public peace demonstrations so overwhelming that Piétri, the Prefect of Police, thought it prudent to at once stop all further street politics, on the plea that the feal Paris people had

²⁵ *La Marseillaise*—a French daily newspaper, organ of the Left-wing Republicans, appeared in Paris from December 1869 to September 1870. The paper regularly published articles on the activities of the International and the workers' movement.

²⁶ A reference to the Society of December Tenth, so called in honor of the election of its patron, Louis Bonaparte, to the Presidency of the French Republic on December 10, 1848. Formed in 1849, this secret society of the Bonapartists was composed mainly of declassed elements, political adventurers and militarists. Though formally dissolved in November 1850, its adherents continued to propagate Bonapartism, and took an active part in the *coup d'état* of December 2, 1851. Marx gave a detailed account of the Society of December Tenth in his work *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, *op. cit.*

The chauvinist demonstration in support of Louis Bonaparte's plan of conquest was held by the Bonapartists with the collaboration of the police on July 15, 1870.

given sufficient vent to their pent-up patriotism and exuberant war enthusiasm.

Whatever may be the incidents of Louis Bonaparte's war with Prussia, the death knell of the Second Empire has already sounded at Paris. It will end, as it began, by a parody. But let us not forget that it is the governments and the ruling classes of Europe who enabled Louis Bonaparte to play during eighteen years the ferocious farce of the *Restored Empire*.

On the German side, the war is a war of defense; but who put Germany to the necessity of defending herself? Who enabled Louis Bonaparte to wage war upon her? *Prussia!* It was Bismarck who conspired with that very same Louis Bonaparte for the purpose of crushing popular opposition at home and annexing Germany to the Hohenzollern dynasty. If the battle of Sadowa²⁷ had been lost instead of being won, French battalions would have overrun Germany as the allies of Prussia. After her victory, did Prussia dream one moment of opposing a free Germany to an enslaved France? Just the contrary. While carefully preserving all the native beauties of her old system, she super-added all the tricks of the Second Empire, its real despotism and its mock democratism, its political shams and its financial jobs, its high-flown talk and its low *legerdemains*. The Bonapartist regime, which till then only flourished on one side of the Rhine, had now got its counterfeit on the other. From such a state of things, what else could result but *war*?

If the German working class allow the present war to lose its strictly defensive character and to degenerate into a war against the French people, victory or defeat will prove alike disastrous. All the miseries that befell Germany after her war of independence will revive with accumulated intensity.

The principles of the International are, however, too widely spread and too firmly rooted amongst the German working class to apprehend such a sad consummation. The voices of the French workmen have re-echoed from Germany. A mass meeting of workmen, held at Brunswick on July 16th, expressed its full concurrence with the Paris manifesto,

²⁷ *The Battle of Sadowa* fought in Czech on July 3, 1866—with Austria and Saxony on one side and Prussia on the other—was decisive in the Austro-Prussian war of 1866, from which Prussia emerged victorious. Historically it was also known as the battle of Königgrätz (now called Hradec Králové).

spurned the idea of national antagonism to France, and wound up its resolutions with these words:

We are enemies of all wars, but above all of dynastic wars... With deep sorrow and grief we are forced to undergo a defensive war as an unavoidable evil; but we call, at the same time, upon the whole German working class to render the recurrence of such an immense social misfortune impossible by vindicating for the peoples themselves the power to decide on peace and war, and making them masters of their own destinies.

At Chemnitz, a meeting of delegates, representing 50,000 Saxon workers, adopted unanimously a resolution to this effect:

In the name of the German Democracy, and especially of the workmen forming the Democratic Socialist Party, we declare the present war to be exclusively dynastic... We are happy to grasp the fraternal hand stretched out to us by the workmen of France... Mindful of the watch word of the International Working Men's Association: *Proletarians of all countries, unite*, we shall never forget that the workmen of *all* countries are our *friends* and the despots of *all* countries our *enemies*.²⁸

The Berlin branch of the International has also replied to the Paris manifesto:

We [they say,] join with heart and hand your protestation... Solemnly we promise that neither the sound of the trumpet, nor the roar of the cannon, neither victory nor defeat, shall divert us from our common work for the union of the children of toil of all countries.

Be it so!

²⁸ The meetings of workers held at Brunswick on July 16, and at Chemnitz on July 17, 1870 were convened by the leaders of the German Social-Democratic Labor Party (the Eisenachers) in protest against the policy of conquest of the ruling class.

Marx quoted the resolutions of both meetings from *Der Volksstaat* No. 58, July 20, 1870.

In the background of this suicidal strife looms the dark figure of Russia. It is an ominous sign that the signal for the present war should have been given at the moment when the Moscovite government had just finished its strategic lines of railway and was already massing troops in the direction of the Pruth. Whatever sympathy the Germans may justly claim in a war of defense against Bonapartist aggression, they would forfeit at once by allowing the Prussian government to call for, or accept, the help of the Cossacks. Let them remember that, after their war of independence against the first Napoleon, Germany lay for generations prostrate at the feet of the Czar.

The English working class stretch the hand of fellowship to the French and German working people. They feel deeply convinced that whatever turn the impending horrid war may take, the alliance of the working classes of all countries will ultimately kill war. The very fact that while official France and Germany are rushing into a fratricidal feud, the workmen of France and Germany send each other messages of peace and goodwill; this great fact, unparalleled in the history of the past, opens the vista of a brighter future. It proves that in contrast to old society, with its economical miseries and its political delirium, a new society is springing up, whose international rule will be *Peace*, because its national ruler will be everywhere the same—*Labor*! The Pioneer of that new society is the International Working Men's Association.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Robert Applegarth

Martin J. Boon

Fred. Bradnick

Cowell Stepney

John Hales

William Hales

George Harris

Fred. Lessner

Legreulier

George Milner

Thomas Mottershead

Charles Murray

George Odger

James Parnell

Pfänder

Rühl

Joseph Shepherd

Stoll

The Civil War in France

W. Lintern
Zévy Maurice

Schmutz
W. Townshend

CORRESPONDING SECRETARIES

Eugène Dupont, *for France*
Karl Marx, *for Germany*
A. Serrailier, *for Belgium, Holland and Spain*
Hermann Jung, *for Switzerland*
Giovanni Bora, *for Italy*
Antoni Żabicki, *for Poland*
James Cohen, *for Denmark*
J. G. Eccarius, *for the United States of America*

Benjamin Lucraft, *Chairman*
John Weston, *Treasurer*
J. George Eccarius, *General Secretary*

Office: 256, High Holborn, London, W.C.
July 23, 1870

Written by Marx on July 19-23, 1870

The original text is in English

Published in leaflet form in English in July 1870, and both in leaflet form and in periodicals in German, French and Russian in August-September 1870

Printed according to the text of the English leaflet of 1870.

SECOND ADDRESS OF THE
GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WORKING
MEN'S ASSOCIATION ON THE
FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES²⁹

In our first Manifesto of July 23 we said:

The death knell of the Second Empire has already sounded at Paris. It will end, as it began, by a parody. But let us not forget that it is the governments and the ruling classes of Europe who enabled Louis Napoleon to play during eighteen years the ferocious farce of the *Restored Empire*.³⁰

Thus, even before war operations had actually set in, we treated the Bonapartist bubble as a thing of the past.

If we were not mistaken as to the vitality of the Second Empire, we were not wrong in our apprehension lest the German war should “lose its

²⁹ The *Second Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Franco-Prussian War* was written by Marx between September 6 and 9, 1870.

After studying the new situation brought about by the fall of the Second Empire and the beginning of a new stage in the Franco-Prussian War, the General Council of the International decided on September 6, 1870 to issue a second address on the war, and for this purpose set up a commission consisting of Marx, Hermann Jung, George Milner and Auguste Serrailier.

While writing the Address, Marx made use of the material Engels sent him, which exposed the attempt of the Prussian militarists, the Junkers and the bourgeoisie to annex French territory under the pretext of military-strategic considerations. The Address drafted by Marx was unanimously adopted at a special session of the General Council on September 9, 1870, and sent to all the bourgeois newspapers in London. With the exception of the *Pall Mall Gazette* which printed an extract of the Address on September 16, 1870, all the newspapers kept silent. A thousand copies of the Address were issued in English in leaflet form between September 11 and 13. At the end of the same month a new edition appeared containing both the First and Second Addresses. In this the misprints in the first edition were corrected and a few changes were made in the language.

The Second Address was translated into German by Marx himself. In this translation, he made several omissions and added a few sentences addressed especially to the German workers. This version of the Second Address was published in *Der Volksstaat*, No. 76, September 21, 1870, and *Der Vorbote*, Nos. 10 and 11, October-November 1870, as well as in leaflet form in Geneva. In 1891 Engels included the Second Address in the German edition of *The Civil War in France*. The translation of the Address for this new edition was made by Louisa Kautsky under Engels' guidance.

The French version of the Second Address appeared in *L'Internationale*, No. 93, October 23, 1870, and partly (the publication was not completed) in *L'Égalité*, No. 35, October 4, 1870.

³⁰ See above, p. 21.

strictly defensive character and degenerate into a war against the French people.”³¹ The war of defense ended, in point of fact, with the surrender of Louis Bonaparte, the Sedan capitulation, and the proclamation of the Republic at Paris. But long before these events, the very moment that the utter rottenness of the imperialist³² arms became evident, the Prussian military *camarilla* had resolved upon conquest. There lay an ugly obstacle in their way—*King William’s own proclamations at the commencement of the war*. In his speech from the throne to the North German Diet, he had solemnly declared to make war upon the emperor of the French, and not upon the French people. On the August 11 he had issued a manifesto to the French nation, where he said:³³

The Emperor Napoleon having made, by land and sea, an attack on the German nation, which desired and still desires to live in peace with the French people, I have assumed the command of the German armies *to repel his aggression*, and I have been led by *military events to cross the frontiers of France*.

Not content to assert the defensive character of the war by the statement that he only assumed the command of the German armies “to repel aggression,” he added that he was only “led by military events” to cross the frontiers of France. A defensive war does, of course, not exclude offensive operations, dictated by “military events.”

Thus, this pious king stood pledged before France and the world to a strictly defensive war. How to release him from his solemn pledge? The stage-managers had to exhibit him as giving, reluctantly, way to the irresistible behest of the German nation. They at once gave the cue to the liberal German middle class, with its professors, its capitalists, its aldermen, and its penmen. That middle class, which in its struggle for civil liberty had, from 1846 to 1870, been exhibiting an unexampled spectacle of irresolution, incapacity and cowardice, felt, of course, highly delighted to bestride the European scene as the roaring lion of German patriotism.

³¹ See above, pp. 21-22.

³² Imperialist: used throughout the book as an adjective for the Second Empire.

³³ In the German edition of 1870, Marx omitted this sentence, the quotation below and the paragraph following. The first three sentences of the last paragraph (continued overleaf) were condensed.

It re-vindicated its civic independence by affecting to force upon the Prussian government the secret designs of that same government. It does penance for its long-continued and almost religious faith in Louis Bonaparte's infallibility, by shouting for the dismemberment of the French Republic. Let us for a moment listen to the special pleadings of those stout-hearted patriots!

They dare not pretend that the people of Alsace and Lorraine pant for the German embrace; quite the contrary. To punish their French patriotism, Strasbourg, a town with an independent citadel commanding it, has for six days been wantonly and fiendishly bombarded by "German" explosive shells, setting it on fire, and killing great numbers of its defenseless inhabitants. Yet, the soil of those provinces once upon a time belonged to the whilom German empire. Hence, it seems, the soil and the human beings grown on it must be confiscated as imprescriptible German property. If the map of Europe is to be remade in the antiquary's vein, let us by no means forget that the Elector of Brandenburg, for his Prussian dominions, was the vassal of the Polish Republic.³⁴

The more knowing patriots, however, require Alsace and the German-speaking part of Lorraine as a "material guarantee" against French aggression. As this contemptible plea has bewildered many weak-minded people, we are bound to enter more fully upon it.

There is no doubt that the general configuration of Alsace, as compared with the opposite bank of the Rhine, and the presence of a large fortified town like Strasbourg, about half way between Basel and Germerheim, very much favor a French invasion of South Germany, while they offer peculiar difficulties to an invasion of France from South Germany. There is, further, no doubt that the addition of Alsace and German-speaking Lorraine would give South Germany a much stronger frontier, inasmuch as she would then be master of the crest of the Vosges mountains in its whole length, and of the fortresses which cover its northern passes.

³⁴ In 1618 the Electorate of Brandenburg merged with Ducal Prussia (East Prussia), a vassal state of the republic of the *szlachta* (gentry) of Poland which had been formed in the early 16th century by estates of the Teutonic Order. As ruler of Prussia the Elector of Brandenburg became a vassal of Poland. This relationship remained until 1657 when the Elector of Brandenburg took advantage of Poland's difficulties in its war against Sweden and obtained the recognition of his sovereign rights over Prussian territory.

If Metz were annexed as well, France would certainly for the moment be deprived of her two principal bases of operation against Germany, but that would not prevent her from constructing a fresh one at Nancy or Verdun. While Germany owns Koblenz, Mainz, Germersheim, Rastatt, and Ulm, all bases of operation against France, and plentifully made use of in this war, with what show of fair play can she begrudge France Strasbourg and Metz, the only two fortresses of any importance she has on that side? Moreover, Strasbourg endangers South Germany only while South Germany is a separate power from North Germany. From 1792 to 1795 South Germany was never invaded from that direction, because Prussia was a party to the war against the French Revolution; but as soon as Prussia made a peace of her own in 1795,³⁵ and left the South to shift for itself, the invasions of South Germany with Strasbourg for a base began and continued till 1809. The fact is, a *united* Germany can always render Strasbourg and any French army in Alsace innocuous by concentrating all her troops, as was done in the present war, between Saarlouis and Landau, and advancing, or accepting battle, on the line of road between Mainz and Metz. While the mass of the German troops is stationed there, any French army advancing from Strasbourg into South Germany would be outflanked, and have its communications threatened. If the present campaign has proved anything, it is the facility of invading France from Germany.

But, in good faith, is it not altogether an absurdity and an anachronism to make military considerations the principle by which the boundaries of nations are to be fixed? If this rule were to prevail, Austria would still be entitled to Venetia and the line of the Mincio, and France to the line of the Rhine, in order to protect Paris, which lies certainly more open to an attack from the northeast than Berlin does from the southwest. If limits are to be fixed by military interests, there will be no end to claims, because every military line is necessarily faulty, and may be improved by annexing some more outlying territory; and, moreover, they can never be fixed finally and fairly, because they always must be imposed by the conqueror upon the conquered, and consequently carry within them the seed of fresh wars.

³⁵ This refers to the separate Peace Treaty of Basel, which Prussia concluded with France on April 5, 1795. The treaty led to the break-up of the first anti-French coalition of the European states.

Such is the lesson of all history. Thus with nations as with individuals. To deprive them of the power of offence, you must deprive them of the means of defense. You must not only garotte, but murder. If ever a conqueror took “material guarantees” for breaking the sinews of a nation, the first Napoleon did so by the Tilsit Treaty,³⁶ and the way he executed it against Prussia and the rest of Germany. Yet, a few years later, his gigantic power split like a rotten reed upon the German people. What are the “material guarantees” Prussia, in her wildest dreams, can or dare impose upon France, compared to the “material guarantees” the first Napoleon had wrenched from herself? The result will not prove the less disastrous. History will measure its retribution, not by the extent of the square miles conquered from France, but by the intensity of the crime of reviving, in the second half of the 19th century, *the policy of conquest!*

But, say the mouthpieces of Teutonic patriotism, you must not confound Germans with Frenchmen. What we want is not glory, but safety. The Germans are an essentially peaceful people. In their sober guardianship, conquest itself changes from a condition of future war into a pledge of perpetual peace. Of course, it is not Germans that invaded France in 1792, for the sublime purpose of bayoneting the revolution of the 18th century. It is not Germans that befouled their hands by the subjugation of Italy, the oppression of Hungary, and the dismemberment of Poland. Their present military system, which divides the whole adult male population into two parts—one standing army on service, and another standing army on furlough, both equally bound in passive obedience to rulers by divine right—such a military system is, of course, a “material guarantee” for keeping the peace, and the ultimate goal of civilizing tendencies! In Germany, as everywhere else, the sycophants of the powers that be poison the popular mind by the incense of mendacious self-praise.

Indignant as they pretend to be at the sight of French fortresses in Metz and Strasbourg, those German patriots see no harm in the vast system of Moscovite fortifications at Warsaw, Modlin, and Ivangorod. While gloating at the terrors of imperialist invasion, they blink at the infamy of autocratic tutelage.

³⁶ By the *Treaty of Tilsit* concluded in 1807 between France on the one side, and Russia and Prussia on the other, Prussia lost almost half of her territory, agreed to pay an indemnity, reduce her army and close all her ports to British shipping.

As in 1865 promises were exchanged between Louis Bonaparte and Bismarck, so in 1870 promises have been exchanged between Gorchakov and Bismarck.³⁷ As Louis Bonaparte flattered himself that the War of 1866, resulting in the common exhaustion of Austria and Prussia, would make him the supreme arbiter of Germany, so Alexander flattered himself that the War of 1870, resulting in the common exhaustion of Germany and France, would make him the supreme arbiter of the Western Continent. As the Second Empire thought the North German Confederation incompatible with its existence, so autocratic Russia must think herself endangered by a German empire under Prussian leadership. Such is the law of the old political system. Within its pale the gain of one state is the loss of the other. The Czar's paramount influence over Europe roots in his traditional hold on Germany. At a moment when in Russia herself volcanic social agencies threaten to shake the very base of autocracy, could the Czar afford to bear with such a loss of foreign prestige? Already the Moscovite journals repeat the language of the Bonapartist journals after the War of 1866. Do the Teuton patriots really believe that liberty and peace³⁸ will be guaranteed to Germany by forcing France into the arms of Russia? If the fortune of her arms, the arrogance of success, and dynastic intrigue lead Germany to a dismemberment of France, there will then only remain two courses open to her. She must at all risks become the *avowed* tool of Russian aggrandizement,³⁹ or, after some short respite, make again ready for another "defensive" war, not one of those new-fangled "localized"

³⁷ At a conference with Napoleon III at Biarritz in October 1865, Bismarck won France's *de facto* agreement to a Prussian-Italian alliance and Prussia's war against Austria. Napoleon calculated that Austria would be the victor and that he could then intervene in the war and reap the gains for himself.

At the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, the czarist Foreign Minister Alexander Gorchakov stated in his talks with Bismarck at Berlin that Russia would keep a benevolent neutrality in the war and put diplomatic pressure on Austria. In its turn, the Prussian government undertook not to place any obstacles in the way of czarist Russia's policy on the Eastern question.

³⁸ In the German edition of 1870, "liberty and peace" reads "independence, liberty and peace."

³⁹ In the German edition of 1870, a clause is added here: "a policy which corresponds to the tradition of the Hohenzollern dynasty."

war, but a *war of races*—a war with the combined Slavonian and Roman races.⁴⁰

The German working class have resolutely supported the war, which it was not in their power to prevent, as a war for German independence and the liberation of France and Europe from that pestilential incubus, the Second Empire. It was the German workmen who, together with the rural laborers, furnished the sinews and muscles of heroic hosts, leaving behind their half-starved families. Decimated by the battles abroad, they will be once more decimated by misery at home.⁴¹ In their turn they are now coming forward to ask for “guarantees”—guarantees that their immense sacrifices have not been brought in vain, that they have conquered liberty, that the victory over the imperialist armies will not, as in 1815, be turned into the defeat of the German people;⁴² and, as the first of these guarantees, they claim an *honorable peace for France*, and the *recognition of the French Republic*.

The Central Committee of the German Socialist-Democratic Workmen’s Party issued on the 5th of September a manifesto, energetically insisting upon these guarantees.

We [they say,] protest against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. And we are conscious of speaking in the name of the German working class. In the common interest of France and

⁴⁰ In the German edition of 1870, another sentence is added here: “This is the perspective of peace which is ‘guaranteed’ to Germany by the addelepatated patriots of the middle class.”

⁴¹ In the German edition of 1870, two sentences are added here: “And the patriotic ranters will tell them, as consolation, that capital has no fatherland and that workers’ wages are regulated by the *unpatriotic international* law of supply and demand. Is it not, therefore, high time for the German working class to speak up and no longer allow the gentlemen of the middle class to speak *in their name*?”

⁴² This refers to the victory won by feudal reaction in Germany after the downfall of Napoleon’s rule.

Together with the people of the other European countries the German people participated in the war of liberation against the rule of Napoleon I. The fruits of the victorious war, however, were seized by the rulers of the feudal absolute states in Europe who relied on the reactionary nobility. The counter-revolutionary league of monarchies—the Holy Alliance, with Austria, Prussia and czarist Russia as its nucleus—controlled the destinies of the European states. With the founding of the German Confederation, feudal separatism remained in Germany, feudal absolutism was consolidated in the German states, all the privileges of the nobles were kept intact and exploitation of the peasants under semi-serfdom was intensified.

Germany, in the interest of peace and liberty, in the interest of Western civilization against Eastern barbarism, the German workmen will not patiently tolerate the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine... We shall faithfully stand by our fellow-workmen in all countries for the common international cause of the Proletariat!⁴³

Unfortunately, we cannot feel sanguine of their immediate success. If the French workmen amidst peace failed to stop the aggressor, are the German workmen more likely to stop the victor amidst the clangor of arms? The German workmen's manifesto demands the extradition of Louis Bonaparte as a common felon to the French Republic. Their rulers are, on the contrary, already trying hard to restore him to the Tuileries as the best man to ruin France. However that may be, history will prove that the German working class is not made of the same malleable stuff as the German middle class. They will do their duty.

Like them, we hail the advent of the Republic in France, but at the same time we labor under misgivings, which we hope will prove groundless. That Republic has not subverted the throne, but only taken its place become vacant.⁴⁴ It has been proclaimed, not as a social conquest, but as a national measure of defense. It is in the hands of a Provisional Government composed partly of notorious Orléanists,⁴⁵ partly of middle-class Republicans, upon some of whom the insurrection of June 1848 has left its indelible stigma. The division of labor amongst the members of that government looks awkward. The Orléanists have seized the strongholds of the army and the police, while to the professed Republicans have fallen the talking departments. Some of their first acts go far to show that they have inherited from the empire not only ruins but also its dread of the working class. If eventual impossibilities are in wild phraseology demanded from the Republic, is it not with a view to prepare the cry for a "possible"

⁴³ A quotation from "*Das Manifest des Ausschusses der Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei an alle deutschen Arbeiter*," which appeared in leaflet form on September 5, 1870, and was published in *Der Volksstaat*, No. 73, September 11, 1870.

⁴⁴ In the German edition of 1870, the rendering is: "...taken its place which was made vacant by German bayonets."

⁴⁵ *The Orléanists* were monarchists representing the interests of the financial aristocracy and the big bourgeoisie. They were the supporters of the House of Orléans, a branch of the Bourbons dynasty that ruled France from July 1830 to 1848.

government? Is the Republic, by some of its middle-class managers, not intended to serve as a mere stopgap and bridge over an Orléanist Restoration? The French working class moves, therefore, under circumstances of extreme difficulty. Any attempt at upsetting the new government in the present crisis, when the enemy is almost knocking at the doors of Paris, would be a desperate folly. The French workmen must perform their duties as citizens;⁴⁶ but, at the same time, they must not allow themselves to be deluded by the national *souvenirs* of 1792, as the French peasants allowed themselves to be deluded by the national *souvenirs* of the First Empire. They have not to recapitulate the past, but to build up the future. Let them calmly and resolutely improve the opportunities of Republican liberty for the work of their own class organization. It will gift them with fresh herculean powers for the regeneration of France, and our common task—the emancipation of labor. Upon their energies and wisdom hinges the fate of the Republic.

The English workmen have already taken measures to overcome, by a wholesome pressure from without, the reluctance of their government to recognize the French Republic.⁴⁷ The present dilatoriness of the British government is probably intended to atone for the Anti-Jacobin war and its former indecent haste in sanctioning the *coup d'état*.⁴⁸ The English workmen call also upon their government to oppose by all its power the dismemberment of France, which part of the English press is so shameless

⁴⁶ In the German edition of 1870, after “citizens” are added “and that is what they are doing.”

⁴⁷ Marx is referring to the movement started by the British workers for recognition of and diplomatic support for the French Republic established on September 4, 1870. With the active support of the trade unions, working people held mass rallies and demonstrations from September 5 in London, Birmingham, Newcastle and other cities. All the demonstrators expressed sympathy for the French people and demanded in resolutions and petitions that the British government immediately recognize the French Republic.

The General Council of the First International took a direct part in organizing the campaign.

⁴⁸ This is an allusion to the active participation of bourgeois-aristocratic Britain in the formation of the coalition of absolute feudal states, which started the war against revolutionary France in 1792 (Britain herself entered the war in 1793); and to the fact that the ruling British oligarchy was the first in Europe to recognize the French Bonapartist regime founded after Louis Bonaparte's *coup d'état* of December 2, 1851.

enough to howl for.⁴⁹ It is the same press that for twenty years deified Louis Bonaparte as the providence of Europe, that frantically cheered on the slaveholders' rebellion.⁵⁰ Now, as then, it drudges for the slaveholder.

Let the sections of the *International Working Men's Association* in every country stir the working classes to action. If they forsake their duty, if they remain passive, the present tremendous war will be but the harbinger of still deadlier international feuds, and lead in every nation to a renewed triumph over the workman by the lords of the sword, of the soil, and of capital.

Vive la République !

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Robert Applegarth	Martin J. Boon
Fred. Bradnick	Caihil
John Hales	William Hales
George Harris	Fred. Lessner
Lopatin	B. Lucraft
George Milner	Thomas Mottershead
Charles Murray	George Odger
James Parnell	Pfänder
Rühl	Joseph Shepherd
Cowell Stepney	Stoll
Schmutz	

CORRESPONDING SECRETARIES

Eugène Dupont, *for France*
Karl Marx, *for Germany and Russia*
A. Serrailier, *for Belgium, Holland and Spain*

⁴⁹ In the German edition of 1870, the latter part of the sentence reads: "...which naturally is quite as noisily heralded by a part of the English press as by the German patriots."

⁵⁰ During the civil war in the USA (1861-1865) between the industrial North and the South, which upheld the system of slave plantations, the English bourgeois press supported the slavery of the South.

Hermann Jung, *for Switzerland*

Giovanni Bora, *for Italy*

Zévy Maurice *for Hungary*

Antoni Żabicki, *for Poland*

James Cohen, *for Denmark*

J. G. Eccarius, *for the United States of America*

William Townshend, *Chairman*

John Weston, *Treasurer*

J. George Eccarius, *General Secretary*

Office: 256 High Holborn, London, W.C.

September 9, 1870

Written by Marx on September 6-9,
1870

The original text is in English

Published in leaflet form, in English on
September 11-13, 1870, and in German
between September and December 1870,
and in French and German periodicals in
September 1870

Printed according to the text of the English
leaflet of 1870

**ADDRESS OF THE GENERAL
COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION ON
THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE, 1871***

TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

I

On the September 4, 1870, when the working men of Paris proclaimed the Republic, which was almost instantaneously acclaimed throughout France, without a single voice of dissent, a cabal of place-hunting barristers, with Thiers for their statesman and Trochu for their general, took hold of the Hôtel de Ville.⁵¹ At that time they were imbued with so

* *The Civil War in France* is one of the most important works of scientific communism, which, in the light of the experience of the Paris Commune, further developed the fundamental theses of Marxist teachings on the class struggle, the state, revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was written as an address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association to all its members in Europe and the United States.

As soon as the Paris Commune was proclaimed Marx began meticulously to collect and study material about the activities of the Commune which was available from such sources as the French, British and German newspapers, and in letters from Paris. At a session of the General Council on April 18, 1871, Marx proposed that the Council issue an address to all members of the International on "the general trend of the struggle" in France. The Council commissioned Marx to draft the address and he then started the work on April 18 and continued it until the end of May. He wrote the first and second drafts of *The Civil War in France* (see pp. 109-260 and Note 111 of the present book). Then he set about to complete the final text. On May 30, 1871, two days after the last street barricade in Paris fell into the hands of the Versailles troops, the Council unanimously approved the final text of the address Marx read out.

The Civil War in France, written in English, was first printed in London around June 13, 1871. A thousand copies of this 35-page pamphlet were issued. As the first edition was sold out very quickly, a second English edition of two thousand copies was issued and sold among the workers at a reduced price. In this edition Marx corrected the misprints in the first edition and added a second document to the "Notes." The names of two trade unionists, Benjamin Lucraft and George Odger, were removed from the list of signatures of General Council members at the end of the Address because they had expressed disagreement with the Address in the bourgeois press and withdrawn from the General Council; the names of new members were added. In August 1871 a third edition of *The Civil War in France* appeared, in which Marx removed a few inaccuracies that had been made in the preceding editions.

In 1871 and 1872, *The Civil War in France* was translated into French, German, Russian, Italian, Spanish and Dutch and published in newspapers, magazines, and also in pamphlet form in Europe and America.

The German version was translated by Engels and appeared in *Der Volksstaat*, Nos. 52-61, June 28, July 1, 5, 8, 12, 16, 19, 22, 26 and 29, 1871, and partly in *Der Vorbote*, August-October 1871. It was also printed as a separate pamphlet in

fanatical a faith in the mission of Paris to represent France in all epochs of historical crisis, that, to legitimate their usurped titles as governors of France, they thought it quite sufficient to produce their lapsed mandates as representatives of Paris. In our second address on the late war, five days after the rise of these men, we told you who they were.⁵²

Yet, in the turmoil of surprise, with the real leaders of the working class still shut up in Bonapartist prisons and the Prussians already marching upon Paris, Paris bore with their assumption of power, on the express condition that it was to be wielded for the single purpose of national defense. Paris, however, was not to be defended without arming its working class, organizing them into an effective force, and training their ranks by the war itself. But Paris armed was the Revolution armed. A victory of Paris over the Prussian aggressor would have been a victory of the French workman over the French capitalist and his State parasites. In this conflict between national duty and class interest, the Government of National Defense did not hesitate one moment to turn into a Government of National Defection.

The first step they took was to send Thiers on a roving tour to all the courts of Europe, there to beg mediation by offering the barter of the Republic for a king. Four months after the commencement of the siege, when they thought the opportune moment come for breaking the first word of capitulation, Trochu, in the presence of Jules Favre and others of his colleagues, addressed the assembled mayors of Paris in these terms:

Leipzig. In the translation, Engels made a few minor changes in the text. When a new German edition of *The Civil War in France* was prepared in 1876 to mark the fifth anniversary of the Paris Commune, some revisions were made in the text.

Engels again revised this translation in 1891 for the German jubilee edition of *The Civil War in France*, issued to mark the 20th anniversary of the Paris Commune. He also wrote an introduction for it. He included in this edition two works by Marx—the First and Second Addresses of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Franco-Prussian War. These were also contained in most of the separate pamphlets of *The Civil War in France* subsequently published in various languages.

The French version of *The Civil War in France* first appeared in *L'Internationale*, Brussels, July-September 1871. A pamphlet in French appeared in Brussels the following year. The translation was edited by Marx, who retranslated many passages and made numerous changes on the proofs.

⁵¹ The Town Hall.

⁵² See above, p. 34.

The first question put to me by my colleagues on the very evening of the 4th of September was this: Paris, can it, with any chance of success, stand a siege by the Prussian army? I did not hesitate to answer in the negative. Some of my colleagues here present will warrant the truth of my words and the persistence of my opinion. I told them, in these very terms, that, under the existing state of things, the attempt of Paris to hold out a siege by the Prussian army would be a folly. Without doubt, I added, it would be an heroic folly; but that would be all... The events (managed by himself) have not given the lie to my prevision.

This nice little speech of Trochu was afterwards published by M. Corbon, one of the mayors present.

Thus, on the very evening of the proclamation of the Republic, Trochu's "plan" was known to his colleagues to be the capitulation of Paris. If national defense had been more than a pretext for the personal government of Thiers, Favre and Co., the upstarts of the September 4 would have abdicated on the 5th—would have initiated the Parisian people into Trochu's "plan," and called upon them to surrender at once, or to take their own fate into their own hands. Instead of this, the infamous impostors resolved upon curing the heroic folly of Paris by a regimen of famine and broken heads, and to dupe her in the meanwhile by ranting manifestoes, holding forth that Trochu, "the governor of Paris, will never capitulate," and Jules Favre, the Foreign Minister, will "not cede an inch of our territory, nor a stone of our fortresses." In a letter to Gambetta, that very same Jules Favre avows that what they were "defending" against were not the Prussian soldiers, but the working men of Paris. During the whole continuance of the siege the Bonapartist cut-throats, whom Trochu had wisely entrusted with the command of the Paris army, exchanged, in their intimate correspondence, ribald jokes at the well-understood mockery of defense. (See, for instance, the correspondence of Alphonse Simon Guiod, supreme commander of the artillery of the Army of Defense of Paris and Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, to Suzanne, general of division of artillery,

a correspondence published by the *Journal officiel* of the Commune.)⁵³ The mask of imposture was at last dropped on January 28, 1871.⁵⁴ With the true heroism of utter self-debasement, the Government of National Defense, in their capitulation, came out as the government of France by Bismarck's prisoners—a part so base that Louis Bonaparte himself had, at Sedan, shrunk from accepting it. After the events of March 18, on their wild flight to Versailles, the *capitulards*⁵⁵ left in the hands of Paris the documentary evidence of their treason, to destroy which, as the Commune says in its manifesto to the provinces, “those men would not recoil from battering Paris into a heap of ruins washed by a sea of blood.”⁵⁶

To be eagerly bent upon such a consummation, some of the leading members of the Government of Defense had besides, most peculiar reasons of their own.

Shortly after the conclusion of the armistice, M. Millière, one of the representatives of Paris to the National Assembly, now shot by express order of Jules Favre, published a series of authentic legal documents in proof that Jules Favre, living in concubinage with the wife of a drunkard resident at Algiers, had, by a most daring concoction of forgeries, spread over many years, contrived to grasp, in the name of the children of his adultery, a large succession,⁵⁷ which made him a rich man, and that, in a law-suit undertaken by the legitimate heirs, he only escaped exposure by the connivance of the Bonapartist tribunals. As these dry legal documents were not to be got rid of by any amount of rhetorical horse power,

⁵³ The correspondence of Alphonse Simon Guidot to Louis Suzanne appeared in the *Journal officiel*, No. 115, April 25, 1871.

Journal officiel is an abbreviation for the *Journal officiel de la République française*, official organ of the Paris Commune. It was published from March 20 to May 24, 1871. The journal used the name of the government paper of the French Republic, published in Paris from September 5, 1870. (During the period of the Commune, the organ of the Thiers government in Versailles was also published under the same title.) Only the issue of March 30 bore the title *Journal officiel de la Commune de Paris*.

⁵⁴ On January 28, 1871. Bismarck and Jules Favre, representative of the Government of National Defense, concluded the “Convention on Armistice and the Capitulation of Paris.”

⁵⁵ *The Capitulards*—a contemptuous name for those who advocated the capitulation of Paris during the siege (1870-71). Later, this term became used in French to describe capitulationists.

⁵⁶ *Le Vengeur*, No. 30, April 28, 1871.

⁵⁷ Succession: inheritance.

Jules Favre, for the first time in his life, held his tongue, quietly awaiting the outbreak of the civil war, in order, then, frantically to denounce the people of Paris as a band of escaped convicts in utter revolt against family, religion, order, and property. This same forger had hardly got into power, after September 4, when he sympathetically let loose upon society Pic and Taillefer, convicted, even under the Empire, of forgery, in the scandalous affair of the *Étendard*.⁵⁸ One of these men, Taillefer, having dared to return to Paris under the Commune, was at once reinstated in prison; and then Jules Favre exclaimed, from the tribune of the National Assembly, that Paris was setting free all her jailbirds!

Ernest Picard, the Joe Miller⁵⁹ of the Government of National Defense, who appointed himself Finance Minister of the Republic after having in vain striven to become the Home Minister of the Empire, is the brother of one Arthur Picard, an individual expelled from the Paris *Bourse* as a blackleg (see report of the Prefecture of Police, dated July 31, 1867), and convicted, on his own confession, of a theft of 300,000 francs, while manager of one of the branches of the *Société Générale*,⁶⁰ Rue Palestro, No. 5 (see report of the Prefecture of Police, December 11, 1868). This Arthur Picard was made by Ernest Picard the editor of his paper, *l'Électeur libre*.⁶¹ While the common run of stock-jobbers were led astray by the official lies of this Finance Office paper, Arthur was running backwards and forwards between the Finance Office and the *Bourse*, there to discount the

⁵⁸ *L'Étendard*—a French Bonapartist paper, published in Paris in 1866-68. It had to stop publication following an exposure of the fraudulent means used by the paper to obtain financial support.

⁵⁹ “Joe Miller” reads “Karl Vogt” in the German editions of 1871 and 1891, and “Falstaff” in the French edition of 1871. *Joe Miller* was a celebrated English actor of the 18th century.

⁶⁰ This refers to the Société générale du crédit mobilier, a big French joint-stock bank founded in 1852. Its source of income was chiefly from speculation on the securities of the joint-stock companies it had established. Crédit mobilier had close connections with the government of the Second Empire. It went bankrupt in 1867 and closed down in 1871. In many of his articles published in the *New York Daily Tribune* Marx laid bare the real nature of Crédit mobilier (see Marx and Engels, *Works*, Ger. ed., Berlin, Vol. XII, pp. 20-36, 202-209, 289-292).

⁶¹ *L'Électeur libre*—organ of the Right-wing Republicans, published in Paris from 1868 to 1871. It was a weekly at first and became a daily after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War. In 1870 and 1871 it had close connections with the Finance Office of the Government of National Defense.

disasters of the French army. The whole financial correspondence of that worthy pair of brothers fell into the hands of the Commune.

Jules Ferry, a penniless barrister before September 4, contrived, as Mayor of Paris during the siege, to job a fortune out of famine. The day on which he would have to give an account of his maladministration would be the day of his conviction.

These men, then, could find, in the ruins of Paris only their tickets of leave:⁶² they were the very men Bismarck wanted. With the help of some shuffling of cards, Thiers, hitherto the secret prompter of the Government, now appeared at its head, with the ticket-of-leave men for his ministers.

Thiers, that monstrous gnome, has charmed the French bourgeoisie for almost half a century, because he is the most consummate intellectual expression of their own class corruption. Before he became a statesman he had already proved his lying powers as an historian. The chronicle of his public life is the record of the misfortunes of France. Banded before 1830, with the Republicans, he slipped into office under Louis Philippe by betraying his protector Laffitte, ingratiating himself with the king by exciting mob-riots against the clergy, during which the church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois and the Archbishop's palace were plundered, and by acting the minister-spy upon, and the jail-*accoucheur* of, the Duchess de Berry.⁶³ The massacre of the Republicans in the Rue Transnonain, and the subsequent infamous laws of September against the press and the right of

⁶² In England common criminals are often discharged on parole after serving the greater part of their term, and are placed under police surveillance. On such discharge they receive a certificate called ticket of leave, their possessors being referred to as ticket-of-leave men. [*Note by Engels to the German edition of 1871.*]

⁶³ A reference to the actions against the Legitimists and the church which occurred in Paris on February 14-15, 1831 and found a response in the provinces. To protest against the Legitimists' demonstration at the funeral of the Duke of Berry, the masses wrecked the Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois church and the palace of Archbishop Quélen, who was known as a sympathizer of the Legitimists. The Orléanist government intended to deal a blow at the hostile Legitimists, and therefore took no measures to restrain the masses. Thiers, the then Home Minister, who was present when the church and the archbishop's palace were being wrecked, persuaded the National Guards not to intervene.

Thiers ordered the arrest in 1832 of the Duchess of Berry—mother of the Count of Chambord, the Legitimist pretender—put her under strict surveillance and made her undergo a humiliating physical examination so as to make public her secret marriage and thus compromise her politically.

association, were his work.⁶⁴ Reappearing as the chief of the Cabinet in March 1840, he astonished France with his plan of fortifying Paris.⁶⁵ To the Republicans, who denounced this plan as a sinister plot against the liberty of Paris, he replied from the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies:

What! To fancy that any works of fortification could ever endanger liberty! And first of all you calumniate any possible Government in supposing that it could some day attempt to maintain itself by bombarding the capital; ...but that government would be a hundred times more impossible after its victory than before.

Indeed, no Government would ever have dared to bombard Paris from the forts but that Government which had previously surrendered these forts to the Prussians.

When King Bomba tried his hand at Palermo, in January 1848,⁶⁶ Thiers, then long since out of office, again rose in the Chamber of Deputies:

⁶⁴ Marx is referring to the infamous role played by Thiers in suppressing the uprising of April 13-14, 1834, which was against the rule of the July Monarchy. The uprising of the Paris workers, and the petit-bourgeois strata which joined in with them, was led by the Republican secret Society for the Rights of Man. In suppressing the insurrection, countless atrocities were perpetrated by the militarists, including the slaughter of all the dwellers in a house in the Rue Transnonain. Thiers was the chief instigator of the brutal suppression of the democrats both during the uprising and after it was put down.

Under the provisions of the reactionary *Laws of September*—introduced in September 1835—the French government restricted the activities of juries and severely inhibited the press by such measures as that which increased the sum of money periodicals had to deposit as a security. The laws also threatened imprisonment and heavy fines for speeches against private ownership and the existing state system.

⁶⁵ In January 1841 Thiers submitted a plan to the Chamber of Deputies on the building of fortifications—ramparts and forts—around Paris. The revolutionary democrats regarded this move as a preparatory measure for the suppression of the people's uprisings. It was pointed out that it was exactly for this purpose that Thiers' plan provided for the construction of a large number of particularly strong forts near the workers' quarters in the eastern and northeastern part of Paris.

⁶⁶ In January 1848 the army of Ferdinand II, King of the Two Sicilies, bombarded the town of Palermo to suppress the people's uprising, which was a signal for the bourgeois revolution in the Italian states in 1848-49. In the autumn of 1848, Ferdinand II again indiscriminately bombarded Messina, and thus won himself the nickname King Bomba.

You know, gentlemen, what is happening at Palermo. You, all of you, shake with horror (in the parliamentary sense) on hearing that during forty-eight hours a large town has been bombarded—by whom? Was it by a foreign enemy exercising the rights of war? No, gentlemen, it was by its own Government. And why? Because that unfortunate town demanded its rights. Well, then, for the demand of its rights it has got forty-eight hours of bombardment... Allow me to appeal to the opinion of Europe. It is doing a service to mankind to arise, and to make reverberate, from what is perhaps the greatest tribune in Europe, some words (indeed words) of indignation against such acts... When the Regent Espartero, who had rendered services to his country (which M. Thiers never did), intended bombarding Barcelona, in order to suppress its insurrection, there arose from all parts of the world a general outcry of indignation.

Eighteen months afterwards, M. Thiers was amongst the fiercest defenders of the bombardment of Rome by a French army.⁶⁷ In fact, the fault of King Bomba seems to have consisted in this only, that he limited his bombardment to forty-eight hours.

A few days before the Revolution of February, fretting at the long exile from place⁶⁸ and pelf to which Guizot had condemned him, and sniffing in the air the scent of an approaching popular commotion, Thiers, in that pseudo-heroic style which won him the nickname of *Mirabeau-mouche* [Mirabeau the fly],⁶⁹ declared to the Chamber of Deputies:

I am of the party of Revolution, not only in France, but in Europe. I wish the Government of the Revolution to remain in the hands of moderate men ...but if that Government should fall into the hands of ardent minds, even into those of

⁶⁷ In April 1849 the French bourgeois government in alliance with Austria and Naples intervened in the Roman Republic in order to overthrow it and restore the temporal power of the Pope. Because of the armed intervention and the siege of Rome—cruelly bombarded by the French army—the Roman Republic was overthrown despite heroic resistance and Rome was occupied by the French army.

⁶⁸ place: government office

⁶⁹ Mirabeau the fly.

Radicals, I shall, for all that, not desert my cause. I shall always be of the party of the Revolution.

The Revolution of February came. Instead of displacing the Guizot Cabinet by the Thiers Cabinet, as the little man had dreamt, it superseded Louis Philippe by the Republic. On the first day of the popular victory he carefully hid himself, forgetting that the contempt of the working men screened him from their hatred. Still, with his legendary courage, he continued to shy the public stage, until the June massacres⁷⁰ had cleared it for his sort of action. Then he became the leading mind of the “Party of Order”⁷¹ and its Parliamentary Republic, that anonymous interregnum, in which all the rival factions of the ruling class conspired together to crush the people, and conspired against each other to restore each of them its own monarchy. Then, as now, Thiers denounced the Republicans as the only obstacle to the consolidation of the Republic; then, as now, he spoke to the Republic as the hangman spoke to Don Carlos: “I shall assassinate thee but for thy own good.” Now, as then, he will have to exclaim on the day after his victory: “*L’Empire est fait*”—the Empire is consummated. Despite his hypocritical homilies about necessary liberties and his personal grudge against Louis Bonaparte, who had made a dupe of him, and kicked out parliamentarism—and outside of its factitious atmosphere the little man is conscious of withering into nothingness—he had a hand in all the infamies of the Second Empire, from the occupation of Rome by French troops to the war with Prussia, which he incited by his fierce invective against German unity—not as a cloak of Prussian despotism, but as an encroachment upon the vested right of France in German disunion. Fond of brandishing, with his dwarfish arms, in the face of Europe the sword of the first Napoleon, whose historical shoeblack he had become, his foreign policy always culminated in the utter humiliation of France, from the

⁷⁰ This refers to the cruel suppression of the uprising of the Parisian proletariat of June 23-26, 1848, by the bourgeois Republican government. With the suppression of the insurrection the reactionary forces became rampant and the position of the conservative monarchists was further consolidated.

⁷¹ *The Party of Order*, founded in 1848, was the party of the conservative big bourgeoisie in France, and a coalition of two monarchist factions, the Legitimists and the Orléanists. It played the leading role in the Legislative Assembly of the Second Republic from 1849 up to the *coup d’état* of December 2, 1851. The bankruptcy of its anti-popular policy was utilized by Louis Bonaparte’s clique in building the regime of the Second Empire.

London convention of 1840⁷² to the Paris capitulation of 1871, and the present civil war, where he hounds on the prisoners of Sedan and Metz against Paris by special permission of Bismarck.⁷³ Despite his versatility of talent and shiftiness of purpose, this man has his whole lifetime been wedded to the most fossil routine. It is self-evident that to him the deeper undercurrents of modern society remained forever hidden; but even the most palpable changes on its surface were abhorrent to a brain all the vitality of which had fled to the tongue. Thus he never tired of denouncing as a sacrilege any deviation from the old French protective system. When a minister of Louis Philippe, he railed at railways as a wild chimera; and when in opposition under Louis Bonaparte, he branded as a profanation every attempt to reform the rotten French army system. Never in his long political career has he been guilty of a single—even the smallest—measure of any practical use. Thiers was consistent only in his greed for wealth and his hatred of the men that produce it. Having entered his first ministry under Louis Philippe poor as Job, he left it a millionaire. His last ministry under the same king (March 1, 1840) exposed him to public taunts of peculation in the Chamber of Deputies, to which he was content to reply by tears—a commodity he deals in as freely as Jules Favre, or any other crocodile. At Bordeaux⁷⁴ his first measure for saving France from impending financial ruin was to endow himself with three millions a year, the first and the last word of the “Economical Republic,” the vista of which he had opened to his Paris electors in 1869. One of his former colleagues of the Chamber of Deputies of 1830, himself a capitalist and, nevertheless, a

⁷² France faced the danger of war with an anti-French coalition of the European powers following the conclusion of the Convention of London on July 15, 1840 by Britain, Russia, Prussia, Austria and Turkey, which agreed to aid the Turkish sultan against the French-backed Mohammed Ali, governor of Egypt. The French government was forced to withhold support for Mohammed Ali in order to avert the war.

⁷³ Endeavoring to strengthen the Versailles troops for the suppression of revolutionary Paris, Thiers requested Bismarck to permit him to enlarge the number of his troops, which, according to the terms of the Versailles preliminary peace treaty signed on February 26, 1871, were not to exceed 40,000 men. Thiers' government assured Bismarck that the troops would be used only to suppress the insurrection in Paris. There upon, the government was granted permission, through the Rouen agreement of March 28, 1871, to increase the size of its army to 80,000 and then to 100,000 men. Under this agreement the German Headquarters hastily repatriated the French prisoners-of-war, namely those captured in Sedan and Metz. They were then put in locked-up camps by Versailles and trained in hatred for the Paris Commune.

