

**GREAT  
LESSONS  
OF THE  
PARIS  
COMMUNE**

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## ***HONGQI* EDITOR'S NOTE**

This is the 95th anniversary of the great uprising of the Paris Commune. In this issue we publish a commemorative article entitled "The Great Lessons of the Paris Commune."

The most fundamental principle of the Paris Commune is the use of revolutionary violence to seize power, smash the state machine of the bourgeoisie and practice the dictatorship of the proletariat. Upholding or betrayal of this principle has always been the fundamental difference between Marxists on the one hand, and opportunists and revisionists on the other.

The principle of the Paris Commune, advanced by Marx and Engels on the basis of the experience and lessons of the Commune, constitutes the basic theory of proletarian revolution. Bernstein, Kautsky and other revisionists of their day turned against this principle and degenerated into lackeys of imperialism and the bourgeoisie. Lenin waged an uncompromising struggle against the old-time revisionists, defended the principle of the Commune and led the Russian people to the great victory of the October Revolution. The path of the October Revolution is the continuation and development of the revolutionary path pioneered by the Paris Commune. Holding aloft the banner of Leninism, Stalin opposed every kind of enemy of Leninism and thus upheld the principle of the Paris Commune and safeguarded the gains of the October Revolution.

After the death of Stalin, the Khrushchov revisionist clique usurped the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Following the 20th, 21st, and 22nd Congresses of the CPSU, they thoroughly betrayed the principle of the Commune and the path of the October Revolution, and adopted a whole body of out-and-out revisionist lines against proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. As a result, the Soviet

Union has been led astray to the path of restoring capitalism and the leadership of the CPSU has become the international center of modern revisionism.

This is an extremely important experience of a negative character in the history of the dictatorship of the proletariat since the Paris Commune. It teaches us that it is out of the question for the leaders of any proletarian party not in power to lead a revolution, if they turn their backs on the principle of the Commune. What is more, such leaders will become renegades and stool-pigeons. If such leaders discard the principle of the Commune after they have assumed power, there exists the danger of the people's revolution losing its fruits and these leaders themselves will likewise become outright renegades and stool-pigeons, and flunkeys and accomplices of the imperialists.

Why are the revisionist leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its followers so rabid in opposing China? The basic reason is that the great Chinese revolution, victorious under the guidance of Mao Zedong's thought, has inherited and further developed the experience of the Paris Commune and the experience of the October Revolution. The Chinese Communist Party today is a great standard-bearer of Marxism-Leninism and is struggling resolutely against all renegades who have turned their backs on the principle of the Commune. Thus, it has incurred the hatred and opposition of all these freaks and monsters. This is nothing strange and we are rather proud of it.

Today, in waging to the end the struggle against Khrushchov revisionism and carrying forward the world revolutionary movement, it is of vital and practical significance to go over again the experience and lessons of the Paris Commune.

# The Great Lessons of the Paris Commune

Ninety-five years have passed since the heroic uprising of the Paris Commune.

These years have seen earth-shaking changes in the world. The cause for which the Paris Commune fought, and which was drowned in blood by the Versailles brigands, triumphed 46 years later in the Great October Revolution led by Lenin. The victory of the Chinese revolution was also a victory for the principles of the Paris Commune and for the road of the October Revolution.

The Paris Commune was a great, epoch-making revolution. It was the proletariat's first rehearsal in taking up arms to overthrow the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, to overthrow the capitalist system and establish the socialist system. The heroes of the Commune bequeathed us invaluable lessons and experience gained at the cost of their blood.

At the present time, when the Khrushchov revisionists pay lip service to the Paris Commune while actually betraying its principles, it is of great importance to develop the revolutionary tradition of the Paris Commune and learn from its experience and lessons.