⁷⁴ In the German edition of 1891, “At Bordeaux” reads “At Bordeaux, 1871.”

devoted member of the Paris Commune, M. Beslay, lately addressed Thiers thus in a public placard:

The enslavement of labor by capital has always been the cornerstone of your policy, and from the very day you saw the Republic of Labor installed at the Hôtel de Ville, you have never ceased to cry out to France: "These are criminals!"

A master in small state roguery, a virtuoso in perjury and treason, a craftsman in all the petty stratagems, cunning devices, and base perfidies of parliamentary party-warfare; never scrupling, when out of office, to fan a revolution, and to stifle it in blood when at the helm of the State; with class prejudices standing him in the place of ideas, and vanity in the place of a heart; his private life as infamous as his public life is odious—even now, when playing the part of a French Sulla, he can not help setting off the abomination of his deeds by the ridicule of his ostentation.

The capitulation of Paris, by surrendering to Prussia not only Paris, but all France, closed the long-continued intrigues of treason with the enemy, which the usurpers of September 4 had begun, as Trochu himself said, on that very same day. On the other hand, it initiated the civil war they were now to wage, with the assistance of Prussia, against the Republic and Paris. The trap was laid in the very terms of the capitulation. At that time above one-third of the territory was in the hands of the enemy, the capital was cut off from the provinces, all communications were disorganized. To elect under such circumstances a real representation of France was impossible, unless ample time were given for preparation. In view of this, the capitulation stipulated that a National Assembly must be elected within eight days; so that in many parts of France the news of the impending election arrived on its eve only. This Assembly, moreover, was, by an express clause of the capitulation, to be elected for the sole purpose of deciding on peace or war, and, eventually, to conclude a treaty of peace. The population could not but feel that the terms of the armistice rendered the continuation of the war impossible, and that for sanctioning the peace imposed by Bismarck, the worst men in France were the best. But not content with these precautions, Thiers, even before the secret of the armistice had been broached to Paris, set out for an electioneering tour through the

provinces, there to galvanize back into life the Legitimist party,⁷⁵ which now, along with the Orléanists, had to take the place of the then impossible Bonapartists. He was not afraid of them. Impossible as a government of modern France, and, therefore, contemptible as rivals, what party were more eligible as tools of counter-revolution than the party whose action, in the words of Thiers himself (Chamber of Deputies, January 5, 1833), “had always been confined to the three resources of foreign invasion, civil war, and anarchy?” They verily believed in the advent of their long-expected retrospective millennium. There were the heels of foreign invasion trampling upon France; there was the downfall of an Empire, and the captivity of a Bonaparte; and there they were themselves. The wheel of history had evidently rolled back to stop at the *Chambre introuvable*⁷⁶ of 1816. In the Assemblies of the Republic, 1848 to 1851, they had been represented by their educated and trained parliamentary champions; it was the rank and file of the party which now rushed in—all the Pourceaugnacs⁷⁷ of France.

As soon as this Assembly of “Rurals”⁷⁸ had met at Bordeaux, Thiers made it clear to them that the peace preliminaries must be assented to at once, without even the honors of a parliamentary debate, as the only condition on which Prussia would permit them to open the war against the Republic and Paris, its stronghold. The counter-revolution had, in fact, no time to lose. The Second Empire had more than doubled the national

⁷⁵ *The Legitimist Party* was the party of the supporters of the older line of the Bourbon dynasty overthrown in 1792. It represented the interests of the big landowning aristocracy. The party was formed in 1830, after the Bourbons were overthrown for the second time. During the Second Empire the Legitimists, unable to gain any support from the people, contented themselves by adopting a temporizing tactic and publishing some critical pamphlets. They became active only in 1871 after they joined the campaign of the counter-revolutionary forces against the Paris Commune.

⁷⁶ The German editions of 1871 and 1891 have “(Sub-prefects’ and Junkers’ Chamber)” after “*Chambre introuvable*.”

Chambre introuvable—a name given to the French Chamber of Deputies of 1815-16 which, composed of out-and-out reactionaries, was elected in the early period of the restoration.

⁷⁷ *Pourceaugnac*—a character in one of Molière’s comedies, typifying the dull-witted, narrow-minded petty landed gentry.

⁷⁸ *The Assembly of Rurals* was a contemptuous nickname for the French National Assembly of 1871, which consisted mostly of reactionary monarchists—provincial landlords, officials, rentiers and merchants elected from the rural election districts. Out of the 630 deputies, 430 were monarchists.

debt and plunged all the large towns into heavy municipal debts. The war had fearfully swelled the liabilities and mercilessly ravaged the resources of the nation. To complete the ruin, the Prussian Shylock was there with his bond for the keep of half a million of his soldiers on French soil, his indemnity of five milliards, and interest at 5 percent on the unpaid instalments thereof.⁷⁹ Who was to pay the bill? It was only by the violent overthrow of the Republic that the appropriators of wealth could hope to shift on the shoulders of its producers the cost of a war which they, the appropriators, had themselves originated. Thus, the immense ruin of France spurred on these patriotic representatives of land and capital, under the very eyes and patronage of the invader, to graft upon the foreign war a civil war—a slaveholders' rebellion.

There stood in the way of this conspiracy one great obstacle—Paris. To disarm Paris was the first condition of success. Paris was therefore summoned by Thiers to surrender its arms. Then Paris was exasperated by the frantic anti-Republican demonstrations of the “Rural” Assembly and by Thiers' own equivocations about the legal status of the Republic; by the threat to decapitate and decapitalize Paris; the appointment of Orléanist ambassadors; Dufaure's laws on overdue commercial bills and house rents,⁸⁰ inflicting ruin on the commerce and industry of Paris, Pouyer-Quertier's tax of two centimes upon every copy of every imaginable publication; the sentences of death against Blanqui and Flourens; the suppression of the Republican journals; the transfer of the National Assembly to Versailles; the renewal of the state of siege declared by Palikao,⁸¹ and expired on Sep-

⁷⁹ A reference to the demand for the payment of war indemnity put forward by Bismarck as one of the terms in the preliminary peace treaty concluded between France and Germany in Versailles on February 26, 1871. (See Note 11.)

⁸⁰ On March 10, 1871, the National Assembly passed the *Law on the Postponement of Payment of Debt Obligations*, which laid down that debts incurred between August 13 and November 12, 1870 had to be paid within seven months from the day they were contracted, while those incurred after November 12 could not be deferred. Thus the law actually did not grant a delay of payment for most of the debtors; it dealt a heavy blow at the workers and the poorer strata of the population and bankrupted many of the small manufacturers and merchants.

⁸¹ This refers to Charles Cousin-Montauban, a French general who commanded the joint French and British aggressive forces which invaded China in 1860. He was given the title of *comte de Palikao* by Napoleon III because he defeated the troops of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) at Baliqiao, a village east of Beijing.

tember 4; the appointment of Vinoy, the *Décembreur*,⁸² as Governor of Paris—of Valentin, the imperialist gendarme, as its Prefect of Police—and of Aurelle de Paladines, the Jesuit general, as the commander-in-chief of its National Guard.

And now we have to address a question to M. Thiers and the men of National Defense, his under-strappers. It is known that, through the agency of M. Pouyer-Quertier, his Finance Minister, Thiers had contracted a loan of two milliards. Now, is it true or not—

1. That the business was so managed that a consideration of several hundred millions was secured for the private benefit of Thiers, Jules Favre, Ernest Picard, Pouyer-Quertier, and Jules Simon? And—
2. That no money was to be paid down until after the “pacification” of Paris?⁸³

At all events, there must have been something very pressing in the matter, for Thiers and Jules Favre, in the name of the majority of the Bordeaux Assembly, unblushingly solicited the immediate occupation of Paris by Prussian troops. Such, however, was not the game of Bismarck, as he sneeringly, and in public, told the admiring Frankfurt philistines on his return to Germany.

II

Armed Paris was the only serious obstacle in the way of the counter-revolutionary conspiracy. Paris was, therefore, to be disarmed. On this point the Bordeaux Assembly was sincerity itself. If the roaring rant of its Rurals had not been audible enough, the surrender of Paris by Thiers to the tender mercies of the triumvirate of Vinoy the *Décembreur*, Valentin the Bonapartist *gendarme*, and Aurelle de Paladines the Jesuit general,

⁸² *The Décembreur*—participants and supporters of the *coup d'état* of Louis Bonaparte of December 2, 1851. Vinoy took a direct part in the *coup d'état* and with armed force suppressed the uprising of the Republicans in one of the provinces.

⁸³ According to press reports, Thiers and other government officials were to get more than 300 million francs as “commission” out of the domestic loan to be raised by the government. Thiers later admitted that representatives of the financial circles, with whom he negotiated for a loan, had demanded the speedy suppression of the revolution in Paris. The law on the domestic loan was adopted on June 20, 1871 after the Versailles troops had suppressed the Paris Commune.

would have cut off even the last subterfuge of doubt. But while insultingly exhibiting the true purpose of the disarmament of Paris, the conspirators asked her to lay down her arms on a pretext which was the most glaring, the most barefaced of lies. The artillery of the Paris National Guard, said Thiers, belonged to the State, and to the State it must be returned. The fact was this: From the very day of the capitulation, by which Bismarck's prisoners had signed the surrender of France, but reserved to themselves a numerous bodyguard for the express purpose of cowing Paris, Paris stood on the watch. The National Guard reorganized themselves and intrusted their supreme control to a Central Committee elected by their whole body, save some fragments of the old Bonapartist formations. On the eve of the entrance of the Prussians into Paris, the Central Committee took measures for the removal to Montmartre, Belleville, and La Villette of the cannon and *mitrailleuses* treacherously abandoned by the *capitulards* in and about the very quarters the Prussians were to occupy. That artillery had been furnished by the subscriptions of the National Guard. As their private property, it was officially recognized in the capitulation of January 28, and on that very title exempted from the general surrender, into the hands of the conqueror, of arms belonging to the Government. And Thiers was so utterly destitute of even the flimsiest pretext for initiating the war against Paris that he had to resort to the flagrant lie of the artillery of the National Guard being State property!

The seizure of her artillery was evidently but to serve as the preliminary to the general disarmament of Paris, and, therefore, of the Revolution of the 4th of September. But that Revolution had become the legal status of France. The Republic, its work, was recognized by the conqueror in the terms of the capitulation. After the capitulation, it was acknowledged by all the foreign powers, and in its name the National Assembly had been summoned. The Paris working men's Revolution of September 4 was the only legal title of the National Assembly seated at Bordeaux, and of its Executive. Without it, the National Assembly would at once have to give way to the *Corps législatif*, elected in 1869 by universal suffrage under French, not under Prussian, rule, and forcibly dispersed by the arm of the Revolution. Thiers and his ticket-of-leave men would have had to capitulate for safe conducts signed by Louis Bonaparte, to save them from

a voyage to Cayenne.⁸⁴ The National Assembly, with its power of attorney to settle the terms of peace with Prussia, was but an incident of that Revolution, the true embodiment of which was still armed Paris, which had initiated it, undergone for it a five months' siege, with its horrors of famine, and made her prolonged resistance, despite Trochu's plan, the basis of an obstinate war of defense in the provinces. And Paris was now either to lay down her arms at the insulting behest of the rebellious slaveholders of Bordeaux and acknowledge that her Revolution of September 4 meant nothing but a simple transfer of power from Louis Bonaparte to his Royal rivals; or she had to stand forward as the self-sacrificing champion of France, whose salvation from ruin, and whose regeneration were impossible, without the revolutionary overthrow of the political and social conditions that had engendered the Second Empire, and, under its fostering care, matured into utter rotteness. Paris, emaciated by a five months' famine, did not hesitate one moment. She heroically resolved to run all the hazards of a resistance against the French conspirators, even with Prussian cannon frowning upon her from her own forts. Still, in its abhorrence of the civil war into which Paris was to be goaded, the Central Committee continued to persist in a merely defensive attitude, despite the provocations of the Assembly, the usurpations of the Executive, and the menacing concentration of troops in and around Paris.

Thiers opened the civil war by sending Vinoy, at the head of a multitude of *sergents de ville*⁸⁵ and some regiments of the line, upon a nocturnal expedition against Montmartre, there to seize, by surprise, the artillery of the National Guard. It is well known how this attempt broke down before the resistance of the National Guard and the fraternization of the line with the people. Aurelle de Paladines had printed beforehand his bulletin of victory, and Thiers held ready the placards announcing his measures of *coup d'état*. Now these had to be replaced by Thiers' appeals, imparting his magnanimous resolve to leave the National Guard in the possession of their arms, with which, he said, he felt sure they would rally round the Government against the rebels. Out of 300,000 National Guards only 300 responded to this summons to rally round little Thiers against themselves.

⁸⁴ *Cayenne*—a city in French Guiana, South America, a penal settlement and place of exile for political prisoners.

⁸⁵ Police constables.

The glorious working men's Revolution of March 18 took undisputed sway of Paris. The Central Committee was its provisional Government. Europe seemed, for a moment, to doubt whether its recent sensational performances of state and war had any reality in them, or whether they were the dreams of a long bygone past.

From March 18 to the entrance of the Versailles troops into Paris, the proletarian revolution remained so free from the acts of violence in which the revolutions, and still more the counter-revolutions, of the "better classes" abound, that no facts were left to its opponents to cry out about but the execution of Generals Lecomte and Clément Thomas, and the affair of the Place Vendôme.

One of the Bonapartist officers engaged in the nocturnal attempt against Montmartre, General Lecomte, had four times ordered the 81st Line Regiment to fire at an unarmed gathering in the Place Pigalle, and on their refusal fiercely insulted them. Instead of shooting women and children, his own men shot him. The inveterate habits acquired by the soldiery under the training of the enemies of the working class are, of course, not likely to change the very moment these soldiers change sides. The same men executed Clément Thomas.

"General" Clément Thomas, a malcontent ex-quarter-master-sergeant, had, in the latter times of Louis Philippe's reign, enlisted at the office of the Republican newspaper *Le National*,⁸⁶ there to serve in the double capacity of responsible man of straw (*gérant responsable*)⁸⁷ and of dueling bully to that very combative journal. After the Revolution of February, the men of the *National* having got into power, they metamorphosed this old quartermaster-sergeant into a general on the eve of the butchery of June, of which he, like Jules Favre, was one of the sinister plotters, and became one of the most dastardly executioners. Then he and his generalship disappeared for a long time, to again rise to the surface on November 1, 1870. The day before, the Government of Defense, caught at the Hôtel de Ville, had solemnly pledged their parole to Blanqui, Flourens, and other representatives of the working class, to abdicate their usurped power into the

⁸⁶ *Le National*—a French daily, organ of the moderate bourgeois Republicans, published in Paris between 1830 and 1851.

⁸⁷ In the German editions of 1871 and 1891, there is an insertion after "*gérant responsable*": "whose task it was to serve prison sentences."

hands of a Commune to be freely elected by Paris.⁸⁸ Instead of keeping their word, they let loose on Paris the Bretons of Trochu, who now replaced the Corsicans of Bonaparte.⁸⁹ General Tamisier alone, refusing to sully his name by such a breach of faith, resigned the commandership-in-chief of the National Guard, and in his place Clément Thomas for once became again a general. During the whole of his tenure of command, he made war, not upon the Prussians, but upon the Paris National Guard. He prevented their general armament, pitted the bourgeois battalions against the working men's battalions, weeded out the officers hostile to Trochu's "plan," and disbanded, under the stigma of cowardice, the very same proletarian battalions whose heroism has now astonished their most inveterate enemies. Clément Thomas felt quite proud of having reconquered his June pre-eminence as the personal enemy of the working class of Paris. Only a few days before March 18, he laid before the War Minister, Le Flô a plan of his own for "finishing off *la fine fleur* [the cream] of the Paris *canaille*." After Vinoy's rout, he must needs appear upon the scene of action in the quality of an amateur spy. The Central Committee and the Paris working men were as much responsible for the killing of Clément Thomas and Lecomte as the Princess of Wales was for the fate of the people crushed to death on the day of her entrance into London.

The massacre of unarmed citizens in the Place Vendôme is a myth which M. Thiers and the Rurals persistently ignored in the Assembly, entrusting its propagation exclusively to the servants' hall of European journalism. "The men of Order," the reactionists of Paris, trembled at the

⁸⁸ On October 31, 1870, workers and the revolutionary section of the National Guard in Paris launched an insurrection after receiving news that Metz had capitulated, Le Bourget was lost, and Thiers, by order of the Government of National Defense, had begun negotiations with the Prussians. The insurgents occupied the Hôtel de Ville and established a revolutionary organ of political power, the Committee of Public Safety, headed by Louis Auguste Blanqui. Under the pressure of the workers, the Government of National Defense promised to resign and hold an election to the Commune on November 1. However, taking advantage of the incomplete organization of the revolutionary forces of Paris and the differences between the leading sections of the insurrection—the Blanquists and the petit-bourgeois democrats, the Jacobinists—the government went back on its words, and, with the help of the few battalions of the National Guard which remained on its side, reoccupied the Hôtel de Ville and regained power.

⁸⁹ *The Bretons*, i.e., the mobile guards of Brittany, which Trochu used as gendarmerie to suppress the revolutionary movement in Paris.

The Corsicans made up an important part of the gendarmerie of the Second Empire.

victory of March 18. To them it was the signal of popular retribution at last arriving. The ghosts of the victims assassinated at their hands from the days of June 1848, down to January 22, 1871,⁹⁰ arose before their faces. Their panic was their only punishment. Even the *sergents de ville*, instead of being disarmed and locked up, as ought to have been done, had the gates of Paris flung wide open for their safe retreat to Versailles. The men of Order were left not only unharmed, but allowed to rally and quietly to seize more than one stronghold in the very center of Paris. This indulgence of the Central Committee—this magnanimity of the armed working men—so strangely at variance with the habits of the “Party of Order,” the latter misinterpreted as mere symptoms of conscious weakness. Hence their silly plan to try, under the cloak of an unarmed demonstration, what Vinoy had failed to perform with his cannon and *mitrailleuses*. On March 22, a riotous mob of swells started from the quarters of luxury, all the *petits crevés*⁹¹ in their ranks, and at their head the notorious familiars of the Empire—the Heeckeren, Coëtlogon, Henri de Pène, etc. Under the cowardly pretense of a pacific demonstration, this rabble, secretly armed with the weapons of the bravo, fell into marching order, ill-treated and disarmed the detached patrols and sentries of the National Guard they met with on their progress, and, on debouching from the Rue de la Paix, with the cry of “Down with the Central Committee! Down with the assassins! The National Assembly forever!” attempted to break through the line drawn up there, and thus to carry by a surprise the headquarters of the National Guard in the Place Vendôme. In reply to their pistol-shots, the regular *sommations* (the French equivalent of the English Riot Act)⁹² were made, and, proving ineffective, fire was commanded by the general of the

⁹⁰ On *January 22, 1871*, on the initiative of the Blanquists, the proletariat of Paris and the National Guards held a revolutionary demonstration, demanding the dissolution of the government and the establishment of the Commune. The Government of National Defense instructed its Breton mobile guards, which guarded the Hôtel de Ville, to fire at the masses. It arrested many demonstrators, ordered the closure of all the clubs in Paris and banned mass rallies and many newspapers. After suppressing the revolutionary movement with terror, the government began to prepare for the surrender of Paris.

⁹¹ Fops.

⁹² *Sommations* was a form of warning issued by the French authorities for the dispersal of demonstrations, meetings, etc. According to the law of 1831, the government had the right to use force after this warning had been repeated three times by a roll of drums or a flourish of trumpets.

National Guard.⁹³ One volley dispersed into wild flight the silly coxcombs, who expected that the mere exhibition of their “respectability” would have the same effect upon the Revolution of Paris as Joshua’s trumpets upon the wall of Jericho. The runaways left behind them two National Guards killed, nine severely wounded (among them a member of the Central Committee),⁹⁴ and the whole scene of their exploit strewn with revolvers, daggers, and sword-canes, in evidence of the “unarmed” character of their “peaceful” demonstration. When, on June 13, 1849, the National Guard made a really peaceful demonstration in protest against the felonious assault of French troops upon Rome, Changarnier, then general of the Party of Order, was acclaimed by the National Assembly, and especially by M. Thiers, as the savior of society, for having launched his troops from all sides upon these unarmed men, to shoot and sabre them down, and to trample them under their horses’ feet. Paris, then, was placed under a state of siege. Dufaure hurried through the Assembly new laws of repression. New arrests, new proscriptions—a new reign of terror set in. But the lower orders manage these things otherwise. The Central Committee of 1871 simply ignored the heroes of the “peaceful demonstration”; so much so that only two days later they were enabled to muster under Admiral Saisset for that armed demonstration, crowned by the famous stampede to Versailles. In their reluctance to continue the civil war opened by Thiers’ burglarious attempt on Montmartre, the Central Committee made themselves, this time, guilty of a decisive mistake in not at once marching upon Versailles, then completely helpless, and thus putting an end to the conspiracies of Thiers and his Rurals. Instead of this, the Party of Order was again allowed to try its strength at the ballot-box, on March 26, the day of the election of the Commune. Then, in the *mairies* of Paris,⁹⁵ they exchanged bland words of conciliation with their too generous conquerors, muttering in their hearts solemn vows to exterminate them in due time.

The Riot Act, which came into force in England in 1715, prohibited any “riotous assembly” of more than twelve persons. The authorities had the duty to sound a special warning to such an assembly and use force if the participants did not disperse within an hour.

⁹³ Jules Bergeret (1831-1905).

⁹⁴ Charles Maljournal (1841-1894).

⁹⁵ Town halls of the *arrondissements* of Paris.

Now, look at the reverse of the medal. Thiers opened his second campaign against Paris in the beginning of April. The first batch of Parisian prisoners brought into Versailles was subjected to revolting atrocities, while Ernest Picard, with his hands in his trousers pockets, strolled about jeering them, and while Mesdames Thiers and Favre, in the midst of their ladies of honor (?), applauded, from the balcony, the outrages of the Versailles mob. The captured soldiers of the line were massacred in cold blood; our brave friend, General Duval, the iron-founder, was shot without any form of trial. Galliffet, the kept man of his wife, so notorious for her shameless exhibitions at the orgies of the Second Empire, boasted in a proclamation of having commanded the murder of a small troop of National Guards, with their captain and lieutenant, surprised and disarmed by his Chasseurs. Vinoy, the runaway, was appointed by Thiers Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor for his general order to shoot down every soldier of the line taken in the ranks of the Federals. Desmarets, the gendarme, was decorated for the treacherous butcher-like chopping in pieces of the high-souled and chivalrous Flourens, who had saved the heads of the Government of Defense on October 31, 1870.⁹⁶ “The encouraging particulars” of his assassination were triumphantly expatiated upon by Thiers in the National Assembly. With the elated vanity of a parliamentary Tom Thumb, permitted to play the part of a Tamerlane, he denied the rebels against his littleness every right of civilized warfare, up to the right of neutrality for ambulances. Nothing more horrid than that monkey allowed for a time to give full fling to his tigerish instincts, as foreseen by Voltaire.⁹⁷ (See note, p. 35.)⁹⁸

After the decree of the Commune of April 7, ordering reprisals and declaring it to be its duty “to protect Paris against the cannibal exploits of the Versailles banditti, and to demand an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,”⁹⁹ Thiers did not stop the barbarous treatment of prisoners, more-

⁹⁶ When the event of October 31, 1870 occurred (see note 66), members of the Government of National Defense were detained in the Hôtel de Ville. One of the insurgents demanded their execution but was stopped by Gustave Flourens.

⁹⁷ See Voltaire, *Candide*, Chapter 22.

⁹⁸ See below, pp. 93-97.

⁹⁹ A quotation from the decree on hostages passed by the Paris Commune on April 5, 1871 and published in the *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 96, April 6, 1871. (The date referred to by Marx was the date of its publication in British

over insulting them in his bulletins as follows: “Never have more degraded countenances of a degraded democracy met the afflicted gazes of honest men”—honest, like Thiers himself and his ministerial ticket-of-leave men. Still the shooting of prisoners was suspended for a time. Hardly, however, had Thiers and his Decembrist generals become aware that the Communal decree of reprisals was but an empty threat, that even their gendarme spies caught in Paris under the disguise of National Guards, that even *sergents de ville* taken with incendiary shells upon them, were spared—when the wholesale shooting of prisoners was resumed and carried on uninterruptedly to the end. Houses to which National Guards had fled were surrounded by gendarmes, inundated with petroleum (which here occurs for the first time in this war), and then set fire to, the charred corpses being afterwards brought out by the ambulance of the Press at the Ternes. Four National Guards having surrendered to a troop of mounted Chasseurs at Belle Épine, on April 25, were afterwards shot down, one after another, by the captain, a worthy man of Galliffet’s. One of his four victims, left for dead, Scheffer, crawled back to the Parisian outposts, and deposed to this fact before a commission of the Commune. When Tolain interpellated the War Minister upon the report of this commission, the Rurals drowned his voice and forbade Le Flô to answer. It would be an insult to their “glorious” army to speak of its deeds. The flippant tone in which Thiers’ bulletins announced the bayoneting of the Federals in their sleep at Moulin-Saquet, and the wholesale fusillades at Clamart shocked the nerves even of the not over-sensitive London *Times*. But it would be ludicrous today to attempt recounting the merely preliminary atrocities committed by the bombardiers of Paris and the fomenters of a slaveholders’ rebellion protected by foreign invasion. Amidst all these horrors, Thiers, forgetful of his parliamentary laments on the terrible responsibility weighing down his dwarfish shoulders, boasts in his bulletin that *l’Assemblée siège paisiblement* (the Assembly continues meeting in peace), and proves by his constant carousals, now with Decembrist generals, now with German princes, that his digestion is not troubled in the least, not even by the ghosts of Lecomte and Clément Thomas.

newspapers.) The decree provided that anyone accused and proved guilty of colluding with Versailles would be detained as hostages. By this measure the Commune tried to prevent the Versailles troops from killing the Communards.

III

On the dawn of March 18, Paris arose to the thunderburst of “Vive la Commune !” What is the Commune, that sphinx so tantalizing to the bourgeois mind?

The proletarians of Paris [said the Central Committee in its manifesto of March 18,] amidst the failures and treasons of the ruling classes, have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs... They have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies, by seizing upon the governmental power.¹⁰⁰

But the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for its own purposes.

The centralized State power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature—organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labor—originates from the days of absolute monarchy, serving nascent middle-class society as a mighty weapon in its struggles against feudalism. Still, its development remained clogged by all manner of medieval rubbish, seignorial rights, local privileges, municipal and guild monopolies and provincial constitutions. The gigantic broom of the French Revolution of the eighteenth century swept away all these relics of bygone times, thus clearing simultaneously the social soil of its last hindrances to the superstructure of the modern State edifice raised under the First Empire, itself the offspring of the Coalition wars¹⁰¹ of old semi-feudal Europe against modern France. During the subsequent *régimes* the Government, placed under parliamentary control—that is, under the direct control of the propertied classes—became not only a hotbed of huge national debts and crushing taxes; with its irresistible allurements of place, pelf, and patronage, it became not only the bone of contention between the rival factions and adventurers of the

¹⁰⁰ *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 80, March 21, 1871.

¹⁰¹ The wars waged by England, Russia, Prussia, Austria, Spain and other states against revolutionary France and later against the empire of Napoleon I.

ruling classes; but its political character changed simultaneously with the economic changes of society. At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class antagonism between capital and labor, the State power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labor, of a public force organized for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism.¹⁰² After every revolution marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely repressive character of the State power stands out in bolder and bolder relief. The Revolution of 1830, resulting in the transfer of government from the landlords to the capitalists, transferred it from the more remote to the more direct antagonists of the working men. The bourgeois Republicans, who, in the name of the Revolution of February, took the State power, used it for the June massacres, in order to convince the working class that “Social” Republic meant the Republic ensuring their social subjection, and in order to convince the royalist bulk of the bourgeois and landlord class that they might safely leave the cares and emoluments of government to the bourgeois “Republicans.” However, after their one heroic exploit of June, the bourgeois Republicans had, from the front to fall back to the rear of the “Party of Order”—a combination formed by all the rival fractions and factions of the appropriating class in their now openly declared antagonism to the producing classes. The proper form of their joint-stock government was the *Parliamentary Republic*, with Louis Bonaparte for its President. Theirs was a *régime* of avowed class terrorism and deliberate insult towards the “vile multitude.” If the Parliamentary Republic, as M. Thiers said, “divided them (the different fractions of the ruling class) least,” it opened an abyss between that class and the whole body of society outside their spare ranks. The restraints by which their own divisions had under former *régimes* still checked the State power, were removed by their union; and in view of the threatening upheaval of the proletariat, they now used that State power mercilessly and ostentatiously as the national war-engine of capital against labor. In their uninterrupted crusade against the producing masses they were, however, bound not only to invest the Executive with continually increased powers of repression,

¹⁰² In the German edition of 1871, the latter part of the sentence reads: “...the State power assumed more and more the character of a public force for the suppression of labor, a machine of class rule.”

but at the same time to divest their own parliamentary stronghold—the National Assembly—one by one, of all its own means of defense against the Executive. The Executive, in the person of Louis Bonaparte, turned them out. The natural offspring of the “Party-of-Order” Republic was the Second Empire.

The Empire, with the *coup d'état* for its certificate of birth, universal suffrage for its sanction, and the sword for its scepter, professed to rest upon the peasantry, the large mass of producers not directly involved in the struggle of capital and labor. It professed to save the working class by breaking down parliamentarism, and, with it, the undisguised subserviency of Government to the propertied classes. It professed to save the propertied classes by upholding their economic supremacy over the working class; and, finally, it professed to unite all classes by reviving for all the chimera of national glory. In reality, it was the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired, the faculty of ruling the nation. It was acclaimed throughout the world as the savior of society. Under its sway, bourgeois society, freed from political cares, attained a development unexpected even by itself. Its industry and commerce expanded to colossal dimensions; financial swindling celebrated cosmopolitan orgies; the misery of the masses was set off by a shameless display of gorgeous, meretricious and debased luxury. The State power, apparently soaring high above society, was at the same time itself the greatest scandal of that society and the very hotbed of all its corruptions. Its own rottenness, and the rottenness of the society it had saved, were laid bare by the bayonet of Prussia, herself eagerly bent upon transferring the supreme seat of that *régime* from Paris to Berlin. Imperialism is, at the same time, the most prostitute and the ultimate form of the State power which nascent middle-class society had commenced to elaborate as a means of its own emancipation from feudalism, and which full-grown bourgeois society had finally transformed into a means for the enslavement of labor by capital.

The direct antithesis to the Empire was the Commune. The cry of “Social Republic,” with which the Revolution of February was ushered in by the Paris proletariat, did but express a vague aspiration after a Republic that was not only to supersede the monarchical form of class rule, but class rule itself. The Commune was the positive form of that Republic.

Paris, the central seat of the old governmental power, and, at the same time, the social stronghold of the French working class, had risen in arms against the attempt of Thiers and the Rurals to restore and perpetuate that old governmental power bequeathed to them by the Empire. Paris could resist only because, in consequence of the siege, it had got rid of the army, and replaced it by a National Guard, the bulk of which consisted of working men. This fact was now to be transformed into an institution. The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people.

The Commune was formed of the municipal councilors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing to be the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the Administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at *workmen's wages*. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of State disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves. Public functions ceased to be the private property of the tools of the Central Government. Not only municipal administration, but the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the State was laid into the hands of the Commune.

Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the "parson-power," by the disestablishment and disendowment of all churches as proprietary bodies. The priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the alms of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors, the Apostles. The whole of the educational institutions were opened to the people gratuitously, and at the same time cleared of all interference of Church and State. Thus, not only was education made accessible to all, but science itself freed from the fetters which class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it.

The judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subserviency to all succeeding governments to which, in turn, they had taken, and broken, the oaths of allegiance. Like the rest of public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible, and revocable.

The Paris Commune was, of course, to serve as a model to all the great industrial centers of France. The Communal *régime* once established in Paris and the secondary centers, the old centralized Government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the self-government of the producers. In a rough sketch of national organization which the Commune had no time to develop, it states clearly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest country hamlet, and that in the rural districts the standing army was to be replaced by a national militia, with an extremely short term of service. The rural Communes of every district were to administer their common affairs by an assembly of delegates in the central town, and these district assemblies were again to send deputies to the National Delegation in Paris, each delegate to be at any time revocable and bound by the *mandat impératif* (formal instructions) of his constituents. The few but important functions which still would remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been intentionally misstated, but were to be discharged by Communal, and therefore strictly responsible agents. The unity of the nation was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, to be organized by the Communal Constitution, and to become a reality by the destruction of the State power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity independent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society. Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business. And it is well known that companies, like individuals, in matters of real business generally know how to put the right man in the right place, and, if they for once make a mistake, to redress it promptly. On the other

hand, nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of the Commune than to supersede universal suffrage by hierarchic investiture.¹⁰³

It is generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks the modern State power, has been mistaken for a reproduction of the medieval Communes, which first preceded, and afterwards became the substratum of, that very State power. The Communal Constitution has been mistaken for an attempt to break up into a federation of small States, as dreamt of by Montesquieu and the Girondins,¹⁰⁴ that unity of great nations which, if originally brought about by political force, has now become a powerful coefficient of social production. The antagonism of the Commune against the State power has been mistaken for an exaggerated form of the ancient struggle against over-centralization. Peculiar historical circumstances may have prevented the classical development, as in France, of the bourgeois form of government, and may have allowed, as in England, to complete the great central State organs by corrupt vestries, jobbing councilors and ferocious poor-law guardians in the towns, and virtually hereditary magistrates in the counties. The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by the State parasite feeding upon, and clogging the free movement of, society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France. The provincial French middle class saw in the Commune an attempt to restore the sway their order had held over the country under Louis Philippe, and which, under Louis Napoleon, was supplanted by the pretended rule of the country over the towns. In reality, the Communal Constitution brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the

¹⁰³ *Investiture* in the Middle Ages meant the act of a feudal lord in granting his vassals a fief, benefice, office, etc. This system was characterized by the complete control exercised by the upper grades of the ecclesiastical and secular hierarchy over the lower grades.

¹⁰⁴ *The Girondins* or Girondists were supporters of the Party of Gironde which was formed in the bourgeois French Revolution, representing the interests of the big commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, as well as the interests of the landlord-bourgeoisie which emerged during the period of the revolution. The Girondins were so named because many of their leaders represented the province of Gironde in the Legislative Assembly and the National Assembly. Under the flag of protecting the right of the provinces to autonomy and federation, the Girondins opposed the Jacobin government and the revolutionary masses supporting it.

central towns of their districts, and there secured to them, in the working men, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local municipal liberty, but no longer as a check upon the, now superseded, State power. It could only enter into the head of a Bismarck, who, when not engaged on his intrigues of blood and iron always likes to resume his old trade, so befitting his mental caliber, of contributor to *Kladderadatsch* (the Berlin *Punch*),¹⁰⁵ it could only enter into such a head, to ascribe to the Paris Commune aspirations after that caricature of the old French municipal organization of 1791, the Prussian municipal constitution which degrades the town governments to mere secondary wheels in the police machinery of the Prussian State. The Commune made that catchword of bourgeois revolutions cheap government, a reality, by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure—the standing army¹⁰⁶ and State functionarism. Its very existence presupposed the non-existence of monarchy, which, in Europe at least, is the normal incumbrance and indispensable cloak of class rule. It supplied the Republic with the basis of really democratic institutions. But neither cheap government nor the “true Republic” was its ultimate aim; they were its mere concomitants.

The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favor, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government,¹⁰⁷ the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labor.

Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion. The political rule of the producer cannot coexist with the perpetuation of his social slavery. The Com-

¹⁰⁵ *Kladderadatsch*—an illustrated humorous satirical weekly which began to appear in Berlin in 1848. *Punch*—an abbreviation for *Punch or the London Charivari*, a humorous weekly of the British bourgeois liberals which first appeared in London in 1841.

¹⁰⁶ In the German editions of 1871 and 1891, “the standing army” reads “the army.”

¹⁰⁷ In the German editions of 1871 and 1891, the words “working-class government” are italicized.

mune was therefore to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class rule. With labor emancipated, every man becomes a working man, and productive labor ceases to be a class attribute.

It is a strange fact. In spite of all the tall talk and all the immense literature, for the last sixty years, about emancipation of labor, no sooner do the working men anywhere take the subject into their own hands with a will than up rises at once all the apologetic phraseology of the mouthpieces of present society with its two poles of Capital and Wage Slavery (the landlord now is but the sleeping partner of the capitalist), as if capitalist society was still in its purest state of virgin innocence, with its antagonisms still undeveloped, with its delusions still unexploded, with its prostitute realities not yet laid bare. The Commune, they exclaim, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilization! Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class property which makes the labor of the many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators. It wanted to make individual property a truth by transforming the means of production, land and capital, now chiefly the means of enslaving and exploiting labor, into mere instruments of free and associated labor. But this is communism, “impossible” communism! Why, those members of the ruling classes who are intelligent enough to perceive the impossibility of continuing the present system—and they are many—have become the obtrusive and full-mouthed apostles of co-operative production. If co-operative production is not to remain a sham and a snare; if it is to supersede the capitalist system; if united co-operative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of capitalist production—what else, gentlemen, would it be but communism, “possible” communism?

The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready-made utopias to introduce *par décret du peuple*.¹⁰⁸ They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long strug-

¹⁰⁸ By decree of the people.

gles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant. In the full consciousness of their historic mission, and with the heroic resolve to act up to it, the working class can afford to smile at the coarse invective of the gentlemen's gentlemen with the pen and inkhorn, and at the didactic patronage of well-wishing bourgeois doctrinaires, pouring forth their ignorant platitudes and sectarian crotchets in the oracular tone of scientific infallibility.

When the Paris Commune took the management of the Revolution in its own hands; when plain working men for the first time dared to infringe upon the governmental privilege of their "natural superiors,"¹⁰⁹ and, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty, performed their work modestly conscientiously, and efficiently—performed it at salaries the highest of which barely amounted to one-fifth of what, according to high scientific authority,¹¹⁰ is the minimum required for a secretary to a certain metropolitan school-board—the old world writhed in convulsions of rage at the sight of the Red Flag, the symbol of the Republic of Labor, floating over the Hôtel de Ville.

And yet, this was the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative, even by the great bulk of the Paris middle class—shopkeepers, tradesmen, merchants—the wealthy capitalists alone excepted. The Commune had saved them by a sagacious settlement of that ever-recurring cause of dispute among the middle classes themselves—the debtor and creditor accounts.¹¹¹ The same portion of the middle class, after they had assisted in putting down the working men's insurrection of June 1848, had been at once unceremoniously sacrificed to their creditors by the then Con-

¹⁰⁹ In the German editions of 1871 and 1891, "natural superiors" reads "natural superiors, the propertied class."

¹¹⁰ In the German editions, the words "(Professor Huxley)" are added after "authority."

¹¹¹ On April 16, 1871, the Commune promulgated a decree postponing payments of all debt obligations for three years and canceling interest. The decree alleviated the financial condition of the petit bourgeoisie and was unfavorable to the creditors among the big bourgeoisie.

stituent Assembly.¹¹² But this was not their only motive for now rallying around the working class. They felt that there was but one alternative—the Commune, or the Empire—under whatever name it might reappear. The Empire had ruined them economically by the havoc it made of public wealth, by the wholesale financial swindling it fostered, by the props it lent to the artificially accelerated centralization of capital, and the concomitant expropriation of their own ranks. It had suppressed them politically, it had shocked them morally by its orgies, it had insulted their Voltairianism by handing over the education of their children to the *frères ignorantins*,¹¹³ it had revolted their national feeling as Frenchmen by precipitating them headlong into a war which left only one equivalent for the ruins it made—the disappearance of the Empire. In fact, after the exodus from Paris of the high Bonapartist and capitalist *bohème*,¹¹⁴ the true middle-class Party of Order came out in the shape of the “*Union républicaine*,”¹¹⁵ enrolling themselves under the colors of the Commune and defending it against the willful misconstruction of Thiers. Whether the gratitude of this great body of the middle class will stand the present severe trial, time must show.

The Commune was perfectly right in telling the peasants that “its victory was their only hope.”¹¹⁶ Of all the lies hatched at Versailles and re-echoed by the glorious European penny-a-liner, one of the most tremendous was that the Rurals represented the French peasantry. Think only

¹¹² This refers to the rejection of the bill on the “*concordats à l'amiable*” by the Constituent Assembly on August 22, 1848. The bill provided for the deferment of the payment of debts by any debtor who could prove he had become bankrupt owing to stagnation of business caused by the revolution. As a result of this, a considerable number of the petit bourgeoisie became totally ruined and were left to the tender mercy of the big bourgeois creditors.

¹¹³ *Frères ignorantins*—a nickname for the religious order which appeared in Reims in 1680. Its members dedicated themselves to the education of poor children. In the schools founded by the order the pupils mainly received religious education and obtained very little in other fields of knowledge. Marx used this expression to allude to the low standard and clerical character of elementary education in bourgeois France.

¹¹⁴ Bohemians.

¹¹⁵ “*Union républicaine*” (*Alliance républicaine des Départements*)—a political organization of the petit-bourgeois elements who came from different provinces and lived in Paris. It called on the provinces to support the Commune and fight against the Versailles government and the monarchist National Assembly.

¹¹⁶ Probably from the appeal of the Paris Commune, “*Au travailleur des campagnes*,” which was published in April or early May 1871 in the newspapers of the Commune and also as a leaflet.

of the love of the French peasant for the men to whom, after 1815, he had to pay the milliard of indemnity!¹¹⁷ In the eyes of the French peasant, the very existence of a great landed proprietor is in itself an encroachment on his conquests of 1789. The bourgeois, in 1848, had burdened his plot of land with the additional tax of forty-five cents in the franc;¹¹⁸ but then he did so in the name of the Revolution; while now he had fomented a civil war against the Revolution, to shift on to the peasant's shoulders the chief load of the five milliards of indemnity to be paid to the Prussians. The Commune, on the other hand, in one of its first proclamations, declared that the true originators of the war would be made to pay its cost. The Commune would have delivered the peasant of the blood-tax—would have given him a cheap government, transformed his present blood-suckers, the notary, advocate, executor, and other judicial vampires, into salaried Communal agents, elected by, and responsible to, himself. It would have freed him of the tyranny of the *garde champêtre*,¹¹⁹ the gendarme, and the prefect; would have put enlightenment by the schoolmaster in the place of stultification by the priest. And the French peasant is, above all, a man of reckoning. He would find it extremely reasonable that the pay of the priest, instead of being extorted by the tax gatherer, should only depend upon the spontaneous action of the parishioners' religious instincts. Such were the great immediate boons which the rule of the Commune—and that rule alone—held out to the French peasantry. It is, therefore, quite superfluous here to expatiate upon the more complicated but vital problems which the Commune alone was able, and at the same time compelled, to solve in favor of the peasant, viz., the hypothecary debt, lying like an incubus upon his parcel of soil, the *prolétariat foncier* (the rural proletariat), daily growing upon it, and his expropriation from it enforced, at a more and

¹¹⁷ On April 27, 1825, the reactionary government of Charles X promulgated a law compensating former émigrés for the loss of their estates confiscated in the years of the bourgeois French Revolution. The greater part of the indemnity—totaling 1,000 million francs and paid by the government in the form of three percent securities—was obtained by the chief aristocrats at court and the big landlords of France.

¹¹⁸ The Provisional Government of France decided on March 16, 1848 to add a 45 centimes tax to each franc of direct tax collected. The burden of this additional tax fell mainly on the peasants. As a result of this policy adopted by the bourgeois Republicans, the peasants were estranged from the revolution and voted for Louis Bonaparte in the presidential election of December 10, 1848.

¹¹⁹ Village policeman.

more rapid rate, by the very development of modern agriculture and the competition of capitalist farming.

The French peasant had elected Louis Bonaparte as President of the Republic; but the Party of Order created the Empire. What the French peasant really wants he commenced to show in 1849 and 1850, by opposing his *maire*¹²⁰ to the Government's prefect, his schoolmaster to the Government's priest, and himself to the Government's gendarme. All the laws made by the Party of Order in January and February 1850¹²¹ were avowed measures of repression against the peasant. The peasant was a Bonapartist, because the great Revolution, with all its benefits to him, was, in his eyes, personified in Napoleon. This delusion, rapidly breaking down under the Second Empire (and in its very nature hostile to the Rurals), this prejudice of the past, how could it have withstood the appeal of the Commune to the living interests and urgent wants of the peasantry?

The Rurals—this was, in fact, their chief apprehension—knew that three months' free communication of Communal Paris with the provinces would bring about a general rising of the peasants, and hence their anxiety to establish a police blockade around Paris, so as to stop the spread of the rinderpest.

If the Commune was thus the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore the truly national Government, it was, at the same time, as a working men's Government, as the bold champion of the emancipation of labor, emphatically international. Within sight of the Prussian army, that had annexed to Germany two French provinces, the Commune annexed to France the working people all over the world.

The Second Empire had been the jubilee of cosmopolitan blacklegism, the rakes of all countries rushing in at its call for a share in its orgies and in the plunder of the French people. Even at this moment the right hand of Thiers is Ganesco, the foul Wallachian, and his left hand

¹²⁰ Mayor of an *arrondissement*.

¹²¹ This refers to the laws that divided France into military districts and gave commanders extensive powers, granted the president of the republic the right to appoint and remove burgomasters, placed school-masters under the control of the prefects, and extended the clergy's influence over national education. Marx gave a characterization of these laws in his work "The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1951, Vol. I, pp. 199-200).

is Markovsky, the Russian spy. The Commune admitted all foreigners to the honor of dying for an immortal cause. Between the foreign war lost by their treason, and the civil war fomented by their conspiracy with the foreign invader, the bourgeoisie had found the time to display their patriotism by organizing police-hunts upon the Germans in France. The Commune made a German working man¹²² its Minister of Labor. Thiers, the bourgeoisie, the Second Empire, had continually deluded Poland by loud professions of sympathy, while in reality betraying her to, and doing the dirty work of, Russia. The Commune honored the heroic sons of Poland¹²³ by placing them at the head of the defenders of Paris. And, to broadly mark the new era of history it was conscious of initiating, under the eyes of the conquering Prussians, on the one side, and of the Bonapartist army, led by Bonapartist generals, on the other, the Commune pulled down that colossal symbol of martial glory, the Vendôme Column.¹²⁴

The great social measure of the Commune was its own working existence. Its special measures could but betoken the tendency of a government of the people by the people. Such were the abolition of the nightwork of journeymen bakers the prohibition, under penalty, of the employers' practice to reduce wages by levying upon their workpeople fines under manifold pretexts—a process in which the employer combines in his own person the parts of legislator, judge, and executor, and filches the money to boot. Another measure of this class was the surrender, to associations of workmen, under reserve of compensation, of all closed workshops and factories, no matter whether the respective capitalists had absconded or preferred to strike work.

The financial measures of the Commune, remarkable for their sagacity and moderation, could only be such as were compatible with the state of a besieged town. Considering the colossal robberies committed upon

¹²² Leó Fränkel (1844-1896).

¹²³ Jarosław Dąbrowski (1836-1871) and Walery Wróblewski (1836-1908).

¹²⁴ *The Vendôme Column*—a bronze column with a statue of Napoleon I, erected in the Vendôme Square in the center of Paris, to glorify victories in his aggressive wars. Cast from 1,200 captured guns, and also known as the “Victory Column,” it was a symbol of aggression and chauvinism.

The Vendôme Column was demolished on May 16, 1871 according to a decree enacted by the Paris Commune on April 12, which denounced it as a “monument of barbarism” and an “affirmation of militarism.” It was re-erected in 1875 by the French bourgeois government.

the City of Paris by the great financial companies and contractors, under the protection of Haussmann,¹²⁵ the Commune would have had an incomparably better title to confiscate their property than Louis Napoleon had against the Orléans family. The Hohenzollern and the English oligarchs, who both have derived a good deal of their estates from Church plunder, were, of course, greatly shocked at the Commune clearing but 8,000 *f.* out of secularization.

While the Versailles Government, as soon as it had recovered some spirit and strength, used the most violent means against the Commune; while it put down the free expression of opinion all over France, even to the forbidding of meetings of delegates from the large towns; while it subjected Versailles and the rest of France to an espionage far surpassing that of the Second Empire; while it burned by its gendarme inquisitors all papers printed at Paris, and sifted all correspondence from and to Paris; while in the National Assembly the most timid attempts to put in a word for Paris were howled down in a manner unknown even to the *Chambre introuvable* of 1816; with the savage warfare of Versailles outside, and its attempts at corruption and conspiracy inside Paris—would the Commune not have shamefully betrayed its trust by affecting to keep up all the decencies and appearances of liberalism as in a time of profound peace? Had the Government of the Commune been akin to that of M. Thiers, there would have been no more occasion to suppress Party-of-Order papers at Paris than there was to suppress Communal papers at Versailles.

It was irritating indeed to the Rurals that at the very same time they declared the return to the Church to be the only means of salvation for France, the infidel Commune unearthed the peculiar mysteries of the Picpus nunnery, and of the Church of Saint-Laurent.¹²⁶ It was a satire upon

¹²⁵ During the Second Empire, Baron Haussmann was Prefect of the Department of the Seine, that is, of the City of Paris. He introduced a number of changes in the layout of the City for the purpose of facilitating the crushing of workers' insurrections. [*Note to the Russian translation of 1905 edited by V. I. Lenin.*]

¹²⁶ In the newspaper *Le Mot d'ordre* of May 5, 1871, evidence was published of the crimes committed in the cloisters. A search in the Picpus convent in the suburban district of St. Antoine revealed cases in which nuns had been imprisoned in cells for many years. Implements of torture were also found. In the church of St. Laurent a secret vault was discovered revealing evidence of several murders. These facts were also made public in the Commune's pamphlet entitled *Les crimes des congrégations religieuses*.

M. Thiers that, while he showered grand crosses upon the Bonapartist generals in acknowledgement of their mastery in losing battles, signing capitulations, and turning cigarettes at Wilhelmshöhe, the Commune dismissed and arrested its generals whenever they were suspected of neglecting their duties. The expulsion from, and arrest by, the Commune of one of its members who had slipped in under a false name,¹²⁷ and had undergone at Lyons six days' imprisonment for simple bankruptcy, was it not a deliberate insult hurled at the forger, Jules Favre, then still the Foreign Minister of France, still selling France to Bismarck, and still dictating his orders to that paragon Government of Belgium? But indeed the Commune did not pretend to infallibility, the invariable attribute of all governments of the old stamp. It published its doings and sayings, it initiated the public into all its shortcomings.

In every revolution there intrude, at the side of its true agents, men of a different stamp; some of them survivors of and devotees to past revolutions, without insight into the present movement, but preserving popular influence by their known honesty and courage, or by the sheer force of tradition; others mere bawlers, who, by dint of repeating year after year the same set of stereotyped declamations against the Government of the day, have sneaked into the reputation of revolutionists of the first water. After March 18, some such men did also turn up, and in some cases contrived to play pre-eminent parts. As far as their power went, they hampered the real action of the working class, exactly as men of that sort have hampered the full development of every previous revolution. They are an unavoidable evil: with time they are shaken off; but time was not allowed to the Commune.

Wonderful, indeed, was the change the Commune had wrought in Paris! No longer any trace of the meretricious Paris of the Second Empire. No longer was Paris the *rendezvous* of British landlords, Irish absentees,¹²⁸ American ex-slaveholders and shoddy men, Russian ex-serf-owners, and Wallachian boyards. No more corpses at the Morgue, no nocturnal burglaries, scarcely any robberies; in fact, for the first time since the days of

¹²⁷ Stanislas Xavier Pourille (1833-1880), known as "Blanchet."

¹²⁸ *Irish absentees*—big landlords who lived in England on their income from Irish estates which were managed by land agents or leased to speculator-middlemen, who, in turn, rented them out to small peasants on exacting terms.

February 1848, the streets of Paris were safe, and that without any police of any kind.

We [said a member of the Commune,] hear no longer of assassination, theft, and personal assault; it seems indeed as if the police had dragged along with it to Versailles all its Conservative friends.

The *cocottes* had refound the scent of their protectors—the absconding men of family, religion, and, above all, of property. In their stead, the real women of Paris showed again at the surface—heroic, noble, and devoted, like the women of antiquity. Working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris—almost forgetful, in its incubation of a new society, of the cannibals at its gates—radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative!

Opposed to this new world at Paris, behold the old world at Versailles—that assembly of the ghouls of all defunct *régimes*, Legitimists and Orléanists, eager to feed upon the carcass of the nation—with a tail of antediluvian Republicans, sanctioning, by their presence in the Assembly, the slaveholders' rebellion, relying for the maintenance of their Parliamentary Republic upon the vanity of the senile mountebank at its head, and caricaturing 1789 by holding their ghastly meetings in the *Jeu de Paume*.¹²⁹ There it was, this Assembly, the representative of everything dead in France, propped up to the semblance of life by nothing but the swords of the generals of Louis Bonaparte. Paris all truth, Versailles all lie; and that lie vented through the mouth of Thiers.

Thiers tells a deputation of the mayors of the Seine-et-Oise: “You may rely upon my word, which I have *never* broken!” He tells the Assembly itself that it was “the most freely elected and most liberal Assembly France ever possessed”; he tells his motley soldiery that it was “the admiration of the world, and the finest army France ever possessed”; he tells the provinces that the bombardment of Paris by him was a myth:

If some cannon-shots have been fired, it is not the deed of the army of Versailles, but of some insurgents trying to make believe that they are fighting, while they dare not show their faces.

¹²⁹ *Jeu de Paume*: The tennis court where the National Assembly of 1789 adopted its famous decisions. [Note by Engels to the German edition of 1871.]

He again tells the provinces that “the artillery of Versailles does not bombard Paris, but only cannonades it.” He tells the Archbishop of Paris that the pretended executions and reprisals (!) attributed to the Versailles troops were all moonshine. He tells Paris that he was only anxious “to free it from the hideous tyrants who oppress it,” and that, in fact, the Paris of the Commune was “but a handful of criminals.”

The Paris of M. Thiers was not the real Paris of the “vile multitude,” but a phantom Paris, the Paris of the *francs-fileurs*,¹³⁰ the Paris of the Boulevards, male and female—the rich, the capitalist, the gilded, the idle Paris, now thronging with its lackeys, its blacklegs, its literary *bohème*, and its *cocottes* at Versailles, Saint-Denis, Rueil, and Saint-Germain; considering the civil war but an agreeable diversion, eyeing the battle going on through telescopes, counting the rounds of cannon, and swearing by their own honor and that of their prostitutes, that the performance was far better got up than it used to be at the Porte Saint-Martin. The men who fell were really dead; the cries of the wounded were cries in good earnest; and, besides, the whole thing was so intensely historical.

This is the Paris of M. Thiers, as the Emigration of Koblenz¹³¹ was the France of M. de Calonne.

IV

The first attempt of the slaveholders’ conspiracy to put down Paris by getting the Prussians to occupy it was frustrated by Bismarck’s refusal. The second attempt, that of March 18, ended in the rout of the army and the flight to Versailles of the Government, which ordered the whole administration to break up and follow in its track. By the semblance of peace negotiations with Paris, Thiers found the time to prepare for war against it. But where to find an army? The remnants of the line regiments

¹³⁰ *Francs-fileurs*—literally “free absconders,” was an ironical nickname for the bourgeois of Paris who fled the city during its siege. The nickname was ironical because its pronunciation is similar to that of *francs-tireurs* (free shooters), the appellation for the French partisans who took an active part in the war against Prussia.

¹³¹ *Koblenz*—a city in Germany which became the counter-revolutionary center for monarchist émigrés who prepared for intervention against revolutionary France during the bourgeois revolution of 1789. Koblenz was the seat of the emigrant government supported by the feudal absolute states and headed by Charles Alexandre de Calonne, the fanatic reactionary minister under Louis XVI.

were weak in number and unsafe in character. His urgent appeal to the provinces to succor Versailles, by their National Guards and volunteers, met with a flat refusal. Brittany alone furnished a handful of *Chouans*¹³² fighting under a white flag, every one of them wearing on his breast the heart of Jesus in white cloth, and shouting “*Vive le Roi!*” (Long live the King!). Thiers was, therefore, compelled to collect, in hot haste, a motley crew, composed of sailors, marines, Pontifical Zouaves,¹³³ Valentin’s gendarmes, and Piétri’s *sergents de ville* and *mouchards*.¹³⁴ This army, however, would have been ridiculously ineffective without the instalments of imperialist war-prisoners, which Bismarck granted in numbers just sufficient to keep the civil war a-going, and keep the Versailles Government in abject dependence on Prussia. During the war itself, the Versailles police had to look after the Versailles army, while the gendarmes had to drag it on by exposing themselves at all posts of danger. The forts which fell were not taken, but bought. The heroism of the Federals convinced Thiers that the resistance of Paris was not to be broken by his own strategic genius and the bayonets at his disposal.

Meanwhile, his relations with the provinces became more and more difficult. Not one single address of approval came in to gladden Thiers and his Rurals. Quite the contrary. Deputations and addresses demanding, in a tone anything but respectful, conciliation with Paris on the basis of the unequivocal recognition of the Republic, the acknowledgement of the Communal liberties, and the dissolution of the National Assembly, whose mandate was extinct, poured in from all sides, and in such numbers

¹³² *Chouans*—originally the participants of the counter-revolutionary riots in north-western France during the bourgeois French Revolution. At the time of the Paris Commune the Communards used this name to describe the monarchist-minded Versailles army recruited at Brittany.

¹³³ *Zouave*—a corps of colonial infantry troops in the French Army—derived its name from a tribe of Algeria. First organized in Algeria in the 1830s, the corps was composed of local inhabitants. Later it became a purely French body but retained the original Oriental costume. The *Pontifical Zouaves* were the Pope’s guards, organized and trained on the pattern of the original Zouaves and recruited from volunteers of the young French noblemen. After the occupation of Rome by the Italian troops and the end of the temporal power of the Pope, the Pontifical Zouaves were dispatched to France in September 1870, and reorganized under the name of the “Legion of Volunteers of the West.” Incorporated into the 1st and the 2nd Loire Army, they fought in the war against Germany. After the war the Legion took part in the suppression of the Paris Commune. Later it was disbanded.

¹³⁴ Police informers.

that Dufaure, Thiers' Minister of Justice, in his circular of April 23 to the public prosecutors, commanded them to treat "the cry of conciliation" as a crime! In regard, however, of the hopeless prospect held out by his campaign, Thiers resolved to shift his tactics by ordering, all over the country, municipal elections to take place on the April 30, on the basis of the new municipal law dictated by himself to the National Assembly. What with the intrigues of his prefects, what with police intimidation, he felt quite sanguine of imparting, by the verdict of the provinces, to the National Assembly that moral power it had never possessed, and of getting at last from the provinces the physical force required for the conquest of Paris.

His banditti-warfare against Paris, exalted in his own bulletins, and the attempts of his ministers at the establishment, throughout France, of a reign of terror, Thiers was from the beginning anxious to accompany with a little byplay of conciliation, which had to serve more than one purpose. It was to dupe the provinces, to inveigle the middle-class element in Paris, and, above all, to afford the professed Republicans in the National Assembly the opportunity of hiding their treason against Paris behind their faith in Thiers. On March 21, when still without an army, he had declared to the Assembly: "Come what may, I will not send an army to Paris." On March 27 he rose again: "I have found the Republic an accomplished fact, and I am firmly resolved to maintain it." In reality, he put down the revolution at Lyons and Marseille¹³⁵ in the name of the Republic, while the roars of his Rurals drowned the very mention of its name at Versailles. After this exploit, he toned down the "accomplished fact" into an hypothetical fact. The Orléans princes, whom he had cautiously warned off Bordeaux, were now, in flagrant breach of the law, permitted to intrigue at Dreux.

¹³⁵ Under the influence of the proletarian revolution in Paris, which gave birth to the Paris Commune, revolutionary movements of the masses started in Lyons, Marseille and many other French cities. On March 22 the National Guards and the working people of Lyons seized the town hall. On March 26 after the arrival of a delegation from Paris the Commune was proclaimed in Lyons. Though the Communal commission—set up to prepare for the election to the Commune—possessed an armed force, it finally relinquished power owing to lack of contact with the people and the National Guards. Another uprising by the Lyons workers on April 30 was cruelly suppressed by the army and police.

In Marseille the insurgent population occupied the town hall, arrested the prefect, formed the "department commission" and decided to hold an election to the Commune on April 5. The revolutionary outbreak in Marseille was put down on April 4 by government troops which bombarded the city.

The concessions held out by Thiers in his interminable interviews with the delegates from Paris and the provinces, although constantly varied in tone and color, according to time and circumstances, did in fact never come to more than the prospective restriction of revenge to the “handful of criminals implicated in the murder of Lecomte and Clément Thomas,” on the well understood premise that Paris and France were unreservedly to accept M. Thiers himself as the best of possible Republics, as he, in 1830, had done with Louis Philippe. Even these concessions he not only took care to render doubtful by the official comments put upon them in the Assembly through his ministers. He had his Dufaure to act. Dufaure, this old Orléanist lawyer, had always been the justiciary of the state of siege as now in 1871, under Thiers, so in 1839 under Louis Philippe, and in 1849 under Louis Bonaparte’s presidency.¹³⁶ While out of office he made a fortune by pleading for the Paris capitalists and made political capital by pleading against the laws he had himself originated. He now hurried through the National Assembly not only a set of repressive laws which were, after the fall of Paris, to extirpate the last remnants of Republican liberty in France;¹³⁷ he foreshadowed the fate of Paris by abridging the, for him, too slow procedure of courts-martial,¹³⁸ and by a new-fangled,

¹³⁶ This refers to Dufaure’s efforts to consolidate the regime of the July Monarchy during the period of the armed uprising of the *Société des saisons* (Society of the Seasons) in May 1839, and to the role played by Dufaure in the struggle against the opposition petit-bourgeois Montagnards at the time of the Second Republic in June 1849.

An attempt at a revolution by the secret Republican-socialist Society of the Seasons on May 12, 1839, headed by Louis Auguste Blanqui and Armand Barbès, did not rely on the masses and bore a conspiratorial character; the rising was suppressed by the government army and the National Guard. In order to combat the danger of revolution, a new cabinet was formed, which Dufaure joined.

During a growing political crisis in June 1849—caused by the Montagnards’ opposition to the President of the Republic, Louis Bonaparte—the Minister of Interior, Dufaure, proposed the adoption of a series of decrees against the revolutionary section of the National Guard, the democrats and socialists.

¹³⁷ This refers to the law adopted by the National Assembly “On the Prosecution Against the Offence of the Press,” which enforced the clauses in the former reactionary press laws (of 1819 and 1849) and laid down harsh penalties—including that of prohibition—for publications containing anti-government views. It also refers to the rehabilitation of officials of the Second Empire who had been removed from office; to the special law concerning the procedure of returning the properties confiscated by the Commune, and the classification of such confiscation as a criminal offence.

¹³⁸ The law on the proceedings in courts-martial, which Dufaure submitted to the National Assembly, further shortened the proceedings as stipulated in the “*Code de*

Draconic code of deportation. The Revolution of 1848, abolishing the penalty of death for political crimes, had replaced it by deportation. Louis Bonaparte did not dare, at least not in theory, to re-establish the *régime* of the guillotine. The Rural Assembly, not yet bold enough even to hint that the Parisians were not rebels, but assassins, had therefore to confine its prospective vengeance against Paris to Dufaure's new code of deportation. Under all these circumstances Thiers himself could not have gone on with his comedy of conciliation, had it not, as he intended it to do, drawn forth shrieks of rage from the Rurals, whose ruminating mind did neither understand the play, nor its necessities of hypocrisy, tergiversation, and procrastination.

In sight of the impending municipal elections of April 30, Thiers enacted one of his great conciliation scenes on April 27. Amidst a flood of sentimental rhetoric, he exclaimed from the tribune of the Assembly:

There exists no conspiracy against the Republic but that of Paris, which compels us to shed French blood. I repeat it again and again. Let those impious arms fall from the hands which hold them, and chastisement will be arrested at once by an act of peace excluding only the small number of criminals.

To the violent interruption of the Rurals he replied:

Gentlemen, tell me, I implore you, am I wrong? Do you really regret that I could have stated the truth that the criminals are only a handful? Is it not fortunate in the midst of our misfortunes that those who have been capable of shedding the blood of Clément Thomas and General Lecomte are but rare exceptions?

France, however, turned a deaf ear to what Thiers flattered himself to be a parliamentary siren's song. Out of 700,000 municipal councilors returned by the 35,000 communes still left to France, the united Legitimists, Orléanists, and Bonapartists did not carry 8,000. The supplementary

justice militaire" of 1857. It confirmed the right of the army commander and the Minister of War to carry out judicial prosecutions according to their own discretion without preliminary inquiry, in such circumstances, the legal case, including the examination of the appeal, had to be settled and the sentence executed within 48 hours.

elections which followed were still more decidedly hostile. Thus, instead of getting from the provinces the badly needed physical force, the National Assembly lost even its last claim to moral force, that of being the expression of the universal suffrage of the country. To complete the discomfiture, the newly chosen municipal councils of all the cities of France openly threatened the usurping Assembly at Versailles with a counter Assembly at Bordeaux.

Then the long-expected moment of decisive action had at last come for Bismarck. He peremptorily summoned Thiers to send to Frankfurt plenipotentiaries for the definitive settlement of peace. In humble obedience to the call of his master, Thiers hastened to dispatch his trusty Jules Favre, backed by Pouyer-Quertier. Pouyer-Quertier, an "eminent" Rouen cotton-spinner, a fervent and even servile partisan of the Second Empire, had never found any fault with it save its commercial treaty with England,¹³⁹ prejudicial to his own shop interest. Hardly installed at Bordeaux as Thiers' Minister of Finance, he denounced that "unholy" treaty, hinted at its near abrogation, and had even the effrontery to try, although in vain (having counted without Bismarck), the immediate enforcement of the old protective duties against Alsace, where, he said, no previous international treaties stood in the way. This man, who considered counter-revolution as a means to put down wages at Rouen, and the surrender of French provinces as a means to bring up the price of his wares in France, was he not *the one* predestined to be picked out by Thiers as the helpmate of Jules Favre in his last and crowning treason?

On the arrival at Frankfurt of this exquisite pair of plenipotentiaries, bully Bismarck at once met them with the imperious alternative: Either the restoration of the Empire, or the unconditional acceptance of my own peace terms! These terms included a shortening of the intervals in which the war indemnity was to be paid, and the continued occupation of the Paris forts by Prussian troops until Bismarck should feel satisfied with the

¹³⁹ This refers to the trade agreement concluded between Britain and France on January 23, 1860. It was stipulated in the agreement that France relinquish the policy of prohibitive tariff and replace it with an income tax not exceeding 30 percent of the value of the goods. The agreement gave France the right to export duty-free most of its goods to Britain. After the conclusion of this agreement, the large flow of English goods into France greatly increased competition in the home market and aroused the discontent of the French manufacturers.

state of things in France; Prussia thus being recognized as the supreme arbiter in internal French politics! In return for this he offered to let loose, for the extermination of Paris, the captive Bonapartist army, and to lend them the direct assistance of Emperor William's troops. He pledged his good faith by making payment of the first instalment of the indemnity dependent on the "pacification" of Paris. Such a bait was, of course, eagerly swallowed by Thiers and his plenipotentiaries. They signed the treaty of peace on May 10 and had it endorsed by the Versailles Assembly on the 18th.

In the interval between the conclusion of peace and the arrival of the Bonapartist prisoners, Thiers felt the more bound to resume his comedy of conciliation, as his Republican tools stood in sore need of a pretext for blinking their eyes at the preparations for the carnage of Paris. As late as the May 8 he replied to a deputation of middle-class conciliators:

Whenever the insurgents will make up their minds for capitulation, the gates of Paris shall be flung wide open during a week for all except the murderers of Generals Clément Thomas and Lecomte.

A few days afterwards, when violently interpellated on these promises by the Rurals, he refused to enter into any explanations; not, however, without giving them this significant hint:

I tell you there are impatient men amongst you, men who are in too great a hurry. They must have another eight days; at the end of these eight days there will be no more danger, and the task will be proportionate to their courage and to their capacities.

As soon as MacMahon was able to assure him that he could shortly enter Paris, Thiers declared to the Assembly that

he would enter Paris with the *laws* in his hands, and demand a full expiation from the wretches who had sacrificed the lives of soldiers and destroyed public monuments.

As the moment of decision drew near he said—to the Assembly, "I shall be pitiless!"—to Paris, that it was doomed; and to his Bonapartist

banditti, that they had State license to wreak vengeance upon Paris to their hearts' content. At last, when treachery had opened the gates of Paris to General Douay, on May 21, Thiers, on the 22nd, revealed to the Rurals the "goal" of his conciliation comedy, which they had so obstinately persisted in not understanding.

I told you a few days ago that we were approaching *our goal*;
today I come to tell you *the goal* is reached. The victory of
order, justice, and civilization is at last won!

So it was. The civilization and justice of bourgeois order comes out in its lurid light whenever the slaves and drudges of that order rise against their masters. Then this civilization and justice stand forth as undisguised savagery and lawless revenge. Each new crisis in the class struggle between the appropriator and the producer brings out this fact more glaringly. Even the atrocities of the bourgeois in June 1848 vanish before the ineffable infamy of 1871. The self-sacrificing heroism with which the population of Paris—men, women, and children—fought for eight days after the entrance of the Versaillese, reflects as much the grandeur of their cause, as the infernal deeds of the soldiery reflect the innate spirit of that civilization of which they are the mercenary vindicators. A glorious civilization, indeed, the great problem of which is how to get rid of the heaps of corpses it made after the battle was over!

To find a parallel for the conduct of Thiers and his bloodhounds, we must go back to the times of Sulla and the two Triumvirates of Rome.¹⁴⁰ The same wholesale slaughter in cold blood; the same disregard in massacre

¹⁴⁰ This refers to the situation of terror and bloody repression during the period of sharpening social-political struggle in ancient Rome, and at different stages of crisis in the slave-holding Roman Republic in the first century B.C.

The Dictatorship of Sulla (82-79 B.C.), lackey of the slave-holding nobility, was accompanied by a mass slaughter of the representatives of hostile groups of slave-holders. Under Sulla proscription was introduced for the first time, *i.e.*, a list of persons whom any Roman had the right to kill without a trial.

The two Triumvirates of Rome (60-53 and 43-56 B.C.)—A Triumvirate was the dictatorship of the three most influential Roman generals who divided the power among themselves. The first Triumvirate consisted of Pompey, Caesar and Crassus; and the second Octavian, Antony and Lepidus. The Triumvirate represented a stage in the struggle for the liquidation of the Roman Republic and the formation of an absolute monarchy. They widely employed the method of physical extermination of their opponents. Upon the fall of the two Triumvirates, sanguinary, internecine civil war ensued.

of age and sex; the same system of torturing prisoners; the same proscriptions, but this time of a whole class; the same savage hunt after concealed leaders, lest one might escape; the same denunciations of political and private enemies; the same indifference for the butchery of entire strangers to the feud. There is but this difference, that the Romans had no *mitrailleuses* for the dispatch, in the lump, of the proscribed, and that they had not “the law in their hands,” nor on their lips the cry of “civilization.”

And after those horrors, look upon the other, still more hideous, face of that bourgeois civilization as described by its own press!

With stray shots [writes the Paris correspondent of a London Tory paper,] still ringing in the distance, and untended wounded wretches dying amid the tombstones of Père-Lachaise—with 6,000 terror-stricken insurgents wandering in an agony of despair in the labyrinth of the catacombs, and wretches hurried through the streets to be shot down in scores by the *mitrailleuse*—it is revolting to see the *cafés* filled with the votaries of absinthe, billiards, and dominoes; female profligacy perambulating the boulevards, and the sound of revelry disturbing the night from the *cabinets particuliers*¹⁴¹ of fashionable restaurants.

M. Édouard Hervé writes in the *Journal de Paris*,¹⁴² a Versaillist journal suppressed by the Commune:

The way in which the population of Paris [!] manifested its satisfaction yesterday was rather more than frivolous, and we fear it will grow worse as time progresses. Paris has now a *fête* day appearance, which is sadly out of place; and, unless we are to be called the *Parisiens de la décadence*, this sort of thing must come to an end.

And then he quotes the passage from Tacitus:

Yet, on the morrow of that horrible struggle, even before it was completely over, Rome—degraded and corrupt—began

¹⁴¹ Private rooms.

¹⁴² *Journal de Paris*—a weekly which appeared in Paris from 1867. It supported the monarchist Orléanists.

once more to wallow in the voluptuous slough which was destroying its body and polluting its soul—*alibi proelia et vulnera, alibi balnea popinoeque* (here fights and wounds, there baths and restaurants).¹⁴³

M. Hervé only forgets to say that the “population of Paris” he speaks of is but the population of the Paris of M. Thiers—the *francs-fileurs* returning in throngs from Versailles, Saint Denis, Rueil, and Saint-Germain—the Paris of the “Decline.”

In all its bloody triumphs over the self-sacrificing champions of a new and better society, that nefarious civilization, based upon the enslavement of labor, drowns the moans of its victims in a hue and cry of calumny, reverberated by a worldwide echo. The serene working men’s Paris of the Commune is suddenly changed into a pandemonium by the bloodhounds of “order.” And what does this tremendous change prove to the bourgeois mind of all countries? Why, that the Commune has conspired against civilization! The Paris people die enthusiastically for the Commune in numbers unequalled in any battle known to history. What does that prove? Why, that the Commune was not the people’s own government but the usurpation of a handful of criminals! The women of Paris joyfully give up their lives at the barricades and on the place of execution. What does this prove? Why, that the demon of the Commune has changed them into Megaeras and Hecates! The moderation of the Commune during two months of undisputed sway is equaled only by the heroism of its defense. What does that prove? Why, that for months the Commune carefully hid, under a mask of moderation and humanity, the blood-thirstiness of its fiendish instincts, to be let loose in the hour of its agony!

The working men’s Paris, in the act of its heroic self-holocaust, involved in its flames buildings and monuments. While tearing to pieces the living body of the proletariat, its rulers must no longer expect to return triumphantly into the intact architecture of their abodes. The Government of Versailles cries, “Incendiarism!” and whispers this cue to all its agents, down to the remotest hamlet, to hunt up its enemies everywhere as suspect of professional incendiarism. The bourgeoisie of the whole world, which

¹⁴³ These two passages were quoted from an article by the French publicist Édouard Hervé, published in *Journal de Paris*, No. 138, May 31, 1871. For the quotation from Tacitus, see Tacitus’ *History*, Book III, Chapter 83.

looks complacently upon the wholesale massacre after the battle, is convulsed by horror at the desecration of brick and mortar!

When governments give state-licenses to their navies to “kill, *burn*, and destroy,” is that a license for incendiarism? When the British troops wantonly set fire to the Capitol at Washington and to the summer palace of the Chinese Emperor,¹⁴⁴ was that incendiarism? When the Prussians, not for military reasons, but out of the mere spite of revenge, burned down by the help of petroleum towns like Châteaudun and innumerable villages, was that incendiarism? When Thiers, during six weeks, bombarded Paris, under the pretext that he wanted to set fire to those houses only in which there were people, was that incendiarism? In war, fire is an arm as legitimate as any. Buildings held by the enemy are shelled to set them on fire. If their defenders have to retire, they themselves light the flames to prevent the attack from making use of the buildings. To be burnt down has always been the inevitable fate of all buildings situated in the front of battle of all the regular armies of the world. But in the war of the enslaved against their enslavers, the only justifiable war in history, this is by no means to hold good! The Commune used fire strictly as a means of defense. They used it to stop up to the Versailles troops those long, straight avenues which Haussmann had expressly opened to artillery-fire; they used it to cover their retreat, in the same way as the Versaillese, in their advance, used their shells which destroyed at least as many buildings as the fire of the Commune. It is a matter of dispute, even now, which buildings were set fire to by the defense, and which by the attack. And the defense resorted to fire only then, when the Versaillese troops had already commenced their wholesale murdering of prisoners. Besides, the Commune had, long before, given full public notice that, if driven to extremities, they would bury themselves under the ruins of Paris, and make Paris a second Moscow, as the Government of Defense, but only as a cloak for its treason, had promised to do. For this purpose Trochu had found them the petroleum. The Commune knew that its opponents cared nothing for the lives of the

¹⁴⁴ In August 1814 during the Anglo-American war, the British troops occupied Washington and burned the Capitol (the Congress hall), the White House and other public buildings.

In October 1860 in the colonial war waged by Britain and France against China, the Anglo-French troops plundered and burned the Yuanmingyuan Palace near Beijing, which was a rich treasure of architecture and art

Paris people, but cared much for their own Paris buildings. And Thiers, on the other hand, had given them notice that he would be implacable in his vengeance. No sooner had he got his army ready on one side, and the Prussians shutting up the trap on the other, than he proclaimed: "I shall be pitiless! The expiation will be complete, and justice will be stern!" If the acts of the Paris working men were vandalism, it was the vandalism of defense in despair, not the vandalism of triumph, like that which the Christians perpetrated upon the really priceless art treasures of heathen antiquity; and even that vandalism has been justified by the historian as an unavoidable and comparatively trifling concomitant to the titanic struggle between a new society arising and an old one breaking down. It was still less the vandalism of Haussmann, razing historic Paris to make place for the Paris of the sightseer!

But the execution by the Commune of the sixty-four hostages, with the Archbishop of Paris at their head! The bourgeoisie and its army, in June 1848, re-established a custom which had long disappeared from the practice of war—the shooting of their defenseless prisoners. This brutal custom has since been more or less strictly adhered to by the suppressors of all popular commotions in Europe and India; thus proving that it constitutes a real "progress of civilization!" On the other hand, the Prussians, in France, had re-established the practice of taking hostages—innocent men, who, with their lives, were to answer to them for the acts of others. When Thiers, as we have seen from the very beginning of the conflict, enforced the humane practice of shooting down the Communal prisoners, the Commune, to protect their lives, was obliged to resort to the Prussian practice of securing hostages. The lives of the hostages had been forfeited over and over again by the continued shooting of prisoners on the part of the Versaillese. How could they be spared any longer after the carnage with which MacMahon's praetorians¹⁴⁵ celebrated their entrance into Paris? Was even the last check upon the unscrupulous ferocity of bourgeois governments—the taking of hostages—to be made a mere sham of? The real murderer of Archbishop Darboy is Thiers. The Commune again and again

¹⁴⁵ *Praetorians*—the name used in ancient Rome to describe the privileged private guards of the generals or the emperor. At the time of the Roman Empire, Praetorians constantly took part in internal strife and often placed their own nominees on the throne. Later the word "praetorians" became a synonym for mercenaries and those who committed outrages and carried out the arbitrary rule of military cliques.

had offered to exchange the archbishop, and ever so many priests in the bargain, against the single Blanqui, then in the hands of Thiers. Thiers obstinately refused. He knew that with Blanqui he would give to the Commune a head, while the archbishop would serve his purpose best in the shape of a corpse. Thiers acted upon the precedent of Cavaignac. How, in June 1848, did not Cavaignac and his men of Order raise shouts of horror by stigmatizing the insurgents as the assassins of Archbishop Affre! They knew perfectly well that the archbishop had been shot by the soldiers of Order. M. Jacquemet, the archbishop's vicar-general, present on the spot, had immediately afterwards handed them in his evidence to that effect.

All this chorus of calumny, which the Party of Order never fail, in their orgies of blood, to raise against their victims, only proves that the bourgeois of our days considers himself the legitimate successor to the baron of old, who thought every weapon in his own hand fair against the plebeian, while in the hands of the plebeian a weapon of any kind constituted in itself a crime.

The conspiracy of the ruling class to break down the Revolution by a civil war carried on under the patronage of the foreign invader—a conspiracy which we have traced from the very September 4 down to the entrance of MacMahon's praetorians through the gate of St.-Cloud—culminated in the carnage of Paris. Bismarck gloats over the ruins of Paris, in which he saw perhaps the first instalment of that general destruction of great cities he had prayed for when still a simple Rural in the Prussian *Chambre introuvable* of 1849.¹⁴⁶ He gloats over the cadavers of the Paris proletariat. For him this is not only the extermination of revolution, but the extinction of France, now decapitated in reality, and by the French Government itself. With the shallowness characteristic of all successful statesmen, he sees but the surface of this tremendous historic event. Whenever before

¹⁴⁶ By the "*Prussian Chambre introuvable*"—analogous to the extremely reactionary French *Chambre introuvable* of 1815-16—Marx meant the Prussian Parliament elected in January-February 1849 according to the Constitution granted by the Prussian king on December 5, 1848, the day of the counter-revolutionary *coup d'état*. According to the Constitution, the Parliament was composed of the House of Lords of the privileged aristocrats and the Lower House. Only "independent Prussians" were allowed to take part in the elections to the Lower House, thereby ensuring the dominance of the Junker-bureaucrats and Right-wing bourgeois elements in it. Bismarck, who was elected to the Lower House, was a leader of the extreme Right-wing group of Junkers.

has history exhibited the spectacle of a conqueror crowning his victory by turning into, not only the gendarme, but the hired bravo of the conquered Government? There existed no war between Prussia and the Commune of Paris. On the contrary, the Commune had accepted the peace preliminaries, and Prussia had announced her neutrality. Prussia was, therefore, no belligerent. She acted the part of a bravo, a cowardly bravo, because incurring no danger; a hired bravo, because stipulating beforehand the payment of her blood-money of 500 millions on the fall of Paris. And thus, at last, came out the true character of the war, ordained by Providence as a chastisement of godless and debauched France by pious and moral Germany! And this unparalleled breach of the law of nations, even as understood by the old-world lawyers, instead of arousing the “civilized” Governments of Europe to declare the felonious Prussian Government, the mere tool of the St. Petersburg Cabinet, an outlaw amongst nations, only incites them to consider whether the few victims who escape the double cordon around Paris are not to be given up to the hangman at Versailles!

That after the most tremendous war of modern times, the conquering and the conquered hosts should fraternize for the common massacre of the proletariat—this unparalleled event does indicate, not, as Bismarck thinks, the final repression of a new society upheaving, but the crumbling into dust of bourgeois society. The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war; and this is now proved to be a mere governmental humbug, intended to defer the struggle of classes, and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out into civil war. Class rule is no longer able to disguise itself in a national uniform; the national Governments are *one* as against the proletariat!

After Whit Sunday, 1871,¹⁴⁷ there can be neither peace nor truce possible between the working men of France and the appropriators of their produce. The iron hand of a mercenary soldiery may keep for a time both classes tied down in common oppression. But the battle must break out again and again in ever-growing dimensions, and there can be no doubt as to who will be the victor in the end—the appropriating few, or the immense working majority. And the French working class is only the advanced guard of the modern proletariat. While the European Govern-

¹⁴⁷ *I.e.*, May 28, the last day of the Commune.

ments thus testify, before Paris, to the international character of class rule, they cry down the International Working Men's Association—the international counter-organization of labor against the cosmopolitan conspiracy of capital—as the head fountain of all these disasters. Thiers denounced it as the despot of labor, pretending to be its liberator. Picard ordered that all communications between the French Internationals and those abroad should be cut off, Count Jaubert, Thiers' mummified accomplice of 1835, declares it the great problem of all civilized Governments to weed it out. The Rurals roar against it, and the whole European press joins the chorus. An honorable French writer,¹⁴⁸ completely foreign to our Association, speaks as follows:

The members of the Central Committee of the National Guard, as well as the greater part of the members of the Commune, are the most active, intelligent, and energetic minds of the International Working Men's Association, ...men who are thoroughly honest, sincere, intelligent, devoted, pure, and fanatical in the good sense of the word.

The police-tinged bourgeois mind naturally figures to itself the International Working Men's Association as acting in the manner of a secret conspiracy, its central body ordering, from time to time, explosions in different countries. Our Association is, in fact, nothing but the international bond between the most advanced working men in the various countries of the civilized world. Wherever, in whatever shape, and under whatever conditions the class struggle obtains any consistency, it is but natural that members of our Association should stand in the foreground. The soil out of which it grows is modern society itself. It cannot be stamped out by any amount of carnage. To stamp it out, the Governments would have to stamp out the despotism of capital over labor—the condition of their own parasitical existence.

Working men's Paris, with its Commune, will be forever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators history has already nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them.

¹⁴⁸ Probably Jean-François Eugène Robinet (1825-1899).

The General Council

M. J. Boon	Fred. Bradnick
G. H. Buttery	Caihil
Delahaye	William Hales
A. Herman	Kolb
Fred. Lessner	Lochner
J. P. MacDonnel	George Milner
Thomas Mottershead	Charles Mills
Charles Murray	Pfänder
Roach	Rochat
Rühl	Sadler
A. Serrailier	Cowell Stepney
Alfred Taylor	W. Townshend

Corresponding Secretaries

Eugène Dupont, *for France*
Karl Marx, *for Germany and Holland*
Frederick Engels, *for Belgium and Spain*
Hermann Jung, *for Switzerland*
P. Giovacchini, *for Italy*
Zévy Maurice *for Hungary*
Antoni Żabicki, *for Poland*
James Cohen, *for Denmark*
J. G. Eccarius, *for the United States of America*

Hermann Jung, *Chairman*
John Weston, *Treasurer*
George Harris, *Financial Secretary*
John Hales, *General Secretary*

Office: 256 High Holborn, London, W.C.

May 30th, 1871

NOTES

I

The column of prisoners halted in the Avenue Uhrich, and was drawn up, four or five deep, on the footway facing to the road. General Marquis de Galliffet and his staff dismounted and commenced an inspection from the left of the line. Walking down slowly and eyeing the ranks, the General stopped here and there, tapping a man on the shoulder or beckoning him out of the rear ranks. In most cases, without further parley, the individual thus selected was marched out into the center of the road, where a small supplementary column was, thus, soon formed... It was evident that there was considerable room for error. A mounted officer pointed out to General Galliffet a man and woman for some particular offence. The woman, rushing out of the ranks, threw herself on her knees, and, with outstretched arms, protested her innocence in passionate terms. The General waited for a pause, and then with most impassible face and unmoved demeanor, said, "Madame, I have visited every theatre in Paris, your acting will have no effect on me." [*Ce n'est pas la peine de jouer la comédie.*] ...It was not a good thing on that day to be noticeably taller, dirtier, cleaner, older, or uglier than one's neighbors. One individual in particular struck me as probably owing his speedy release from the ills of this world to his having a broken nose... Over a hundred being thus chosen, a firing party told off, and the column resumed its march, leaving them behind. A few minutes afterwards a dropping fire in our rear commenced, and continued for over a quarter of an hour. It was the execution of these summarily convicted wretches.—Paris Correspondent, *Daily News*,¹⁴⁹ June 8th.

¹⁴⁹ *The Daily News*—a liberal paper and mouthpiece of the British industrial bourgeoisie, published from 1846 to 1930 in London.

This Galliffet, “the kept man of his wife, so notorious for her shameless exhibitions at the orgies of the Second Empire,” went, during the war, by the name of the French “Ensign Pistol.”

The *Temps*,¹⁵⁰ which is a careful journal, and not given to sensation, tells a dreadful story of people imperfectly shot and buried before life was extinct. A great number were buried in the square round Saint-Jacques-la-Boucherie; some of them very superficially. In the daytime the roar of the busy streets prevented any notice being taken; but in the stillness of the night the inhabitants of the houses in the neighborhood were roused by distant moans, and in the morning a clenched hand was seen protruding through the soil. In consequence of this, exhumations were ordered to take place... That many wounded have been buried alive I have not the slightest doubt. One case I can vouch for. When Brunel was shot with his mistress on the 24th ult. in the courtyard of a house in the Place Vendôme, the bodies lay there until the afternoon of the 27th. When the burial party came to remove the corpses, they found the woman living still and took her to an ambulance. Though she had received four bullets she is now out of danger.—Paris Correspondent, *Evening Standard*,¹⁵¹ June 8th.

II

The following letter appeared in the [London] *Times* of June 13th:¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ *Le Temps*—a conservative daily, organ of the French big bourgeoisie; published in Paris from 1861 to 1943. It opposed the Second Empire and its war against Prussia. After the collapse of the Second Empire it supported the Government of National Defense.

¹⁵¹ *The Evening Standard*—published in London between 1857 and 1905, used to be the evening edition of *The Standard* a daily paper of the British Conservatives, which was founded in London in 1827.

¹⁵² The statement was drawn up by Marx and Engels for the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on Jules Favre's circular of June 6, 1871. It was included in the second and third English editions of *The Civil War in France* and

To the Editor of *The Times*:

Sir,—On June 6, 1871, M. Jules Favre issued a circular to all the European Powers, calling upon them to hunt down the International Working Men's Association. A few remarks will suffice to characterize that document.

In the very preamble of our statutes it is stated that the International was founded 'September 28, 1864, at a public meeting held at St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre, London.'¹⁵³ For purposes of his own Jules Favre puts back the date of its origin behind 1862.

In order to explain our principles, he professes to quote 'their (the International's) sheet of the 25th of March, 1869.' And then what does he quote? The sheet of a society which is not the International. This sort of maneuver he already recurred to when, still a comparatively young lawyer, he had to defend the *National* newspaper, prosecuted for libel by Cabet. Then he pretended to read extracts from Cabet's pamphlets while reading interpolations of his own—a trick exposed while the Court was sitting, and which, but for the indulgence of Cabet, would have been punished by Jules Favre's expulsion from the Paris bar. Of all the documents quoted by him as documents of the International, not one belongs to the International. He says, for instance, 'The Alliance declares itself Atheist, says the General Council, constituted in London in July 1869.' The General Council never issued such a document. On the contrary, it issued a document¹⁵⁴ which quashed the original statutes of the 'Alliance'—*L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste* at Geneva—quoted by Jules Favre.

in the German editions of 1871, 1876 and 1891. It was also published separately in many newspapers. (See Marx and Engels, *Works*, Ger. ed., Vol. XVII, pp. 367-68.)

¹⁵³ See Marx and Engels, *Works*, Ger. ed., Vol. XVI, p. 14.

¹⁵⁴ This refers to the circular drafted by Marx, "The International Working Men's Association and the Alliance of Socialist Democracy" (see Marx and Engels, *Works*, Ger. ed., Vol. XVI, pp. 359-41).

Throughout his circular, which pretends in part also to be directed against the Empire, Jules Favre repeats against the International but the police inventions of the public prosecutors of the Empire, which broke down miserably even before the law courts of that Empire.

It is known that in its two addresses (of July and September last) on the late war,¹⁵⁵ the General Council of the International denounced the Prussian plans of conquest against France. Later on, Mr. Reitlinger, Jules Favre's private secretary, applied, though of course in vain, to some members of the General Council for getting up by the Council a demonstration against Bismarck, in favor of the Government of National Defense; they were particularly requested not to mention the Republic. The preparations for a demonstration with regard to the expected arrival of Jules Favre in London were made—certainly with the best of intentions—in spite of the General Council, which, in its address of the 9th of September, had distinctly forewarned the Paris workmen against Jules Favre and his colleagues.

What would Jules Favre say if, in its turn, the International were to send a circular on Jules Favre to all the Cabinets of Europe, drawing their particular attention to the documents published at Paris by the late M. Millière?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

John Hales

Secretary to the General Council of the International
Working Men's Association.

256, High Holborn, London, W.C.

June 12th, 1871.

In an article on "The International Society and its aims," that pious informer, the London *Spectator*¹⁵⁶ (June 24), amongst other similar tricks,

¹⁵⁵ See above, pp. 16-24 and 26-37.

¹⁵⁶ *The Spectator*—a British liberal weekly, which began to appear in London in 1828.

quotes, even more fully than Jules Favre has done, the above document of the "Alliance" as the work of the International, and that eleven days after the refutation had been published in *The Times*. We do not wonder at this. Frederick the Great used to say that of all Jesuits the worst are the Protestant ones.

THE DRAFTS OF
THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE

THE FIRST DRAFT OF *THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE*¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ “The Drafts of *The Civil War in France*” were written by Marx in April and May of 1871. In the first days after the Revolution of March 18, Marx began carefully to study all the material on the event in Paris; he collected cuttings and made numerous extracts from French and English newspapers. In the latter half of April Marx began on the first draft and continued working until about May 10; then he began the second draft of *The Civil War in France* which he completed by the middle of May. Thereupon, he went on to write the final text and put it in the form of an address of the General Council of the International Working Men’s Association. The newspaper cuttings and the extracts he had collected in a notebook during the last week of the Paris Commune were not used in the second draft, but were first used in the text of the address itself.

Both the first and second drafts were originally written on large sheets of paper. The manuscript of the first draft, the longest one, is apparently preserved intact. It fills both sides of 11 written sheets, or 22 pages, which were numbered by Marx with the exception of pages 6 and 13. The manuscript of the second draft, according to the page numbers marked by Marx (not on all the sheets), probably consisted of 13 sheets; 11 sheets are preserved (8 are written on one side only, and 3 on both sides). It is assumed that the missing part of the manuscript is Section 4 of the draft, which precedes the preserved Section 5, “Opening of the Civil War. The March 18 Revolution. Clément Thomas. Lecomte. The Vendôme Affair.” The last three pages which bear no page numbers (see pp. 226-231 of this book), are mainly revisions of individual passages in the second draft. The larger part of the manuscripts of the first and second drafts has been crossed out by Marx with perpendicular and slanting

THE GOVERNMENT OF DEFENSE

Four months after the commencement of the war, when the Government of Defense had thrown a sop to [the] Paris National Guard by allowing them to show their fighting capabilities at Buzenval,¹⁵⁸ the Government considered the opportune moment has come to prepare Paris for capitulation. To the assembly of the *maires* of Paris for capitulation, Trochu in presence of and supported by Jules Favre and some others of his colleagues, revealed at last *his "plan"*. He said literally:

The first question, addressed to me by my colleagues *on the evening of the 4th September*, was this: Paris, can it stand, with any chance of success, a siege against the Prussian army? *I did not hesitate to answer in the negative*. Some of my colleagues here present will warrant the truth of these my words, and *the persistence of my opinion*, I told them in these very terms that, under the existing state of things, the attempt of Paris to maintain a siege against the Prussian army would be *a folly*. Without doubt, I added, this might be *a heroic folly*, but it

lines. Apparently in this way Marx marked those portions which he had already used while working on the final text of *The Civil War in France*. The only words and sentences not included in the present edition are those which Marx crossed out in the manuscripts with horizontal lines. In the manuscripts of both drafts there are many marginal notes, round and square brackets, and so on, which are marks used by the author in his work. These are not to be found in the present edition.

When Marx cited or quoted the decrees and proclamations of the Commune, he referred to the date of their promulgation or to the date of their publication in the London press.

The two drafts of *The Civil War in France* were not published during the lifetime of Marx and Engels, and remained unknown long after their death. Extracts of the first draft appeared for the first time in the Soviet Union, in *Pravda*, Nos. 72 and 76, published respectively on March 14 and 18, 1933. The complete text of the first and second drafts was first published in the original (English) and in Russian in 1934 in the *Archives of Marx and Engels*, Vol. III (VIII).