**THE PROLETARIAT CAN WIN THE RIGHT TO  
EMANCIPATE ITSELF ONLY BY TAKING UP ARMS.  
THE FIRST TENET OF A PROLETARIAN WHO  
REFUSES TO BE A SLAVE IS TO KEEP A FIRM  
GRIP ON HIS RIFLE**

In the 19th century, France was one of the countries which stood in the very forefront of the revolutionary movement in Europe. It was in succession the center of the bourgeois revolution and then of the proletarian revolution. From 1789 to 1871, the workers of France took up arms many times and laid them down again or were disarmed. They fought, failed, fought again, failed again, and for more than 80 years suffered a heavy loss in blood. In this way, the proletariat gradually realized that if they cherished the illusion that they could win liberation under conditions in which the bourgeoisie was not overthrown but held the leadership, then the guns in their hands only served to help their own enemy seize political power. When the revolution triumphed, the ruling group, whether the Right-wing or the Left-wing of the bourgeoisie, would “repay” the proletariat by disarming the workers. And the proletariat, once disarmed, would lose all its rights.

The proletariat should take up arms and win the right to emancipate itself on the battlefield. The workers of France finally moved step by step closer to this revolutionary truth. Both the June uprising in Paris in 1848 and the uprising of the Paris Commune in 1871 showed in varying degrees that they were translating this revolutionary truth into revolutionary action. During these two uprisings, the proletariat took up arms and directly engaged its own enemy in a struggle to seize political power for itself.

The uprising of the Paris Commune marked the climax of the struggle of the proletariat of that period both in France and in other parts of the world to emancipate itself. Compared to previous uprisings of the French workers, the Paris Commune showed great creative initiative in the matter of the proletariat using revolutionary arms to win the right to emancipate itself:

(1) Preparations to form workers' armed units were made six months before the uprising. By force of arms, the workers set up their own special political organizations (the Central Committee of 20 *arrondissements* and Committees of Vigilance for the various *arrondissements*) and special military organizations (the Workers' Battalions of National Guards and the Central Committee of the National Guards).

(2) They resolutely stood their ground in the face of threats and blandishments from the government of the bourgeoisie and refused to hand over their weapons. The first demand of the First Congress of the National Guards was to call on everyone to hold tight to his rifle. Varlin said: "We will not allow ourselves to be disarmed without a fight.... the struggle will continue until we are victorious."<sup>1</sup>

(3) When the government of the bourgeoisie tried to disarm the workers by force, they dared to answer counter-revolutionary force with revolutionary force. Confronted both by the reactionary government's bloody suppression at home and a strong enemy's threat from abroad, they dared to stage an uprising, turn a predatory war between the exploiting classes into a revolutionary civil war and smash the state machine of the bourgeoisie.

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1 P. M. Kerzhentsev, *History of the Paris Commune of 1871*, Russian ed., Publishing House of Social-Economic Literature, Moscow, 1959, p. 168.

(4) When the uprising triumphed, the workers did not lay down their arms nor did they hand over power. Marx said: “The new feature [of this revolution] 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.”<sup>2</sup>

(5) After gaining victory in the uprising, the workers laid the groundwork for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, relying on the revolutionary armed forces of the proletariat. Marx said: “... 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.”<sup>3</sup>

(6) Even when the uprising was on the verge of defeat, the workers still persisted in their heroic struggle. They preferred to die a glorious death, with rifle in hand, rather than lay down their arms and live in humiliation. They demonstrated the revolutionary proletariat’s dauntless spirit of preferring death to surrender.

Comrade Mao Zedong said: “It is very difficult for the laboring people, who have been deceived and intimidated by the reactionary ruling classes for thousands of years, to awaken to the importance of having guns in their own hands.”<sup>4</sup> The heroes of the Paris Commune foiled the deceptions and threats of the reactionary ruling classes, resolutely took up arms and smashed the state machine of the bourgeoisie. This was a great develop-

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2 Marx, “The Civil War in France (First Draft),” *The Civil War in France*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 171.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 171.

4 Mao Zedong, “Problems of War and Strategy,” *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, Vol. II, p. 206.

ment in the cause of liberation of the proletariat; it wrote a new chapter in history worthy of the highest praise.