¹⁵⁸ *The Battle of Buzenval* (also known as the Battle of Montretout or Mont-Valérien) took place on January 19, 1871, four months after Paris had been besieged. It was Trochu's last onslaught from the encircled Paris aimed at thoroughly destroying the forces of the National Guards, dampening their morale and convincing the Parisians and the army that the capital was indefensible. During the onslaught, which was carried out without adequate preparation and the necessary reserve force, the French forces failed to co-ordinate their actions. And though the French army fought bravely, the onslaught was repulsed on all points.

would be nothing else... *The events have not given the lie to my prevision.*

Trochu's plan, from the very day of the proclamation of the Republic, was *the capitulation of Paris and of France*. In point of fact, he was the commander-in-chief of the Prussians. In a letter to Gambetta, Jules Favre himself confessed so much that the enemy to be put down was not the Prussian soldier, but the Paris (revolutionary) "demagogue." The high-sounding promises to the people by the Government of Defense were therefore as many deliberate lies. The "plan" they systematically carried out by entrusting the defense of Paris to Bonapartist generals, by disorganizing the National Guard and by organizing famine under the maladministration of Jules Ferry. The attempts of the Paris workmen on October 5th, October 31st, etc., to supplant these traitors by the Commune, were put down as conspiracies with the Prussian!¹⁵⁹ After the capitulation the mask was thrown off (cast aside). The *capitulards* became a government by the grace of Bismarck. Being his prisoners, they stipulated with him a general armistice, the conditions of which disarmed France and rendered all further resistance impossible. Resuscitated at Bordeaux as the Government of the Republic, these very same *capitulards* through Thiers, their ex-Ambassador, and Jules Favre, their Foreign Minister, fervently implored Bismarck in the name of the majority of the so-called National Assembly, and long before the rise of Paris, to disarm, and occupy Paris, and put down "its *canaille*," as Bismarck himself on his return from France to *Berlin* sneeringly told his admirers at Frankfurt. This occupation of Paris by the Prussians—such was the last word of the "plan" of the Government of Defense. The cynical effrontery with which, since their instalment at Versailles, the same men fawn upon and appeal to the armed intervention of Prussia, has dumbfounded even the venal press of Europe. The heroic exploits of the Paris National Guard, since they fight no longer *under* but *against* the *capitulards*, have forced even the most skeptical to brand the

¹⁵⁹ Under the leadership of Gustave Flourens the Worker's Battalions of the National Guard demonstrated in front of the Hôtel de Ville of Paris on October 5, 1870, demanding that the Government of National Defense hold elections to the Commune, take measures to strengthen the republic and energetically resist the invading enemy. The government rejected these demands and forbade the National Guards to assemble or hold armed demonstrations without instructions.

For the uprising of October 31, 1870, see Note 88.

word “traitor” on the brazen fronts of the Trochu, Jules Favre *et Co.* The documents seized by the Commune, have, at last, furnished the juridical proofs of their high treason. Amongst these papers there are letters of the Bonapartist *sabreurs*, to whom the execution of Trochu’s “plan” had been confided, in which these infamous wretches crack jokes at and make fun of their own “defense of Paris” (cf., for instance, the letter of *Alphonse Simon Guiod*, supreme commander of the artillery of the army of defense of Paris and Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, to *Suzanne*, General of division of artillery, published by the *Journal officiel* of the Commune).

It is, therefore evident, that the men who now form the government of Versailles, can only be saved from the fate of convicted traitors by civil war, the death of the Republic and a monarchical *restauration* [restoration] under the shelter of Prussian bayonets.

But—and this is most characteristic of the men of the Empire, as well as of the men who but on its soil and within its atmosphere could grow into mock-tribunes of the people—the victorious Republic would not only brand them as traitors, it would have to surrender them as common felons to the criminal court. Look only at *Jules Favre*, *Ernest Picard*, and *Jules Ferry*, the great men, under Thiers, of the Government of Defense!

A series of authenticated judiciary documents spreading over about 20 years, and published by M. Millière, a representative to the National Assembly, proves that *Jules Favre*, living in adulterous concubinage with the wife of a drunkard resident at Algiers, had, by a most complicated concatenation of daring forgeries, contrived to grasp in the name of his bastards, a large succession that made him a rich man and that the connivance only of the Bonapartist tribunals saved him from exposure in a law-suit undertaken by the legitimate claimants. Jules Favre, then, this unctuous mouthpiece of family, religion, property, and order, has long since been forfeited to the *Code pénal*. Lifelong penal servitude would be his unavoidable lot under every honest government.

Ernest Picard, the present Versailles Home Minister, appointed by himself on September 4, Home Minister of the Government of Defense,¹⁶⁰ after he had tried in vain to be appointed by Louis Bonaparte, this Ernest

¹⁶⁰ In his final manuscript, Marx made a revision: Ernest Picard was Minister of Finance of the Government of National Defense and the *Électeur libre* was the paper of the Finance Office (see p. 43).

Picard is the brother of one *Arthur Picard*. When, together with Jules Favre and Co., he had the impudence to propose this worthy brother of his as a candidate in the Seine-et-Oise for the *Corps législatif*, the imperialist government published two documents, a report of the Prefecture of Police (July 13,¹⁶¹ 1867) stating that this Arthur Picard was excluded from the *Bourse* as an “*escroc*” [swindler], and another document of *December 11, 1868*, according to which Arthur had confessed the theft of 300,000 francs., committed by him as a director of one of the branches of the *Société Générale*, Rue Palestro, No. 5. Ernest made not only his worthy Arthur the *editor-in-chief* of a paper of his own, the *Électeur libre*, founded under the Empire and continued to this day, a paper, in which the Republicans are daily denounced as “robbers, bandits, and *partageux* [appropriators],” but once become the Home Minister of the “Defense,” Ernest employed Arthur as his financial medium between the Home Office to [read and] the Stock Exchange, there to discount the State secrets entrusted to him.

The whole “financial” correspondence between Ernest and Arthur has fallen into the hands of the Commune. Like the lachrymose Jules Favre, Ernest Picard, the Joe Miller of the Versailles Government, is a man forfeited to the *Code pénal* and the galleys.

To make up this trio, *Jules Ferry*, a poor breadless barrister before September 4, not content to organize the famine of Paris, had contrived to job a fortune out of this famine. The day on which he would have to give an account of his peculations during the Paris siege would be his day of judgment!

No wonder then that these men who can only hope to escape from the hulks in a monarchy, protected by Prussian bayonets, who but in the turmoil of civil war can win their *ticket of leave*, that these desperadoes were at once *chosen* by Thiers and accepted by the Rurals as the safest tools of the counter-revolution!

No wonder that when in the beginning of April captured National Guards were exposed at Versailles to the ferocious outrages of Piétri’s “lambs” and the Versailles mob, M. Ernest Picard, “with his hands in his trousers pockets, walked from group to group cracking jokes,” while “on the balcony of the Prefecture Madame Thiers, Madame Jules Favre and

¹⁶¹ The correct date was July 31.

a bevy of similar *dames*, looking in excellent health and spirits,” exulted in that disgusting scene. No wonder then, that while one part of France winces under the heels of the conquerors, while Paris, the heart and head of France, daily sheds streams of its best blood in self-defense against the home traitors... the Thiers, Favres et Co. indulge in revelries at the Palace of Louis XIV, such, for instance, as the grand *fête* given by Thiers in honor of Jules Favre on his return from Rouen (whither he had been sent to conspire with (fawn upon) the Prussians). It is the cynical orgy of evaded felons.

If the Government of Defense first made Thiers their Foreign Ambassador, going a-begging at all courts of Europe, there to barter a king for France for their intervention against Prussia, if, later on, they sent him on a travelling tour throughout the French provinces, there to conspire with the *Châteaux* and secretly prepare the general elections which, together with the capitulation, would take France by surprise—Thiers, on his side, made them his ministers and high functionaries. They were safe men.

There is one thing rather mysterious in the proceedings of Thiers, his recklessness in precipitating the revolution of Paris. Not content to goad Paris by the anti-Republican demonstrations of his Rurals, by the threats to *decapitate* and *decapitalize* Paris, by Dufaure’s (Thiers’ Minister of Justice) law of the March 10 on the *échéances* of bills [bills falling due] which impended bankruptcy on the Paris commerce, by appointing Orléanist ambassadors, by the transfer of the *Assemblée* to Versailles, by an imposition of a new tax on newspapers, by the confiscation of the Republican Paris journals, by the revival of the state of siege, first proclaimed by Palikao¹⁶² and annulled with the downfall of the imperialist government on the 4th of September, by appointing Vinoy, the *Décembriseur* and ex-senator, Governor of Paris, *Valentin*, the imperialist gendarme, Prefect of Police, and Aurelle de Paladines, the Jesuit general, commander-in-chief of the Paris National Guard—he opened the civil war with feeble forces, by Vinoy’s attack on the *buttes Montmartre*, by the attempt first to rob the

¹⁶² This refers to Charles Cousin-Montauban, a French general who commanded the joint French and British aggressive forces which invaded China in 1860. He was given the title of *comte de Palikao* by Napoleon III because he defeated the troops of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) at Palikao (Baliqiao), a village east of Beijing.

National Guards of cannon which belonged to them and which were only left to them by the Paris convention, because they were their property, and thus to disarm Paris.

Whence this feverish eagerness *d'en finir* [to finish it off]? To disarm and put down Paris was of course the first condition of a monarchical counter-revolution, but an astute intriguer like Thiers could only risk the future of the difficult enterprise in undertaking it without due preparation, with ridiculously insufficient means, except under the sway of some overwhelmingly urgent wave. The motive was this. By the agency of Pouyer-Quertier, his Finance Minister, Thiers had concluded a loan of two milliards to be paid immediately down, and some more milliards to follow at certain terms. In this loan transaction a truly royal *pot de vin* (drink money) was reserved for those grand citizens—Thiers, Jules Favre, Ernest Picard, Jules Simon, Pouyer-Quertier, etc. But there was one hitch in the transaction. Before definitively sealing the treaty, the contractors wanted one guarantee—the *tranquillization of Paris*. Hence the reckless proceedings of Thiers. Hence the savage hatred against the Paris workmen, perverse enough to interfere with this fine job.

As to the Jules Favres, Picards, etc., we have said enough to prove them the worthy accomplices of such a jobbery. As to Thiers himself, it is notorious that during his two ministries under Louis Philippe he realized 2 millions, and that during his premiership (dating March 1840) he was taunted from the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies with his *Bourse* speculations, in answer to which he shed tears, a commodity he disposes of as freely as Jules Favre and the celebrated comedian Frédérick Lemaître. It is no less notorious that the first measure taken by M. Thiers to save France from the financial ruin, fastened upon her by the war, was—to endow himself with a yearly salary of 3 millions of francs, exactly the sum Louis Bonaparte got in 1850 as an equivalent from M. Thiers and his troop in the Legislative Assembly for allowing them to abolish the general suffrage.¹⁶³ This endowment of M. Thiers with 3 millions was the first word of “the economic republic,” the vista of which he had opened to his Paris

¹⁶³ Alarmed by the victory of the democrats and the socialists in the election of March-April 1850, the Party of Order led by Thiers had an election law adopted by the Legislative Assembly on May 31, 1850, which abolished universal suffrage. Under this law—directed against the workers in town and countryside as well as against the small peasants—the vote was only given to those who had settled down in

electors in 1869. As to Pouyer-Quertier, he is a cotton-spinner at Rouen. In 1869, he was the leader of the millowners' conclave that proclaimed a general reduction of wages necessary for the "conquest" of the English market—an intrigue, then baffled by the *International*.¹⁶⁴ Pouyer-Quertier, otherwise a fervent and even servile partisan of the Empire, found only one fault with it, its commercial treaty with England damaging to his own shop interests. His first step, as M. Thiers' finance minister, was to denounce that "hateful" treaty and to pronounce the necessity of re-establishing the old protective duties for his own shop. His second step was the *patriotic* attempt to strike Alsace by the re-established old protective duties on the pretext that in this case no international treaty stood in the way of their re-introduction. By this master-stroke his own shop at Rouen would have got rid of the dangerous competition of the rival shops at Mülhausen. His last step was to make a present to his son-in-law, M. de La Rochelambert, of the *receveur*-generalship [general tax-collector's office] of the Loiret, one of the rich booties falling into the lap of the *governing* bourgeois, and which Pouyer-Quertier had found so much fault with his imperialist predecessor, M. Magne, endowing his own son with that big jobbing place. This Pouyer-Quertier was then exactly the man for the perpetration of the above said job.

one place for three years and paid direct tax. Consequently, the number of voters in France was reduced by nearly three million.

Soon after the adoption of the election law of 1850 the parliament increased the yearly salary of the President of the Republic, Louis Bonaparte, from 600,000 to 3,000,000 francs.

¹⁶⁴ At the end of 1868 the factory owners of Normandy tried to make a considerable cut in the wages of the textile workers in order successfully to compete with English-made goods. This caused a great strike in early 1869 of the textile workers in Sotteville-lès-Rouen. The strikers appealed to the International for support and the General Council organized collections for them through the trade unions of London and France. Though the strike was defeated, Marx pointed out in the "Report of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association to the Fourth Annual Congress at Basel": "It enlisted the Norman cotton-workers into the revolutionary army of labor, it gave rise to the birth of trades unions at Rouen, Elboeuf, Darnétal, and the environs; and it sealed anew the bond of fraternity between the English and French working classes." (See Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Ger. ed., Vol. XVI, pp. 374-75.)

30 mars. *Rappel*.¹⁶⁵ Jules Ferry, ex-maire de Paris, a défendu, par une circulaire du 28 mars, aux employés de l’octroi... de continuer toute perception for the city of Paris. [*March 30, Rappel*. Jules Ferry, ex-mayor of Paris, by a circular on March 28, forbade the employees of the toll-office... to continue any collection for the city of Paris.]

Small state rogueries—a little character... cankering conscience... everlasting suggester of parliamentary intrigue... petty expedients and devices... rehearsing his homilies of liberalism, of the “*libertés nécessaires*”... eagerly bent on... strong reasons to weigh against the chances of failure... cogent arguments which counterpoise... kind of heroism in exaggerated baseness... lucky parliamentary stratagems...

M. E. Picard est un malandrin, qui pendant toute la durée du siège a tripoté à la Bourse sur les défaites de nos armées. [M. E. Picard is a robber, who speculated at the *Bourse* on our army’s defeats throughout the period of the Siege.]

Massacre, trahison, incendie, assassinat, calomnie, mensonge. [*Massacre, treason, arson, assassination, calumny, lying.*]

In his speech to the assembly of *maires*, etc. (April 25), Thiers says himself that the “assassins of Clement Thomas and Lecomte” [are] a handful of criminals—“et ceux qui pourront à juste titre être considérés comme complices de ces crimes par conspiration ou assistance, c’est-à-dire un *très petit* nombre d’individus.” [“and those who can rightly be considered as accomplices of these crimes by conspiracy or assistance, that is to say, a *very small* number of individuals.”]

¹⁶⁵ *Le Rappel*—a daily paper of the Left-wing Republicans, founded by Victor Hugo and Henri Rochefort. Appearing in Paris from 1869 to 1928, it sharply criticized the Second Empire and supported the Paris Commune.

Dufaure

Dufaure wants to put down Paris by press prosecutions in the provinces. Monstrous to bring journals before a jury because preaching “*conciliation*.”

Dufaure plays a great part in the Thiers intrigue. By his law of March 10th, he roused all the indebted commerce of Paris. By his law on Paris house rents, he menaced all Paris. Both laws were to punish Paris for having saved the honor of France and delayed the surrender to Bismarck for 6 months. Dufaure is an Orléanist, and a “Liberal,” in the parliamentary sense of the word. Consequently, he has always been the minister of repression and of the state of siege.

He accepted his first *portefeuille* on May 13, 1839, after the defeat of the *dernière prise d'armes* [latest armed uprising]¹⁶⁶ of the Republican party, was therefore the minister of the pitiless repression of the July government of that day.

On the June 2nd, 1849,¹⁶⁷ Cavaignac, forced on the 29th of October (1848) to raise the state of siege, called into his ministry two ministers of Louis Philippe (*Dufaure*, for the Interior, and *Vivien*). He appointed them on the demand of the *Rue [de] Poitiers*¹⁶⁸ (Thiers), which demanded guarantees. He thus hoped to secure the support of the dynastics for the impending election of president. Dufaure employed the most illegal means to secure Cavaignac's candidature. Intimidation and electoral corruption had never been exercised on a larger scale. Dufaure inundated France with defamatory prints against the other candidates, and especially of Louis Bonaparte, what [read which] did not prevent him to become later on Louis Bonaparte's minister. Dufaure became again the minister of *the state of siege of June 13, 1849* (against the demonstration of the National Guard against the bombardment of Rome, etc., by the French army). He is now again the minister of the state of siege, proclaimed at Versailles (for depart-

¹⁶⁶ This refers to the armed uprising of the Blanquist Society of the Seasons which took place on May 12, 1839 (see Note 136).

¹⁶⁷ A slip of the pen in Marx' manuscript. In fact, it was on October 13, 1848 that Jules Dufaure and Alexandre Vivien joined Cavaignac's cabinet as Minister of Interior and Minister of Public Works respectively. On June 2, 1849, Dufaure became minister in Odilon Barrot's cabinet.

¹⁶⁸ I.e., the Rue de Poitiers Committee, leading organ of the so-called Party of Order, which was dominated by the Orléanists headed by Thiers.

ment of Seine-et-Oise). Power given to Thiers to declare any department whatever in a state of siege. Dufaure, as in 1839, as in 1849, wants new repressive laws, new press laws, a law to “abridge the formalities of the courts-martial.” In a circular to the *Procureurs généraux* [Attorneys-General] he denounces the cry of “*conciliation*” as a press crime to be severely prosecuted. It is characteristic of the French magistrature that only one single *Procureur général* (that of Mayenne)¹⁶⁹ wrote to Dufaure to

resign... I cannot serve an Administration which orders me, in a moment of civil war, to rush into party struggles and prosecute citizens, whom my conscience holds innocent, for uttering the word *conciliation*.

He belonged to the “Union libérale” in 1847 which conspired against Guizot, as he belonged to the “Union libérale” of 1869 which conspired against Louis Bonaparte.¹⁷⁰

With respect to the law of March 10 and the law of house rents, it ought to be remarked that both Dufaure’s and Picard’s (both advocates) best clients are amongst the house proprietors and the *big bourses* averse to losing anything by the siege of Paris.

Now as after the Revolution of February 1848, these men tell the Republic, as the executioner told Don Carlos, “*Je vais t’assassiner, mais c’est pour ton bien.*” (I shall murder thee, but for thy own good.)

¹⁶⁹ Louis Vacheron.

¹⁷⁰ By the “*Union libérale*” in 1847 Marx is referring to the Progressist-Conservatives who emerged in the French Chamber of Deputies after the 1846 election. The chief representatives of this group were Orléanists like Émile de Girardin, Alexis de Tocqueville and Dufaure. In order to consolidate the July Monarchy the Progressist-Conservatives demanded that the Gizot government extend suffrage and carry out a series of economic reforms in the interest of the big industrial bourgeoisie. They were opposed to Gizot and exposed the discreditable acts of members of his government.

The Union libérale was a coalition of the bourgeois Republicans, the Orléanists and a section of the Legitimists. It was formed on the basis of common opposition to the Empire during the election of the *Corps législatif* in 1863. An attempt was made to form the *Union libérale* again during the election campaign of 1869, but this failed due to quarrels between the different parties which had joined the *Union* in 1863. The moderate bourgeois Republicans, such as Jules Favre and Jules Simon, advocated an alliance with the monarchists in 1869 and supported the Orléanist Dufaure as a candidate. However, Dufaure was defeated.

Lecomte and Clément Thomas

After Vinoy's attempt to carry the *buttes Montmartre* (on March 18, they were shot in the gardens of the Château Rouge, 4 o'clock, 18th), General Lecomte and Clément Thomas were taken prisoner and shot by the same excited soldiers of the 81st of the line. It was a summary act of Lynch justice performed despite the instances of some delegates of the *Central Committee*. Lecomte, an epauletted cut-throat, had four times commanded his troops, on the Place Pigalle, to charge an unarmed gathering of women and children. Instead of shooting the people, the soldiers shot him. Clément Thomas, an ex-quartermaster, a "general," extemporized [on] the eve of the June massacres (1848) by the men of the *National*, whose *gérant* [manager] he had been, had never dipped his sword in the blood of any other enemy but that of the Paris working class. He was one of the sinister plotters who deliberately provoked the June insurrection and one of its most atrocious executioners. When, on October 31, 1870, the Paris proletarian National Guards surprised the "Government of Defense" at the Hôtel de Ville and took them prisoner, these men who had [been] appointed by themselves, these *gens de paroles* [men of their word], as one of them, Picard, called them recently, gave their *word of honor* that they would make place to [read for] the *Commune*. Thus allowed to escape scot-free, they launched Trochu's Bretons on their too-confident captors. One of them, however, *M. Tamisier*, resigned his dignity as commander-in-chief of the National Guard. He refused to *break* his word of honor. Then the hour had again struck for Clément Thomas. He was appointed, in Tamisier's place, commander-in-chief of the National Guard. He was the true man for Trochu's "plan." "He never made war upon the Prussians," he made war upon the National Guard, whom he disorganized, disunited, calumniated, weeding out all its officers hostile to Trochu's "plan," setting one set of National Guards against the other and whom he sacrificed in "sorties," so planned as to cover them with ridicule. Haunted by the specters of his June victims, this man, without any official charge, must need again reappear on [the] theatre of war of March 18th, where he scented another massacre of the Paris people. He fell a victim of Lynch justice in the first moment of popular exasperation. The men who had surrendered Paris to the tender mercies of the *Décembriseur* Vinoy in order to kill the

Republic and pocket the *pots-de-vin*, [tips], stipulated by the Pouyer-Quertier contract, shouted now: Assassins, Assassins! Their howl was re-echoed by the press of Europe, so eager for the blood of the “proletarians.” A farce of hysterical “sensibleness” was enacted in the rural *Assemblée*, and now as before, the corpses of their friends were most welcome weapons against their enemies. Paris and the Central Committee were made responsible for an accident out of their control. It is known how in the days of June 1848, the “men of Order” shook Europe with the cry of indignation against the insurgents because of the assassination of the Archbishop of Paris.¹⁷¹ Even at that time they knew perfectly well from the evidence of M. Jacquemet, the *vicairé général* of the Archbishop, who had accompanied him to the barricades, that the Bishop had been shot by the troops of Cavaignac, and not by the insurged,¹⁷² but his dead corpse served their turn. M. Darboy, the present Archbishop of Paris, one of the hostages taken by the *Commune* in self-defense against the savage atrocities of the Versailles Government, however, seems, as appears from his letter to Thiers, to have strange misgivings [that] *Papa Transnonain*¹⁷³ be eager to speculate in his body, as an object of holy indignation. There passed hardly a day, in which the Versailles journals did not announce his execution, which the continued atrocities, and violation of the rules of war on the side of “order,” would have scaled on the part of every government but that of the Commune. The Versailles Government had hardly realized a first military success, when Captain Desmarets, who at the head of his gendarmes assassinated the chivalrous Flourens, has been decorated by Thiers. Flourens had saved the lives of the “defense men” on October 31st. Vinoy the runaway (runagate), was appointed Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, because he had our brave comrade Duval when taken prisoner, shot inside the redoubts, because as a second instalment, he had shot some dozen captive troops of the line who had joined the Paris people, and inaugurated this civil war by the “methods of December.”¹⁷⁴ General Galliffet—“the husband of that charming

¹⁷¹ Denis-Auguste Affre (1793-1848).

¹⁷² insurged: insurgents.

¹⁷³ This refers to Thiers, who, as Minister of Interior, played a shameless part in ruthlessly suppressing the Republicans' rising in Paris, April 13-14, 1834, and, particularly, in butchering the inhabitants of the Rue Transnonain (see Note 64).

¹⁷⁴ This means a coup d'état to be staged in the way as Louis Bonaparte did on December 2, 1851.

Marchioness whose costumes at the masked balls were one of the wonders of the Empire,” as a London penny-a-liner delicately puts it—“surprised” near Rueil a captain, lieutenant, and private of National Guards, had them at once shot, and immediately published a proclamation to glorify himself on the deed. These are a few of the murders *officially* narrated and gloried in by the Versailles Government. 25 soldiers of the 80th Regiment of the line shot as “rebels” by the 75th.

Every man wearing the uniform of the regular army who was captured in the ranks of the Communists was straight-away shot without the slightest mercy. The governmental troops were perfectly ferocious.

M. Thiers communicated the encouraging particulars of Flourens’ death to the Assembly.

Versailles, April 4. Thiers, that misshapen dwarf, reports on his prisoners brought to Versailles (in his proclamation):

Never had more degraded countenances of a degraded democracy met the afflicted gaze of honest man. [Piétri’s men!] *Vinoy protests against any mercy to insurgent officers or line men.*

On the April 6, *decree of the Commune on reprisals* (and hostages):

Considering that the Versailles Government openly treads underfoot the laws of humanity and those of war, and that it has been guilty of horrors such as even the invaders of France have not dishonored themselves by... it is decreed, etc.¹⁷⁵ (*Folgen die Artikel.* [The articles are as follows.])

April 5, Proclamation of the Commune:

Every day the banditti of Versailles slaughter or shoot our prisoners, and every hour we learn that another murder has been committed... The people, even in its anger, detests bloodshed, as it detests civil war, but it is its duty to protect itself against

¹⁷⁵ *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 96, April 6, 1871.

the savage attempts of its enemies, and whatever it may cost, it shall be an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.¹⁷⁶

Les sergents de ville qui se battent contre Paris ont 10 francs par jour, [The policemen who fight against Paris get 10 francs a day.]

Versailles, April 11. Most horrible details of the cold-blooded shooting of prisoners, not deserters, related with an evident gusto by general officers and other eyewitnesses.

In his letter to Thiers, Darboy protests “against the atrocious excesses which add to the horror of our fratricidal war.” In the same strain writes Deguerry (*curé de la Madeleine*) [priest at the Madeleine]:

These executions rouse de grandes colères à Paris et peuvent y produire de terribles représailles. Ainsi l’on est résolu, à chaque nouvelle exécution, d’en ordonner deux des nombreux otages que l’on a entre les mains. Jugez à quel point ce que [je] vous demande comme prêtre est d’une rigoureuse et absolue nécessité. [These executions rouse great wrath in Paris and may bring terrible reprisals. It is thus resolved, for each new execution, to dispose of two of the many hostages on hand. Judge for yourself how urgent and absolutely necessary the demand is—which (I) as a priest make of you.]

In midst of these horrors Thiers writes to the Prefects: “L’Assemblée siège *paisiblement*.” (Elle aussi a le coeur léger.)¹⁷⁷ [“The Assembly is sitting peacefully.” (It is also light-hearted.)]

Thiers and *la commission des quinze*¹⁷⁸ of his Rurals had the cool impudence to “deny officially” the “pretended *summary executions and*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ This was said by the French Prime Minister, Émile Ollivier, on the eve of the declaration of war against Prussia. He declared that he accepted the responsibility for war “with a light heart.”

¹⁷⁸ *La commission des quinze*—an organization formed by the National Assembly on March 20, 1871 to assist the Thiers government in the struggle against revolutionary Paris. The commission was mainly composed of monarchists as well as some bourgeois Republicans who supported Thiers. It called upon the provinces to organize volunteers to fight the Paris Commune, but there was no response. The commission broke up after the fall of the Commune.

reprisals attributed to the troops of Versailles.” But Papa Transnonain [said] in his *circular of April 16 on the bombardment of Paris*:

If some cannon-shots have been fired, it is not the deed of the army of Versailles, but of some insurgents wanting to make believe that they are fighting, while they do not dare show themselves.

Thiers has proved that he surpasses his hero, Napoleon I, at least in one thing—lying bulletins. (Of course, Paris bombards itself, in order to be able to calumniate M. Thiers!)

To these atrocious provocations of the Bonapartist black legs, the Commune has contented itself to take hostages and to threaten reprisals, but its threats have remained a dead letter! Not even the gendarmes masqueraded into [*read as*] officers, not even the captive *sergents de ville*, upon whom explosive bombs have been seized, were placed before a court-martial! The Commune has refused to soil its hands with the blood of these bloodhounds!

A few days before the March 18, Clément Thomas laid before the War Minister Le Flô a plan for the disarmament of *trois quarts* [three-quarters] of the National Garde.

La fine fleur de la canaille, disait-il. s’est concentrée autour de Montmartre et s’entend avec Belleville. [The cream of the mob is concentrated around Montmartre and united with Belleville, he said.]

The National Assembly

L’Assemblée élue le 8 février sous la pression de l’ennemi aux mains desquels les hommes qui gouvernent à Versailles avaient remis tous les forts et livré Paris sans défense, l’Assemblée de Versailles avait un but unique et clairement déterminé par la convention même signée à Versailles le 29 janvier—de décider si la guerre pouvait être continuée ou traiter la paix; et, dans ce cas, fixer les conditions de cette paix et assurer le plus promptement possible l’évacuation du territoire français. [The Assembly elected on February 8 under the pressure of the enemy, to whom the men governing at Versailles had surrendered all the forts and handed over the defenseless

Paris—this Versailles Assembly had but one aim, clearly determined by the Convention signed at Versailles on January 29, that is, to decide whether the war could be continued or whether to treat for peace, and, in the latter case, to establish the conditions for such a peace and ensure the evacuation of French territory as quickly as possible.]

Chanzy, Archbishop of Paris, etc.

Liberation of Chanzy took place almost simultaneously with the retreat of Saisset. The Royalist journalists were unanimous *in decreeing the death of the General*. They desired to fix that amiable proceeding on the Reds. Three times he had been ordered to execution, and now he was really going to be shot.

*After the Vendôme Affair:*¹⁷⁹ There was consternation at Versailles. An attack on Versailles was expected on March 23, for the leaders of the Communal agitation had announced that they would march on Versailles, if the Assembly took any hostile action. The Assembly did not. On the contrary, it voted as urgent a proposition to hold Communal elections at Paris, etc. By the concessions the Assembly admitted its powerlessness. At the same time *Royalist intrigues at Versailles*. Bonapartist generals and the Duc d'Aumale.¹⁸⁰ Favre avowed he had received a letter from Bismarck, announcing that unless order were restored by March 26, Paris would be occupied by the German troops. Reds saw plainly through his little artifice. *Die Vendôme affaire* provoquée by le faussaire, *ce jésuite infâme J. Favre*, qui le (March 21?) est monté à la tribune de l'Assemblée de Versailles pour insulter ce peuple qui l'a tiré du néant et soulever Paris contre les départements. [The Vendôme Affair was provoked by the forger, *that infamous Jesuit J. Favre*, who mounted the tribune of the Versailles Assembly on (March 21?) to insult the people who had raised him out of obscurity, and to stir up Paris against the departments.]

March 30, Proclamation of the Commune:

¹⁷⁹ See below, p. 181, *et. seq.*

¹⁸⁰ In his *The Civil War in France* Marx probably wanted to cite examples of the monarchists' intrigues in the Versailles National Assembly. The material Marx collected from newspapers during this period included news items about the conspiracies of Duke Aumale and his brother Prince Joinville in Versailles, rumors about the merger of the Bourbons and the Orléans, and the scheme to place Duke Aumale on the throne of France.

Aujourd'hui les criminels, que vous n'avez pas même voulu poursuivre, abusent de votre magnanimité pour organiser aux portes mêmes de la cité un foyer de conspiration monarchique. Ils invoquent la guerre civile, ils mettent en oeuvre toutes les corruptions, ils acceptent toutes les complicités, ils ont osé mendier jusqu'à l'appui de l'étranger.¹⁸¹ [Today the criminals, whom you did not even wish to pursue, abuse your magnanimity and organize a center of monarchical conspiracy at the very gates of the city. They invoke civil war, they employ all kinds of corrupt methods, they accept any complicity, they even dare to solicit foreign support.]

Thiers

On the April 25, in his reception of the *maires*, adjuncts, and municipal councillors of the suburban communes of the Seine, Thiers said:

La République existe. *Le chef du pouvoir exécutif n'est qu'un simple citoyen.* [The Republic exists. The Chief of the Executive is only a common citizen.]

The progress of France from 1830 to 1871, according to M. Thiers, consists in this: In 1830 Louis Philippe was "the best of Republics." In 1871 the ministerial fossil of Louis Philippe's reign, little Thiers himself, is the *best of Republics*.

M. Thiers commenced his *régime* by an usurpation. By the National Assembly he was appointed chief of the ministry of the Assembly; he appointed himself Chief of the Executive of France.

The Assembly and the Paris Revolution

The Assembly, summoned at the dictate of the foreign invader, was, as is clearly laid down in the Versailles convention of January 29th, but elected for one single purpose: To decide the continuation of war or settle the conditions of peace. In their calling the French people to electoral urns, the *capitulards* of Paris themselves plainly defined that specific mission of the Assembly and this accounts to a great part for its very constitution. The

¹⁸¹ *Journal officiel de la Commune de Paris*, No. I, March 30, 1871.

continuation of the war having become impossible through the very terms of the armistice humbly accepted by the *capitulards*, the Assembly had in fact but to register a disgraceful peace and for this specific performance the worst men of France were [the] best.

The Republic was proclaimed on September 4th, not by the pettifoggers who installed themselves at the Hôtel de Ville as a Government of Defense, but by the Paris people. It was acclaimed throughout France without a single dissentient voice. It conquered its own existence by a five months' war whose cornerstone was the prolonged resistance of Paris. Without this war, carried on by the Republic and in the name of the Republic, the Empire would have been restored by Bismarck after the capitulation of Sedan, the pettifoggers with M. Thiers at their head would have had to capitulate not for Paris, but for personal guarantees against a voyage to Cayenne, and the Rural Assembly would never have been heard of. It met only by the grace of the Republican revolution, inchoated at Paris. Being no constituent Assembly, as M. Thiers himself has repeated to nauseousness, it would, if not as a mere chronicler of the passed incidents of the Republican Revolution, not even have had the right to proclaim the *destitution* [removal] of the Bonaparte's dynasty. The only legitimate power, therefore, in France is the *Revolution* itself, centering in Paris. That Revolution was not made against Napoleon the Little, but against the social and political conditions, which engendered the Second Empire, which received their last finish under its sway, and which, as the war with Prussia glaringly revealed, would leave France a cadaver, if they were not superseded by the regenerating powers of the French working-class Revolution. The attempts of the Rural Assembly holding only an attorney's power to the Revolution to sign the disastrous bond handed over by its present "Executive" to the foreign invader, its attempt to treat the Revolution as its own *capitulard* is, therefore, a monstrous usurpation. Its war against Paris is nothing but a cowardly Chouannerie¹⁸² under the shelter of Prussian bayonets. It is a bare conspiracy to assassinate France, in order to save the privileges, the

¹⁸² *The Chouannerie*—a revolt of the monarchists during the bourgeois French Revolution which took place in the Vendée in March 1793 and later spread to Brittany and Normandy. The rebels mainly consisted of local peasants incited and controlled by counter-revolutionary priests and aristocrats. The revolts in the Vendée and Brittany were quelled in 1795-96, but similar attempts were made in 1799 and in later years.

monopolies and the luxuries of the degenerate, effete, and putrefied classes that have dragged her to the abyss from which she can only be saved by the herculean hand of a truly Social Revolution.

Thiers' Finest Army

Even before he became a “statesman,” M. Thiers had proved his lying powers as a historian. But the vanity, so characteristic of dwarfish men, has this time betrayed him into the sublime of the ridiculous. His army of Order, the dregs of the Bonapartist *soldatesca* [soldiery] freshly reimported, by the grace of Bismarck, from Prussian prisons, the Pontifical Zouaves,¹⁸³ the Chouans¹⁸⁴ of Charette, the Vendéens of Cathelineau, the “municipals”¹⁸⁵ of Valentin, the *ex-sergents de ville* of Piétri and the Corsican gendarmes of Valentin, who under L. Bonaparte were only the spies of the army but under M. Thiers form its warlike flower, the whole under the supervision of epauletted *mouchards* and under the command of the runaway Decembrist marshals who had no honor to lose—this motley, ungainly, hangdog lot M. Thiers dubs “*the finest army France ever possessed!*” If he allows the Prussians still to quarter at St. Denis, it is only to frighten them by the sight of the “finest army” of Versailles.

¹⁸³ *Zouave*—a corps of colonial infantry troops in the French Army—derived its name from a tribe of Algeria. First organized in Algeria in the 1830s, the corps was composed of local inhabitants. Later it became a purely French body but retained the original Oriental costume. The *Pontifical Zouaves* were the Pope’s guards, organized and trained on the pattern of the original Zouaves and recruited from volunteers of the young French noblemen. After the occupation of Rome by the Italian troops and the end of the temporal power of the Pope, the Pontifical Zouaves were dispatched to France in September 1870, and reorganized under the name of the “Legion of Volunteers of the West.” Incorporated into the 1st and the 2nd Loire Army, they fought in the war against Germany. After the war the Legion took part in the suppression of the Paris Commune. Later it was disbanded.

¹⁸⁴ *Chouans*—originally the participants of the counter-revolutionary riots in north-western France during the bourgeois French Revolution. At the time of the Paris Commune the Communards used this name to describe the monarchist-minded Versailles army recruited at Brittany.

¹⁸⁵ *The “municipals”* (known as the Republican Guards since 1871) were a military police force consisting of infantry and cavalry, founded by the July Monarchy in Paris in 1830 to suppress revolutionary movements. In 1871 it became a crack force of the Versailles counter-revolutionary army.

Thiers

Small state rogueries.

Everlasting suggester of parliamentary intrigues M. Thiers was never anything else but an “able” journalist and a clever word “fencer,” a master of parliamentary roguery, a virtuoso in perjury, a craftsman in all the small stratagems, base perfidies, and subtle devices of parliamentary party-warfare. This mischievous gnome charmed the French bourgeoisie during half a century because he is the truest intellectual expression of their own class corruption. When in the ranks of the opposition, he over and over rehearsed his stale homily of the “libertés nécessaires,” to stamp them out when in power. When out of office, he used to threaten Europe with the sword of France. And what were his diplomatic performances in reality? To pocket in 1841 the humiliation of the London treaty,¹⁸⁶ to hurry on the war with Prussia by his declamations against German unity, to compromise France in 1870 by his begging tour at all the courts of Europe, to sign in 1871 the Paris capitulation to accept a “peace at any price” and implore from Prussia a concession—leave and means to get up a civil war in his own downtrodden country. To a man of his stamp the underground agencies of modern society remained of course always unknown; but even the palpable changes at its surface he failed to understand. For instance, any deviation from the old French protective system he denounced as a sacrilege and, as a minister of Louis Philippe, went the length of treating disdainfully the construction of railways as a foolish chimera and even under Louis Bonaparte he eagerly opposed every reform of the rotten French army organization. A man without ideas, without convictions, and without courage.

A professional “Revolutionist” in that sense, that in his eagerness of display, of wielding power and putting his hands into the National Exchequer, he never scrupled, when banished to the ranks of the opposition,

¹⁸⁶ As a result of a concession made by France to other European powers following the signing of the convention of London of 1840 (see Note 72), she was allowed to take part in the concluding of the treaty of London of 1841. This treaty forbade the passage of foreign warships through the Straits (Bosporus and Dardanelles) in time of peace. It was signed on July 13, 1841 by Russia, Britain, France, Austria and Prussia on the one side and Turkey on the other.

In the third English edition of *The Civil War in France* Marx mentioned the London convention of 1840 as an example of France’s defeat in foreign policy.

to stir the popular passions and provoke a catastrophe to displace a rival; he is at the same time a most shallow man of routine, etc. The working class he reviled as “*the vile multitude*.” One of his former colleagues in the legislative assemblies, a contemporary of his, a capitalist and however a member of the Paris Commune, *M. Beslay* thus addresses him in a public address:

The subjugation (*asservissement*) of labor to capital, such is the “*fonds*” [“foundation”] of your politics (policy). and [since] the day you saw the *Republic of Labor* installed at the Hôtel de Ville, you have never ceased to cry to France, “They are criminals!”

No wonder that M. Thiers has given orders by his Home Minister Ernest Picard to prevent “the International Association” from communicating with Paris (*Sitting of Assembly*, March 28). *Circulaire de Thiers aux préfets et sous-préfets* [*Thiers’ Circular to the Prefects and Sub-Prefects*]:

The good workmen, so numerous as compared to the bad ones ought to know that if bread flies again from their mouths, they owe it to the adepts of the International, who are the tyrants of labor, of which they pretend themselves the liberators.

Without the *International*...

(Jetzt die Geldgeschichte.) (Er und Favre haben ihr Geld nach London übersiedelt.) [(Now about the money affair.) (He and Favre have sent their money to London.)] It is a proverb that if rogues fall out, truth comes out. We can therefore not better finish the picture of Thiers than by the words of the London *Moniteur* of the master of his Versailles generals. Says the *Situation*¹⁸⁷ in the number of the March 28:

M. Thiers has never been minister without pushing the soldiers to the massacre of the people; he, the parricide, the man of incest, the peculator, the plagiarist, the traitor, the ambitious, the *impuissant* [impotent].

¹⁸⁷ *La Situation*—a Bonapartist newspaper in French published in London from September 1870 to August 2, 1871. It was opposed to the Government of National Defense and Thiers.

Shrewd in cunning devices and artful dodges.

Banded with the Republicans before the Revolution of July, he slipped into his first ministry under Louis Philippe by thrusting Laffitte, his old protector. His first deed was to throw his old collaborator, Armand Carrel, into prison. He insinuated himself with Louis Philippe as a spy upon, and the jail-*accoucheur* of the Duchess of Berry, but his activity centered in the massacre of the insurgent Paris Republicans in the Rue Transnonain and the September Laws against the press,¹⁸⁸ to be then cast aside as an instrument become blunted. Having intrigued himself again into power in 1840, he planned the Paris fortifications, opposed as an attempt on the liberty of Paris by the whole democratic party, except the bourgeois Republicans of the *National*. M. Thiers replied to their outcry from the tribune of the *Chambre des députés*:

Quoi ? Imaginer que des ouvrages de fortification quelconque peuvent nuire à la liberté... C'est se placer hors de toute réalité. Et d'abord, c'est calomnier un gouvernement quel qu'il soit de supposer qu'il puisse un jour chercher à se maintenir en bombardant la capitale. Quoi ? Après avoir percé de ses bombes la voute des Invalides ou du Panthéon, après avoir inondé de ses feux la demeure de vos familles, il se présenterait à vous pour vous demander la confirmation de son existence ! *Mais il serait cent fois plus impossible après la victoire qu'auparavant.* [What? To fancy that any works of fortification could ever endanger liberty... That is to depart completely from reality.

¹⁸⁸ Marx is referring to the infamous role played by Thiers in suppressing the uprising of April 13-14, 1834, which was against the rule of the July Monarchy. The uprising of the Paris workers, and the petit-bourgeois strata which joined in with them, was led by the Republican secret Society for the Rights of Man. In suppressing the insurrection, countless atrocities were perpetrated by the militarists, including the slaughter of all the dwellers in a house in the Rue Transnonain. Thiers was the chief instigator of the brutal suppression of the democrats both during the uprising and after it was put down.

Under the provisions of the reactionary *Laws of September*—introduced in September 1835—the French government restricted the activities of juries and severely inhibited the press by such measures as that which increased the sum of money periodicals had to deposit as a security. The laws also threatened imprisonment and heavy fines for speeches against private ownership and the existing state system.

And first of all it is a slander on a *government whatever it might be like* to suppose that it could some day attempt to maintain itself by bombarding the capital. What? After having breached the vault of the Hôtel des Invalides or of the Panthéon with its shells, after having inundated your houses with its fire, it would present itself before you to demand confirmation of its existence! *But such a government would be a hundred times more impossible after the victory than before.*]

Indeed, neither the government of Louis Philippe nor that of the Bonapartist Regency dared to withdraw from Paris and bombard it. This employment of the fortifications was reserved to M. Thiers, their original plotter.

When King Bomba¹⁸⁹ of Naples bombarded Palermo in January 1848, M. Thiers again declared in the Chamber of Deputies:

Vous savez, Messieurs, ce qui se passe à Palerme: vous avez tous tressailli d'horreur en apprenant que, pendant 48 heures, une grande ville a été bombardée. Par qui ? Était-ce par un ennemi étranger, exerçant les droits de la guerre ? Non, Messieurs, par *son propre gouvernement*. Et pourquoi ? *Parce que cette ville infortunée demandait des droits*. Eh bien ! pour la demande de ses droits il y a eu 48 heures de bombardement. Permettez-moi d'en appeler à l'opinion européenne. C'est un service à rendre à l'humanité que de venir, du haut de la plus grande tribune peut-être de l'Europe, faire retentir *quelques paroles d'indignation contre de tels actes*. Messieurs, lorsque, il y a 50 ans, les Autrichiens, exerçant les droits de la guerre, pour s'épargner les longueurs d'un siège, voulurent bombarder Lille, lorsque plus tard les Anglais, qui exerçaient aussi les droits de la guerre, bombardèrent Copenhague, et tout récemment, *quand le régent Espartero, qui avait rendu des services à son pays, pour réprimer une insurrection, a voulu bombarder Bar-*

¹⁸⁹ In January 1848 the army of Ferdinand II, King of the Two Sicilies, bombarded the town of Palermo to suppress the people's uprising, which was a signal for the bourgeois revolution in the Italian states in 1848-49. In the autumn of 1848, Ferdinand II again indiscriminately bombarded Messina, and thus won himself the nickname King Bomba.

celone, dans tous les partis, il y a eu une générale indignation. [You know, gentlemen, what is happening at Palermo. You, all of you, shake with horror on hearing that a large town has been bombarded for 48 hours. By whom? Was it by a foreign enemy exercising the rights of war? No, gentlemen, it was by *its own Government*. And why? *Because that unfortunate town demanded its rights*. Well, then, for demanding its rights, it has got 48 hours of bombardment. Allow me to appeal to European public opinion. It is doing a service to mankind to stand up and make reverberate *some words of indignation against such acts* from perhaps the greatest tribune of Europe. Gentlemen, 50 years ago when the Austrians, exercising the rights of war, wanted to bombard Lille in order to spare it a long siege, when later the English, who also exercised the rights of war, bombarded Copenhagen, and recently, *when the Regent Espartero*, who had rendered services to his country, *wanted to bombard Barcelona in order to suppress an insurrection*, indignation was general in all political parties.]

Little more than a year later, Thiers acted the most fiery apologist of the bombardment of Rome by the troops of the French Republic, and exalted his friend, General Changarnier, for sabering down the Paris National Guards protesting against this breach of the French Constitution.

A few days before the Revolution of February 1848, fretting at the long exile from the place to which Guizot had condemned him, [and] scenting the growing commotion of the masses, which he hoped would enable him to oust his rival and impose himself upon Louis Philippe, *Thiers* exclaimed in the Chamber of Deputies:

Je suis du parti de la révolution, tant en France qu'en Europe. Je souhaite que le gouvernement de la révolution reste dans les mains des hommes modérés... Mais quand ce gouvernement passerait dans les mains d'hommes ardents, fût-ce des radicaux, je n'abandonnerai pas ma cause pour cela. Je serai toujours du parti de la révolution. [I am of the party of the Revolution, not only in France but in Europe. I wish the Government of

the Revolution to remain in the hands of moderate men... but if that Government should fall into the hands of ardent men, even into those of Radicals, I shall, for all that, not desert my cause. *I shall always be of the party of the Revolution.*]

To put down the February Revolution was his exclusive occupation from the day when the Republic was proclaimed to the *coup d'état*.

The first days after the February explosion he anxiously hid himself, but the Paris workmen despised him too much to hate him. Still, with his notorious cowardice, which made Armand Carrel answer to his boast "he would one day die on [the] banks of the Rhine": "Thou wilt die in a gutter"—he dared not play a part on the public stage before the popular forces were broken down through the massacre of the insurgents of June. He confined himself first to the secret direction of the conspiracy of the *réunion* [party] of the Rue de Poitiers which resulted in the *Restauration* of the Empire, until the stage had become sufficiently clear to reappear publicly on it.

During the siege of Paris, on the question whether Paris was about to capitulate, Jules Favre answered that, to utter the word capitulation, the bombardment of Paris was wanted! This explains his melodramatic protests against the Prussian bombardment, indicating the latter was a mock-bombardment, while the Thiers bombardment is a stern reality.

Parliamentary mountebank.

He is for 40 years on the stage. He has never initiated a single useful measure in any department of state or life. Vain, skeptical, epicurean, he has never written or spoken for things. In his eyes the things themselves are mere pretexts for the display of his pen or his tongue. Except his thirst for place and pelf and display there is nothing real about him, not even his chauvinism.

In the true vein of vulgar professional journalists he now sneers in his bulletins [at] the bad looks of his Versailles prisoners, now communicates that the Rurals are "à leur aise [at their ease]," now covers himself with ridicule by his bulletin on the taking of Moulin-Saquet (May 4), where 300 prisoners were taken.

Le reste des insurgés s'est enfui à toutes jambes, laissant 150 morts et blessés sur le champ de bataille, [The rest of the insurgents took to their heels, leaving 150 dead and wounded on the battlefield,] [and snappishly adds:] Voilà la victoire que la Commune peut célébrer demain dans ses bulletins. Paris sera sous peu délivré de ses terribles tyrans qui l'oppriment. [There's the victory the Commune can celebrate tomorrow in its bulletins. Paris will shortly be delivered from the terrible tyrants who oppress it.]

Paris—the “Paris” of the mass of the Paris people fighting against him is not “Paris.” “Paris—that is the rich, the capitalist, the idle” (why not the cosmopolitan stew?). This is the Paris of M. Thiers. The real Paris, working, thinking, fighting Paris, the Paris of the people, the Paris of the Commune is a “vile multitude.” There is the whole case of M. Thiers, not only for Paris, but for France. The Paris that showed its courage in the “pacific procession” and Saisset’s escapade, that throngs now at Versailles, at Rueil, at St. Denis, at St. Germain-en-Laye, followed by the *cocottes* sticking to the “man of religion, family, order, and property” (the Paris of the really “dangerous,” of the exploiting and lounging classes) (“the *franc-fileurs*”¹⁹⁰) and amusing itself by looking by the telescope at the battle going on, for whom “the civil war is but an agreeable diversion”—that is the Paris of M. Thiers (as the emigration of Koblenz was the France of M. de Calonne). In his vulgar journalist vein he knows not even to observe sham dignity, but he murders the wives and girls and children, found under the ruins of Neuilly, not to swerve from the etiquette of “legitimacy.” He must needs illuminate the municipal elections he has ordered in France by the conflagration of Clamart, burnt by petroleum bombs. The Roman historians finish off Nero’s character by telling us that the monster gloried in being a rhymester and a comedian. But lift a mere professional journalist and parliamentary mountebank like Thiers to power, and he will out-Nero Nero.

¹⁹⁰ *Francs-fileurs*—literally “free absconders,” was an ironic nickname for the bourgeois of Paris who fled the city during its siege. The nickname was ironic because its pronunciation is similar to that of *francs-tireurs* (free shooters), the appellation for the French partisans who took an active part in the war against Prussia.

He acts only his part as the blind tool of class interests in allowing the Bonapartist “generals” to revenge themselves on Paris; but he acts his personal part in the little byplay of bulletins, speeches, addresses, in which the vanity, vulgarity, and lowest taste of the journalist creep out.

He compares himself with Lincoln and the Parisians with the rebellious slaveholders of the South. The Southerners fought for the slavery of labor and the territorial secession from the United States. Paris fights for the emancipation of labor and the secession from power of Thiers’ State parasites, of the would-be slaveholders of France!

In his speech to the *maires*:

On peut compter sur ma parole à laquelle je n’ai jamais manqué ! [You can count on my word, which I have never broken!]

L’assemblée est une des plus libérales qu’ait nommée la France. [The Assembly is one of the most liberal France has elected.]

Er wird die Republik retten [He will save the Republic]

pourvu que l’ordre et le travail ne soient pas perpétuellement compromis par ceux qui se prétendent les gardiens particuliers du salut de la République. [provided that order and work are not constantly endangered by those who claim to be particular guardians of the safety of the Republic.]

In der Sitzung der Assemblée vom 27 April sagt er: [He said at the April 27 session of the Assembly:]

L’assemblée est plus libérale que lui-même ! [The Assembly is more liberal than he himself is!]

He, whose rhetorical trump card was always the denunciation of the Vienna treaties, he signs the Paris treaty,¹⁹¹ not only the dismemberment of one part of France, (not only the occupation of almost ½ of it), but the milliards of indemnity, without even asking Bismarck to specify and prove his war expenses! He does not even allow the Assembly at Bordeaux to discuss the paragraphs of his capitulation!

He who upbraided throughout his life the Bourbons because they came back in the rear of foreign armies and because of their undignified behavior to the allies occupying France after the conclusion of peace,¹⁹² he asks nothing from Bismarck in the treaty but one concession: 40,000 troops to subdue Paris (as Bismarck stated in the Diet). Paris was for all purposes of internal defense and [opposing] foreign aggression fully secured by its armed National Guard, but Thiers super added at once [to] the capitulation of Paris to the foreigner, the character of the capitulation of Paris to himself and Co. This stipulation was a stipulation for civil war. That war itself he opens not only with the passive permission of Prussia, but by the facilities she lends him, by the captive French troops she magnanimously despatches him from German dungeons! In his bulletins, in his and Favre's speeches in the Assembly, he crawls in the dust before Prus-

¹⁹¹ *The Treaties of Vienna* were concluded in May-June 1815 as a result of the Vienna Congress of 1814-15, held by the countries that had taken part in the anti-Napoleon wars. To restore the rule of the "legitimate" monarchies, the treaties arbitrarily altered the boundary lines of European countries in violation of their national unity and independence.

The Paris Treaty refers to the preliminary peace treaty signed between France and Germany on February 26, 1871.

¹⁹² This refers to the two treaties France was forced to sign with the sixth and the seventh anti-French coalition of Austria, Britain, Prussia and Russia. One was signed in 1814, after the fall of Napoleon's empire, and the other in 1815, after Napoleon's restoration and short-lived rule.

According to the peace treaty of Paris of May 30, 1814, France lost nearly all the territories conquered during the republic and the First Empire. With the exception of small tracts of territories on her northern, eastern and southeastern borders, she was allowed only to retain her boundaries of January 1, 1792.

The second peace treaty of Paris, concluded on November 20, 1815, further deprived France of her important, strategic strongholds on the northern, eastern and southeastern frontiers, which had been retained by the Paris peace treaty of 1814. To help consolidate the monarchical regime of the restored Bourbon dynasty, French fortresses on the north-eastern frontier were to be garrisoned by 150,000 allied troops till the end of 1818.

sia and threatens Paris every eight days with her intervention, after having failed to get it, as stated by Bismarck himself. The Bourbons were dignity itself compared to this mountebank, this grand apostle of chauvinism!

After the break-down of Prussia (Tilsit peace 1807), its government felt that it could only save itself and the country by a great social regeneration (revolution). It naturalized in Prussia on a small scale, within the limits of a feudal monarchy, the results of the French Revolution. It liberated the peasant, etc.¹⁹³

After the Crimean defeat, which, however Russia might have saved her honor by the defense of Sevastopol and dazzled the foreigner by her diplomatic triumphs at Paris, laid open at home the rottenness of her social and administrative system, her government emancipated the serf and [reformed] her whole administrative and judicial system.¹⁹⁴ In both countries the daring social reform was fettered and limited in its character because it was octroyed¹⁹⁵ from the throne and not (instead of being) conquered by the people. Still there were great social changes, doing away

¹⁹³ Marx here refers to Prussia's partial bourgeois reform of 1807-11. The reform was instituted following Prussia's defeat in the war against Napoleonic France in 1806, which exposed the rottenness of the social-political system of the Prussian states of feudal serfdom. As a result of this reform, personal dependency of the peasants was abolished, but feudal duties and services were still retained and the peasants could redeem themselves only with the lord's consent. Limited local autonomy was also introduced and the army and the central administrative organs reorganized.

¹⁹⁴ The defense of Sevastopol, Russia's capture of Turkey's Fort Kars and the defeat suffered by the allied troops at the Baltic Sea enabled Russia to use diplomatic maneuvers at the Peace Congress of Paris in February-March 1856. Though the Crimean War ended in defeat for Russia, she succeeded in exploiting the conflicts between Britain, Austria and France. As a result, the peace terms were considerably mitigated in that the territories ceded to Turkey were greatly limited, Russia was allowed to retain its rule over the Caucasus, maintain a fleet in the Sea of Azov and build forts along its seacoast. The congress also decided to end Austria's occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia, thus creating great difficulties for Austria's policy of expansion in the Balkans.

Marx refers here to the reforms carried out by the czarist government after its defeat in the Crimean War, which involved the emancipation of serfs in 1861, the adoption of a new legal procedure and a new financial system in 1864, and the reforming of the local administrative system, including that of local self-government in 1864 and municipal government in 1870. The reforms marked an important step in Russia's progress to bourgeois democracy.

¹⁹⁵ octroyed: granted.

with the worst privileges of the ruling classes and changing the economical basis of the old society. They felt that the great malady could only be cured by heroic measures. They felt that they could only answer to the victors by social reforms, by calling into life elements of popular regeneration. The French catastrophe of 1870 stands unparalleled in the history of the modern world! It showed official France, the France of Louis Bonaparte, the France of the ruling classes and their State parasites—a putrescent cadaver. And what is the first attempt of the infamous men, who had got at her government by a surprise of the people and who continue to hold it by a conspiracy with the foreign invader, what is [their] first attempt? To assassinate, under Prussian patronage, by L. Bonaparte's *soldatesca* and Piétri's police, the glorious work of popular regeneration commenced at Paris, to summon all the old Legitimist specters, beaten by the July Revolution, the fossil swindlers of Louis Philippe, beaten by the Revolution of February, and celebrate an orgy of counter-revolution! Such heroism in exaggerated self-debasement is unheard of in the annals of history! But, what is most characteristic, instead of arousing a general shout of indignation on the part of official Europe and America, it evokes a current of sympathy and of fierce denunciation of Paris! This proves that Paris, true to its historical antecedents, seeks the regeneration of the French people in making it the champion of the regeneration of old society, making the social regeneration of mankind the national business of France! It is the emancipation of the producing class from the exploiting classes, their retainers and their State parasites, who prove the truth of the French adage, that "les valets du diable sont pires que le diable himself." ["the devil's valets are worse than the devil himself."] Paris has hoisted the flag of mankind!

March 18: Government laid "stamp of 2 centimes on each copy of every periodical, whatever its nature." "Forbidden to found new journals until the raising of the state of siege."

The different fractions of the French bourgeoisie had successively *their reigns*, the great landed proprietors under the *Restoration* (the old Bourbons), the capitalists under the parliamentary monarchy of July (Louis Philippe), while its Bonapartist and Republican elements kept rankling in the background. Their party feuds and intrigues were of course carried on on pretexts of *public welfare*, and a popular revolution having got rid of these monarchies, the other set in.

All this changed with the Republic (February). All the fractions of the bourgeoisie combined together in the *Party of Order*, that is the party of proprietors and capitalists, bound together to maintain the economic subjugation of labor and the repressive State machinery supporting it. Instead of a monarchy, whose very name signified the prevalence of one bourgeois fraction over the other, a victory on one side and a defeat on the other (the triumph of one side and the humiliation of the other), the *Republic* was the anonymous joint-stock company of the combined bourgeois fractions, of all the *exploiteurs* of the people clubbed together, and indeed, Legitimists, Bonapartists, Orléanists, bourgeois Republicans, Jesuits and Voltairiens, embraced each other—no longer hidden by the shelter of the crown, no longer able to interest the people in their party feuds by masquerading them into [read as] struggles for popular interest, no longer subordinate the one to the other. Direct and confessed antagonism of their class rule to the emancipation of the producing masses—*order*, the name for the economical and political conditions of their class rule and the servitude of labor, this anonymous or Republican form of the bourgeois *régime*—this bourgeois Republic, this Republic of the *Party of Order* is the most *odious* of all political *régimes*. Its direct business, its only *raison d'être* is to crush down the people. It is the *terrorism* of class rule. The thing is done in this way. The people having fought and made the Revolution, proclaimed the Republic, and made room for a National Assembly, the bourgeois, whose known Republican professions are a guarantee for their “Republic,” are pushed on the foreground of the stage by the majority of the Assembly, composed of the vanquished and professed enemies of the Republic. The Republicans are entrusted with the task to goad the people into the trap of an insurrection, to be crushed by fire and sword. This part was performed by the party of the *National* with Cavaignac at their head after the Revolution of February (by the June Insurrection). By their crime against the masses, these Republicans lose then their sway. They have done their work and, if yet allowed to support the *Party of Order* in its general struggle against the proletariat, they are at the same time displaced from the government, forced to fall back in the last ranks, and only allowed “on sufferance.” The combined Royalist bourgeois then become the father of the Republic, the true rule of the “Party of Order” sets in. The material forces of the people being broken for the time being the work of reaction—the breaking

down of all the concessions conquered in four revolutions—begins piece by piece. The people is stung to madness not only by the deeds of the *Party of Order*, but by the cynical effrontery with which it is treated as the vanquished, with which in its own name, in the name of the Republic, that low lot rules it supreme. Of course, that spasmodic form of *anonymous* class despotism cannot last long, can only be a transitory phasis. It knows that it is seated on a revolutionary volcano. On the other hand, if the *Party of Order* is united in its war against the working class, in its capacity of the *Party of Order*, the play of intrigue of its different fractions, the one against the other, each for the prevalence of its peculiar interest in the old order of society, each for the restoration of its own pretender and personal ambitions, sets in in full force as soon as its rule seems secured (guaranteed) by the destruction of the material revolutionary forces. This combination of a common war against the people and a common conspiracy against the Republic, combined with the internal feuds of its rulers, and their play of intrigues, paralyzes society, disgusts and bewilders the masses of the middle class and “troubles” business, keeps them in a chronic state of disquietude. All the conditions of despotism are created (have been engendered) under this *régime*, but despotism without quietude, despotism with parliamentary anarchy at its head. Then the hour has struck for a *coup d'état*, and the incapable lot has to make room for any lucky pretender, making [an] end of the *anonymous* form of class rule. In this way Louis Bonaparte made an end of the bourgeois Republic after its 4 years of existence. During all that time Thiers was the “âme damnée” [tool] of the *Party of Order*, that in the name of the Republic made war upon the Republic, a class war upon the people, and, in reality, created the Empire. He played exactly the same part now as he played then, only then but as a parliamentary intriguer, now as the Chief of the Executive. Should he not be conquered by the Revolution, he will now as then be a baffled tool. Whatever counter-vailing government will set in, its first act will be to cast aside the man who surrendered France to Prussia and bombarded Paris.

Thiers had many grievances against Louis Bonaparte. The latter had used him as a tool and a dupe. He had frightened him (shocked his nerves) by his arrest after the *coup d'état*. He had annulled him by putting down the parliamentary *régime*, the only one under which a mere State parasite, like Thiers, a mere talker, can play a political part. Last [but] not least Thiers,

having been the historic shoeblack of Napoleon, had so long described his deeds, as to fancy he had enacted them himself. The legitimate caricature of Napoleon I was in his eyes not Napoleon the Little, but little Thiers. With all that there was no infamy committed by L. Bonaparte which had not been backed by Thiers, from the occupation of Rome by the French troops to the war with Prussia.

Only a man of his shallow head can fancy for one moment, that a Republic with his head on its shoulders, with a National Assembly half Legitimist, half Orléanist, with an army under Bonapartist leaders, will, if victorious, not push him aside.

There is nothing more grotesquely horrid than a Tom Pouce affecting to play the (acting the part [of]) Timur Tamerlane. With him the deeds of cruelty are not only a matter of business, but a thing of theatrical display (stage effect) of phantastical vanity. To write “his” bulletins, to show “his” severity, to have “his” troops, “his” strategy, “his” bombardments, “his” petroleum bombs, to hide “his” cowardice under the cold-bloodedness with which he allows the Decembrist blacklegs to take their revenge on Paris! This kind of heroism in exaggerated baseness! He exults in the important part he plays and the noise he makes in the world! He quite fancies to be a great man: and how gigantic (titanic) he, the dwarf, the parliamentary dribbler, must look in the eyes of the world! In [the] midst [of] the horrid scenes of this war, one cannot help smiling at the ridiculous capers Thiers Vanity cuts! M. Thiers is a man of lively imagination, there runs an artist’s vein through his blood, and an artist’s vanity able to gull him into a belief in his own lies, and a belief in his own grandeur.

Through all the speeches, bulletins, etc., of Thiers, runs a vein of elated vanity.

*That affreux Triboulet.*¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ That hideous Triboulet (a typical tragic buffoon in Victor Hugo’s *Le Roi s’amuse*).

Splendid bombardment (with petroleum bombs) from Mont-Valérien, *zerstört* [destroyed] a part of the houses in the Ternes within the rampart (?), with a grandiose conflagration and a fearful thunder of cannon shaking all Paris. Bombs purposely thrown into [the] Ternes and the Champs-Élysées quarters.

Explosive bombs, petroleum bombs.

The Commune

The glorious British penny-a-liner has made the splendid discovery that this is not what *we* used to understand by self-government. Of course, it is not. It is not the self-administration of the towns by turtle-soup guzzling aldermen, jobbing vestries, and ferocious workhouse guardians. It is not the self-administration of the counties by the holders of broad acres, long purses and empty heads. It is not the judicial abomination of “the Great Unpaid.”¹⁹⁷ It is not political self-government of the country through the means of an oligarchic club and the reading of the *Times* newspaper. It is the people acting for itself by itself.

Within this war of cannibals the most disgusting, the “literary” shrieks of the hideous gnome seated at the head of the government!

The ferocious treatment of the Versailles prisoners was not interrupted one moment, and their cold-blooded assassination was resumed so soon as Versailles had convinced itself that the Commune was too humane to execute its decree of reprisals!

The *Paris Journal* (at Versailles) says that 13 line soldiers made prisoners at the railway station of Clamart were shot off-hand, and all prisoners wearing the line uniforms who arrive in Versailles will be executed whenever doubts about their identity are cleared up!

M. Alexandre Dumas, *fils*, tells that a young man exercising the functions, if not bearing the title of a general, was shot when having marched (in custody) a few hundred yards along a road.

¹⁹⁷ *The Great Unpaid*—a nickname for the unpaid magistrates and justices in England.

5 mai, *Mot d'ordre*:¹⁹⁸ D'après *La Liberté*, qui paraît à Versailles, “tous les soldats de l'armée régulière qui ont été trouvés à Clamart parmi les insurgents ont été fusillés séance tenante” [*May 5, Mot d'ordre*: According to *La Liberté* published in Versailles, “All the soldiers of the regular army who were found at Clamart among the insurgents were shot on the spot”] (by Lincoln Thiers!) (Lincoln acknowledged the belligerent rights.) “These are the men denouncing on the walls of all French communes the Parisians as assassins!” The banditti!

Desmarets.

Députation de [la] Commune à Bicêtre (April 27) pour faire une enquête sur les 4 gardes nationaux du 185^e bataillon de marche de la Garde nationale, où ils ont visité le survivant (grièvement blessé) *Scheffer*. [Deputation from the Commune went to Bicêtre (April 27) where they visited the only survivor (seriously wounded) *Scheffer* to inquire about the four National Guards of the 185th Infantry Battalion of the National Guard.]

Le malade a déclaré que, le 15 April, à la Belle-Épine, près de Villejuif, il était surpris avec trois de ses camarades par les chasseurs à cheval, qui leur ont dit de se rendre. Comme il leur était impossible de faire une résistance utile contre les forces qui les entouraient, ils jetèrent leurs armes à terre et se rendirent. Les soldats les entourèrent, les firent prisonniers sans exercer aucune violence ni aucune menace envers eux. Ils étaient déjà prisonniers depuis quelques instants, lorsqu'un capitaine des chasseurs à cheval arriva et se précipita sur eux, le revolver au poing. Il fit feu sur l'un d'eux sans dire un seul mot et l'étendit raide mort, puis il en fit autant sur le garde Scheffer, qui reçut une balle en pleine poitrine et tomba à côté de ses camarades. Les deux autres gardes se retirèrent effrayés de cette infâme agression, mais le féroce capitaine se précipita sur

¹⁹⁸ *Le Mot d'ordre*, a Left-wing Republican daily newspaper under the editorship of Henri Rochefort, was founded in Paris on February 3, 1871. It was banned by Joseph Vinoy, governor of Paris, on March 11 and resumed publication from April 8 to May 20, 1871, during the period of the Paris Commune. The paper sharply criticized the Versailles government and the monarchist majority in the National Assembly, but it never sided completely with the Commune. It was opposed to the Commune's measures of suppressing the counter-revolutionaries in Paris.

les deux prisonniers et les tua de deux autres coups de revolver. Les chasseurs, après les actes d'atroce et de féroce lâcheté, se retirèrent avec leur chef, laissant leurs victimes étendues sur le sol.¹⁹⁹

[The wounded man said that on April 15,²⁰⁰ at Belle-Épine, near Villejuif, he and three comrades were attacked by cavalrymen who told them to surrender. As it was impossible to put up effective resistance against the forces which were surrounding them, they threw their arms to the ground and surrendered. The soldiers surrounded them and took them prisoner without using violence or threats. They had been prisoners for several minutes when a cavalry captain came and rushed at them, revolver in hand. Without a word he fired at one of them and killed him; in the same way he shot at the guard Scheffer who received a bullet in the chest and fell beside his comrades. Terrified by this foul attack, the two other guards drew back, but the frenzied captain rushed at them and killed them with two revolver shots. After these atrocious and base acts, the cavalrymen retired with their chief, leaving their victims lying dead on the ground.]

“*New York Tribune*”²⁰¹ *outdoes the London papers.*

¹⁹⁹ The report on the result of the investigation by a Commune commission into the killing of the National Guards was published on April 29, 1871 in the *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 119, and *Le Mot d'ordre*, No. 65. Marx quoted the passage from the commission's report which appeared in *Le Mot d'ordre*.

²⁰⁰ The correct date was April 25.

²⁰¹ *New York Daily Tribune* was an American newspaper published in 1841-1924, first as the organ of the Left wing of the American Whig Party before the mid-fifties and later that of the Republicans. Marx's contributions to the newspaper covered the period between August 1851 and March 1862. In fact, however, Engels wrote most of the articles in this period at Marx's request. During the reactionary period in Europe, Marx and Engels made use of this widely circulated progressive paper to make a factual exposure of the maladies of capitalist society. During the American civil war, Marx completely severed connections with the paper chiefly because the forces advocating compromise with the slave-owners had increased in the editorial board and the paper had departed from its former progressive stand. Later the paper turned further Right.

M. Thiers' "most liberal and most freely elected National Assembly that ever existed in France" is quite of a piece with his "finest army that France ever possessed." This senile *Chambre introuvable*, chosen on a false pretext, consists almost exclusively of Legitimists and Orléanists. The municipal elections, carried on under Thiers himself on April 30th, show their relation to the French people! Of 700,000 councillors (in round numbers) returned by the 35,000 communes still left in mutilated France, 200 are Legitimists, 600 Orléanists, 7,000 avowed Bonapartists, and all the rest Republicans or Communists.²⁰² (*Versailles Cor.*, *Daily News*, 5 May.) Is any other proof wanted that this Assembly with the Orléanist mummy Thiers at its head represent an usurpatory minority?

Paris

M. Thiers represented again and again the Commune as the instrument of a handful of "convicts" and "ticket-of-leave men," of the scum of Paris. And this "handful" of desperadoes holds in check since [*read for*] more than 6 weeks the "finest army that France ever possessed" led by the invincible MacMahon and inspired by the genius of Thiers himself!

The exploits of the Parisians have not only refuted him. All elements of Paris have spoken.

Il ne faut point confondre le mouvement de Paris avec la surprise de Montmartre, qui n'en a été que l'occasion et le point de départ; ce mouvement est général et profond dans la conscience de Paris; le plus grand nombre de ceux-là mêmes qui, pour une cause ou pour une autre, s'en sont tenus à l'écart n'en désavouent point pour cela la légitimité sociale. [One must not confuse the movement of Paris with the surprise attack on Montmartre, the latter being only the cause and starting point; this movement is general and goes deep into the consciousness of Paris; even the majority of those who for one reason or another keep aloof do not deny its social legitimacy.]

²⁰² This refers to the supporters of the Commune.

Who says this? The *delegates of the Syndical chambers*, men who speak in the name of 7-8,000 merchants and industrials.²⁰³ They have gone to tell it at Versailles... The *Ligue de la réunion républicaine... the manifestation of the francs-maçons*,²⁰⁴ etc. [*The League of Republican Union... the demonstration of the Freemasons, etc.*]

The Province

Les provinciaux espiègles. [*The provincial rogues.*]

If Thiers fancied one moment that the provinces were really antagonistic to the Paris movement, he would do all in his power to give the provinces the greatest possible facilities to become acquainted with the movement and all “its horrors.” He would solicit them to look at it in its naked reality, to convince themselves with their own eyes and ears of what it is. Not he! He and his “defense men” try to keep the provinces down, to prevent their general rising for Paris, by a *wall of lies*, as they kept out the news from the provinces in Paris during the Prussian siege. The provinces are only allowed to look at Paris through the Versailles *camera obscura* (distorting glass). (Les mensonges et les calomnies des journaux de Versailles parviennent seuls aux départements et y font loi.) [(Only the lies and slanders of the Versailles journals reach the departments and have any validity there.)] Pillages and murders of [read by] 20,000 ticket-of-leave men dishonor the capital.

²⁰³ Marx quoted the address of the delegates of the Chambres Syndicales from *Le Rappel*, No. 669, April 13, 1871.

²⁰⁴ The *Ligue de l'Union républicaine pour les droits de Paris* was a bourgeois organization founded in Paris in early April 1871. Its aims were peacefully to abolish the Paris Commune and end the civil war and it tried to do this by mediating between Versailles and Paris, proposing that the two sides reach agreement on the basis of recognition of the republic and the municipal freedom of Paris.

The demonstration of the Freemasons was staged by Paris Freemasons on April 29, 1871 in front of the city fortifications, demanding that the Versailles troops cease military actions. In order to win the sympathy of the middle- and petit-bourgeois Republicans, the Commune received the representatives of their political viewpoint—the Freemasons—at the Hôtel de Ville on April 26 and 29. The Freemasons declared their support of the Commune during the two meetings as their proposal for a ceasefire had been rejected by Thiers. Their demonstration in front of the fortifications took place after the interview of April 29 with the participation of a delegation from the Commune.

La *Ligue* se donne pour premier devoir de faire la lumière et de rétablir les relations normales entre la province and Paris.²⁰⁵ [The *League* considers its first duty to clarify the facts and restore the normal relations between the provinces and Paris.]

As they were, when besieged in Paris, thus they are now in besieging it in their turn.

Le mensonge comme par le passé est leur arme favorite. Ils suppriment, saisissent les journaux de la capitale, interceptent les communications, sift the letters, de telle sorte que la province est réduite aux nouvelles qu'il plaît aux Jules Favre, Picard et Cons. de lui donner, sans qu'il soit possible de vérifier l'exactitude de leur dire. [As before, lying is their favourite weapon. They suppress and seize the capital's newspapers, intercept communications, sift the letters, so that the provinces can only get the news which Jules Favre, Picard and company are pleased to give, and there is no way to verify the truth of what they say.]

Thiers' bulletins, Picard's *circulaires*, Dufaure's... The placards in the communes. The felon press of Versailles and the Germans. The *petit moniteur*.²⁰⁶ The reintroduction of passports for travelling from one place to another. An army of *mouchards* spread in every direction. Arrests (in Rouen, etc., under Prussian authority), etc. Les milliers de commissaires de police répandus dans les environs de Paris ont reçu du préfet-gendarme Valentin l'ordre de saisir tous les journaux, à quelque nuance qu'ils appartiennent, qui s'impriment dans la ville insurgée, et de les brûler en place publique comme au meilleur temps de la Ste. Inquisition. [The thousands of police superintendents scattering round Paris received an order from the prefect-gendarme Valentin to seize all newspapers, whatever their shade,

²⁰⁵ Quoted from the resolution of the Ligue de l'Union républicaine pour les droits de Paris, published in *Le Rappel*, No. 673, April 17, 1871.

²⁰⁶ This refers to the *Moniteur des communes*, a French government newspaper published in Versailles during the period of the Paris Commune. It appeared as an evening supplement to the *Journal officiel* of the Thiers government.

printed in this insurgent city and to burn them in public as was done at the height of the Holy Inquisition.]

Thiers' government first appealed to the provinces²⁰⁷ to form battalions of National Guards and send them to Versailles against Paris. The Province, as the *Journal de Limoges*²⁰⁸ says, showed its discontent by refusing the bataillons of *volontaires* [volunteers] which were asked from it by Thiers and his *Ruraux*. The few Breton idiots, fighting under a white flag, every one of them wearing on his breast a Jesus heart in white cloth and shouting "Vive le roi !" are the only "provincial" army gathered round Thiers.

*The elections. Vengeur, May 6.*²⁰⁹

M. Dufaure's press law (*April 8*). Confessedly directed against the "excesses" of the provincial press.

Then the numerous arrestations in the Province. It is placed under the *Laws of Suspects*.²¹⁰

Blocus intellectuel et policier de la province. [Intellectual and police blockade of the provinces.]

April 23, Havre: The municipal council has dispatched three of its members to Paris and Versailles with instructions to offer mediation, with the view of terminating the civil war on the basis of the maintenance of the Republic, and the granting of municipal franchises to the whole of France... *April 23, delegates from Lyons received by Picard and Thiers*—"Guerre a tout prix" deren Antwort. ["War at any price," was their answer.]

²⁰⁷ In the manuscript, above the words "first appealed to the provinces" is the following: "turned to the provinces with an anxious appeal, before it had obtained an army of captives from Bismarck." (Retranslated from the German translation of the "Drafts of *The Civil War in France*" in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17.)

²⁰⁸ Marx here refers to *La Défense républicaine*, a French Republican paper published in Limoges in 1871.

²⁰⁹ This evidently refers to *Le Vengeur's* comment of May 6, 1871, on the result of the election to the municipal council of April 30, 1871.

²¹⁰ *The Laws of Suspects*—passed on February 19, 1858 by the Legislative Assembly (Corps législatif)—vested the emperor and the government with unlimited authority to mete out punishment to people suspected of being hostile to the Second Empire. Under this law people could be jailed or banished to any part of France or Algeria or even expelled altogether from French territory.

Adresse des délégués de Lyon présentée a l'Assemblée par Greppo²¹¹
[le] 24 avril. [Petition of the Lyons delegates presented to the Assembly by Greppo on April 24.]

The municipalities of the provincial towns committed the great impudence to send their deputations to Versailles in order to call upon them to grant what [was] demanded by Paris; not one commune of France has sent an address approving of the acts of Thiers and the Rurals; the provincial papers, like these municipal councils, as Dufaure complains in his *circular against conciliation to the procureur général*,

mettent sur la même ligne l'Assemblée issue du suffrage universel et la prétendue commune de Paris, reprochent à la première de n'avoir pas accordé à Paris ses droits municipaux, etc. [put the Assembly born of universal suffrage on the same footing with the pretender Paris Commune, reproach the former with not having accorded Paris its municipal rights, etc.]

and what is worse, these municipal councils, for instance, *that of Auch*,

unanimement lui demandent *de proposer immédiatement un armistice avec Paris* [unanimously demand of it to *propose immediately an armistice with Paris*] and that the Assembly chosen on the 8th of February, dissolves itself because its mandate had expired. (*Dufaure, [à] l'Assemblée de Versailles, 26 April*.)

It ought to be remembered that these were the old municipal councils,²¹² not those elected on April 30. Their delegations so numerous, that Thiers decided no longer to receive them personally but address them to a ministerial subaltern.

²¹¹ The petition of the Lyons municipal council presented by deputy Greppo to the National Assembly demanded that the civil war be stopped and that Versailles negotiate peace with Paris. It also proposed to clearly limit the authority of the assembly and the Paris Commune and restrict the Commune's activities within the area of municipal questions.

²¹² This refers to the municipal councils elected in 1865 under the pressure of the government of the Second Empire.

Lastly the elections of April 30, the final judgment of the Assembly and the electoral surprise from which it had sprung. If then the provinces have till now only made a passive resistance against Versailles without rising for Paris, [it is] to be explained by the strongholds the old authorities hold here still, the trance in which the Empire merged and the war maintained the Province. It is evident that it is only the Versailles army, government and [the] Chinese wall of lies, that stand between Paris and the provinces. If that wall falls, they will unite with it.

It is most characteristic, that the same men (Thiers *et* Co.) who in May 1850 abolished by a parliamentary conspiracy (Bonaparte aided them, to get them into a snare, to have them at his mercy, and to proclaim himself after the *coup d'état* as the restorer of the universal suffrage against the Party of Order and its Assembly) *the universal suffrage*, because under the Republic it might still play them freaks, are now its fanatical adepts, make it their “legitimate” title against Paris, after it had received under Bonaparte such an organization as to be the mere plaything in the hand of the Executive, a mere machine of cheat, surprise, and forgery on the part of the Executive. (*Congrès de la Ligue des villes*) (*Rappel*, 6 mai.)²¹³

Trochu, Jules Favre et Thiers, Provincials

It may be asked how these superannuated parliamentary mountebanks and intriguers like Thiers, Favre, Dufaure, Garnier-Pagès (only strengthened by a few rascals of the same stamp) continue to reappear, after every revolution, on the surface, and usurp the executive power—these men that always exploit and betray the Revolution, shoot down the

²¹³ *La Ligue des villes* [*The League of Cities*]—an abbreviated name for La Ligue patriotique des villes républicaines. The League was planned in April-May 1871 by the bourgeois Republicans who were afraid of the resurgence of a monarchy after the defeat of the Paris Commune. Its provisional committee, with the active participation of the Ligue de l'Union républicaine pour les droits de Paris, decided to hold a congress of delegates of the municipal councils at Bordeaux on May 9, 1871, to find ways to end the civil war, consolidate the republic and formally establish the League. After the Versailles government banned the convening of the congress the provisional committee stopped its activities.

Le Rappel of May 6, 1871 published the program of the abortive congress of the Ligue des villes.

people that made it, and sequester the few liberal concessions conquered from former governments (which they opposed themselves)?

The thing is very simple. In the first instance, if very unpopular, like Thiers after the February Revolution, popular magnanimity spares them. After every successful rising of the people the cry of conciliation, raised by the implacable enemies of the people, is re-echoed by the people in the first moments of the enthusiasm at its own victory. After this first moment men like Thiers and Dufaure eclipse themselves as long as the people holds material power, and work in the dark. They reappear as soon as it is disarmed, and are acclaimed by the bourgeoisie as their *chefs de file* [file-leaders].

Or, like Favre, Garnier-Pagès, Jules Simon, etc. (recruited by a few younger ones of similar stamp) and Thiers himself after September 4th, [they] were the “respectable” Republican opposition under Louis Philippe; afterwards the parliamentary opposition under L. Bonaparte. The reactionary *régimes* they have themselves initiated when raised to power by the Revolution, secure for them the ranks of the opposition, deporting, killing, exiling the true revolutionists. The people forget their past, the middle class look upon them as their men, their infamous past is forgotten, and thus they reappear to recommence their treason and their work of infamy.

Night of May 1 to 2: the village of Clamart had been in the hands of the military, the railway station in that [read those] of the insurgents (this station dominates the Fort of Issy). By a surprise (their *patrouilles* [patrols] being let in by a soldier on guard, the *watchword having been betrayed* to them) the 23 *Bataillon*²¹⁴ of Chasseurs got in, surprised the garrison, most of them sleeping in their beds, made only 60 prisoners, *bayoneted* 300 of the insurgents. *Dazu* [In addition,] line soldiers [were] afterwards shot off-hand. *Thiers in his circular to the Prefects, civil and military authorities of May 2* has the impudence to say:

²¹⁴ “23 Bataillon” should read “22nd Battalion.”

It (the Commune) arrests generals (Cluseret!) only to shoot them, and institutes a committee of public safety which is utterly unworthy!

Troops under General Lacretelle took the *redoubt of Moulin-Saquet* situated betwixt Fort Issy and Montrouge, by a coup de main. The garrison was surprised by treachery on the part of the commandant *Gallien*, who had sold the password to the Versailles troops. 150 of the Federals bayoneted and over 300 of them made prisoners. M. Thiers, says the *Times* correspondent, was weak when he ought to have been firm (the coward is always weak as long as *he has to apprehend danger for himself*), and firm when everything was to be gained by some concessions. (The rascal is always firm, when the employment of material force bleeds France, gives great airs to himself, but when he, personally, is safe. This is his whole cleverness. Like Anthony, Thiers is an “honest man.”)

Thiers' bulletin über [on] Moulin-Saquet (4 mai):

Délivrance de Paris des affreux tyrans qui l'oppriment, (les Versaillais étaient déguisés en gardes nationaux,) (le plus grand nombre des fédérés dormaient et ont été frappés ou saisis dans leur sommeil.) [*Deliverance of Paris from the dreadful tyrants who oppress it*, (Versailles men disguised as National Guards,) (Most of the Communards were asleep and were killed or captured in their sleep.)]

Picard:

Notre artillerie ne bombarde pas: elle canonne, il est vrai. (*Moniteur des communes*, journal de Picard.) [*Our artillery does not bombard: it's true it shells.* (*Commune Monitor*, Picard's paper.)]

Blanqui, enseveli mourant dans un cachot, Flourens, haché par les gendarmes, Duval, fusillé par Vinoy, les ont tenus dans leurs mains au 31 octobre et [qu'] ils [ne] leur ont rien faits. [Blanqui, shut up dying in a prison cell, Flourens, hacked to pieces by the gendarmes, and Duval, shot by Vinoy, held these

people in their hands on October 31, and nothing was done to them.]

THE COMMUNE

I. MEASURES FOR THE WORKING CLASS

Nightwork of journeymen bakers suppressed (April 20).

The private jurisdiction, usurped by the seigneurs of mills, etc. (manufacturers), (employers, great and small), being at the same time judges, executors, gainers and parties in the disputes, that right of *a penal code of their own*, enabling them to rob the laborers' wages by fines and deductions as punishment, etc., abolished in public and private work shops; penalties impended upon the employers in case they infringe upon this law; *finés and deductions* extorted since March 18 to be paid back to the workmen (*April 27*). Sale of pawned articles at pawnshops suspended (*March 29*).

A great lot of workshops and manufactories have been closed in Paris, their owners having run away. This is the old method of the industrial capitalists, who consider themselves entitled, "by the spontaneous action of the laws of political economy," not only to make a profit out of labor, as the condition of labor, but to stop it altogether and throw the workmen on the pavement—to produce an artificial crisis whenever a victorious revolution threatens the "order" of their "system." The Commune, very wisely, has appointed a Communal commission which, in co-operation with delegates chosen by the different trades, will inquire into the ways of handing over the deserted workshops and manufactories to co-operative workmen societies with some indemnity for the capitalist deserters (*April 16*); (this commission has also to make statistics of the abandoned workshops).

Commune has given order to the *mairies* to make no distinction between the *femmes* called illegitimate, the mothers and widows of National Guards, as to the indemnity of 75 centimes.

The public prostitutes till now kept for the "men of Order" at Paris, but for their "safety" kept in personal servitude under the arbitrary rule of the police; the Commune has liberated the prostitutes from this degrading slavery, but swept away the soil upon which, and the men by whom, prostitution flourishes. The higher prostitutes—the *cocottes*—were of course,

under the rule of Order, not the slaves, but the masters of the police and the governors.

There was, of course, no time to reorganize public instruction (education); but by removing the religious and clerical element from it, the Commune has taken the initiative in the mental emancipation of the people. It has appointed a commission for the organization *de l'enseignement* [of education] (primary (elementary) and professional) (*April 28*). It has ordered that all tools of instruction, like books, maps, paper, etc., be given gratuitously by the schoolmasters, who receive them in their turn from the respective *mairies* to which they belong. No schoolmaster is allowed on any pretext to ask payment from his pupils for these instruments of instruction (*April 28*).

Pawnshops: toute reconnaissance du mont-de-piété antérieure au 25 avril 1871, portant engagement d'effets d'habillement, de meubles, de linge, de livres, d'objets de literie et d'instruments de travail nicht über 20 francs pourra être dégagée gratuitement à partir du 12 mai courant (*7 May*). [*Pawnshops*: all pawn-tickets dated before April 25, 1871, for articles of clothing, furniture, linen, books, bedding and work tools worth no more than 20 francs may, beginning from May 12 of this year, be redeemed without a charge (*May 7*).]

2. MEASURES FOR [THE] WORKING CLASS, BUT MOSTLY FOR THE MIDDLE CLASSES

House rent for the last 3 quarters up to April wholly remitted: Whoever had paid any of these 3 quarters shall have right of setting that sum against future payments. The same law to prevail in the case of furnished apartments. No notice to quit coming from landlords to be valid for 3 months to come (*March 29*).

Échéances (Payment of bills of exchange due) (*expiration of bills*): all prosecutions for bills of exchange, fallen due, suspended (*April 12*).

All commercial papers of that sort to be repaid in (repayments spread over) two years, to begin next July 15, the debt being not chargeable with interest. The total amount of the sums due divided in 8 *equal coupures* [*portions*] *payable by trimester* (first trimester to be dated from July 15). Only on these partial payments when fallen due judicial prosecutions permitted

(April 16). The Dufaure laws on leases and bills of exchange entailed the bankruptcy of the majority of the respectable shopkeepers of Paris.

The notaries, *huissiers*, auctioneers, bumbailiffs and other judicial officers making till now a fortune of their functions, transformed into agents of the Commune receiving from it fixed salaries like other workmen.

As the professors of the *École de médecine* have run away, the Commune appointed a commission for the foundation of *free universities* no longer State parasites; given to the students that had passed their examination, means to practice independent of Doctor titles (titles to be conferred by the faculty).

Since the judges of the *Civil Tribunal of the Seine*, like the other magistrates always ready to function under any class government, had run away, Commune appointed an advocate to do the most urgent business until the reorganization of tribunals on the basis of general suffrage (April 26).

3. GENERAL MEASURES

Conscription abolished. In the present war every able man (National Guard) must serve. This measure excellent to get rid of all traitors and cowards hiding in Paris. (March 29).

Games of hazard suppressed (April 2).

Church separated from State; the religious budget suppressed; all clerical estates declared national properties (April 3). The Commune, having made inquiries consequent upon private information, found that beside the old guillotine the “*government of order*” had commanded the construction of a new guillotine (more expeditious and portable) and paid in advance. The Commune ordered both the old and the new guillotines to be burned publicly on April 6. The Versailles journals, re-echoed by the press of Order all over the world, narrated the Paris people, as a demonstration against the bloodthirstiness of the Communards, had burnt these guillotines! (April 6) All political prisoners were set free at once after the Revolution of March 18th. But the Commune knew that under the *régime of L. Bonaparte* and his worthy successor the Government of Defense, many people were simply incarcerated on no charge whatever as politi-

cal suspects. Consequently it charged [one] of its members—Protot—to make inquiries. By him 150 people [were] set free who, being arrested since six months, had not yet undergone any judicial examination; many of them, already arrested under Bonaparte, had been for a year in prison without any charge or judicial examination (*April 9*). This fact, so characteristic of the Government of Defense, enraged them. They asserted the Commune had liberated all felons. But who liberated convicted felons? The forger Jules Favre. Hardly got into power, he hastened to liberate *Pic and Taillefer*, condemned for theft and forgery in the affair of the *Étendard*. One of these men, Taillefer, daring to return to Paris, has been reinstated in his convenient abode. But this is not all. The Versailles Government has delivered, in the *Maisons centrales* [prisons] all over France, convicted thieves on the condition of entering M. Thiers' army.

Decree on the demolition of the column of the Place Vendôme as “a monument of barbarism, symbol of brute force and false glory, an affirmation of militarism, a negation of international right” (*April 12*).²¹⁵

Election of Frankel (German member of the International) to the Commune declared valid: “considering that the flag of the Commune is that of the Universal Republic and that foreigners can have a seat in it” (*April 4*);²¹⁶ Frankel afterwards chosen a member of the Executive of the Commune (*April 21*).

The *Journal officiel* has inaugurated the publicity of the sittings of the Commune (*April 15*).

Decree of Paschal Grousset for the protection of foreigners against requisitions. Never a government in Paris so courteous to foreigners (*April 27*).

The Commune has abolished political and professional oaths (*April 27*).

Destruction of the monument dit “Chapelle expiatoire de Louis XVI” Rue d’Anjou-St. Thérèse (œuvre de la Chambre introuvable de 1816) (*7 mai*). [*Destruction of the monument called “the Chapel of Atonement of Louis*

²¹⁵ *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 103, April 13, 1871.

²¹⁶ Quoted from the summary of the election commission of the Commune, which appeared in the *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 90, March 31, 1871.

XVI,” Rue d’Anjou-St.-Thérèse²¹⁷ (work of the *Chambre introuvable* of 1816) (*May 7*)]

4. MEASURES OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Disarmament of the “loyal” National Guards (*March 30*); Commune declares incompatibility between seats in its ranks and at Versailles (*March 29*).

Decree of Reprisals. Never executed. Only the fellows arrested, *Archbishop of Paris and curé of the Madeleine*; whole staff of the college of Jesuits; incumbents of all the principal churches; *part of these fellows arrested* as hostages, part as conspirators with Versailles, part because they tried to save church property from the clutches of the Commune (*April 6*).

The Monarchists wage war like savages; they shoot prisoners, they murder the wounded, they fire on ambulances, troops raise the butt-end of their rifles in the air and then fire traitorously. (*Proclamation of [the] Commune.*)²¹⁸

In regard to these decrees of reprisals to be remarked:

In the first instance, men of all layers of the Paris society—after the exodus of the capitalists, the idlers and the parasites—have interposed at Versailles to stop the civil war—*except the Paris clergy*. The Archbishop and the cure de [la] Madeleine have only written to Thiers because averse to “*the effusion of their own blood*,” in their quality as hostages.

Secondly: After the publication by the Commune of the decree of reprisals, the taking of hostages, etc., the atrocious treatment of the Versailles prisoners by Piétri’s lambs and Valentin’s gendarmes did not cease, but the assassination of the captive Paris soldiers and National Guards was stopped to set in with renewed fury so soon as the Versailles Government had convinced itself that the Commune was too humane to execute its decree of April 6. Then the assassination set in again wholesale. The Commune did not execute one hostage, not one prisoner, not even some gendarme officers who under the disguise of National Guards had entered Paris as spies and were simply arrested.

²¹⁷ “St.-Thérèse” should read “St.-Honoré.”

²¹⁸ *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 95, April 5, 1871.

Surprise of the Redoubt of Clamart (May 2). Railway station in the hands of the Parisians, massacre, bayoneting, the 22nd Battalion of Chasseurs (Galliffet?) shoots line soldiers off-hand without any formality (May 2). Redoubt of Moulin-Saquet, situated between Fort Issy and Montrouge, surprised in the night by treachery on the part of the commandant Gallien who had sold the password to the Versailles troops. Federals surprised in their beds, asleep, massacred, great part of them. (May 4?)

April 25. 4 National Guards (this constated by Commissaries sent to Bicêtre where the only survivor of the 4 men, à [at] Belle Épine, près [near] Villejuif. His name Scheffer). These men being surrounded by horse Chasseurs, on their order, unable to resist, surrendered, disarmed, nothing done to them by the soldiers. But then arrives the captain of the Chasseurs, and shoots them down one after the other with his revolver. Left there on the soil. Scheffer, fearfully wounded, survived.

13 soldiers of the line made prisoners at the railway station of Clamart were shot off-hand, and all prisoners wearing the line uniforms who arrive in Versailles will be executed whenever doubts about their identity are cleared up. (*Liberté* at Versailles.) Alexander Dumas, *filz*, now at Versailles, tells that a young man exercising the functions, if not bearing the title, of a general, was shot, by order of a Bonapartist general, after having marched in custody a few hundred yards along a road. Parisian troops and National Guards surrounded in houses by gendarmes, [who] inundate the house with petroleum and then fire it. Some cadavers of National Guards (*calcinés*) [(calcined)] have been transported by the ambulance of the press of the Ternes. (*Mot d'ordre*, April 20.) "They have no right to ambulances."

Thiers, Blanqui, Archbishop, General Chanzy. (Thiers said his Bonapartists should have liked to be shot.)

Visitation in Houses, etc. Casimir Bouis, nommé président d'une commission d'enquête [Casimir Bouis, appointed president of a commission of inquiry] in[to] the doings of the dictators of 4 September (*April 14*). Private houses invaded and papers seized, but no furniture has been carried away and sold by auction. (Papers der fellows vom 4. September, des Thiers etc. und bonapartistischer Polizeileute), f.i., in Hotel of Lafont, inspecteur général des Prisons [the papers of the fellows of September 4, Thiers etc. and Bonapartist police), for instance, in the Mansion of Lafont,

Inspector General of Prisons]) (*April 11*). The houses (properties) of Thiers et Co. as traitors trailed,²¹⁹ but *only the papers* confiscated.

Arrest among themselves: This shocks the bourgeois who wants political idols and “great men” immensely.