The exploiting classes always consider that they have the right to use every kind of weapon to suppress the exploited but that it is a crime for the exploited to have any weapons at all. In their eyes, an armed uprising staged by the exploited is a towering crime. Catering to this reactionary view, the revisionists always spread within the ranks of the proletariat the slave philosophy of "never resorting to arms." They therefore tamper with the history of the proletarian revolution and try to change it into a history of "peaceful transition." They have done just this in the case of the uprising of the Paris Commune. Whenever he touched on the Paris Commune, Kautsky immediately sang the praises of the March 28 election, and described the Commune as a product of a ballot by the whole people and of "pure democracy." Whenever the Khrushchov revisionists talk about the Paris Commune, they like to "count" the number of people who died on the day of March 18 in an attempt to prove that the Commune "took power into its hands without bloodshed."

Anyone with an elementary knowledge of Marxism-Leninism knows that every revolutionary movement is a process of development. In order to understand that revolution, one should look at it as a whole and not substitute a single day or a certain phenomenon for the whole nor put some specific event in place of the general picture. The whole course of development of the Paris Commune, from the eve of the uprising to the last week of bloodbath, was a life-and-death struggle between the revolution and the counter-revolution. The blood shed by the heroes of the Commune when they staged the armed uprising and when they tried to defend the fruits of the successful uprising can never be disposed of by the lies spread by the revisionists.

**THE PROLETARIAT MUST ADOPT  
REVOLUTIONARY METHODS TO SEIZE STATE  
POWER, SMASH THE BOURGEOIS MILITARY-  
BUREAUCRATIC MACHINE, AND ESTABLISH THE  
DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT**

Prior to the uprising of the Paris Commune, the political scene in France much resembled a merry-go-round in which various forms of bourgeois state power were rapidly rotated in the course of fierce class struggles. The proletariat learnt from its own experience that this rotation simply meant the rulers transferring power from one hand to the other and from one group to the other. However the rotation went, the situation remained the same: the proletariat was ruled and exploited by the bourgeoisie. The proletariat also learnt from its own experience that every change in the process of this rotation led to the further expansion and perfection of the state machine and the more ruthless enslavement of the workers and other working people.

With its more than 80 years of experience (1789-1871), the French proletariat step by step became aware that “the political instrument of their enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation,”<sup>5</sup> that to emancipate itself the proletariat must smash the bourgeois state machine, and that it was the machine itself and not this or that form which it took that had to be fought against. This was the line of action taken by the insurgents of the Commune. Marx said: “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

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5 Marx, “The Civil War in France (Second Draft),” *The Civil War in France*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 212.

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.”<sup>6</sup>

After the Second Empire collapsed, a struggle for state power gradually unfolded between the bourgeoisie and proletariat. In early September, 1870, the various groups of the bourgeoisie, in order to preserve the existing state machine and prevent state power from falling into the hands of the people, lost no time in reaching agreement and forming a new government with a gilt-edged label—the “Government of National Defence.” Because the proletariat was not sufficiently prepared ideologically and organizationally, they could not yet form a government of their own at once. But they already set out to establish their own political and military organizations which were becoming the actual organs of power in the workers’ areas of Paris and a force which set itself against the “Government of Defence.”

At that time, relying on the workers’ armed forces and the masses of the people, the Central Committee of 20 *arrondissements* and the Committees of Vigilance in various *arrondissements* took under their surveillance the activities of the “Government of Defence” and of the governments of the *arrondissements* in Paris. The Vigilance Committees in the workers’ areas controlled the mayors or exercised power on their behalf. Arago, who once served as a mayor, said that in the *arrondissements*, the committees “directed matters concerning the arming and equipping [of military forces], and public assistance,” and were “hot beds of revolutionary activity.”<sup>7</sup> In Count Daru’s report, the work of the Vigilance Committees is described as follows: “They took upon themselves the right to put pressure on the deci-

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6 Marx, “The Civil War in France (First Draft),” *Ibid.*, p. 158.