It is provoking (*Daily News, May 6, Paris correspondence*), however, and *discouraging*, that whatever [may] be the authority possessed by the Commune, it is continually changing hands, and we know not to-day with whom the power may rest to-morrow... In all these eternal changes one sees more than ever the want of a presiding hand. The Commune is a concourse of equivalent atoms, each one jealous of another and *none endowed with supreme control over the others*.

Journal suppression!

5. FINANCIAL MEASURES

See *Daily News, May 6*.

Principal outlay for war!

Only 8928 frs. from *saisies* [seizures]—all taken from ecclesiastics, etc.

Vengeur, May 6.

LA COMMUNE

THE RISE OF THE COMMUNE AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Commune had been proclaimed at Lyons, then Marseille, Toulouse, etc., after Sedan. Gambetta tried his best to break it down.²²⁰

²¹⁹ trailed: searched.

²²⁰ Following news of the defeat at Sedan, of the revolutionary outbreak in Paris and of the collapse of the Empire on September 4, 1870, workers in many other French cities such as Lyons, Marseille and Toulouse staged revolutionary armed uprisings and set up Communes as the organs of people's political power. In spite of their short existence, the provincial Communes, particularly the one in Lyons, put into effect a series of important revolutionary measures. For instance, they abolished the police-bureaucrat apparatus, released political prisoners, introduced secular education, levied a tax on the wealthy people and gratuitously redeemed pawned articles from pawnshops. The Government of National Defense ruthlessly suppressed these provincial Communes.

The different movements at Paris in the beginning of October aimed at the establishment of the Commune, as a measure of defense against the foreign invasion, as the realization of the rise of September 4th. Its establishment by the movement of the October 31 failed only because Blanqui, Flourens and the other then leaders of the movement believed in the *gens de paroles* [men of their word] who had given their *parole d'honneur* [word of honor] to abdicate and make room for a Commune freely elected by all the *arrondissements* of Paris. It failed because they saved the lives of those men so eager for the assassination of their saviors. Having allowed Trochu and Ferry to escape, they surprised them by Trochu's Bretons.²²¹ It ought to be remembered that on October 31st the self-imposed "Government of Defense" existed only on sufferance. It had not yet gone even through the farce of a plebiscite.²²² Under the circumstances, there was of course nothing easier than to misrepresent the character of the movement, to decry it as a treasonable conspiracy with the Prussians, to improve the dismissal of the only man²²³ amongst them who would not break his word, for strengthening Trochu's Bretons, who were for the Government of the Defense what the Corsican *spadassins* [desperadoes] had been for L. Bonaparte, by the appointment of Clément Thomas as commander-in-chief of the National Guard; there was nothing easier for these old panic-mongers [than]—appealing to the cowardly fears of the middle class [in the presence of the] working *bataillons* who had taken the initiative, throwing distrust and dissension amongst the working *bataillons* themselves, by an appeal to patriotism—to create one of those days of blind reaction and disastrous misunderstandings by which they have always contrived to maintain their usurped power. As they had slipped into power September 4 by a surprise, they were now enabled to give it a mock sanction by a plebiscite of the true Bonapartist pattern during days of reactionary terror.

²²¹ In the German translation, this sentence reads: "They allowed Trochu and Ferry to escape, and these then fell upon them with Trochus Bretons."

²²² The revolutionary events of October 31, 1870 indicated the instability of the Government of National Defense. To strengthen its position, the government conducted a plebiscite in Paris on November 3, 1870. Although a large section of Parisians voted against the government, it won a majority through heavy pressure on the people, demagoguery and the state of the siege.

²²³ François Tamisier (1809-1880)

The victorious establishment at Paris of the Commune in the beginning of November 1870 (then already initiated in the great cities of the [country] and sure to be imitated all over France) would not only have taken the defense out of the hands of traitors, and imprinted its enthusiasm [on it] as the present heroic war of Paris shows, it would have altogether changed the character of the war. It would have become the war of Republican France, hoisting the flag of the Social Revolution of the 19th century, against Prussia, the banner bearer of the conquest and counter-revolution. Instead of sending the hackneyed old intriguer a-begging at all courts of Europe, it would have electrified the producing masses in the old and the new world. By the *escamotage* of the Commune on October 31, the Jules Favre *et Co.* secured the capitulation of France to Prussia and initiated the present civil war.

But this much is shown: The Revolution of September 4th was not only the reinstalment of the Republic because the place of the usurper had become vacant by his capitulation at Sedan—it not only conquered that Republic from the foreign invader by the prolonged resistance of Paris although fighting under the leadership of its enemies—that Revolution was working its way in[to] the heart of the working classes. The Republic had ceased to be a name for a thing of the past. It was impregnated with a new world. Its real tendency, veiled from the eye of the world through the deceptions, the lies and the vulgarizing of a pack of intriguing lawyers and word fencers, came again and again to the surface in the spasmodic movements of the Paris working classes (and the South of France) whose watchword was always the same, the *Commune!*

The Commune—the positive form of the Revolution against the Empire and the conditions of its existence—first essayed in the cities of Southern France, again and again proclaimed in spasmodic movements during the siege of Paris and *escamotés* [conjured away] by the sleights of hands of the Government of Defense and the Bretons of Trochu, the “plan of capitulation” hero—was at last victoriously installed on March 26th, but it had not suddenly sprung into life on that day. It was the unchangeable goal of the workmen’s revolution. The capitulation of Paris, the open conspiracy against the Republic at Bordeaux, the *coup d’état* initiated by the nocturnal attack on Montmartre, rallied around it all the living elements of Paris, no longer allowing the defense men to limit it to the insulated

efforts of the most conscious and revolutionary portions of the Paris working class.

The Government of Defense was only undergone as a *pis aller* [makeshift] of the first surprise, a necessity of the war. The true answer of the Paris people to the Second Empire, the Empire of Lies, was the Commune.

Thus also the rising of all living Paris—with the exception of the pillars of Bonapartism and its official opposition, the great capitalists, the financial jobbers, the sharpers, the loungers, and the old State parasites—against the Government of Defense does not date from March 18th, although it conquered on that day its first victory against the *conspiration* [conspiracy]; it dates from the January 31,²²⁴ from the very day of the capitulation. The National Guard—that is all the armed manhood of Paris—organized itself and really ruled Paris from that day, independently of the usurpatory government of the *capitulards* installed by the grace of Bismarck. It refused to deliver its arms and artillery, which was its property and only left them in the capitulation[?] because its property.²²⁵ It was not the magnanimity of Jules Favre that saved these arms from Bismarck, but the readiness of armed Paris to fight for its arms against Jules Favre and Bismarck. In view of the foreign invader and the peace negotiations Paris would not complicate the situation. It was afraid of civil war. It observed a mere attitude of defense and content with the de facto self-rule of Paris. But it organized itself quietly and steadfastly for resistance. (Even in the terms of the capitulation itself the *capitulards* had unmistakably shown their tendency to make the surrender to Prussia at the same time the means of their domination over Paris. The only concession of Prussia they insisted upon, a concession, which Bismarck would have imposed upon them as a condition, if they had not begged it as a concession—was 40,000 soldiers for subduing Paris. In the face of its 300,000 National Guards—more than sufficient for securing Paris from an attempt by the foreign enemy, and for the defense of its internal order—the demand of these 40,000 men—a thing which was besides avowed—could have no other

²²⁴ The correct date was January 28.

²²⁵ In the German translation, the latter part of the sentence reads: "...which were its property, had been officially acknowledged as its property in the capitulation and were, therefore, left to it."

purpose.) On its existing military organization it grafted a political federation according to a very simple plan. It was the alliance of all the Guard *nationale*, put in connection the one with the other *by the delegates* of each company, appointing in their turn the delegates of the *bataillons*, who in their turn appointed general delegates, generals of legions, who were to represent an *arrondissement* and to co-operate with the delegates of the 19 other *arrondissements*. Those 20 delegates, chosen by the majority of the *bataillons* of the National Guard, composed the *Central Committee*, which on March 18th initiated the greatest revolution of this century and still holds its post in the present glorious struggle of Paris. Never were elections more sifted, never delegates fuller representing the masses from which they had sprung. To the objection of the outsiders that they were unknown—in point of fact, that they only were known to the working classes, but no old stagers, no men illustrious by the infamies of their past, by their chase after pelf and place—they proudly answered: “So were the 12 Apostles,” and they answered by their deeds.

THE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNE

The centralized State machinery which, with its ubiquitous and complicated military, bureaucratic, clerical and judiciary organs, entoids (inmeshes) the living civil society like a boa constrictor, was first forged in the days of absolute monarchy as a weapon of nascent modern society in its struggle of emancipation from feudalism. The seignorial privileges of the medieval lords and cities and clergy were transformed into the attributes of a unitary State power, displacing the feudal dignitaries by salaried State functionaries, transferring the arms from medieval retainers of the landlords and the corporations of townish citizens to a standing army, substituting for the checkered (party-colored) anarchy of conflicting medieval powers the regulated plan of a State power, with a systematic and hierarchic division of labor. The first French Revolution with its task to found national unity (to create a nation) had to break down all local, territorial, townish and provincial independence. It was, therefore, forced to develop, what absolute monarchy had commenced, the centralization and organization of State power, and to expand the circumference and the attributes of the State power, the number of its tools, its independence, and its supernaturalist sway of real society, which in fact took the place of

the medieval supernaturalist heaven, with its saints. Every minor solitary interest engendered by the relations of social groups was separated from society itself, fixed and made independent of it and opposed to it in the form of State interest, administered by State priests with exactly determined hierarchical functions.

This parasitical [excrescence upon] civil society, pretending to be its ideal counterpart, grew to its full development under the sway of the first Bonaparte. The Restoration and the Monarchy of July added nothing to it but a greater division of labor, growing at the same measure in which the division of labor within civil society created new groups of interest, and, therefore, new material for State action. In their struggle against the Revolution of 1848, the Parliamentary Republic of France and the governments of all continental Europe, were forced to strengthen, with their measures of repression against the popular movement, the means of action and the centralization of that governmental power. All revolutions thus only perfected the State machinery instead of throwing off this deadening incubus. The fractions and parties of the ruling classes which alternately struggled for supremacy, considered the occupancy (control) (seizure) and the direction of this immense machinery of government as the main booty of the victor. It centered in the creation of immense standing armies, a host of State vermin, and huge national debts. During the time of the absolute monarchy it was a means of the struggle of modern society against feudalism, crowned by the French Revolution, and under the first Bonaparte it served not only to subjugate the Revolution and annihilate all popular liberties, it was an instrument of the French Revolution to strike abroad, to create for France on the Continent instead of feudal monarchies more or less States after the image of France. Under the Restoration and the Monarchy of July it became not only [a] means of the forcible class domination of the middle class, and [*read* but] a means of adding to the direct economic exploitation a second exploitation of the people by assuring to their [i.e., the middle class] families all the rich places of the State household. During the time of the revolutionary struggle of 1848 at last it served as a means of annihilating that Revolution and all aspirations at the emancipation of the popular masses. But the State parasite received only its last development during the Second Empire. The governmental power with its standing army, its all directing bureaucracy, its stultifying clergy and

its servile tribunal hierarchy had grown so independent of society itself, that a grotesquely mediocre adventurer with a hungry band of desperadoes behind him sufficed to wield it. It did no longer want the pretext of an armed Coalition of old Europe against the modern world founded by the Revolution of 1789. It appeared no longer as a means of class domination, subordinate to its parliamentary ministry or legislature. Humbling under its sway even the interests of the ruling classes, whose parliamentary show work it supplanted by self-elected *Corps législatifs* and self-paid senates, sanctioned in its absolute sway by universal suffrage, the acknowledged necessity for keeping up “order,” that is the rule of the landowner and the capitalist over the producer, cloaking under the tatters of a masquerade of the past the orgies of the corruption of the present and the victory of the most parasite fraction, the financial swindler, the *debauchery* of all the reactionary influences of the past let loose—a pandemonium of infamies—the State power had received its last and supreme expression in the Second Empire. Apparently the final victory of this governmental power over society, it was in fact the orgy of all the corrupt elements of that society. To the eye of the uninitiated it appeared only as the victory of the Executive over the Legislative, of [read as] the final defeat of the form of class rule pretending to be the autocracy of society [by] its form pretending to be a superior power to society. But in fact it was only the last degraded and the only possible form of that class ruling, as humiliating to those classes themselves as to the working classes which they kept fettered by it.

September 4 was only the revindication of the *République* against the grotesque adventurer that had assassinated it. The true antithesis to *the Empire itself*—that is, to the State power, the centralized executive, of which the Second Empire was only the exhausting formula—was *the Commune*. This State power forms in fact the creation of the middle class, first [as] a means to break down feudalism, then [as] a means to crush the emancipatory aspirations of the producers, of the working class. All reactions and all revolutions had only served to transfer that organized power—that organized force of the slavery of labor—from one hand to the other, from one fraction of the ruling classes to the other. It had served the ruling classes as a means of subjugation and of pelf. It had sucked new forces from every new change. It had served as the instrument of breaking

down every popular rise²²⁶ and served it to crush the working classes after they had fought and been ordered to secure its transfer from one part of its oppressors to the others. This was, therefore, a revolution not against this or that, legitimate, constitutional, republican or imperialist form of State power. It was a revolution against the *State* itself, of this supernaturalist abortion of society, a resumption by the people for the people of its own social life. It was not a revolution to transfer it from one fraction of the ruling classes to the other, but a revolution to break down this horrid machinery of class domination itself. It was not one of those dwarfish struggles between the executive and the parliamentary forms of class domination, but a revolt against both these forms, integrating each other, and of which the parliamentary form was only the deceitful by work of the Executive. The Second Empire was the final form of this State usurpation. The Commune was its definite negation, and, therefore, the initiation of the Social Revolution of the 19th century. Whatever therefore its fate at Paris, it will make *le tour du monde* [a trip round the world]. It was at once acclaimed by the working class of Europe and the United States as the magic word of delivery. The glories and the antediluvian deeds of the Prussian conqueror seemed only hallucinations of a bygone past.

It was only the working class that could formulate by the word “Commune” and initiate by the fighting Commune of Paris—this new aspiration. Even the last expression of that State power in the Second Empire, although humbling for the pride of the ruling classes and casting to the winds their parliamentary pretensions of self-government, had been only the last possible form of their class rule. While politically dispossessing them, it was the orgy under which all the economic and social infamies of their *régime* got full sway. The middling bourgeoisie and the petty middle class were by their economical conditions of life excluded from initiating a new revolution and induced to follow in the track of the ruling classes or [to become] the followers of the working class. The peasants were the passive economical basis of the Second Empire, of that last triumph of a *State* separate of and independent from society. Only the proletarians, fired by a new social task to accomplish by them for all society, to do away with all classes and class rule, were the men to break the instrument of that class

²²⁶ rise: rising.

rule—the State, the centralized and organized governmental power usurping to be the master instead of the servant of society. In the active struggle against them by the ruling classes, supported by the passive adherence of the peasantry, the Second Empire, the last crowning at the same time as the most signal prostitution of the State—which had taken the place of the medieval Church—had been engendered. It had sprung into life against them. By them it was broken, not as a peculiar form of governmental (centralized) power, but as its most powerful expression, elaborated into seeming independence from society, and, therefore, also its most prostitute reality, covered by infamy from top to bottom, having centered in absolute corruption at home and absolute powerlessness abroad.

But this one form of class rule had only broken down to make the Executive, the governmental State machinery the great and single object of attack to the revolution.

Parliamentarism in France had come to an end. Its last term and fullest sway was the Parliamentary Republic from May 1848 to the *coup d'état*. The Empire that killed it was its own creation. Under the Empire with its *Corps législatif* and its Senate—in this form it has been reproduced in the military monarchies of Prussia and Austria—it had been a mere farce, a mere by work of despotism in its crudest form. Parliamentarism then was dead in France and the workmen's revolution certainly was not to awaken it from this death.

The *Commune*—the reabsorption of the State power by society as its own living forces instead of as forces controlling and subduing it, by the popular masses themselves, forming their own force instead of the organized force of their suppression—the political form of their social emancipation, instead of the artificial force (appropriated by their oppressors) (their own force opposed to and organized against them) of society wielded for their oppression by their enemies. The form was simple like all great things. The reaction of former revolutions—the time wanted for all historical developments, and in the past always lost in all revolutions, in the very days of popular triumph, whenever it had rendered its victorious arms, to be turned against itself—first by displacing the army by the National Guard.²²⁷

²²⁷ In the German translation, this sentence reads: "As against previous revolutions—in which the time necessary for all historical development always got lost and in

For the first time since the 4th September the Republic is liberated from the *government of its enemies*... [It gives] to the city a national militia that defends the citizens against the power (the government) *instead of a permanent army that defends the government against the citizens*. (*Proclamation of Central Committee of March 22.*)²²⁸

(The people had only to organize this militia on a national scale, to have done away with the standing armies; [this is] the first economical *condition sine qua [non]* for all social improvements, discarding at once this source of taxes and State debt, and this constant danger to government usurpation of class rule—of the regular class rule or an adventurer pretending to save all classes); at the same time the safest guarantee against foreign aggression and making in fact the costly military apparatus impossible in all other States; the emancipation of the peasant from the blood-tax and [from being] the most fertile source of all State taxation and State debts. Here [is] already the point in which the Commune is a *luck for the peasant*, the first word of his emancipation. With the “independent police” abolished, and its ruffians supplanted by servants of the Commune. The general suffrage, till now abused either for the parliamentary sanction of the Holy State Power, or a play²²⁹ in the hands of the ruling classes, only employed by the people to sanction (choose the instruments of) parliamentary class rule once in many years, [is] adapted to its real purposes, to choose by the Communes their own functionaries of administration and initiation. [Dispelled is] the delusion as if administration and political governing were mysteries, transcendent functions only to be trusted to the hands of a trained caste—State parasites, richly paid sycophants and sinecurists in the higher posts, absorbing the intelligence of the masses and turning them against themselves in the lower places of the hierarchy. Doing away with the State hierarchy altogether and replacing the haughteous masters

which, in the very first days of popular triumph, as soon as the people had laid down their victorious arms they were turned against the people themselves—the Commune first of all replaced the army by the National Guard.”

²²⁸ Quoted from the “Proclamation of the Central Committee of the National Guard to the Citizens of Paris” on March 22, 1871, which appeared in the form of a government ordinance and was also printed in the *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 84, March 25, 1871.

²²⁹ play: plaything

of the people into [*read by*] always removable servants, a mock responsibility by a real responsibility, as they act continuously under public supervision. Paid like skilled workmen, 12 pounds a month, the highest salary not exceeding £240 a year, a salary somewhat more than 1/5, according to a great scientific authority, Professor Huxley, to satisfy a clerk for the Metropolitan School Board. The whole sham of State mysteries and State pretensions was done away [with] by a Commune, mostly consisting of simple working men, organizing the defense of Paris, carrying war against the praetorians of Bonaparte, securing the *approvisionnement* [supply] of that immense town, filling all the posts hitherto divided between government, police, and prefecture, doing their work publicly, simply, under the most difficult and complicated circumstances, and doing it, as Milton did his *Paradise Lost*, for a few pounds, acting in bright daylight, with no pretensions to infallibility, not hiding itself behind circumlocution offices, not ashamed to confess blunders by correcting them. Making in one order the public functions—military, administrative, political—*real workmen's functions*, instead of the hidden attributes of a trained caste; (keeping order in the turbulence of civil war and revolution) (initiating measures of general regeneration). Whatever the merits of the single measures of the Commune, its greatest measure was its own organization, extemporized with the foreign enemy at one door, and the class enemy at the other, proving by its life its vitality, confirming its thesis by its action. Its appearance was a victory over the victors of France. Captive Paris resumed by one bold spring the leadership of Europe, not depending on brute force, but by taking the lead of the social movement, by giving body to the aspirations of the working class of all countries.

With all the great towns organized into Communes after the model of Paris, no government could repress the movement by the surprise of sudden reaction. Even by this preparatory step the time of incubation, the guarantee of the movement, came. All France [would be] organized into self-working and self-governing Communes, the standing army replaced by the popular militias, the army of State parasites removed, the clerical hierarchy displaced by the schoolmaster, the State judge transformed into Communal organs, the suffrage for the national representation not a matter of sleight of hand for an all-powerful government but the deliberate

expression of organized Communes, the State functions reduced to a few functions for general national purposes.

Such is the *Commune—the political form of the social emancipation*, of the liberation of labor from the usurpations (slaveholding) of the monopolists of the means of labor, created by the laborers themselves or forming the gift of nature. As the State machinery and parliamentarism are not the real life of the ruling classes, but only the organized general organs of their dominion, the political guarantees and forms and expressions of the old order of things, so the Commune is not the social movement of the working class and therefore of a general regeneration of mankind, but the organized means of action. The Commune does not [do] away with the class struggles, through which the working classes strive to [*read for*] the abolition of all classes and, therefore, of all classes [class rule] (because it does not represent a peculiar interest, it represents the liberation of “labor,” that is the fundamental and natural condition of individual and social life which only by usurpation, fraud, and artificial contrivances can be shifted from the few upon the many), but it affords the rational medium in which that class struggle can run through its different phases in the most rational and humane way. It could start violent reactions and as violent revolutions. It begins the *emancipation of labor*—its great goal—by doing away with the unproductive and mischievous work of the State parasites, by cutting away the springs which sacrifice an immense portion of the national produce to the feeding of the State monster on the one side, by doing, on the other, the real work of administration, local and national, for working men’s wages. It begins therefore with an immense saving, with economical reform as well as political transformation.

The Communal organization once firmly established on a national scale, the catastrophes it might still have to undergo, would be sporadic slaveholders’ insurrections, which, while for a moment interrupting the work of peaceful progress, would only accelerate the movement, by putting the sword into the hands of the Social Revolution.

The working class know that they have to pass through different phases of class struggle. They know that the superseding of the economical conditions of the slavery of labor by the conditions of free and associated labor can only be the progressive work of time (that economical transformation), that they require not only a change of distribution, but a

new organization of production, or rather the delivery (setting free) of the social forms of production in present organized labor (engendered by present industry), of [read from] the trammels of slavery, of [read from] their present class character, and their harmonious national and international co-ordination. They know that this work of regeneration will be again and again relented ²³⁰ and impeded by the resistance of vested interests and class egotisms. They know that the present “spontaneous action of the natural laws of capital and landed property” can only be superseded by “the spontaneous action of the laws of the social economy of free and associated labor” by a long process of development of new conditions, as was the “spontaneous action of the economic laws of slavery” and the “spontaneous action of the economical laws of serfdom.” But they know at the same time that great strides may be [made] at once through the Communal form of political organization and that the time has come to begin that movement for themselves and mankind.

PEASANTRY

(*War indemnity*) Even before the instalment of the Commune, the Central Committee had declared through its *Journal officiel*: “The greater part of the war indemnity should be paid by the authors of war.”²³¹ This is the great “conspiracy against civilization” the men of Order are most afraid of. This [is] the most practical question. With the Commune victorious, the authors of the war will have to pay its indemnity; with Versailles victorious, the producing masses who have already paid in blood, ruin, and contribution, will have again to pay, and the financial dignitaries will even contrive to make a profit out of the transaction. The liquidation of the war costs is to be decided by the civil war. The Commune represents on this vital point not only the interests of the working class, the petty middle class, in fact, all the middle class with the exception of the *bourgeoisie* (the wealthy capitalists) (the rich landowners, and their State parasites). It represents above all the interest of the *French peasantry*. On them the greater part of the war taxes will be shifted, if Thiers and his “*Ruraux*” are victorious. And

²³⁰ relented: retarded.

²³¹ From an article which elucidated the stand of the stand of the Central Committee of the National Guard on the payment of the war indemnity. The article appeared in the *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 83, March 24, 1871.

people are silly enough to repeat the cry of the “*Ruraux*” that they—the great landed proprietors—“represent the peasant,” who is of course, in the naivety of his soul, exceedingly anxious to pay for these good “landowners” the milliards of the war indemnity, who made him already pay the milliard of indemnity: the Revolution indemnity.²³²

The same men deliberately compromised the Republic of February by the additional 45 centimes tax²³³ on the peasant, but this they did in the name of the Revolution, in the name of the “provisional government,” created by it. It is now in their own name that they wage a civil war against the Communal Republic to shift the war indemnity from their own shoulders upon those of the peasant! He will of course be delighted by it!

The Commune will abolish conscription, the Party of Order will fasten the blood-tax on the peasant. The Party of Order will fasten upon him the tax-collector for the payment of a parasitical and costly State machinery, the Commune will give him a cheap government. The Party of Order will continue [to] grind him down by the townish usurer, the Commune will free him of the incubus of the mortgages lasting upon his plot of land. The Commune will replace the parasitical judiciary body eating the heart of his income—the notary, the *huissier*, etc.—[by] Communal agents doing their work at workmen’s salaries, instead of enriching himself out of the peasant’s work. It will break down this whole judiciary cobweb which entangles the French peasant and gives abodes to the judiciary bench and *maires* of the bourgeois spiders that suck its blood! The Party of Order will keep him under the rule of the gendarme, the Commune will restore him to independent, social and political life! The Commune will enlighten him by the rule of the schoolmaster, the Party of Order force upon him the stultification by the rule of the priest! But the French peasant is above all a man of reckoning! He will find it exceedingly reasonable that the payment

²³² On April 27, 1825, the reactionary government of Charles X promulgated a law compensating former émigrés for the loss of their estates confiscated in the years of the bourgeois French Revolution. The greater part of the indemnity—totaling 1,000 million francs and paid by the government in the form of three-per-cent securities—was obtained by the chief aristocrats at court and the big landlords of France.

²³³ The Provisional Government of the Second Republic decided on March 16, 1848 to add a 45 centimes tax to each franc of direct tax collected. The burden of this additional tax fell mainly on the peasants. Big landowners and priests made use of the peasants’s discontent, incited them to oppose the democrats and workers of Paris and turned them into a reserve force of counter-revolution.

of the clergy will no longer [be] exacted from him by the tax-collector, but will be left to the “spontaneous action” of his religious instinct!

The French peasant had elected Louis Bonaparte President of the Republic, but the Party of Order (during the anonymous *régime* of the Republic under the assembly *constituante* and *législative*) was the creator of the Empire! What the French peasant really wants, he commenced to show in 1849 and 1852 by opposing his *maire* to the government’s prefect, his schoolmaster to the government’s parson, himself to the government’s gendarme! The nucleus of the reactionary laws of the Party of Order in 1849—and peculiarly in January and February 1850²³⁴—were specifically directed against the French peasantry! If the French peasant had made Louis Bonaparte President of the Republic because in his tradition all the benefits he had derived from the first Revolution were phantastically transferred on the first Napoleon, the armed risings of peasants in some departments of France and the gendarme hunting upon them after the *coup d’état* proved that that delusion was rapidly breaking down! The Empire was founded on the delusions artificially nourished into power and [on] traditional prejudices, the Commune would be founded on his living interests and his real wants.

The hatred of the French peasant is centering on the “Rurals,” the men of the *Château*, the men of the milliard of indemnity and the townish capitalist, masqueraded into [*read as*] a landed proprietor, whose encroachment upon him marched never more rapidly than under the Second Empire, partly fostered by artificial State means, partly naturally growing out of the very development of modern agriculture. The “Rurals” know that three months’ rule of the Republican Empire in France would be the signal of the rising of the peasantry and the agricultural proletariat against them. Hence their ferocious hatred of the Commune! What they fear even more than the emancipation of the townish proletariat is the emancipation of the peasants. The peasants would soon acclaim the townish proletariat as their own leaders and seniors. There exists of course in France as in most continental countries a deep antagonism between the townish and

²³⁴ This refers to the laws that divided France into military districts and gave commanders extensive powers, granted the president of the republic the right to appoint and remove burgomasters, placed school-masters under the control of the prefects, and extended the clergy’s influence over national education. Marx gave a characterization of these laws in his work “The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850.”

rural producers, between the industrial proletariat and the peasantry. The aspirations of the proletariat, the material basis of its movement is labor organized on a grand scale, although now despotically organized, and the means of production centralized, although now centralized in the hands of the monopolist, not only as a means of production, but as a means of the exploitation and enslavement of the *producteur* [producers]. What the proletariat has to do is to transform the present capitalist character of that organized labor and those centralized means of labor, to transform them from the means of class rule and class exploitation into forms of free associated labor and social means of production. On the other hand, the labor of the peasant is insulated and the means of production are parceled, dispersed. On these economical differences rests superconstructed²³⁵ a whole world of different social and political views. But this peasantry proprietorship has long since outgrown its normal phase, that is, the phase in which it was a reality, a mode of production and a form of property which responded to the economical wants of society and placed the rural producers themselves into normal conditions of life. It has entered its period of decay. On the one side a large *prolétariat foncier* (rural proletariat) has grown out of it, whose interests are identical with those of the townish wage laborers. The mode of production itself has become superannuated by the modern progress of agronomy. Lastly—the peasant proprietorship itself has become nominal, leaving to the peasant the delusion of proprietorship and expropriating him from the fruits of his own labor. The competition of the great farm producers, the blood-tax, the State tax, the usury of the townish mortgagee and the multitudinous pilfering of the judiciary system thrown around him, have degraded him to the position of a Hindoo Ryot, while expropriation—even expropriation from his nominal proprietorship—and his degradation into a rural proletarian is an everyday fact. What separates the peasant from the proletarian is, therefore, no longer his real interest, but his delusive prejudice. If the Commune, as we have shown, is the only power that can give him immediate great loans even in its present economical conditions, it is the only form of government that can secure to him the transformation of his present economical conditions, rescue him from expropriation by the landlord on the one hand,

²³⁵ superconstructed: as superstructure.

save him from grinding, trudging²³⁶ and misery on the pretext of proprietorship on the other, that can convert his nominal proprietorship of the land into real proprietorship of the fruits of his labor, that can combine for him the profits of modern agronomy, dictated by social wants and every day now encroaching upon him as a hostile agency, without annihilating his position as a really independent producer. Being immediately benefited by the Communal Republic, he would soon confide in it.

UNION (LIGUE) RÉPUBLICAINE

The party of disorder, whose *régime* topped²³⁷ under the corruption of the Second Empire, has left Paris (exodus from Paris), followed by its appurtenances, its retainers, its menials, its State parasites, its *mouchards*, its *cocottes*, and the whole band of low *bohème* (the common criminals) that form the complement of that *bohème of quality*. But the true vital elements of the middle classes, delivered by the workmen's revolution from their sham *représentants*, has for the first time in the history of French Revolutions, separated from it and come out in its true colors. It is the "Ligue of Republican Liberty,"²³⁸ acting as the intermediary between Paris and the provinces, disavowing Versailles and marching under the banners of the Commune.

THE COMMUNAL REVOLUTION AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL CLASSES OF SOCIETY NOT LIVING UPON FOREIGN LABOR²³⁹

We have seen that the Paris proletarian fights for the French peasant, and Versailles fights against him; that the greatest anxiety of the *Ruraux* is that Paris be heard by the peasant and no longer separated by [read from] him through the blockade; that at the bottom of its war upon Paris is the attempt to keep the peasantry as its bondman and treat him as before as its *matière* "taillable à merci et miséricorde" [its object "liable to pay taxes at its mercy and behest"].

²³⁶ "trudging" should read "drudging."

²³⁷ topped: reached its summit.

²³⁸ This probably refers to the Alliance républicaine des Départements (see note 115).

²³⁹ foreign labor: the labor of others.

For the first time in history the petty and *moyenne* middle class [petty and middle bourgeoisie] has openly rallied round the workmen's Revolution, and proclaimed it as the only means of their own salvation and that of France! It forms with them the bulk of the National Guard, it sits with them in the Commune, it mediates for them in the Union républicaine!

The principal measures taken by the Commune are taken for the salvation of the middle class—the debtor class of Paris against the creditor class! That middle class had rallied in the June insurrection (1848) against the proletariat under the banners of the capitalist class, their generals, and their State parasites. It was punished at once on the September 19, 1848 by the rejection of the “concordats à l'amiable.”²⁴⁰ The victory over the June insurrection showed itself at once also as the victory of the creditor, the wealthy capitalist over the debtor, the middle class. It insisted mercilessly on its pound of flesh. On June 13th, 1849 the National Guard of that middle class was disarmed and sabered down by the army of the bourgeoisie!

During the Empire, [as a result of] the dilapidation of the State resources, upon which the wealthy capitalist fed, this middle class was delivered to the plunder of the stock-jobber, the railway kings, the swindling associations of the Crédit mobilier, etc., and expropriated by capitalist association (joint-stock company). If lowered in its political position, attacked in its economical interests, it was morally revolted by the orgies of that *régime*. The infamies of the war gave the last shock and roused its feelings as Frenchmen. [Considering] the disasters bestowed upon France by that war, its crisis of national breakdown and its financial ruin, this middle class feels that not the corrupt class of the would-be slaveholders of France, but only the manly aspirations and the herculean power of the working class can come to the rescue!

They feel that only the working class can emancipate them from priest rule, convert science from an instrument of class rule into a popular force, convert the men of science themselves from the panderers to

²⁴⁰ This refers to the rejection of the bill on the “*concordats à l'amiable*” by the Constituent Assembly on August 22, 1848. The bill provided for the deferment of the payment of debts by any debtor who could prove he had become bankrupt owing to stagnation of business caused by the revolution. As a result of this, a considerable number of the petite bourgeoisie became totally ruined and were left to the tender mercy of the big bourgeois creditors.

class prejudice, place-hunting State parasites, and allies of capital into free agents of thought! Science can only play its genuine part in the Republic of Labor.

REPUBLIC ONLY POSSIBLE AS AVOWEDLY SOCIAL REPUBLIC

This civil war has destroyed the last delusions about [the] “Republic,” as the Empire [destroyed] the delusion of unorganized “universal suffrage” in the hands of the State gendarme and the parson. All vital elements of France acknowledge that a Republic is only in France and Europe possible as a “Social Republic,” that is a Republic which disowns the capital and landowner class of the State machinery to supersede it by the Commune, that frankly avows “social emancipation” as then great goal of the Republic and guarantees thus that social transformation by the Communal organization. The other Republic can be nothing but the *anonymous* terrorism of all monarchical fractions, of the combined Legitimists, Orléanists, and Bonapartists to land in an Empire *quelconque* [of any kind] as its final goal, the *anonymous* terror of class rule which having done its dirty work will always burst into an Empire!

The professional Republicans of the Rural Assembly are men who really believe, despite the experiments of 1848-51, despite the civil war against Paris—the *Republican form* of class despotism [to be] a possible, lasting form, while the “Party of Order” demands it only as a form of conspiracy for fighting the Republic and reintroducing its only adequate form, monarchy or rather imperialism, as the form of class despotism. In 1848 these voluntary dupes were pushed in the foreground till, by the insurrection of June, they had paved the way for the *anonymous* rule of all fractions of the would-be slaveholders in France. In 1871, at Versailles, they are from [the] beginning pushed in the background, there to figure as the “Republican” decoration of Thiers’ rule and sanction by their presence the war of the Bonapartist generals upon Paris! In unconscious self-irony these wretches hold their party meeting in the *Salle du Jeu de Paume* (Tennis Court) to show how they have degenerated from their predecessors in 1789!²⁴¹ By their Schölchers, etc., they tried to coax Paris in[to] tendering

²⁴¹ The French Estates-General on June 17, 1789, took the title of National Assembly. In opposition to Louis XVI’s order that the three estates were to sit separately, the representatives of the third estate assembled at Jeu de Paume (Tennis Court) in Ver-

its arms to Thiers and to force it into disarmament by the National Guard of "Order" under Saisset! We do not speak of the so-called socialist Paris deputies like Louis Blanc. They undergo meekly the insults of a Dufaure and the *Ruriaux*, dote upon Thiers' "legal" rights, and whining in [the] presence of the banditti cover themselves with infamy!

WORKMEN AND COMTE

If the workmen have outgrown the time of socialist sectarianism, it ought not be forgotten that they have never been in the leading strings of Comtism. This sect has never afforded the *International* but a *branch* of about half a dozen of men, whose program was rejected by the General Council.²⁴² Comte is known to the Parisian workmen as the prophet in politics of imperialism (of personal *dictatorship*), of capitalist rule in political economy, of hierarchy in all spheres of human action, even in the sphere of science, and as the author of a new catechism with a new pope and new saints in place of the old ones.

If his followers in England play a more popular part than those in France it is not by preaching their sectarian doctrines, but by their personal valor, and by the acceptance [...?...] of the forms of working-men class struggle created without them,²⁴³ as, f.i., the trade unions and strikes in England which by-the-by are denounced as heresy by their Paris co-religionists.

THE COMMUNE (SOCIAL MEASURES)

That the workmen of Paris have taken the initiative of the present Revolution and in heroic self-sacrifice bear the brunt of this battle, is nothing new. It is the striking fact of all French Revolutions! It is only a repetition of the past! That the Revolution is made in *the name* and con-

sailles on June 20 and took an oath not to disperse until a constitution for France was worked out. The Tennis Court oath was one of the events that heralded the bourgeois French Revolution.

²⁴² This refers to the Paris Society of Proletarian Positivists whose program smacked of Auguste Comte's bourgeois philosophy. Though the General Council sharply criticized the program, it accepted the society as a section of the International in early 1870 because of its working-class composition.

²⁴³ In the German translation, this sentence reads: "... and because their sects accept the forms of proletarian class struggle, which were created without them..."

fessedly *for* the popular masses, that is, the producing masses, is a feature this Revolution has in common with all its predecessors. The new feature is that the people, after the first rise, have not disarmed themselves and surrendered their power into the hands of the Republican mountebanks of the ruling classes, that, by the constitution of the *Commune*, they have taken the actual management of their Revolution into their own hands and found at the same time, in the case of success, the means to hold it in the hands of the people itself, displacing the State machinery, the governmental machinery of the ruling classes by a governmental machinery of their own. This is their ineffable crime! Workmen infringing upon the governmental privilege of the upper 10,000 and proclaiming their will to break the economical basis of that class despotism which for its own sake wielded the organized State force of society! This is it that has thrown the respectable classes in Europe as in the United States into the paroxysm of convulsions and accounts for their shrieks of abomination [that] it is blasphemy, [and for] their fierce appeals to assassination of the people and the billingsgate of abuse and calumny from their parliamentary tribunes and their journalistic servants' hall!

The greatest measure of the Commune is its own existence, working, acting under circumstances of unheard-of difficulty! The red flag, hoisted by the Paris Commune, crowns in reality only the government of workmen for Paris! They have clearly, consciously proclaimed the Emancipation of Labor, and the transformation of society, as their goal! But the actual "social" character of their Republic consists only in this, that workmen govern the Paris Commune! As to their measures, they must, by the nature of things, be principally confined to the military defense of Paris and its *approvisionnement* [supply]!

Some patronizing friends of the working class, while hardly dissembling their disgust even at the few measures they consider as "socialist," although there is nothing socialist in them except their tendency, express their satisfaction and try to coax genteel sympathies for the Paris Commune by the great discovery that, after all, workmen are rational men and whenever in power always resolutely turn their back upon socialist enterprises! They do in fact neither try to establish in Paris a *phalanstère* nor

an *Icarie*.²⁴⁴ Wise men of their generation! These benevolent patronizers, profoundly ignorant of the real aspirations and the real movement of the working classes, forget one thing. All the socialist founders of sects belong to a period in which the working class themselves were neither sufficiently trained and organized by the march of capitalist society itself to enter as historical agents upon the world's stage, nor were the material conditions of their emancipation sufficiently matured in the old world itself. Their misery existed, but the conditions of their own movement did not yet exist. The utopian founders of sects, while in their criticism of present society clearly describing the goal of the social movement, the supersession of the wages system with all its economical conditions of class rule, found neither in society itself the material conditions of its transformation, nor in the working class the organized power and the *conscience* [consciousness] of the movement. They tried to compensate for the historical conditions of the movement by phantastic pictures and plans of a new society in whose propaganda they saw the true means of salvation. From the moment the working-men class movement became real, the phantastic utopias evanesced, not because the working class had given up the end aimed at by these Utopists, but because they had found the real means to realize them, but in their place came a real insight into the historic conditions of the movement and a more and more gathering force of the military organization of the working class. But the last 2 ends of the movement proclaimed by the Utopians are the last ends proclaimed by the Paris Revolution and by the International. Only the means are different and the real conditions of the movement are no longer clouded in utopian fables. These patronizing friends of the proletariat, in glossing over the loudly proclaimed socialist tendencies of this Revolution, are therefore but the dupes of their own ignorance. It is not the fault of the Paris proletariat, if for them the utopian creations of the prophets of the working-men movement are still the "Social Revolution," that is to say, if the Social Revolution is for them still "utopian."

²⁴⁴ *Phalanstère*—this is the name given by Charles Fourier, the French utopian socialist, to describe the producers' and consumers' co-operative in an ideal socialist society.

Icarie—an imaginary communist land described by an exponent of utopian communism, Étienne Cabet, in his socio-philosophical novel, *Voyage en Icarie*.

Journal officiel of the Central Committee, March 20:

The proletarians of the capital, in [the] midst [of] the *défaillances* [failures] and the treasons of the governing (ruling) classes, have understood (*compris*) that the hour has arrived for them *to save the situation in taking into their own hands the direction (management) of public affairs* (the state business).

They denounce “the political incapacity and the moral decrepitude of the bourgeoisie” as the source of “the misfortunes of France.”

The workmen, who produce everything and enjoy nothing, who suffer from misery in the midst of their accumulated products, the fruit of their work and their sweat... *shall they never be allowed to work for their emancipation?* ...The proletariat, in face of the permanent menace against its rights, of the absolute negation of all its legitimate aspirations, of the ruin of the country and all its hopes, has understood that it was its imperious duty and its absolute right to take into its hands its own destinies and to assure their triumph in seizing the State power (*en s'emparant du pouvoir*).²⁴⁵

It is here plainly stated that the government of the working class is, in the first instance, necessary to save France from the ruins and the corruption impended upon it by the ruling classes, that the dislodgment of these classes from power (of these classes who have lost the capacity of ruling France) is *a necessity of national safety*.

But it is no less clearly stated that the government by the working class can only save France and do the national business, by working for its *own emancipation*, the conditions of that emancipation being at the same time the conditions of the regeneration of France.

It is proclaimed as a war of labor upon the monopolists of the means of labor, upon capital.

The *chauvinism* of the bourgeoisie is only a vanity, giving a national cloak to all their own pretensions. It is a means, by permanent armies, to

²⁴⁵ *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 80, March 21, 1871.

perpetuate international struggles, to subjugate in each country the producers by pitching them against their brothers in each other country, a means to prevent the international co-operation of the working classes, the first condition of their emancipation. The true character of that chauvinism (long since become a mere phrase) has come out during the war of defense after Sedan, everywhere paralyzed by the chauvinist bourgeoisie in the capitulation of France, in the civil war carried on under that high priest of chauvinism, Thiers, on Bismarck's sufferance! It came out in the petty police intrigue of the Anti-German League,²⁴⁶ [in the] foreigners hunting in Paris after the capitulation. It was hoped that the Paris people (and the French people) could be stultified into the passion of national hatred and by factitious outrages to the foreigner forget its real aspiration and its home betrayers!

How has this factitious movement disappeared (vanished) before the breath of revolutionary Paris! Loudly proclaiming its international tendencies—because the cause of the producer is every[where] the same and its enemy everywhere the same, whatever its nationality (in whatever national garb?—it proclaimed as a principle the admission of foreigners into the Commune; it chose even a foreign workman²⁴⁷ (a member of the International) into its Executive, it decreed [the destruction of] the symbol of French chauvinism—the Vendôme Column!

And while their bourgeois *chawvins* have dismembered France, and act under the dictatorship of the foreign invasion, the Paris workmen have beaten the foreign enemy by striking at their own class rulers, have abolished fractions, in conquering the post as the vanguard of the workmen of all nations!

The genuine patriotism of the bourgeoisie—so natural for the real proprietors of the different “national” estates—has faded into a mere sham consequent upon the cosmopolitan character imprinted upon their financial, commercial, and industrial enterprise. Under similar circumstances it would explode in all countries as it did in France.

²⁴⁶ During the period of the Paris Commune, the reactionary *Paris-Journal* published a libelous report, stating that the Paris sections of the International had expelled all the German members from the International in accordance with the wish of the Anti-German League (See Marx and Engels, *Works*, Ger. ed., Vol. XVII, pp. 296-97).

²⁴⁷ Leó Frankel (1844-1896).

DECENTRALIZATION BY THE RURAUX AND THE COMMUNE

It has been said that Paris, and with it, the other French towns, were oppressed by the rule of the peasants, and that its present struggle is for its emancipation from the rule of the peasantry! Never was a more foolish lie uttered!

Paris, as the central seat and the stronghold of the centralized government machinery, subjected the peasantry to the rule of the gendarme, the tax-collector, the Prefect, and the priest, and the rural magnates, that is, to the despotism of its enemies, and deprived it of all life (took the life out of it). It repressed all organs of independent life in the rural districts. On the other hand, the government, the rural magnate, the gendarme and the priest, into whose hands the whole influence of the provinces was thus thrown by the centralized State machinery centering at Paris, brought this influence to bear for the government and the classes whose government it was, not against [the] Paris [of] the government, the parasite, the capitalist, the idle, the cosmopolitan stew, but against the Paris of the workman and the thinker. In this way, by the government centralization with Paris as its base, the peasants were suppressed by the Paris of the government and the capitalist and the Paris of the workmen was suppressed by the provincial power handed over into the hands of the enemies of the peasants.

*The Versailles Moniteur*²⁴⁸ (March 29) declares "that Paris cannot be a *free city*, because it is *the capital*." This is the true thing. Paris, the capital of the ruling classes and its [read their] government, cannot be a "free city" and the provinces cannot be "free," because such a Paris is the capital. The provinces can only be free with the *Commune at Paris*. The *Party of Order* is still more infuriated against Paris because it has proclaimed its own emancipation from them and their government, than because, by doing so, it has sounded the alarm signal for the emancipation of the peasant and the provinces from their sway.

Journal officiel de la Commune, 1 April:

The revolution of the 18th March had not for its only object the securing to Paris of Communal representation elected, but subject to the *despotic tutelage of a national power strongly*

²⁴⁸ See Note 206.

*centralized. It is to conquer, and secure independence for all the communes of France, and also of [read for] all superior groups, departments, and provinces, united amongst themselves for their common interest by a really national pact; it is to guarantee and perpetuate the Republic... Paris has renounced her apparent omnipotence which is identical with her forfeiture, she has not renounced that moral power, that intellectual influence, which so often has made her victorious in France and Europe in her propaganda.*²⁴⁹

This time again Paris works and suffers for all France, of which it prepares by its combats and its sacrifices the intellectual, moral, administrative and economical regeneration, the glory and the prosperity. (*Program of the Commune de Paris sent out by balloon.*)²⁵⁰

Mr. Thiers, in his tour through the provinces, managed the elections, and above all, his own manifold elections. But there was one difficulty. The Bonapartist provincials had for the moment become impossible. (Besides, he did not want them, nor did they want him.) Many of the old Orléanist stagers had merged into the Bonapartist lot. It was, therefore, necessary, to appeal to the rusticated Legitimist landowners who had kept quite aloof from politics and were just the men to be duped. They have given the apparent character to the Versailles Assembly, its character of the “*Chambre introuvable*” of Louis XVIII, its “Rural” character. In their vanity, they believed, of course, that their time had at last come with the downfall of the Second Bonapartist Empire and under the shelter of foreign invasion, as it had come in 1814 and 1815. Still they are mere dupes. So far as they act, they can only act as elements of the “Party of Order,” and its “anonymous” terrorism as in 1848-1851. Their own party effusions lend only the comical character to that association. They are, therefore, forced to suffer as president the jail-*accoucheur* of the Duchess of Berry and

²⁴⁹ Quoted from an editorial of the *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 91, April 1, 1871.

²⁵⁰ From the “Proclamation to the People of France,” issued by the Paris Commune on April 19, 1871, and published in the *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 110, April 20, 1871.

as their ministers the pseudo-Republicans of the Government of Defense. They will be pushed aside as soon as they have done their service. But—a trick of history—by this curious combination of circumstances they are forced to attack Paris because of revolting against “the *République une et indivisible*” [the Republic, one and indivisible] (Louis Blanc expresses it so, Thiers calls it unity of France) while their very first exploit was to revolt against unity by declaring for the “decapitation and decapitalization” of Paris, by wanting the Assembly to throne in a provincial town. What they really want is to go back to what preceded the centralized State machinery, become more or less independent of its prefects and its ministers, and put into its place the provincial and local domainial influence of the *Châteaux*. They want a reactionary *decentralization* of France. What Paris wants is to supplant that centralization which has done its service against feodality, but has become the mere unity of an artificial body, resting on gendarmes, red and black armies, repressing the life of real society, lasting as an incubus upon it, giving Paris an “apparent omnipotence” by enclosing it and leaving the provinces outdoor²⁵¹—to supplant this unitarian France which exists besides the French society, by the political union of French society itself through the Communal organization.

The true partisans of breaking up the unity of France are therefore the Rurals, opposed to the united State machinery so far as it interferes with their own local importance (seignorial rights), so far as it is the antagonist of feudalism.

What Paris wants is to break up that factitious unitarian system, so far as it is the antagonist of the real living union of France and a mere means of Class rule.

Comtist View

Men completely ignorant of the existing economical system are of course still less able to comprehend the workmen’s negation to that system. They can of course not comprehend that the social transformation the working class aim at is the necessary, historical, unavoidable birth²⁵² of

²⁵¹ outdoor: outside.

²⁵² birth: product.

the present system itself. They talk in deprecatory tones of the threatened abolition of “property,” because in their eyes their present class form of property—a transitory historical form—*is* property itself, and the abolition of that form would therefore be the abolition of “property”. As they now defend the “charity” of capital rule and the wages system, if they had lived in feudal times or in times of slavery they would have defended the feudal system and the slave system, as founded on the nature of things, as a spontaneous outgrowth[?] springing from nature; [they would have] fiercely declaimed against their “abuses,” but at the same time from the height of their ignorance answering to the prophecies of their abolition by the dogma of their “charity” weighed by “moral checks” (“constraints”).

They are as right in their appreciation of the aims of the Paris working classes, as is M. Bismarck in declaring that what the Commune wants is the social property which makes property the attribute of labor; far from creating individual “moral constraints” [it] will emancipate the “morals” of the individual from its class constraints.

Poor men! They do not even know that every *social form* of property has “morals” of its own, and that the form of [...] ²⁵³

How the breath of the popular revolution has changed Paris! The Revolution of February was called the revolution of moral contempt. It was proclaimed by the cries of the people, “*À bas les grands voleurs ! À bas les assassins !*” [“Down with the big thieves! Down with the assassins!”] Such was the sentiment of the people. But as to the bourgeoisie, they wanted broader sway for corruption! They got it under Louis Bonaparte’s (Napoleon the Little’s) reign. Paris, the gigantic town, the town of historic initiative, was transformed in[to] the *maison dorée* [“gilded house”—brothel] of all the idlers and swindlers of the world, into a cosmopolitan stew! After the exodus of the “better class of people,” the Paris of the working class reappeared, heroic, self-sacrificing, enthusiastic in the sentiment of its herculean task! No cadavers in the Morgue, no insecurity of the streets. Paris was never more quiet within. Instead of the *cocottes*, the heroic women of

²⁵³ In the German translation, the last two paragraphs read: “They are as right in their appreciation of the aims of the Paris working classes, as is M. Bismarck in declaring that what the Commune wants is the Prussian municipal system.”

Paris! Manly, stern, fighting, working, thinking Paris! Magnanimous Paris! In view of the cannibalism of their enemies, making their prisoners only dangerless!²⁵⁴ ...What Paris will no longer stand is yet the existence of the *cocottes* and *cocodès* [dandies]. What it is resolved to drive away or transform is this useless, skeptical and egoistical race which has taken possession of the gigantic town, to use it as its own. No celebrity of the Empire shall have the right to say, "Paris is very pleasant in the best quarters, but there are too many paupers in the others." (*Vérité*,²⁵⁵ 23 April):

Private crime wonderfully diminished at Paris. The absence of thieves and *cocottes*, of assassinations and street-attacks: all the conservateurs [conservatives] have fled to Versailles!

There has not been signaled one single nocturnal attack even in the most distant and less frequented quarters since the citizens do their police business themselves.

²⁵⁴ In the German translation, this sentence reads: "Faced with the cannibalism of its enemies, it took measures so that its captives could not endanger it any longer."

²⁵⁵ *La Vérité*—a daily published in Paris by radical bourgeois Republicans from October 1870 to September 3, 1871. At first it supported the Paris Commune, but later turned against the social measures the Commune had adopted.

[FRAGMENTS]

Thiers on the Rurals

This party “knows only to employ three means: foreign invasion, civil war and anarchy... Such a government will never be that of France.” (*Chambre des députés of 5th janvier, 1833.*)

Government of Defense

And this same Trochu said in his famous program: “The governor of Paris will never capitulate,” and Jules Favre in his circular: “Not a stone of our fortresses, nor a foot of our territories,” same as Ducrot: “I shall never return to Paris save dead or victorious.” He found afterwards at Bordeaux that his life was necessary for keeping down the “rebels” of Paris. (These wretches know that in their flight to Versailles they have left behind the proofs of their crimes, and to destroy these proofs they would not recoil from making Paris a mountain of ruins bathed in a sea of blood.) (*Manifeste à la province, by balloon.*)²⁵⁶

The unity which has been imposed upon us to the present, by the Empire, the Monarchy, and Parliamentary Government is nothing but centralization, despotic, unintelligent, arbitrary and onerous. The political unity as desired by Paris, is a voluntary association of all local initiative... a central delegation from the Federal Communes.

End of the old governmental and clerical world, of military supremacy and bureaucracy and jobbing in monopolies and privileges to which the *proletariat* owed its slavery and the country its misfortunes and disasters. (Proclamation of Commune, April 19.)²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ *Le Vengeur*, No. 30, April 28, 1871.

²⁵⁷ From the “Proclamation to the People of France,” issued by the Paris Commune on April 19, 1871, and published in the *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 110, April 20, 1871.

Gendarmes and Policemen

20,000 gendarmes (drawn to Versailles from all France, *im ganzen 30,000 untet dem Empire*²⁵⁸) and 12,000 Paris police agents—basis of the finest army France ever had.

Republican Deputies of Paris

The Republican Deputies of Paris “have not protested either against the bombardment of Paris, or the summary executions of the prisoners, or the calumnies against the people of Paris. They have on the contrary, by their presence at the Assembly and their *mutisme* [mutism], given a consecration to all these acts supported by the notoriety the Republican Party has given those men. Have become the allies and conscious accomplices of the monarchical party. Declares them traitors to their mandate and the Republic.” (*Association générale des défenseurs de la République.*)²⁵⁹ (May 9.)

“Centralization leads to apoplexy in Paris and to absence of life everywhere else.” (*Lamennais.*)

“Aujourd’hui tout se rapporte à un centre, et ce centre est, pour ainsi dire, l’État même.” [“Today everything relates to a center, and this center is, so to speak, the State itself.”] (*Montesquieu.*)²⁶⁰

Vendôme Affair, etc.

The Central Committee of the National Guard, constituted by the nomination of a delegate of each company, on the entrance of the Prussians into Paris, transported to Montmartre, Belleville *et* La Villette the cannon and *mitrailleuses* found[ed] by the subscription of the National Guards themselves, which cannon and *mitrailleuses* were abandoned by the Government of National Defense, even in those quarters which were to be occupied by the Prussians.

²⁵⁸ Totaling 30,000 under the Empire.

²⁵⁹ *L’Association générale des Défenseurs de la République*—a bourgeois democratic organization, formed in Paris in February 1871 to fight for a republic. The association supported the Commune and criticized the policies of the Versailles government. The resolution of the association quoted here appeared in the *Journal officiel de la République française*. No. 129, May 9, 1871.

²⁶⁰ Charles Montesquieu, *De l’Esprit des lois*, Genève, 1748, Vol. II, p. 165.

On the morning of March 18th the Government made an energetic appeal to the National Guard, but out of 400,000 National Guards only 300 men answered.

On March 18th, at 3 o'clock in the morning, the agents of police and some *bataillons* of the line were at Montmartre, Belleville, and La Villette to surprise the guardians of artillery and to take it away by force.

The National Guard resisted, the soldiers of the line *levèrent la crosse en l'air* [raised the butts of their guns in the air], *despite the menaces and the orders of General Lecomte*, shot the same day by his soldiers at the same time as Clément Thomas. ("Troops of the line threw the butts of their muskets in the air, and fraternized with the insurgents.")

The bulletin of victory by Aurelle de Paladines was already printed; also papers found on the Décembrisation²⁶¹ of Paris.

On the March 19 the Central Committee declared the state of siege of Paris raised; on the 20^[th] Picard proclaimed it for the department of the *Seine-et-Oise*.

March 18 (morning: still believing in his victory), *Proclamation of Thiers*, placarded on the walls:

The Government has resolved to act. The criminals who affect to institute a government must be delivered to regular justice and the cannon taken away must be restored to the Arsenals.

Late in the afternoon, the nocturnal surprise having failed, he appeals to the *National Guards*:

The Government is not preparing a *coup d'état*. The Government of the Republic has not and cannot have any other aim than the safety of the Republic.

He will only "do away with the insurgent committee"... "almost all unknown to the population."

Late in the evening, a third proclamation to the *National Guard*, signed by Picard and Aurelle:

²⁶¹ Here Marx means a coup d'état like that of Louis Bonaparte of December 2, 1851.

Some misguided men... resist formally the National Guard and the army... The Government has *chosen that your arms should be left to you*. Seize them with resolution to establish the reign of law and to *save the Republic from anarchy*.

(On the 17th Schölcher tries to wheedle them into disarming.)

Proclamation of the Central Committee of the March 19: “The state of siege is raised. The people of Paris is convoked for its Communal elections.”

Id. to the National Guards:

You have charged us to organize the defense of Paris and of your rights... At this moment our mandate has expired; we give it back to you, we will not take the place of those whom the popular breath *vient de renverser* [has just overthrown].²⁶²

They allowed the members of the Government to withdraw quietly to Versailles (even such as they had in their hands like Ferry).

The Communal elections convoked for the March 22 through the demonstration of the Party of Order, removed²⁶³ to March 26th.

March 21. The Assembly’s frantic roars of dissent against the words “Vive la République” at the end of a Proclamation “to *citizens and army* (soldiers).” *Thiers*: “It might be a very legitimate proposal, etc.” (Dissent of the Rurals.) *Jules Favre* made harangue against the doctrine of the Republic being superior to universal suffrage, flattered the Rural majority, threatened the Parisians with Prussian intervention and provoked *the demonstration of the Party of Order*. *Thiers*: “Come what may he would not send an armed force to attack Paris.” (Had no troops yet to do it.)

Le Comité central était si peu sûr de sa victoire qu’il accepta avec empressement la médiation des maires et des députés de Paris... L’entêtement de Thiers lui permit (au Comité) de vivre un ou deux jours: il eut alors conscience de ses forces. Fautes sans nombre des révolutionnaires. Au lieu de mettre les sergents de ville hors d’état de nuire, on leur ouvrit les portes; ils allèrent à Versailles, où ils furent accueillis comme les sauveurs; on laissa partir le 43^e de ligne; on renvoya dans leurs foyers tous les soldats

²⁶² *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 79, March 20, 1871.

²⁶³ removed: was postponed.

qui avaient fraternisé avec le peuple; on permit à la réaction de s'organiser dans le centre même de Paris; on laissa tranquille Versailles. Tridon, Jaclard, Varlin, Vaillant voulaient qu'on allât immédiatement débusquer les royalistes... Favre et Thiers faisaient des démarches pressantes auprès des autorités prussiennes dans le but d'obtenir leurs concours... pour réprimer le mouvement insurrectionnel de Paris. [The Central Committee was so little sure of its own victory that it hastily accepted the mediation by the mayors and deputies of Paris... Thiers' obstinacy permitted it (the committee) to subsist one or two days: it then became aware of its own strength. Countless mistakes by the revolutionaries. Instead of disarming the police, they opened the gates to them; the police went to Versailles, where they were welcomed as saviors; they let the 43rd Regiment of the line leave; they sent home all the soldiers who had fraternized with the people; they allowed the reactionaries to organize themselves in the very center of Paris; they left Versailles undisturbed. Tridon, Jaclard, Varlin and Vaillant wanted to drive out the Royalists immediately... Favre and Thiers took immediate action to obtain the support of the Prussian authorities... in order to suppress the insurrectional movement in Paris.]

L'occupation constante de Trochu et de Clément Thomas d'entraver toutes les tentatives d'armement et d'organisation de la Garde nationale. La marche sur Versailles fut décidée, préparée et entreprise par le Comité central, à l'insu de la Commune et même en opposition directe avec sa volonté nettement manifestée... [Trochu and Clément Thomas were constantly preoccupied with thwarting every attempt of the National Guard to arm and organize. The march on Versailles was decided on, prepared and undertaken by the Central Committee without the knowledge of the Commune and even in opposition to its expressed wish...]

Bergeret... au lieu de faire sauter le pont de Neuilly, que les fédérés ne pouvaient garder à cause du mont Valérien et des batteries établies à Courbevoie, il laissa les royalistes s'en emparer, s'y retrancher puissamment et s'assurer par là une voie de communication avec Paris... [*Bergeret...* instead of blowing up the bridge at Neuilly which the Communards could not protect on account of Mont-Valérien and the batteries set up at Courbevoie, he let the Royalists seize it and strongly entrench themselves there, thus assuring themselves of a line of communication with Paris...]

As *M. Littré* said in a letter (*Daily News*, April 20):

Paris disarmed; Paris manacled by the Vinois, the Valentins, the Paladines, the Republic was lost. This the Parisians understood. With the alternative of succumbing without fighting, and risking a terrible contest of uncertain issue, they chose to fight; and I cannot but praise them for it.

The expedition to Rome, the work of Cavaignac, Jules Favre, and Thiers.

Un gouvernement qui a tous les avantages intérieurs du gouvernement républicain et la force extérieure du gouvernement monarchique. Je parle de la *République fédérative*... C'est une société des sociétés, qui en font une nouvelle qui peut s'agrandir par des nombreux associés, jusqu'à ce que sa puissance suffise à la sûreté de ceux qui se sont unis. Cette sorte de république... peut se maintenir, dans sa grandeur, *sans que l'intérieur* se corrompe. La forme de cette société prévient tous les inconvénients. (*Montesquieu, Esprit des lois*, 1. IX. ch. I.)²⁶⁴

[A form of government that has all the internal advantages of a republican government and the external force of a monarchical government. I mean a *federal republic*... It is a society made up of societies that constitute a new one, capable of growing by means of numerous *associates*, until its power is sufficient to ensure the security of those who have united... A republic of this kind... may preserve its greatness *without becoming internally* corrupt; the form of this society prevents all disadvantages. (*Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws*, Vol. I, Bk. IX, Ch. I.)]

Constitution de 1793:²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Charles Montesquieu, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 204-06.

²⁶⁵ *The Constitution of 1793*—constitution of the French Republic, adopted by the National Convention of the revolutionary Jacobin dictatorship during the French bourgeois Revolution. It was more democratic than any other bourgeois constitutions of the 18th and 19th centuries.

§78) Il y a dans *chaque commune* de In République une administration municipale. Dans *chaque district*, une administration intermédiaire, dans *chaque département* une administration centrale. §79) les officiers municipaux sont élus par les assemblées de la Commune. §80) Les administrateurs sont nommés par les assemblées électorales de département et de district. §81) Les municipalites et les administrations sont renouvelées tous les ans par moitié.

[§78) *Each commune* of the Republic has a municipal administration; *each district*, an intermediate administration; *each department*, a central administration. §79) The municipal officials are elected by the assemblies of the commune. §80) The administrators are appointed by the electoral assemblies of the department and the district. §81) Half of the municipal and administration members are replaced every year.]

Conseil exécutif. §62) Composé de 24 membres. §63) L'Assemblée electorale de chaque département nomme un candidat. Le Corps législatif choisit sur la liste générale les membres du conseil. §64) Il est renouvelé par moitié à chaque législature, dans le dernier mois de sa session. §65) Le conseil est chargé de la direction et de la surveillance de l'générale. §66) Il nomme, hors de son sein, les agents en chef de l'administration générale de la république. §68) Ces agents ne forment point un conseil; ils sont séparés, sans rapports immédiats entre eux, ils n'exercent aucune autorité personnelle. §73) Le Conseil révoque et remplace les agent à sa nomination.

[*Executive Council.* §62) Composed of 24 members. §63) The Electoral Assembly of each department nominates a candidate. The legislative body selects from the general list the members of the council. §64) In each legislature the council replaces half of its members in the last month of its session. §65) The council is charged with the direction and supervision of the general administration. §66) It appoints, other than its own

members, heads of general administration of the Republic. §68) These heads do not form a council; they are separated, without direct connection between them; they do not exercise personal authority. §73) The Council removes and replaces the officials it appoints.]

Roused on the one hand by Jules Favre's call to civil war in the Assembly—he told that the Prussians had threatened to interfere, if the Parisians did not give in at once—encouraged by the forbearance of the people and the passive attitude towards them of the Central Committee, the “Party of Order” at Paris resolved on a *coup de main*, which came off on March 22 under the etiquette of a *Peaceful Procession*, a peaceable demonstration against the Revolutionary Government. And it was a peaceful demonstration of a very peculiar character. “The whole movement seemed a surprise. There were no preparations to meet it.” “A riotous mob of gentlemen,” in their first rank the familiars of the Empire, the Heckeren, Coëtlogon, and H. de Pène, etc., ill-treating and disarming National Guards detached from advanced sentinels (sentries), who fled to the Place Vendôme whence the National Guards march at once to the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs. Meeting the rioters, they received order not to fire, but the rioters advance under the cry: “Down with the Assassins! Down with the Committee!” insult the guards, grasp at their muskets, shoot with a revolver citizen *Maljournal* (*lieutenant d'état-major de la place*) (*membre du Comité central*) [(lieutenant of the staff at the Place) (member of the Central Committee)]. General Bergeret calls upon them to withdraw (disband) (retire). During about 5 minutes the drums are beaten and the summations (replacing the English reading of the Riot Act) made. They reply by cries of insult. Two National Guards fall severely wounded. Meanwhile their comrades hesitate and fire into the air. *The rioters try to forcibly break through the lines and to disarm them.* Bergeret commands fire and the cowards fly. The *émeute* [riot] is at once dispersed and the fire ceases. Shots are fired from houses on the National Guards. Two of them, Wahlin and François, are killed, eight are wounded. The streets through which the “pacific” disband are strewn with revolvers and sword-canes (many of them picked up in the Rue de la Paix). Vicomte de Molinet, killed from behind (by his own people), [is] found with a *dagger* fixed by a chain.

Rappel was beaten. A number of cane-swords, revolvers, and daggers lay on the streets by which the “unarmed” demonstration had passed. Pistol-shots were fired before the insurgents received orders to fire on the crowd. The manifestors were the aggressors (witnessed by General Sheridan from a window).

This was then simply an attempt to do by the reactionists of Paris, armed with revolvers, cane-swords, and daggers, what Vinoy had failed to do with his *sergents de ville*, soldiers, cannon and *mitrailleuse*. That the “lower orders” of Paris allowed themselves not even to be disarmed by the “gentlemen” of Paris, was really too bad!

When on June 13th, 1849 the National Guards of Paris made a really “unarmed” and “pacific” procession to protest against a crime, the attack on Rome by the French troops, General Changarnier was praised by his intimate Thiers for sabring and shooting them down. The state of siege was declared, new laws of repression, new proscriptions, a new reign of terror! Instead of all that, the Central Committee and the workmen of Paris strictly kept on the defensive, during the encounter itself, allowed the assailers (the gentlemen of the dagger), to return quietly home, and, by their indulgence, by not calling them to account for this daring enterprise, encouraged them so much that two days later, under the leadership of Admiral Saisset, sent from Versailles, [they] rallied again and tried again their hands at civil war.

And this Vendôme Affair evoked at Versailles a cry of “assassination of unarmed citizens,” reverberating throughout the world. Be it remarked that even Thiers, while eternally reiterating the assassination of the two generals, has not once dared to remind the world of this “assassination of unarmed citizens.”

As in the medieval times the knight may use any weapon whatever against the plebeian, but the latter must not dare even to defend himself.

(*March 27, Versailles. Thiers:*

I give a formal contradiction to those who accuse me of leading the way for a monarchical settlement. *I found the Republic an accomplished fact.* Before God and man I declare I will not betray it.)

After the second rising of the Party of Order, the Paris people took no reprisals whatever. The Central Committee even committed the great blunder, against the advice of its most energetic members, not to march at once at Versailles, where, after the flight of Adm. Saisset and the ridiculous collapse of the National Guard of Order, consternation ruled supreme, there being not yet any forces of resistance organized.

After the election of the Commune, the Party of Order tried again their forces at the ballot-box, and, when again beaten, effected their exodus from Paris. During the election hand-shaking and fraternization of the bourgeois (in the courts of the Mayoralities) with the insurgent National Guards, while among themselves they talk of nothing but “*décimation en masse*,” “*mitraille*,” “frying at Cayenne,” “wholesale *fusillades*.”

The runaways of yesterday think to-day, by flattering the men of the Hôtel de Ville, to keep them quiet until the Rurals and Bonapartist generals, who are gathering at Versailles, will be in a position to fire on them.

Thiers commenced the armed attack on the National Guard for the second time in [the] *Affair of April 2*. Fighting between Courbevoie and Neuilly, close to Paris. National Guards beaten, bridge of Neuilly occupied by Thiers’ soldiers. Several thousands of National Guards having come out of Paris and occupied Courbevoie *et* Puteaux and the bridge of Neuilly, routed. Many prisoners taken. Many of the insurgents immediately shot as rebels. Versailles troops began the firing.

Commune:

The Government of Versailles has attacked us. Not being able to count upon the army, it has sent Pontifical Zouaves of Charette, Bretons of Trochu, and gendarmes of Valentin, in order to bombard Neuilly.²⁶⁶

On April 2nd the Versailles Government had sent forward a division chiefly consisting of *gendarmes, marines, forest guard, and police*. Vinoy with

²⁶⁶ Quoted from the “Proclamation to the Paris National Guards,” issued by the Executive Committee of the Commune on April 2, 1871, and published in the *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 93, April 3, and also in the form of a government ordinance.

two brigades of infantry, and Galliffet at the head of a brigade of cavalry and a battery of artillery advanced upon Courbevoie.

Paris, April 4. Millière (Declaration):

The people of Paris [were] not making any aggressive attempt... when the Government ordered it to be attacked by the ex-soldiers of the Empire, organized as praetorian troops, under the command of ex-Senators.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ *Le Vengeur*, No. 6, April 4, 1871.

THE SECOND DRAFT OF
THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE

I) GOVERNMENT OF DEFENSE. TROCHU, FAVRE, PICARD, FERRY, AS THE
DEPUTIES OF PARIS

The Republic proclaimed on September 4th by the Paris workmen, was acclaimed through all France without a single voice of dissent. Its right of life was fought for by a 5 months' defensive war (centering in) based upon the resistance of Paris. Without that war of defense waged in the name of the Republic, William the Conqueror²⁶⁸ would have restored the Empire of his "good brother" Louis Bonaparte. The cabal of barristers, with Thiers for their statesman, and Trochu for their general,²⁶⁹ installed themselves at the Hôtel de Ville at a moment of surprise, when the real leaders of [the] Paris working class were still shut up in Bonapartist prisons and the Prussian army was already marching upon Paris. So deeply were the Thiers, the Jules Favres, the Picards then imbued with the belief in the historical leadership of Paris that they founded their claim as the Government of National Defense upon their having been chosen in the elections to the *Corps législatif* in 1869.

In our second address on the late war, five days after the advent of those men, we told you what they were.²⁷⁰ If they had seized the government without consulting Paris, Paris had proclaimed the Republic in the teeth of their resistance. And their first step was to send Thiers begging about at all courts of Europe there to buy if possible foreign mediation, bartering the Republic for a king. Paris did bear with their *régime* (assumption of power), because they highly professed on their solemn vow to wield that power for the single purpose of *national defense*. Paris, however, could not be (was not to be) seriously defended without arming the working class, organizing them into a National Guard, and training them through the war itself. But Paris armed was the Social Revolution armed. The victory of Paris over the Prussians would have been a victory of the Republic over French class rule. In this conflict between national duty and class interest the Government of National Defense did not hesitate one moment to turn into a Government of National Defection. In a letter to Gambetta, Jules

²⁶⁸ This refers to William I, king of Prussia. Marx here sarcastically compares him to William the Conqueror (Duke of Normandy) who conquered England in 1066.

²⁶⁹ In the draft the word "who" appears before "installed," but as this was clearly a slip of the pen it is omitted here.

²⁷⁰ See above, pp. 34.

Favre confessed that what Trochu stood in defense of [*read* against], was not the Prussian soldier, but the Paris workman. Four months after the commencement of the siege when they thought the opportune moment come for breaking the first word of capitulation, Trochu, in the presence of Jules Favre and others of his colleagues, addresses the *réunion* [meeting] of the *maires* of Paris in these terms:

The first question, addressed to me by my colleagues on the very evening of the 4th Sept. was this: Paris, can it with any chance of success, stand a siege against the Prussian army? I did not hesitate to answer in the negative. Some of my colleagues here present will warrant the truth of my words, and *the persistence of my opinion*. I told them, in these very terms, that under the existing state of things, the attempt of Paris to maintain a siege against the Prussian army, would be a folly. Without doubt, I added, it might be a heroic *folly*, but it would be nothing more... *The events* (managed by himself) *have not given the lie to my prevision*.

(This little speech of Trochu was after the armistice, published by M. Corbon, one of the *maires* present. Thus on the very evening of the proclamation of the Republic, Trochu's "plan," known to his colleagues, [was] nothing else but the *capitulation of Paris and France*. To cure Paris of its "heroic folly," it had to undergo a treatment of decimation and famine, long enough to screen the usurpers of September 4th from the vengeance of the December men. If national defense had been more than a false pretense for "government," its self-appointed members would have abdicated on September 5th, publicly revealed Trochu's "plan" and called upon the Paris people to at once surrender to the conqueror or take the work of defense in its own hands. Instead of this the imposters published high-sounding manifestoes wherein Trochu, "the governor will never capitulate," and Jules Favre, the Foreign Minister, "not cede a stone of our fortresses, nor a foot of our territory." Through the whole time of the siege Trochu's plan was systematically carried out. In fact the vile Bonapartist cut-throats, to whose trust they gave the generalship of Paris, cracked in their intimate correspondence ribald jokes at the well-understood farce of the defense. (See, f.i., the correspondence of *Alphonse Simon Guidod*,

supreme commander of the artillery of the army of defense of Paris and Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, to *Suzanne*, general of division of artillery, published by the *Journal officiel* of the Commune.) The mask of imposture was dropped at the capitulation of Paris. The “*Government of National Defense*” unmasked (resurged) itself as the “*government of France by Bismarck’s prisoners*”—a part which Louis Bonaparte himself, at Sedan, had considered too infamous even for a man of his stamp. On their wild flight to Versailles, after the events of March 18th, the *capitulards* have left in the hands of Paris the documentary evidence of their treason, to destroy which, as the Commune says in its *Manifesto to the Provinces*, “they would not recoil from battering Paris into a heap of ruins washed in a sea of blood.”²⁷¹

Some of the most influential members of the Government of Defense had moreover urgent private reasons of their own to be passionately bent upon such a consummation. Look only at Jules Favre, Ernest Picard, and Jules Ferry!

Shortly after the conclusion of the armistice, *M. Millière*, one of the representatives of Paris to the National Assembly, published a series of authentic legal documents in proof that *Jules Favre*, living in concubinage with the wife of a drunkard, resident at Algiers, had by a most daring concoction of forgeries, spread over many years, contrived to grasp, in the name of the children of his adultery, a large succession which made him a rich man, and that, in a lawsuit undertaken by the legitimate heirs, he only escaped exposure through the connivance of the Bonapartist tribunals. Since those dry legal documents were not to be got rid of by any horsepower of rhetorics, Jules Favre, in the same heroism of self-abusement, remained for once tongue-tied until the turmoil of the civil war allowed him to brand the Paris people in the Versailles assembly as a band of “escaped convicts” in utter revolt against family, religion, order and property!

(*[The] Pic Affair*). This very forger had hardly got into power when he sympathetically hastened to liberate two brother forgers, Pic and Taillefer, who had been under the Empire itself convicted to the hulks for theft and forgery. One of these men, Taillefer, daring to return to Paris after the

²⁷¹ *Le Vengeur*, No. 30, April 28, 1871.

instalment of the Commune, was at once returned to a convenient abode; and then Jules Favre told all Europe that Paris was setting free all the felonious inhabitants of her prisons!

Ernest Picard, appointed by himself the Home Minister²⁷² of the French Republic on September 4th, after having striven in vain to become the Home Minister of Louis Bonaparte, is the brother of one *Arthur Picard*, an individual, expelled from the Paris *Bourse* as a blackleg (Report of the Prefecture of Police, *d.d.* July 13,²⁷³ 1867) and convicted on his own confession of a theft of 300,000 francs while a director of one of the branches of the *Société Générale* (see Report of the Prefecture of Police, December 11, 1868). Both these reports have been still published at the time of the Empire. This Arthur Picard was made by Ernest Picard the *rédacteur en chef* [chief editor] of his *Électeur libre* to act during the whole siege as his financial go-between, discounting at the *Bourse* the State secrets in the trust of Ernest and safely speculating on the disasters of the French army, while the common jobbers were misled by the false news, and official lies, published in the *Électeur libre*, the organ of the Home Minister. The whole financial correspondence between that worthy pair of brothers has fallen into the hands of the Commune. No wonder that Ernest Picard, the Joe Miller of the Versailles Government, “with his hands in his trousers pockets, walked from group to group cracking jokes,” at the first batch of Paris National Guards, made prisoners and exposed to the ferocious outrages of Piétri’s lambs.

Jules Ferry, a penniless barrister before September 4th, contrived as the *Maire* of Paris, to job during the siege a fortune out of the famine which was to a great part the work of his maladministration. The documentary proofs are in the hands of the Commune. The day on which he would have to give an account of his maladministration would be his day of judgment.

These men therefore are the deadly foes of the working men’s Paris, not only as parasites of the ruling classes, not only as the betrayers of Paris during the siege, but above all as common felons who only in the ruins of Paris, this stronghold of the French Revolution, can hope to find their

²⁷² See p. 43.

²⁷³ *d.d.*: dated. The correct date was 31 July.

tickets of leave. These desperadoes were exactly the men to become the ministers of Thiers.

2) THIERS, DUFAURE, POUYER-QUERTIER

In the “parliamentary sense” things are only a pretext for words, serving as a snare for the adversary, an *embuscade* [ambuscade] for the people, or a matter of artistic display for the speaker himself.

Their master M. Thiers, the mischievous gnome, has charmed the French bourgeoisie for almost half a century, because he is the most consummate intellectual expression of their own class corruption. Even before he became a statesman, he had shown his lying powers as a historian. Eager of display, like all dwarfish men, greedy of place and pelf, with a barren intellect but lively fancy, epicurean, skeptical, of an encyclopedic facility for mastering (learning) the surface of things, and turning things into a mere pretext for talk, a word-fencer of rare conversational power, a writer of lucid shallowness, a master of small state roguery, a virtuoso in perjury, a craftsman in all the petty stratagems, cunning devices and base perfidies of parliamentary party-warfare, national and class prejudices standing him in the place of ideas, and vanity in the place of conscience, in order to displace a rival, and to shoot[?] the people, in order to stifle the Revolution, mischievous when in opposition, odious when in power, never scrupling to provoke revolutions, the history of his public life is the chronicle of the miseries of his country. Fond of brandishing with his dwarfish arms in the face of Europe the sword of the first Napoleon, whose historical shoeblack he had become, his foreign policy always culminated in the utter humiliation of France, from the London convention of 1841²⁷⁴,²⁷⁵ to the Paris capitulation of 1871 and the present civil war he wages under the shelter of Prussian invasion. It need not be said that to such a man the deeper undercurrents of modern society remained a closed book, but even the most palpable changes at its surface were abhorrent to a brain all whose vitality had fled to the tongue. For instance, he never fatigued to denounce any

²⁷⁴ “1841” should read “1840”.

²⁷⁵ France faced the danger of war with an anti-French coalition of the European powers following the conclusion of the Convention of London on July 15, 1840 by Britain, Russia, Prussia, Austria and Turkey, which agreed to aid the Turkish sultan against the French-backed Mohammed Ali, governor of Egypt. The French government was forced to withhold support for Mohammed Ali in order to avert the war.

deviation from the old French protective system as a sacrilege, railways he sneeringly derided, when a minister of Louis Philippe, as a wild chimera, and every reform of the rotten French army system he branded under Louis Bonaparte as a profanation. With all his versatility of talent and shiftiness of purpose, he was steadily wedded to the traditions of a fossilized routine, and never, during his long official career, became guilty of one single, even the smallest measure of practical use. Only the old world's edifice may be proud of being crowned by two such men as Napoleon the Little and little Thiers. The so-called accomplishments of culture appear in such a man only as the refinement of debauchery and the...²⁷⁶ of selfishness.

Banded with the Republicans under the *Restauration*, Thiers insinuated himself with Louis Philippe as a spy upon and the jail-*accoucheur* of the Duchess of Berry, but his activity when he had first slipped into a ministry (1834-35) centered in the massacre of the insurgent Republicans at the Rue Transnonain and the incubation of the atrocious September laws against the press.²⁷⁷

Reappearing as the chief of the cabinet in March 1840 he came out with the plot of the Paris fortifications. To the [protest] of the Republican party against the sinister attempt on the liberty of Paris, he replied:

What! To fancy that any works of fortification could endanger liberty! And first of all, you calumniate *every Government whatever* in supposing that it could one day try to maintain itself by bombarding the capital... But it would be [a] hundred times more impossible after its victory than before.

Indeed no French government whatever save that of M. Thiers himself with his ticket-of-leave ministers and his Rural ruminants could have dared upon such a deed! And this too in the most classic form; one part of his fortifications in the hands of his Prussian conquerors and protectors.

When King Bomba²⁷⁸ tried his hands at Palermo in January 1848, Thiers rose in the Chamber of Deputies:

²⁷⁶ In the manuscript some words were missing here.

²⁷⁷ See Note 70.

²⁷⁸ See Note 66.

You know, gentlemen, what passes at Palermo: you all shock²⁷⁹ with horror [in the “parliamentary” sense] when hearing that *during 48 hours a great town has been bombarded*. By whom? Was it by a foreign enemy, exercising the rights of war? No, gentlemen, by *its own government*.

(If it had been by its own government, under the eyes and on the sufferance of the foreign enemy, all would, of course, have been right.)

And why? *Because that unfortunate town (city) demanded its rights*. Well, then. For the demand of its rights, it has *had 48 hours of bombardment*.

(If the bombardment had lasted 4 weeks and more, all would have been right.)

Allow me to appeal to the opinion of Europe. It is doing a service to mankind to come and make reverberate from the greatest tribune perhaps of Europe some *words of indignation* (indeed! words!) against such acts... When the Regent Espartero, who had rendered services to his country (what Thiers never did), *in order to suppress an insurrection*, wanted to *bombard Barcelona*, there was from all parts of the world a general shriek of indignation.

Well, about a year later this fine-souled man became the sinister suggester and the most fierce defender (apologist) of the bombardment of Rome by the troops of the French Republic, under the command of the Legitimist Oudinot.

A few days before the Revolution of February, fretting at the long exile from power to which Guizot had condemned him, smelling in the air the commotion, Thiers exclaimed again in the Chamber of Deputies:

I am of the party of Revolution, not only in France, but in Europe. I wish the government of the Revolution to remain in the hands of moderate men. But if that government should pass into the hands of ardent men, even of the Radicals, I

²⁷⁹ shock = shook

should not for all that desert (abandon) my cause. *I shall always be of the party of the Revolution.*

The Revolution of February came. Instead of displacing the cabinet [of] Guizot by the cabinet [of] Thiers, as the little man had dreamt, it displaced Louis Philippe by the Republic. To put down that Revolution was M. Thiers' exclusive business from the proclamation of the Republic to the *coup d'état*. On the first day of the popular victory, he anxiously hid himself, forgetting that the contempt of the people rescued him from its hatred. Still, with his legendary courage, he continued to shy the public stage until after the bloody disruption of the material forces of the Paris proletariat by Cavaignac, the bourgeois Republican. Then the scene was cleared for his sort of action. His hour had again struck. He became the leading mind of the "*Party of Order*" and its "*Parliamentary Republic*," that anonymous reign in which all the rival factions of the ruling classes conspired together to crush the working class and conspired against each other, each for the restoration of its own monarchy.

(The Restoration had been the reign of aristocratic landed proprietors, the July Monarchy the reign of the capitalist, Cavaignac's republic the reign of the "Republican" fraction of the bourgeoisie, while during all these reigns the band of hungry adventurers forming the Bonapartist party had panted in vain for the plunder of France, that was to qualify them as the saviors of "order and property, family and religion.")

That Republic was the anonymous reign of the coalesced Legitimists, Orléanists, and Bonapartists with the bourgeois Republicans for their tail.)

3) THE RURAL ASSEMBLY

If this Rural Assembly, meeting at Bordeaux, made this government, the "Government of Defense men" had before hand taken good care to make that Assembly. For that purpose they had dispatched Thiers on a travelling tour through the provinces, there to foreshadow coming events and make ready for the surprise of the general elections. Thiers had to overcome one difficulty. Quite apart from having become an abomination to the French people, the Bonapartists, if numerously elected, would at once

have restored the Empire and *embaled*²⁸⁰ M. Thiers and Co. for a voyage to Cayenne. The Orléanists were too sparsely scattered to fill their own places and those vacated by the Bonapartists. To galvanize the Legitimist party had therefore become unavoidable. Thiers was not afraid of his task. [The Legitimists were] impossible as a government of modern France, and therefore contemptible as rivals for place and pelf; who could be fitter to be handled as the blind tool of counter-revolution than the party whose action, in the words of Thiers, had always been confined to the three resources of “foreign invasion, civil war, and anarchy?” (*Speech of Thiers at the Chamber of Deputies of January 5, 1833.*) A select set of the Legitimists, expropriated by the Revolution of 1789, had regained their estates by enlisting in the servant hall of the first Napoleon, [but] the bulk of them, by the milliard of indemnity and the private donations of the Restoration. Even their seclusion from participation in active politics under the successive reigns of Louis Philippe and Napoleon the Little served as a lever to the re-establishment of their wealth, as landed proprietors. Freed from court and representation costs at Paris, they had, out of the very corners of provincial France, only to gather the golden apples falling into their *Châteaux* from the tree of modern industry, railways enhancing the price of their land, agronomy applied to it by capitalist farmers, increasing its produce, and the inexhaustible demand of a rapidly swollen town population securing the growth of markets for that produce. The very same social agencies which reconstituted their material wealth and remade their importance as partners of that joint-stock company of modern slaveholders, screened them from the infection of the modern ideas and allowed them, in rustic innocence, nothing to forget and nothing to learn. Such people furnished the mere passive material to be worked upon by a man like Thiers. While executing the mission entrusted to him by the Government of Defense, the mischievous imp overreached his mandataries in securing to himself that multitude of elections which was to convert the Defense men from his opponent masters into his avowed servants.

The electoral traps being thus laid, the French people was suddenly summoned by the *capitulards* of Paris to choose, within 8 days, a National Assembly, with the exclusive task, by virtue of the terms of the convention

²⁸⁰ *embaled*: bundled off.

of January 31st, dictated by Bismarck, to decide on war or peace. Quite apart [from] the extraordinary circumstances, under which that election occurred, with no time for deliberation, with one half of France under the sway of Prussian bayonets, with its other half secretly worked upon by the government intrigue, with Paris secluded from the provinces, the French people felt instinctively that the very terms of the armistice, undergone by the *capitulards* left France no choice (alternative) but that of a peace *à outrance* [at any price], and that for its sanction the worst men of France would be the best. Hence the Rural Assembly emerging at Bordeaux.

Still we must distinguish between the old *régime* orgies and the real historical business of the Rurals. Astonished to find themselves the strongest fraction of an immense majority composed of themselves and the Orléanists, with a contingent of bourgeois Republicans and a mere sprinkling of Bonapartists, they vainly believed in the long expected advent of their retrospective millennium. There were the heels of the foreign invasion, trampling upon France, there was the downfall of the Empire and the captivity of a Bonaparte, and there they were themselves. The wheel of history had evidently turned round to stop at the *Chambre introuvable* of 1816, with its deep and impassionate curses against the revolutionary deluge and its abominations, with its “decapitation and decapitalization of Paris,” its “decentralization” breaking through the network of State rule by the local influences of the *Châteaux* and its religious homilies and its tenets of antediluvian politics, with [its] *gentilhommerie* [gentility], flippancy, its genealogic spite against the drudging masses, and its *oeil-de-boeuf*²⁸¹ views of the world. Still in point of fact they had only to act their part as joint-stock holders of the “Party of Order,” as monopolists of the means of production. From 1848 to 1851, they had only to form a fraction of the interregnum of the “Parliamentary Republic,” with this difference that then they were represented by the educated and trained parliamentary champions, the Berryer, the Falloux, the La Rochejaquelein, while now they had to ask in their rustic rank and file, imparting thus a different tone and tune to the Assembly, masquerading its bourgeois reality under feudal colors. Their grotesque exaggerations (lies [?]²⁸²) serve only to set off the

²⁸¹ This refers to the ante-room, decorated with an oval window, in the Versailles Palace, where the courtiers waited for an audience with the king.

²⁸² “homilies” in the German translation.

liberalism of their banditti government. Ensnared into an usurpation of powers beyond their electoral mandates, they live only on the sufferance of their self-made rulers. The foreign invasion of 1814 and 1815²⁸³ having been the deadly weapon wielded against them by the bourgeois parvenus, they have [in] injudicial blindness fastened upon themselves the responsibility of this unprecedented surrender of France to the foreigner by their bourgeois foes. The French people, astonished and insulted by the reappearance of all the noble Pourceaugnacs it believed buried long since, has become aware that besides making the Revolution of the 19th century it has to finish off²⁸⁴ the Revolution of 1789 by driving the [...?...] ²⁸⁵ to the last goal of all rustic criminals—the shambles.

5) OPENING OF THE CIVIL WAR. [THE] MARCH 18 REVOLUTION.
CLÉMENT THOMAS. LECOMTE. THE VENDOME AFFAIR

The disarmament of Paris, as a mere necessity of the counter revolutionary plot, might have been undertaken in a more temporizing circumspect manner, but as a clause of the urgent financial treaty with its irresistible fascinations, it brooked no delay. Thiers had therefore to try his hands at a *coup d'état*. He opened the civil war by sending Vinoy, the *Décembriseur*, at the head of a multitude of *sergents de ville* and a few regiments of the line, upon the nocturnal expedition against the buttes Montmartre. His felonious attempt having broken down on the resistance of the National Guards and their fraternization with the soldiers, on the following day, in a manifesto stuck to the walls of Paris, Thiers told the National Guards of his magnanimous resolve to leave them their arms, with which he felt sure they would be eager to rally round the Government against “the rebels.” Out of 300,000 National Guards only 300 responded to his summons. The glorious workmen’s Revolution of March 18th had taken undisputed possession (sway) of Paris.

The Central Committee, which directed the defense of Montmartre and emerged on the dawn of March 18th as the leader of the Revolution,

²⁸³ This refers to the invasions of France in 1814 and 1815 by the sixth and the seventh anti-French coalition headed by Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia, for the purpose of overthrowing the First Empire of Napoleon and restoring the Bourbons.

²⁸⁴ finish off: complete.

²⁸⁵ “ruminants” in the German translation.

was neither an expedient of the moment nor the offspring of secret conspiracy. From the very day of the capitulation, by which the Government of National Defense had disarmed France but reserved to itself a body-guard of 40,000 troops for the purpose of cowing Paris, Paris stood on the watch. The National Guard reformed its organization and entrusted its supreme control to a Central Committee, consisting of the delegates of the single companies, mostly workmen, with their main strength in the workmen's suburbs, but soon accepted by the whole body save its old Bonapartist formations. On the eve of the entrance of the Prussians into Paris, the Central Committee took measures for the removal to Montmartre, Belleville, and La Villette, of the cannon and *mitrailleuses* treacherously abandoned by the *capitulards* even in those quarters which the Prussians were about to occupy. It thus made safe of the artillery, furnished by the subscriptions of the National Guard, officially recognized as their private property in the convention of January 31st, and on that very title exempted from the general surrender of arms. During the whole interval from the meeting of the National Assembly at Bordeaux to March 18th, the Central Committee had been the people's government of the capital, strong enough to persist in its firm attitude of defense despite the provocations of the Assembly, the violent measures of the Executive, and the menacing concentration of troops.

(The Revolution of September 4th had restored the Republic. The tenacious resistance of Paris during the siege, serving as the basis of a war of defense in the provinces, had wrung from the foreign invader the recognition of the Republic. Its true meaning and purpose were only revealed by the Revolution of March 18th and that revelation was a Revolution. It was to supersede the social and political conditions of class rule which had engendered the Second Empire, and in their turn ripened under its tutelage into rottenness. Europe thrilled as under an electric shock. It seemed for a moment to doubt whether, in its recent sensational performances of State and war there was any reality and whether they were not the mere hallucination of a long bygone past, upon which the old world system rests.)

The defeat of Vinoy by the National Guard was but a check given to the counter-revolution plotted by the ruling classes, but the Paris people turned at once that incident of their self-defense into the first act of

a Social Revolution. The Revolution of September 4th had restored the Republic after the throne of the usurper had become vacant. The tenacious resistance of Paris during its siege, serving as the basis for the defensive war in the provinces, had wrung from the foreign invader the recognition of that Republic, but its true meaning and purpose were only revealed on March 18th. It was to supersede the social and political conditions of class rule, upon which the old world's system rests, which had engendered the Second Empire and under its tutelage, ripened into rottenness. Europe thrilled as under an electric shock. It seemed for a moment to doubt whether its late sensational performances of State and war had any reality in them and were not the mere sanguinary dreams of a long bygone past. The traces of the long endured famine still upon their figures,²⁸⁶ and under the very eyes of Prussian bayonets, the Paris working class conquered in one bound the championship of progress, etc.

In the sublime enthusiasm of historic initiative, the Paris workmen's Revolution made it a point of honor to keep the proletarian clean of the crimes in which the Revolution and still more the counter-revolution of their natural superiors (betters) abound.

Clément Thomas, Lecomte, etc.

But the horrid "atrocities" that have sullied this Revolution?

So far as these atrocities imputed to them by their enemies are not the deliberate calumny of Versailles or the horrid spawn of the penny-a-liner's brain, they relate only to two facts—the execution of the Generals Lecomte and Clément Thomas and the Vendôme Affair, of which we shall dispose in a few words.

One of the paid cut-throats selected for the (felonious handiwork) execution of the nocturnal coup de main on Montmartre, General Lecomte had on the Place Pigalle four times ordered his troops of the 81st of the line to charge an unarmed gathering, and on their refusal fiercely insulted them. Instead of shooting women and children, some of his own men shot him, when taken prisoner in the afternoon of March 18th, in the gardens of the Château Rouge. The inveterate habits acquired by the French *soldatesca* under the training of the enemies of the working class, are of course not

²⁸⁶ figures: faces.

likely to change the very moment they change sides. The same soldiers executed Clément Thomas.