7 Kerzhentsev, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

sions of the mayors, took over their functions, gave orders, inspected houses, made arrests and searches, particularly on the pretext of espionage.”<sup>8</sup>

At that time, put under surveillance by the Workers’ Battalions of National Guards and the revolutionary masses, “the prefecture was completely helpless; the police commissioners sat quiet, only apprehensive that they might be seized.”<sup>9</sup> Trochu, head of the “Government of Defence,” moaned: “The streets were in the hands of the mob; the courts did not function; all institutions charged with the preservation of social order, morals, and public health, were practically paralyzed.”<sup>10</sup> In the short span of a few months, the reactionary authorities successively dismissed and replaced several police chiefs in an attempt to restore police rule, but all these attempts were defeated.

It is clear that from the time of the downfall of the Second Empire to the uprising of the Paris Commune, two governments actually existed in Paris. This was similar to the situation in which two governments existed side by side in Petrograd [now Leningrad] after Russia’s February 1917 Revolution.

The formation of proletarian military organizations by the proletariat of Paris to counter the bourgeois state machine was an important preliminary measure for smashing the bourgeois state machine. When Thiers provoked the civil war on March 18, 1871, the proletariat relied on its own armed forces to defeat his counter-revolutionary attack and smash the bourgeois state machine.

Based on their class instinct and political experience, the insurgents of the Paris Commune realized that the standing army and officials were the two important agencies of the bourgeois state machine, and so in the

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8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

10 *Ibid.*

wake of their victory they immediately disbanded them. The first decree of the Commune was the Decree Abolishing The Standing Army and Replacing It With The National Guard. The decree stipulated that “no armed force, with the exception of the National Guard, is allowed to be formed in Paris or brought into it.” And “all citizens who are fit to serve will join the National Guard.”<sup>11</sup> The bourgeois battalions of the National Guard were disbanded by the Commune.

At the same time, the Decree Declaring Orders And Regulations Of The Versailles Government Null And Void stipulated: “Being actually the only power at the present time, the Paris Commune decrees: From now on employees of public services will regard orders and communications coming from the Versailles government or from its adherents as null and void... Any official or employee disobeying this decree will be dismissed immediately.”<sup>12</sup> The Commune dismissed the reactionary officials who remained in Paris and demanded that ordinary functionaries of the old government should loyally serve the people.

The Commune smashed the old judicial organs and liquidated reactionary legal traditions. It stipulated that judges should be elected by the people and that procurator-generals be appointed directly by the Commune.

Having eliminated the physical prop of bourgeois rule over the people—the standing army, the Commune immediately began to smash the spiritual instrument for maintenance of the rule of the bourgeoisie over the people. Among other things it announced the separation of the State from the Church, and abrogation of the prerogatives of the clergy.

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11 *Protocols of the Meetings of the Paris Commune*, Russian ed., Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Moscow, 1959, Vol. I, p. 43.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 44.



In their revolutionary practice the insurgents of the Paris Commune repudiated the erroneous views of Proudhonism and Blanquism on the question of the state. Instead of striving for a state of anarchy as advocated by Proudhonism, they established the state organs of the proletariat. Instead of building up a dictatorship of a few revolutionaries as advocated by Blanquism, they took the first steps in exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat by relying on the revolutionary enthusiasm and initiative of the proletariat.

Why do we say that the Paris Commune was a dictatorship of the proletariat?

First, the Commune was a revolutionary regime of the proletariat in opposition to the bourgeoisie. It was born in the armed uprising of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and founded on the basis of the destruction of the bourgeois state machine. Within the short 72 days of its existence, it waged a valiant struggle against the forces of capitalism both domestic and international. The proclamation of the Central Committee of the National Guard expounding the social content of the revolution of 1871 called this struggle a great struggle in which “parasitism and labor, exploitation and production are locked in combat.”<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, the Commune was a revolutionary regime in which the proletariat was the master of the house. Its mainstay was the workers’ armed forces. “The dictatorship of the proletariat is essential, and its first condition is an army of the proletariat.”<sup>14</sup> The Commune enjoyed the widespread support of the workers and their mass organizations. The bulk of its policies arose out of the proposals of the masses, reflecting the interests of the

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13 *Ibid.*, p. 109.

14 Marx, “On the Seventh Anniversary of the International,” *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Russian ed., State Publishing House of Political Literature, Moscow, 1960, Vol. XVII, p. 438.

proletariat and of the working people. Its leaders were elected by the masses, and subject to their supervision and they could be dismissed and recalled by the masses according to law.

Thirdly, the Commune was a revolutionary regime totally different from a bourgeois parliament. In the Commune, “representative institutions remain, but there is *no* parliamentarism here as a special system, as the division of labor between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for the deputies.”<sup>15</sup> The Commune was at the same time the working body of the executive and the legislative. The Commune committees promulgated laws and their members carried them out and were responsible to the committees and the people.

Fourthly, the Commune was a revolutionary regime which upheld proletarian internationalism. “For the Commune fought, not for some local or narrow national aim, but for the emancipation of all toiling humanity, of all the downtrodden and oppressed.”<sup>16</sup> The Commune declared: “The flag of the Commune is that of the Universal Republic.”<sup>17</sup>

Fifthly, the Commune was a revolutionary regime which had as its aim the liquidation of exploitation. “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,” and it wanted to transform “the means of production, land and capital, now chiefly the means of enslaving and exploiting labor, into mere instruments of free and associated labor.”<sup>18</sup>

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15 Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 48.

16 Lenin, “In Memory of the Commune,” *Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1963, Vol. XVII, p. 143.

17 Marx, “The Civil War in France (First Draft),” *op cit.*, p. 148.

These characteristics of the Paris Commune show that it was the antithesis of all forms of state power of the exploiting classes, that it was not an instrument through which the exploiting minority ruled over the broad masses of working people but an instrument through which the exploited took their destinies into their own hands to win their own emancipation. Therefore the reactionaries hated it like the plague. The pseudo-socialist Louis Blanc also attacked the Commune as “an issue of an election in which a small number of electors took part, made up of men for the most part unknown, and whose ability and honor is open to doubt, and at least in a few cases, certainly.”<sup>19</sup> He whitewashed the Versailles National Assembly and attacked the Commune as being responsible for starting the civil war. He said: “O civil war! Dreaded struggle! The cannon roars! People are killed and done to death and those in the National Assembly who would willingly give their lives to see this bloody problem settled in a peaceful manner are condemned to the rack of not being allowed to do anything, utter a cry or say a word!”<sup>20</sup> This renegade’s shameful lies vividly reveal the ugly features of one opposed to proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The writers of the classic Marxist works have firmly refuted the reactionaries’ slanders against the Paris Commune. They pointed out that because the Commune did not have the leadership of a Marxist political party and the guidance of Marxist theory, it was therefore not a complete or mature proletarian dictatorship. However, in the matter of realizing proletarian rule, it made an attempt that was of world significance. Marx

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18 Marx, *The Civil War in France*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 68.

19 Arthur Adamov, *La Commune de Paris, 18 mars-28 mai 1871*, *Anthologie*, Editions sociales, Paris, 1959, p. 236.

20 *Ibid.*

said: “Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government, 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.”<sup>21</sup> The writers of the classic Marxist works have also pointed out that the Commune-type of state power and some of the Commune’s correct acts were products of the practice of proletarian revolution and crystallizations of the creativity of the masses. In taking up arms to win their right to liberation, and in trying to take their destinies into their own hands, the proletariat, relying on its own class instinct, broke through the bonds of Proudhonism and Blanquism and blazed a trail in the course of the struggle. Engels said: “The Commune was the grave of the *old*, specifically French socialism, but at the same time it was the cradle of the international communism that was new to France.”<sup>22</sup> “Although the Proudhonists were strongly represented in the Commune, not the slightest attempt was made to liquidate the old society or to organize the economic forces according to Proudhon’s proposals. On the contrary, it does the Commune the greatest honor that in all its economic measures the ‘driving spirit’ was not any set of ‘principles,’ but simple, practical needs. And therefore these measures—abolition of night work in the bakeries, prohibition of monetary fines in the factories, confiscation of shut-down factories and workshops and handing them over to workers’ associations—were not at all in accordance with the spirit of Proudhonism, but certainly in accordance with the spirit of German scientific socialism.”<sup>23</sup> Lenin said:

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21 Marx, *The Civil War In France*, *op cit.*, p. 67.