“General” Clément Thomas, a discontent ex-quartermaster sergeant had, in the latter times of Louis Philippe’s reign, enlisted in the “Republican” *National* newspaper, there to serve in the double quality of straw man (responsible *gérant*) and bully. The men of the *National*, having abused the February Revolution, to cheat themselves into power, metamorphosed their old quartermaster-sergeant into a “General” on the eve of the butchery of June, of which he, like Jules Favre, was one of the sinister plotters and became one of the most merciless executors. Then his generalship came to a sudden end. He disappeared only to rise again to the surface on November 1st, 1870. The day before, the Government of Defense, caught at the Hôtel de Ville, had upon their word of honor, solemnly bound themselves to Blanqui, Flourens and the other representatives of the working class to abdicate their usurped power into the hands of a Commune to be freely chosen by Paris. They broke, of course, their word of honor, to let loose the Bretons of Trochu, who had taken the place of the Corsicans of Louis Bonaparte, upon the people guilty of believing in their honor. M. Tamisier alone refusing to sully his name by such a breach of faith, tendering at once his resignation of the commandership-in-chief of the National Guard, “General” Clément Thomas was shuffled into his place. During his whole tenure of office he made war not upon the Prussians, but upon the Paris National Guard, proving inexhaustible in pretexts to prevent their [*read its*] general armament, in devices of disorganization by pitching its bourgeois elements against its working men’s elements, of weeding out the officers hostile to Trochu’s “plan” and disbanding under the stigma of cowardice the very proletarian *bataillons* whose heroism is now astonishing their most inveterate enemies. Clément Thomas felt proud of having reconquered his June pre-eminence as the personal enemy of the Paris working class. Only a few days before March 18th he laid before the War Minister Le Flô a plan of his own for finishing off “*la fine fleur* (the cream) of the Paris *canaille*.” As if haunted by the June specters, he must needs appear, in the quality of an *amateur détecteur* [detective], on the scene of action after Vinoy’s rout!

The Central Commune²⁸⁷ tried in vain to rescue these two criminals Lecomte and Clément Thomas from the soldiers' wild Lynch justice, of which they themselves and the Paris workmen were as guilty as the Princess Alexandra of the people crushed to death on the day of her entrance in London. Jules Favre with his forged pathos, flung his curses upon Paris, the den of assassins. The Rural Assembly mimicked hysterical contortions of "*sensiblerie*" [sentimentality]. These men never shed their crocodile tears but as a pretext for shedding the blood of the people. To handle respectable cadavers as weapons of civil war has always been a favorite trick with the Party of Order. How did Europe ring in 1848 with their shouts of horror at the assassination of the Archbishop of Paris²⁸⁸ by the insurgents of June, while they were fully aware from the evidence of an eyewitness, M. Jaquetmet, the Archbishop's vicar, that the Bishop had been shot by Cavaignac's own soldiers! Through the letters to Thiers of the present Archbishop of Paris,²⁸⁹ a man with no martyr's vein in him, there runs the shrewd suspicion that his Versailles friends were quite the men to console themselves of his prospective execution in the violent desire to fix that amiable proceeding on the Commune! However, when the cry of "assassins" had served its turn, Thiers coolly disposed of it by declaring from the tribune of the National Assembly, that the "assassination" was the private deed of a "very few" obscure individuals.

The "men of Order," the reactionists of Paris, trembling at the people's victory as the signal of retribution, were quite astonished by proceedings, strangely at variance with their own traditional methods of celebrating a defeat of the people. Even the *sergents de ville*, instead of being disarmed and locked up, had the doors of Paris flung wide open for their safe retreat to Versailles, while the "men of Order," left not only unhurt, were allowed to rally quietly [and] lay hold on the strongholds in the very center of Paris. They interpreted, of course, the indulgence of the Central Committee and the magnanimity of the armed workmen, as mere symptoms of conscious weakness. Hence their plan to try under the mask of an "unarmed" demonstration the work which four days before Vinoy's cannon and *mitrailleuses* had failed in. Starting from the quarters of luxury,

²⁸⁷ "Commune" should read "Committee."

²⁸⁸ Denis Auguste Affre (1793-1848).

²⁸⁹ Georges Darboy (1813-1871).

a riotous mob of “gentlemen” with all the “*petits crevés*” [dandies] in their ranks and the familiars of the Empire, the Heeckeren, Coëtlogon, H. de Pène, etc., at their head fell in marching order under the cries of “Down with the Assassins! Down with the Central Committee! Vive l’Assemblée nationale!” ill-treating and disarming the detached posts of National Guards they met with on their progress. When then at last debouching in[to] the Place Vendôme, they tried, under shouts of ribald insults, to dislodge the National Guards from their headquarters, forcibly break through the lines. In answer to their pistol-shots the regular *sommations* (the French equivalent of the English reading of the Riot Act) were made, but proved ineffective to stop the aggressors. Then fire was commanded by the general of the National Guard²⁹⁰ and these rioters dispersed in wild flight. Two National Guards killed, eight dangerously wounded and the streets, through which they [the rioters] disbanded, strewn with revolvers, daggers and cane-swords, gave clear evidence of the “unarmed” character of their “*pacif*ic” demonstration. When, on the June 13th, 1849, the National Guards of Paris made a really “unarmed” demonstration of protest against the felonious assault on Rome by French troops, Changarnier, the general of the “Party of Order” had their ranks sabred, trampled down by cavalry, and shot down. The state of siege was at once proclaimed, new arrests, new proscriptions, a new reign of terror set in. But the “lower orders” manage these things otherwise. The runaways of March 22nd, being neither followed nor harassed on their flight, nor afterwards called to account by the judge of instruction (*juge d’instruction*), were able two days later to muster again an “armed” demonstration under Admiral Saisset. Even after the grotesque failure of this their second rising they were, like all other Paris citizens, allowed to try their hands at the ballot-box for the election of the Commune. When succumbing in this bloodless battle, they at last purged Paris from their presence by an unmolested exodus dragging along with them the *cocottes*, the *lazzaroni* and the other dangerous class[es] of the capital. The assassination of the “unarmed citizens” on March 22nd is a myth which even Thiers and his Rurals have never dared to harp upon entrusting it exclusively to the servants’ hall of European journalism.

²⁹⁰ Jules Bergeret (1831-1905).

If there is to be found fault with in the conduct of the Central Committee and the Paris workmen towards these “men of Order” from March 18th to the time of their exodus, it is an excess of moderation bordering upon weakness.

Look now to the other side of the medal!

After the failure of their nocturnal surprise of Montmartre, the Party of Order began their regular campaign against Paris in the commencement of April. For inaugurating the civil war by the methods of December, the massacre in cold blood of the captured soldiers of the line and infamous murder of our brave friend Duval, Vinoy, the runaway, is appointed by Thiers Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor! Galliffet, the fancy man of that woman so notorious for her shameless masquerades at the orgies of the Second Empire, boasts in an official manifesto of the cowardly assassination of Paris National Guards with their lieutenant and their captain made by surprise and treason. Desmarets, the gendarme, is decorated for his butchery-like chopping of the high-souled and chivalrous Flourens, the encouraging particulars of whose death are triumphantly communicated to the Assembly of Thiers. In the horribly grotesque exultation of a Tom Pouce playing the part of Timur Tamerlane, Thiers denies the “rebels” against his littleness all the rights and customs of civilized warfare, even the right of “ambulances.”

When the Commune had published on April 7 the decree of reprisals, declaring it its duty to protect itself against the cannibal exploits of the Versailles banditti and to demand an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, the atrocious treatment of the Versailles prisoners, of whom Thiers says in one of his bulletins, “never had more degraded countenances of a degraded democracy met the afflicted gazes of honest men,” did not cease, but the fusillades of the captives were stopped. Hardly, however, had he and his Decembrist general become aware, that the Commune’s decree was but an empty threat, that even their spying gendarmes caught in Paris under the disguise of National Guards, that even their *sergents de ville* captured with explosive bombs upon them were spared, when at once the old *régime* set in again wholesale, and has continued to this day. The National Guards who had surrendered at Belle-Épine to an overwhelming force of Chasseurs

were then shot down one after the other by the captain of the *peloton* [platoon] on horseback; houses to which Parisian troops and National Guards had fled, [were] surrounded by gendarmes, inundated with petroleum, and then set on fire, the calcinated corpses being afterwards transported by Paris ambulance; the bayoneting of the National Guards surprised by treason in their beds at the redoubt of Moulin-Saquet (the Federals surprised in their beds asleep), the massacre (*fusillade*) of Clamart, prisoners wearing the line uniform shot off-hand,—all these high deeds flippantly told in Thiers' bulletin are only a few incidents of this slaveholders' rebellion! But would it not be ludicrous to quote single facts of ferocity in view of this civil war, fermented amidst the ruins of France, by the conspirators of Versailles, from the meanest motives of class interest, and [in view of] the bombardment of Paris under the patronage of Bismarck, in the sight of his soldiers! The flippant manner in which Thiers reports on these things in the bulletin has even shocked the not over-sensitive nerves of the *Times*. All this is, however, "regular" as the Spaniards say. The fights of the ruling classes against the producing classes menacing their privileges, are full of the same horrors, although none exhibits such an excess of tenacity on the part of the oppressed and bear such an abasement...²⁹¹ Thiers has always been the old axiom of knight-errantry that every weapon is fair if used against the plebeian.

"L'Assemblée siège paisiblement [The Assembly is sitting peacefully]," writes *Thiers* to the *Prefects*.

[The] **Affair at Belle Épine**

The affair at Belle Épine, near Villejuif [was like] this: On April 25th four National Guards [were] being surrounded by a troop of mounted Chasseurs, who bid them to surrender and lay down their arms. Unable to resist, they obeyed and were left unhurt by the Chasseurs. Some time later their captain, a worthy officer of Galliffet's, arrived in full gallop and shot the prisoners down with his revolver, one after the other, and then trotted off with his troop. Three of the guards were dead, one named Scheffer,

²⁹¹ In the German translation, this sentence reads: "All the fights of the ruling classes against the producing classes menacing their privileges are full of the same horrors, although none exhibits such an excess of humanity on the part of the oppressed, and only a few show such baseness by their adversaries..."

grievously wounded, survived, and was afterwards brought to the Hospital of Bicêtre. Thither the Commune sent a commission to take up the evidence of the dying man, which it published in its *rapport* [report]. When one of the Paris members of the *Assemblée* interpellated the War Minister upon that report, the *Rurals* drowned the voice of the deputy and forbid the minister to answer. It would be an insult to their “glorious” army—not to commit murder, but to speak of it.

The tranquility of mind with which that Assembly bears with the horrors of civil war is told in one of Thiers’ bulletins to his Prefects: “L’Assemblée siège paisiblement” (has the *cœur léger* like Ollivier),²⁹² and the Executive with its ticket-of-leave men shows by its gastronomical feats, given by Thiers and at the table of German princes, that their digestion is not troubled even by the ghosts of Lecomte and Clément Thomas.

6) THE COMMUNE

The Commune had, after Sedan, been proclaimed by the workmen of Lyons, Marseille and Toulouse. Gambetta did his best to destroy it.²⁹³ During the siege of Paris the ever recurrent workmen’s commotions, again and again crushed on false pretenses by Trochu’s Bretons, those worthy substitutes of Louis Bonaparte’s Corsicans, were as many attempts to dislodge the government of impostors by the Commune. The Commune then silently elaborated was the true secret of the Revolution of September 4th. Hence, on the very dawn of March 18th, after the rout of the counter-revolution, drowsy Europe started up from its dreaming under the Paris thunderbursts of “*Vive la Commune !*”

What is the Commune, this sphinx so tantalizing to the bourgeois mind?

In its most simple conception [it is] the form under which the working class assumes the political power in their social strongholds, Paris and the other centers of industry.

The proletarians of the capital [said the Central Committee in its proclamation of March 20,] have, in the midst of the failures and treason of the ruling classes, understood that for

²⁹² See Note 177.

²⁹³ See Note 220.

them the hour had struck to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs... They have understood that it was their imperious duty and their absolute right to take into their own hands their own destiny by seizing upon the political power (State power).²⁹⁴

But the proletariat cannot, as the ruling classes and their different rival fractions have done in the successive hours of their triumph, simply lay hold on the existent State body and wield this ready-made agency for their own purpose. The first condition for the hold[ing] of political power, is to transform [the] working machinery and destroy it—an instrument of class rule. That huge governmental machinery, entailing like a boa constrictor the real social body in the ubiquitous meshes of a standing army, hierarchical bureaucracy, an obedient police, clergy and a servile magistrature, was first forged in the days of absolute monarchy as a weapon of nascent middle-class society in its struggles of emancipation from feudalism. The first French Revolution with its task to give full scope to the free development of modern middle-class society had to sweep away all the local, territorial, townish and provincial strongholds of feudalism, prepared the social soil for the superstructure of a centralized State power, with omnipresent organs ramified after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labor.

But the working class cannot simply lay hold on the ready-made State machinery and wield it for their own purpose. The political instrument of their enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation.

The modern bourgeois State is embodied in two great organs, parliament and the government. Parliamentary omnipotence had, during the period of the Party of Order Republic, from 1848 to 1851, engendered its own negative—the Second Empire—and imperialism, with its mere mockery of parliament, is the *régime* now flourishing in most of the great military States of the continent. At first view, apparently, the usurpatory dictatorship of the governmental body over society itself, rising alike above and humbling alike all classes; it has in fact, on the European continent at least, become the only possible State form in which the appropriating

²⁹⁴ *Journal officiel de la République française*, No. 80, March 21, 1871.

class can continue to sway it over the producing class. The assembly of the ghosts of all the defunct French parliaments which still haunts Versailles wields no real force save the governmental machinery as shaped by the Second Empire.

The huge governmental parasite, entailing the social body like a boa constrictor in the ubiquitous meshes of its bureaucracy, police, standing army, clergy and magistrature, dates its birth from the days of absolute monarchy. The centralized State power had at that time to serve nascent middle-class society as a mighty weapon in its struggles of emancipation from feudalism. The French Revolution of the 18th century, with its task to sweep away the medieval rubbish of seigniorial, local, townish and provincial privileges, could not but simultaneously clear the social soil of the last obstacles hampering the full development of a centralized State power, with omnipresent organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labor. Such [*read* Thus] it burst into life under the First Empire, itself the offspring of the Coalition wars of old semi-feudal Europe against modern France. During the subsequent parliamentary *régimes* of the *Restauration*, the July Monarchy, and the Party of Order Republic, the supreme management of that State machinery with its irresistible allurements of place, pelf and patronage became not only the butt of contest between the rival fractions of the ruling class, but at the same degree that [*read* as] the economic progress of modern society swelled the ranks of the working class, accumulated its miseries, organized its resistance and developed its tendencies at emancipation, in one word, that [*read* as] the modern struggle of classes, the struggle between labor and capital, assumed shape and form, the physiognomy and the character of the State power underwent a striking change. It had always been the power for the maintenance of order, i.e., the existing order of society, and therefore, of the subordination and exploitation of the producing class by the appropriating class. But as long as this order was accepted as an uncontrovertible and uncontested necessity, the State power could assume an aspect of impartiality. It kept up the existing subordination of the masses, which was the unalterable order of things and a social fact undergone without contest on the part of the masses, exercised by their “natural superiors” without solicitude. With the entrance of society itself into a new phase, the phase of class struggle, the character of its organized public force, the State power, could

not but change also (but also undergo a marked change) and more and more develop its character as the instrument of class despotism, the political engine forcibly perpetuating the social enslavement of the producers of wealth by its appropriators, of the economic rule of capital over labor. After each new popular revolution, resulting in the transfer of the direction of the State machinery from one set of the ruling classes to another, the repressive character of the State power was more fully developed and more mercilessly used, because the promises made, and seemingly assured by the Revolution, could only be broken by the employment of force. Besides, the change worked by the successive revolutions sanctioned only politically the social fact, the growing power of capital, and, therefore, transferred the State power itself more and more directly into the hands of the direct antagonists of the working class. Thus the Revolution of July transferred the power from the hands of the landowners into those of the great manufacturers (the great capitalists), and the Revolution of February into those of the united fractions of the ruling class, united in their antagonism to the working class, united as “the Party of Order,” the order of their own class rule. During the period of the Parliamentary Republic the State power became at last the avowed instrument of war, wielded by the appropriating class against the productive mass of the people. But as an avowed instrument of civil war, it could only be wielded during a time of civil war, and the condition of life for the Parliamentary Republic was, therefore, the continuance of openly declared civil war, the negative of that very “order” in the name of which the civil war was waged. This could only be a spasmodic, exceptional state of things. It was impossible as the normal political form of society, unbearable even to the mass of the middle classes. When therefore all elements of popular resistance were broken down, the Parliamentary Republic had to disappear before (give way to) the Second Empire.

The Empire—professing to rest upon the producing majority of the nation, the peasants, [who stayed] apparently out of the range of the class struggle between capital and labor (indifferent and hostile to both the contesting social powers), wielding the State power as a force superior to the ruling and ruled classes, imposing upon both an armistice (silencing the political, and therefore revolutionary form of the class struggle), divesting the State power from its direct form of class despotism by braking

the parliamentary, and therefore directly political power of the appropriating classes—was the only possible State form to secure the old social order a respite of life. It was, therefore, acclaimed throughout the world as the “savior of order” and the object of admiration during 20 years on the part of the would-be slaveholders all over the world. Under its sway, coincident with the change brought upon the market of the world by California, Australia,²⁹⁵ and the wonderful development of the United States, an unsurpassed period of industrial activity set [in], an orgy of stock-jobbery, finance swindlings, joint-stock company adventure—leading all to rapid centralization of capital by the expropriation of the middle class and widening the gulf between the capitalist class and the working class. The whole turpitude of the capitalist *régime*, given full scope to its innate tendency, broke loose unfettered. At the same time, an orgy of luxurious debauch, meretricious splendor, a pandemonium of all the low passions of the higher classes. This ultimate form of the governmental power was at the same time its most prostitute, shameless plunder of the State resources by a band of adventurers, hotbed of huge State debts, the glory of prostitution, a fictitious life of false pretenses. The governmental power with all its tinsel covering from top to bottom immersed in mud. The maturity of rottenness of the State machinery itself, and the putrescence of the whole social body, flourishing under it, were laid bare by the bayonets of Prussia, herself only eager to transfer the European seat of that *régime* of gold, blood, and mud from Paris to Berlin.

This was the State power in its ultimate and most prostitute shape, in its supreme and basest reality, which the Paris working class had to overcome, and of which this class alone could rid society. As to parliamentarism, it had been killed by its own charges²⁹⁶ and by the Empire. All the working class had to do was not to revive it.

What the workmen had to break down was not a more or less incomplete form of the governmental power of old society; it was that power itself in its ultimate and exhausting shape, the *Empire*. The direct opposite to the *Empire* was the *Commune*.

²⁹⁵ This refers to the influence exerted on the development of international trade by the discovery of gold mines in California and Australia in the mid-19th century.

²⁹⁶ In the German translation, “charges” reads “victory.”

In its most simple conception the Commune meant the preliminary destruction of the old governmental machinery at its central seats, Paris and the other great cities of France, and its superseding by real self-government which in Paris and the great cities, the social strongholds of the working class, was the government of the working class. Through the siege Paris had got rid of the army which was replaced by a National Guard, with its bulk formed by the workmen of Paris. It was only due to this state of things, that the rising of March 18th had become possible. This fact was to become an institution, and the National Guard of the great cities, the people armed against governmental usurpation, to supplant the standing army defending the government against the people. The Commune [was] to consist of the municipal councilors of the different *arrondissements* (as Paris was the initiator and the model, we have to refer to it), chosen by the suffrage of all citizens, responsible, and revocable in short terms. The majority of that body would naturally consist of workmen or acknowledged representatives of the working class. It was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time. The police agents, instead of being the agents of a central government, were to be the servants of the Commune, having, like the functionaries in all the other departments of administration, to be appointed and always revocable by the Commune; all the functionaries, like the members of the Commune itself, having to do their work at workmen's wages. The judges were also to be elected, revocable, and responsible. The initiative in all matters of social life to be reserved to the Commune. In one word, all public functions, even the few ones that would belong to the Central Government, were to be executed by Communal agents, and, therefore, under the control of the Commune. It is one of the absurdities to say that the Central functions, not of governmental authority over the people, but necessitated by the general and common wants of the country, would become impossible. These functions would exist, but the functionaries themselves could not, as in the old governmental machinery, raise themselves over real society, because the functions were to be executed by *Communal agents*, and, therefore, always under real control. The public functions would cease to be a private property bestowed by a central government upon its tools. With the standing army and the governmental police, the physical force of repression was to be broken. By the disestablishment of all churches as

proprietary bodies and the banishment of religious instruction from all public schools (together with [the introduction of] gratuitous instruction) into the recesses of private life, there to live upon the alms of the faithful, [and by] the divestment of all educational institutes from governmental patronage and servitude, the mental force of repression was to be broken, [and] science made not only accessible to all, but freed from the fetters of government pressure and class prejudice. The municipal taxation to be determined and levied by the Commune, the taxation for general State purposes to be levied by Communal functionaries, and disbursed by the Commune itself for the general purposes (its disbursement for the general purposes to be supervised by the Commune itself).

The governmental force of repression and authority over society was thus to be broken in its merely repressive organs, and where it had legitimate functions to fulfil, these functions were not to be exercised by a body superior to the society, but by the responsible agents of society itself.

7) *SCHLUSS*²⁹⁷

To [the] fighting, working, thinking Paris, electrified by the enthusiasm of historic initiative, full of heroic reality, the new society in its throes, there is opposed at Versailles the old society, a world of antiquated shams and accumulated lies. Its true representation is that Rural Assembly, peopled with the gibberish ghouls of all the defunct *régimes* into [read in] which class rule had successively embodied itself in France, at their head a senile mountebank of parliamentarism, their sword in the hands of the imperialist *capitulards*, bombarding Paris under the eyes of their Prussian conquerors.

The immense ruins which the Second Empire, in its fall, has heaped upon France, are for them only an opportunity to dig out and throw to the surface the rubbish of former ruins, of Legitimacy or Orléanism.

The flame of life is to burn in an atmosphere of the sepulchral exhalation of all the bygone emigrations. (The very air they breathe is the sepulchral exhalation of all bygone emigrations.)

There is nothing real about them but their common conspiracy against life, their egotism of class interest, their wish to feed upon the car-

²⁹⁷ Conclusion

cass of French society, their common slaveholders' interests, their hatred of the present, and their war upon Paris.

Everything about them is a caricature, from that old fossil of Louis Philippe's *régime*, Count Jaubert, exclaiming in the National Assembly, in the palace of Louis XIV, "We are the State" ("The State, that is ourselves"),²⁹⁸ (they are in fact the State specter in its secession from society), and [read to] the Republican fawners upon Thiers holding their *réunions* [meetings] in the *Salle du Jeu de Paume* (Tennis Court) to show their degeneracy from their predecessors in 1789.

Thiers at the head, the bulk of the majority split into these two groups of Legitimists and Orléanists, in the tail the Republicans of [the] "old style." Each of these fractions intrigues for a restoration of its own, the Republicans for that of the Parliamentary Republic—building their hopes upon the senile vanity of Thiers, forming in the meantime [the] Republican decoration of his rule and sanctioning by their presence the war of the Bonapartist generals upon Paris, after having tried to coax it into the arms of Thiers and to disarm it under Saisset! Knights of the sad figure, the humiliations they voluntarily bear with, [show] what Republicanism, as a special form of class rule, has come down to. It was in view of them that Thiers said to the assembled *maires* of the Seine and Oise: What could they more want? "Was not he, a simple citizen, at the head of the State?" Progress from 1830 to 1870 [shows] that then Louis Philippe was the best of Republics, and that now Louis Philippe's Minister, little Thiers himself, is the best of Republics.

Being forced to do their real work—the war against Paris—through the imperialist soldiers, gendarmes, and police, under the sway of the retired Bonapartist generals, they tremble in their shoes at the suspicion that—as during their regime of 1848-51—they are only forging the instrument for a second restoration of the Empire. The Pontifical Zouaves and the *Vendéens* of Cathelineau and the Bretons of Charette are in fact their "parliamentary" army, the mere phantasms of an army compared with the imperial reality. While fuming with rage at the very name of the Republic, they accept Bismarck's dictates in its name, waste in its name the rest of French wealth upon the civil war, denounce Paris in its name, forge laws

²⁹⁸ Here Marx makes an ironic allusion to the saying of the French king Louis XIV: "I am the state," which later became a motto of absolutism.

of prospective proscription against the rebels in its name, usurp dictation over France in its name.

Their title [is] the general suffrage, which they had always opposed during their own regimes from 1815 to 1848, [and] abolished in May 1850, after it had been established against them by the Republic, and which they now accept as the prostitute of the Empire, forgetting that with it they accept the Empire of the plebiscites! They themselves are impossible even with the general suffrage.

They reproach Paris to revolt [*read* for revolting] against national unity, and their first word was the *decapitation* of that unity by the decapitalization of Paris. Paris has done the thing they pretended to want, but it has done it, not as they wanted it, as a reactionary dream of the past, but as the revolutionary vindication of the future. Thiers, the Chauvin, threatens since March 18th Paris with the “intervention of Prussia,” stood at Bordeaux for the “intervention of Prussia,” acts against Paris in fact only by the means accorded to him by Prussia. The Bourbons were dignity itself, compared to this mountebank of chauvinism.

Whatever may be the name—in case they are victorious—of their Restoration, with whatever successful pretender at its head, its reality can only be the Empire, the ultimate and indispensable political form of the rule of their rotten classes. If they succeed to restore it, and they must restore it with any of their plans of restoration successful—they succeed only to accelerate the putrefaction of the old society they represent and the maturity of the new one they combat. Their dim eyes see only the political outwork of the defunct *régimes* and they dream of reviving them by placing a Henry the 5th or the Count of Paris at their head. They do not see that the social bodies which bore these political superstructures have withered away, that these *régimes* were only possible under now outgrown conditions and past phases of French society, and that it can only yet bear with imperialism, in its putrescent state, and the Republic of Labor in its state of regeneration. They do not see that the cycles of political forms were only the political expression of the real changes society underwent.

The Prussians, who in coarse war exultation of triumph look at the agonies of French society and exploit them with the sordid calculation of a

Shylock, and the flippant coarseness of the Krautjunker,²⁹⁹ are themselves already punished by the transplantation of the Empire to the German soil. They themselves are doomed to set free in France the subterranean agencies which will engulf them with the old order of things. The Paris Commune may fall, but the Social Revolution it has initiated, will triumph. Its birth-stead is everywhere.

[FRAGMENTS]

The Lies in Thiers' Bulletins.

The immense sham of that Versailles, its lying character could not better be embodied and résuméed than in Thiers, the professional liar, for whom the "reality of things" exists only in their "parliamentary sense," that is, as a lie.

In his answer to the Archbishop's letter he coolly denies "the pretended executions and *reprisals* [!] attributed to the troops of Versailles," and has this impudent lie confirmed by a commission appointed for this very purpose by his Rurals. He knows of course their triumphant proclamations by the Bonapartist generals themselves. But in "the parliamentary sense" of the word they do not exist.

In his circular of April 16th on the bombardment of Paris:

If some cannon-shots have been fired, it is not the deed of the army of Versailles, but of some insurgents *wanting to make believe that they are fighting*, while they do not dare show themselves.

Of course, Paris bombards itself, in order to make the world believe that it fights!

Later: "*Notre artillerie ne bombarde pas: elle canonne, il est vrai.*" ["*Our artillery does not bombard: it's true it shells.*"]

Thiers' bulletin on Moulin-Saquet (4 May): "Délivrance de Paris des affreux tyrans qui l'oppriment" ["*Deliverance of Paris from the dreadful tyrants who oppress it*"] (by killing the Paris National Guards asleep).

²⁹⁹ "rustic squire" in the German translation.

The motley lot of an army—the dregs of the Bonapartist *soldatesca* released from prison by the grace of Bismarck, with the gendarmes of Valentin and the *sergents de ville* of Piétri for their nucleus, set off by the Pontifical Zouaves, the *Chouans* of Charette and the *Vendéens* of Cathelineau, the whole placed under the runaway Decembrist generals of capitulation—he dubs “*the finest army France ever possessed.*” Of course, if the Prussians quarter still at St. Denis, it is because Thiers wants to frighten them by the sight of that “finest of fine armies.”

If such is the “finest army”—the Versailles anachronism is “the most liberal and most freely elected assembly that ever existed in France.” Thiers caps his eccentricity by telling the *maires*, etc., that “he is a man, who has never broken his word,” of course in the parliamentary sense of word-keeping.

He is the truest of Republicans and (Séance vom [sitting of] 27 April): “L’assemblée est plus libérale que lui-même.” [“The Assembly is more liberal than he himself.”]

To the *maires*: “On peut compter sur ma parole à laquelle je n’ai jamais manqué,” [“You may rely upon my word, which I have never broken,”] in an unparliamentary sense, which I have never kept.

“L’assemblée est une des plus libérales qu’ait nommée la France.” [“The Assembly is one of the most liberal France has elected.”]

He compares himself with Lincoln and the Parisians with the rebellious slaveholders of the South. The Southerners wanted territorial secession from the United States for the slavery of labor. Paris wants the secession of M. Thiers himself and the interests he represents from power for the emancipation of labor.

The revenge which the Bonapartist generals, the gendarmes and the *Chouans* wreak upon Paris is a necessity of the class war against labor, but in the little byplay of his bulletins Thiers turns it into a pretext of caricaturing his idol, the first Napoleon, and make himself the laughing-stock of Europe by boldly affirming, that the French army through its war upon the Parisians has regained the renown it had lost in the war against the Prussians. The whole war thus appears as mere child play to give vent to the childish vanity of a dwarf, elated at having to describe *his* own battles, fought by *his* own army, under *his* own secret commandership-in-chief.

And his lies culminate in regard to Paris and the Province.

Paris, which in reality holds in check for two months the finest army France ever possessed, despite the secret help of the Prussians, is in fact only anxious to be delivered from its “atrocious tyrants,” by Thiers, and therefore it fights against him, although a mere handful of criminals.

He does not tire of representing the Commune as a handful of convicts, ticket-of-leave men, scum. Paris fights against him because it wants to be delivered by him from “the *affreux* [frightful] tyrants that oppress it.” And this “handful” of desperadoes holds in check since two months “the finest army that France ever possessed,” led by the invincible MacMahon and inspired by the Napoleonic genius of Thiers himself!

The resistance of Paris is no reality, but Thiers’ lies about Paris are.

Not content to refute him by its exploits, all the living elements of Paris have spoken to him, but in vain, to dislodge him out of his lying world.

You must not confound the movement of Paris with the surprise of Montmartre, which was only its opportunity and starting point: this movement is general and profound in the conscience of Paris; the greatest number even of those who by one reason or another keep back (stand aside), do for all that not disavow its social legitimacy.

By whom was he told this? By the delegates of the Syndical Chambers, speaking in the name of 7-8,000 merchants and industrials.³⁰⁰ They went to tell it him personally at Versailles. Thus the *Ligue of the Republican Union*, thus the *Masons’ lodges*³⁰¹ by their delegates and their demonstrations. But he sticks to it.

In his bulletins of [read on] Moulin-Saquet (May 4):

300 prisoners taken... the rest of the insurgents has fled à toutes jambes, laissant 150 morts et blessés sur le champ de bataille... Voilà la victoire que la Commune peut célébrer dans ses bulletins. Paris sera sous peu délivré de ses terribles tyrans qui l’oppriment. [...has fled at top speed, leaving 150 dead and wounded on the battlefield... That is the victory the

³⁰⁰ See Note 203.

³⁰¹ See Note 204.

Commune can celebrate in its bulletins. Paris will shortly be delivered from its terrible tyrants who oppress it.]

But the fighting Paris, the real Paris is not *his* Paris. His Paris is itself a parliamentary lie. “The rich, the idle, the capitalist Paris,” the cosmopolitan stew, this is his Paris. That is the Paris which wants to be restored to him; the real Paris, is the Paris of the “vile multitude.” The Paris that showed its courage in the “pacific procession” and Saisset’s stampede, that throngs now at Versailles, at Rueil, at St. Denis, at St. Germain-en-Laye, followed by the *cocottes*, sticking to the “man of family, religion, order,” and above all, “of property,” the Paris of the lounging classes, the Paris of the *francs-fleurs*, amusing itself by looking through telescopes at the battles going on, treating the civil war [as] but an agreeable diversion, that is the Paris of M. Thiers, as the Emigration of Koblenz was the France of M. de Calonne and as the Emigration at Versailles is the France of M. Thiers.

If the Paris, that wants to be delivered of the Commune by Thiers, his Rurals, *Décembriseurs* and gendarmes, is a lie, so is his “Province” which through him and his Rurals wants to be delivered from Paris.

Before the definitive conclusion at Frankfurt of the peace treaty,³⁰² he appealed to the provinces to send their *bataillons* of National Guards and volunteers to Versailles to fight against Paris. The provinces refused point-blank. Only the Bretagne sent a handful of *Chouans* “fighting under a white flag, every one of them wearing on his breast a Jesus heart in white cloth and shouting: ‘Vive le roi!’” Thus is the provincial France listening to his summons so that he was forced to send captive French troops from Bismarck, lay hold on the Pontifical Zouaves (the real armed representatives of *his* provincial France) and make 20,000 gendarmes and 12,000 *sergents de ville* the nucleus of his army.

³⁰² The peace treaty of Frankfurt signed on May 10, 1871, set down the definitive terms for the ending of the war between France and Germany. The treaty confirmed the cession of Alsace and the eastern part of Lorraine to Germany, as was provided for in the preliminary peace treaty of February 26, 1871. The Frankfurt treaty imposed even more severe war indemnity terms on France than the preliminary peace treaty and lengthened the time of occupation of French territory by the German troops—a price the Versailles government had to pay for Bismarck’s collaboration in suppressing the Commune. The plunder of France as a result of the Frankfurt treaty made the future armed conflict between France and Germany inevitable.

Despite the wall of lies, the intellectual and police blockade, by which he tried to fence off (debar) Paris from the provinces, the provinces, instead of sending him *bataillons* to wage war upon Paris, inundated him with so many delegations insisting upon peace with Paris, that he refused to receive them any longer in person. The tone of the addresses sent up from the provinces, proposing most of them the immediate conclusion of an armistice with Paris, the dissolution of the Assembly, "because its mandate had expired," and the grant of the municipal rights demanded by Paris, was so offensive that Dufaure denounces them in his "circular against conciliation" to the Prefects. On the other hand, the Rural Assembly and Thiers received not one single address of approval on the part of the provinces.

But the grand *défi* [challenge] the provinces gave to Thiers' "lie" about the provinces were the municipal elections of April 30, carried on under his government, on the basis of a law of his Assembly. Out of 700,000 councilors (in round numbers) returned by the 35,000 communes still left in mutilated France, the united Legitimists, Orléanists and Bonapartists did not carry 8,000! The supplementary elections still more hostile! This showed plainly how far the *National Assembly*, chosen by surprise, and on false pretenses, represents France, provincial France, France minus Paris!

But the plan of an assembly of the municipal delegates of the great provincial towns at Bordeaux, forbidden by Thiers on the ground of his law of 1834 and an imperialist one of 1855,³⁰³ forced him to avow that his "provinces" are a lie, as "his" Paris is. He accuses them of resembling the "false" Paris, of being eagerly bent upon "laying the fundamentals of communism and rebellion." Again he has been answered by the late resolution of the municipal councils of Nantes, Vienne, Chambéry, Limoux, Carcassonne, Angers, Carpentras, Montpellier, Privas, Grenoble, etc., asking, insisting upon peace with Paris,

the absolute affirmation of the Republic, the recognition of the Communal right," which, as the *municipal council of*

³⁰³ This probably refers to the municipality law of 1831, which rigorously restricted the power of municipal councils, and that of 1855, which prohibited connections between municipal councils.

For the planned Bordeaux congress of delegates of the municipal councils, see Note 213.

Vienna says, “the élus of the 8. février promised dans leur circulaire, lorsqu’ils étaient candidats. Pour faire cesser la guerre étrangère, elle (l’Assemblée nationale) a cédé deux provinces et promis cinq milliards à la Prusse. Que ne doit-elle pas faire pour mettre fin à la guerre civile? [the elected of February 8 promised in their circular while they were candidates. In order to end the foreign war, it (the National Assembly) ceded two provinces and promised to give Prussia five milliards. What then will it not do to put an end to the civil war?]”

(Just the contrary. The two provinces are not their “private” property, and as to the promissory note of 5 milliards, the thing is exactly that it shall be paid by the French people and not by them.)

If, therefore, Paris may justly complain of the provinces that they limit themselves to pacific demonstrations, leaving it unaided against all the State forces... the province has in most unequivocal tones given the lie to Thiers and the Assembly to be represented there, has declared their Province a lie as is their whole existence, a sham, a false pretense.

The General Council feels proud of the prominent part the Paris branches of the *International* have taken in the glorious revolution of Paris. Not, as the imbeciles fancy, as if the Paris, or any other branch of the International received its *mot d’ordre* [order] from a center. But the flower of the working class in all civilized countries belonging to the *International*, and being imbued with its ideas, they are sure everywhere in the working-class movements to take the lead.

From³⁰⁴ the very day of the capitulation by which the government of Bismarck’s prisoners had signed the surrender of France, but, in return, got leave to retain a bodyguard for the express purpose of cowing Paris, Paris stood on its watch. The National Guard reorganized itself and entrusted its supreme control to a Central Committee elected by all the companies, battalions and batteries of the capital, save some fragments of the old

³⁰⁴ Beginning from here, three pages of the manuscript were minus their page numbers.

Bonapartist formations. On the eve of the entrance of the Prussians into Paris, the Central Committee took measures for the removal to Montmartre, Belleville, and La Villette, of the cannon and *mitrailleuses* treacherously abandoned by the *capitulards* in the very quarters the Prussians were about to occupy.

Armed Paris was the only serious obstacle in the way of the counter-revolutionary conspiracy. Paris was, therefore, to be disarmed. On this point the Bordeaux Assembly was sincerity itself. If the roaring rant of its Rurals had not been audible enough, the surrender of Paris handed over by Thiers to the tender mercies of the triumvirate of Vinoy, the *Décembriseur*, Valentin, the Bonapartist gendarme, and Aurelle de Paladines, the Jesuit general, would have cut off even the last subterfuge of doubt as to the ultimate aim of the disarmament of Paris. But if their purpose was frankly avowed, the pretext on which these atrocious felons initiated the civil war was the most shameless, the most bare-faced (glaring) of lies. The artillery of the Paris National Guard, said Thiers, belonged to the State, and to the State it must be returned. The fact was this. From the very day of the capitulation by which Bismarck's prisoners had signed the surrender of France but reserved to themselves a numerous bodyguard for the express purpose of cowing Paris, Paris stood on its watch. The National Guard reorganized themselves and entrusted their supreme control to a Central Committee elected by their whole body, save some fragments of the old Bonapartist formations. On the eve of the entrance of the Prussians into Paris, their Central Committee took measures for the removal to Montmartre, Belleville, and La Villette of the cannon and *mitrailleuses*, treacherously abandoned by the *capitulards* in the very quarters the Prussians were about to occupy. That artillery had been furnished by the subscriptions of the National Guard. As their private property it was officially recognized in the convention of the January 28th, and on that very title exempted from the general surrender of arms, belonging to the government, into the hands of the conqueror. And Thiers dared initiate the civil war on the mendacious pretext that the artillery of the National Guard was State property!

The seizure of this artillery was evidently but to serve as the preparatory measure for the general disarmament of the Paris National Guard,

and therefore of the Revolution of September 4th. But that Revolution had become the legal status of France. Its Republic was recognized in the terms of the capitulation itself by the conqueror, it was after the capitulation acknowledged by the foreign powers, in its name the National Assembly had been summoned. The Revolution of the Paris workmen of September 4th was the only legal title of the National Assembly seated at Bordeaux and its Executive. Without it, the National Assembly had at once to give room to the *Corps législatif*, elected by general suffrage and dispersed by the arm of the Revolution. Thiers and his ticket-of-leave men would have had to capitulate for safe-conducts and securities against a voyage to Cayenne. The National Assembly, with its attorney's power to settle the terms of peace with Prussia, was only an incident of the Revolution. Its true embodiment was armed Paris, that had initiated the Revolution [and] undergone for it a five months' siege with its horrors of famine, that had made its prolonged resistance, despite Trochu's "plan," the basis of a tremendous war of defense in the provinces. And Paris was now summoned with coarse insult by the rebellious slaveholders at Bordeaux to lay down its arms and acknowledge that the popular revolution of September 4th had had no other purpose but the simple transfer of power from the hands of Louis Bonaparte and his minions in [read to] those of his monarchical rivals, or to stand forward as the self-sacrificing champion of France, to be saved from her ruin and to be regenerated only through the revolutionary overthrow of the political and social conditions that had engendered the Empire and under its fostering care, matured into utter rotteness. Paris, emaciated by a five months' famine, did not hesitate one moment. It heroically resolved to run all the hazards of a resistance against the French conspirators under the very eyes of the Prussian army quartered before its gates. But in its utter abhorrence of civil war, the popular government of Paris, the Central Committee of the National Guard, continued to persist in its merely defensive attitude, despite the provocations of the Assembly, the usurpations of the Executive, and the menacing concentration of troops in and around Paris.

On the dawn of the March 18th Paris arose under thunder bursts of "*Vive la Commune !*" What is the Commune, that sphinx so tantalizing to the bourgeois mind?

The proletarians of the capital [said the Central Committee in its manifesto of the 18th March,] have, in the midst of the failures and treasons of the ruling classes, understood that for them the hour has struck to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs... They have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to take into their own hands their own destinies by seizing the political power.

But the working class cannot, as the rival factions of the appropriating class have done in their hours of triumph, simply lay hold on the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.

The centralized State power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy and magistrature, organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labor, dates from the days of absolute monarchy when it served nascent middle-class society as a mighty weapon in its struggles for emancipation from feudalism. The French Revolution of the 18th century swept away the rubbish of seigniorial, local, townish and provincial privileges, thus clearing the social soil of its last medieval obstacles to the final superstructure of the State. It received its final shape under the First Empire, the offspring of the Coalition wars of old, semi-feudal Europe against modern France. Under the following parliamentary *régimes*, the hold[ing] of the governmental power, with its irresistible allurements of place, pelf, and patronage, became not only the bone of contention between the rival factions of the ruling classes. Its political character changed simultaneously with the economic changes of society. At the same pace that the progress of industry developed, widened and intensified the class antagonism between capital and labor, the governmental power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labor, of a political force organized to enforce social enslavement, of a mere engine of class despotism. On the heels of every popular revolution, marking a new progressive phase in the march (development) (course) of the struggle of classes (class struggle), the repressive character of the State power comes out more pitiless and more divested of disguise. The Revolution of July, by transferring the management of the State machinery from the landlord to the capitalist, transfers it from the

distant to the immediate antagonist of the working men. Hence the State power assumes a more clearly defined attitude of hostility and repression in regard of the working class. The Revolution of February hoists the colors of the "Social Republic," thus proving at its outset that the true meaning of State power is revealed, that its pretense of being the armed force of public welfare, the embodiment of the general interests of societies rising above and keeping in their respective spheres the warring private interests, is exploded, that its secret as an instrument of class despotism is laid open, that the work men do want the Republic, no longer as a political modification of the old system of class rule, but as the revolutionary means of breaking down class rule itself. In view of the menaces of the "Social Republic" the ruling class feel instinctively that the anonymous reign of the Parliamentary Republic can be turned into a joint-stock company of their conflicting factions, while the past monarchies by their very title signify the victory of one faction and the defeat of the other, the prevalence of one section's interest of that class over that of the other, land over capital or capital over land. In opposition to the working class the hitherto ruling class, in whatever specific forms it may appropriate the labor of the masses, has one and the same *economic* interest, to maintain the enslavement of labor and reap its fruits directly as landlord and capitalist, indirectly as the State parasites of the landlord and the capitalist, to enforce that "order" of things which makes the producing multitude, a "vile multitude," serving [*read* serve] as a mere source of wealth and dominion to their betters. Hence Legitimists, Orléanists, bourgeois Republicans and the Bonapartist adventurers, eager to qualify themselves as defenders of property by first pilfering it, club together and merge into the "*Party of Order*," the practical upshot of that Revolution made by the proletariat under enthusiastic shouts of the "*Social Republic*." The Parliamentary Republic of the Party of Order is not only the reign of terror of the ruling class. The State power becomes in their hand the *avowed instrument of the civil war* in [the] hand of the capitalist and the landlord, their State parasites, against [the] revolutionary aspirations of the producer.

Under the monarchical *régimes* the repressive measures and the confessed principles of the day's government are denounced to the people by the fractions of the ruling classes that are out of power; the opposition ranks of the ruling class interest the people in their party feuds by appealing to

its own interests, by their attitudes of [*read as*] tribunes of the people, by the revindication of popular liberties. But in the anonymous reign of the Republic, while amalgamating the modes of repression of old past *régimes* (taking out of the arsenals of all past *régimes* the arms of repression), and wielding them pitilessly, the different fractions of the ruling class celebrate an orgy of renegation. With cynical effrontery they deny the professions of their past, trample under foot their “so-called” principles, curse the revolutions they have provoked in their name, and curse the name of the Republic itself, although only its anonymous reign is wide enough to admit them into a common crusade against the people.

Thus this most cruel is at the same time the most odious and revolting form of class rule. Wielding the State power only as an instrument of civil war, it can only hold it by perpetuating civil war. With parliamentary anarchy at its head, crowned by the uninterrupted intrigues of each of the fractions of the “Order” Party for the restoration of each own pet *régime*, [and] in open war against the whole body of society out of its own narrow circle, the Party of Order rule becomes the most intolerable rule of disorder. Having, in its war against the mass of the people, broken all its means of resistance and laid it helplessly under the sword of the Executive, the Party of Order itself and its parliamentary *régime* is warned off the stage by the sword of the Executive. That parliamentary Party of Order republic can therefore only be an interreign. Its natural upshot is *imperialism*, whatever the number of the Empire. Under the form of imperialism, the State power with the sword for its scepter, professes to rest upon the peasantry, that large mass of producers apparently outside the class struggle of labor and capital, professes to save the working class by breaking down parliamentarism and therefore the direct subserviency of the State power to the ruling classes, professes to save the ruling classes themselves by subduing the working classes without insulting them, professes, if not public welfare, at least national glory. It is therefore proclaimed as the “savior of order.” However galling to the political pride of the ruling class and its State parasites, it proves itself to be the really adequate regime of the bourgeois “order” by giving full scope to all the orgies of its industry, turpitudes of its speculation, and all the meretricious splendors of its life. The State thus seemingly lifted above civil society, becomes at the same time itself the hotbed of all the corruptions of that society. Its own utter rottenness,

and the rottenness of the society to be saved of [*read* by] it, was laid bare by the bayonet of Prussia, but so much is this imperialism the unavoidable political form of “order,” that is, the “order” of bourgeois society, that Prussia herself seemed only to reverse³⁰⁵ its central seat at Paris in order to transfer it to Berlin.

The Empire is not³⁰⁶ like its predecessors, the Legitimate monarchy, the Constitutional monarchy and the Parliamentary Republic, one of the political forms of bourgeois society, it is at the same time its most prostitute, its most complete, and its ultimate political form. It is the State power of modern class rule, at least on the European continent.

³⁰⁵ reverse: overthrow.

³⁰⁶ For meaning, the word “merely” is required after “not.”

Collection “Foundations”

1. *The Foundations of Leninism*
Joseph Stalin
2. *Wage Labour and Capital
& Wages, Price and Profit*
Karl Marx
3. *Reform or Revolution?*
Rosa Luxemburg
4. *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*
Frederick Engels
5. *The State and Revolution*
V. I. Lenin
6. *Labour in Irish History*
James Connolly
7. *Anarchism or Socialism?
& Trotskyism or Leninism?*
Joseph Stalin
8. *Manifesto of the Communist Party
& Principles of Communism*
Karl Marx & Frederick Engels
9. *Essays in Historical Materialism*
George Plekhanov
10. *The Fascist Offensive
& Unity of the Working Class*
George Dimitrov
11. *Imperialism, the Highest
Stage of Capitalism*
V. I. Lenin
12. *The Origin of the Family, Private
Property and the State*
Frederick Engels
13. *The Housing Question*
Frederick Engels
14. *The Modern Prince
& Other Writings*
Antonio Gramsci
15. *What is to be Done?*
V. I. Lenin
16. *Critique of the Gotha Program*
Karl Marx
17. *Elementary Principles
of Philosophy*
Georges Politzer
18. *Militarism & Anti-Militarism*
Karl Liebknecht
19. *History and Class Consciousness*
Georg Lukács
20. *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy
in the Democratic Revolution*
V. I. Lenin
21. *Dialectical and Historical
Materialism & Questions of
Leninism*
Joseph Stalin
22. *The Re-Conquest of Ireland*
James Connolly
23. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of
Louis Bonaparte*
Karl Marx
24. *The Right to Be Lazy
& Other Studies*
Paul Lafargue
25. *The Civil War in France*
Karl Marx
26. *Anti-Dühring*
Frederick Engels