22 Engels, “Letter to August Bebel, Oct. 29, 1884,” *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Russian ed., State Publishing House of Political Literature, Moscow, 1964, Vol. XXXVI, p. 196.

23 Engels, *The Housing Question*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 78.

“... the masses, who were raising the *whole* movement to a *higher level* in spite of the false theories and mistakes of Blanqui and Proudhon.”<sup>24</sup>

Smash the military-bureaucratic machine of the bourgeoisie and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat to replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie—this is the quintessence of Marxist-Leninist theory on the state and the most important experience of the Paris Commune. It is precisely on this fundamental question that a line of demarcation has emerged between Marxist-Leninists on the one hand and opportunists and revisionists on the other. Marx and Engels sharply repudiated the Right opportunists’ “parliamentary cretinism” and their “phobia against the proletarian dictatorship.” Lenin and Stalin, too, sharply repudiated the fallacy spread by the revisionists of the Second International about “peaceful growth into socialism.”

At the present time the Marxist-Leninists of the world are waging an uncompromising struggle against the Khrushchov revisionists’ reactionary theory and practice concerning “peaceful transition,” “the state of the whole people,” and so on and so forth. The Khrushchov revisionists, under the pretext that times have changed, publicize the deceitful myth that the proletariat can seize state power without smashing the state machine of the bourgeoisie and that socialism can be built without the dictatorship of the proletariat.

More than 90 years have elapsed since the uprising of the Paris Commune, and it is true that the world has witnessed great changes during this period. But no matter where changes occur, they cannot possibly alter the anti-socialist nature of the bourgeoisie. The closer the capitalist system gets to its doom, the more desperately the bourgeoisie strengthens, in a thousand and

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24 Lenin, “Preface to the Russian Translation of Karl Marx’s Letters to Dr. Kugelmann,” *Collected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1962, Vol. XII, pp. 110-111.

one ways, its state machine for a deathbed struggle. Take the United States for example. Its armed forces comprised only 42,000-odd men in 1871, but the number has now risen to more than 2.6 million.<sup>25</sup> In comparison with those of Bismarck, Napoleon III and Thiers, the armed forces of the United States are several or dozens of times larger numerically; their equipment is hundreds of times better; and they are thousands of times more truculent as reactionaries. They are playing the role of international gendarme, trying to strangle revolutionary movements both in the United States and in the other countries of the world. The state machines of the bourgeoisie are now bigger and more reactionary than ever before, and the bourgeoisie, by means of armed subversion, peaceful evolution and all kinds of phoney socialism, is rapidly sabotaging the cause of emancipation of the proletariat. Under these circumstances, to broadcast the idea that the proletariat can seize state power without smashing the state machine of the bourgeoisie and that socialism can be built without the dictatorship of the proletariat simply means advocacy of sham revolution and actual capitulation; all it amounts to is the peddling of phoney socialism and the upholding of real capitalism. The Khrushchov revisionists are simply brokers promoting sham revolution and selling phoney socialism.

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25 Today, the number is 1.35 million active personnel, with almost 800,000 in reserve. In 1966, US imperialism was still using conscription to draft men into the armed forces to carry out the genocidal US aggression in Vietnam. Since the invasion of Vietnam ended in 1973, US imperialism has relied on volunteers in its domination of the world, using the poverty of its people to coerce them into serving it. *-RRP*

**THE PROLETARIAT WHICH HAS SEIZED POWER  
MUST PREVENT THE TRANSFORMATION OF ITS  
STATE ORGANS FROM SERVANTS OF SOCIETY  
INTO MASTERS OF SOCIETY. HIGH SALARIES  
AND MULTIPLE SALARIES FOR CONCURRENTLY-  
HELD POSTS MUST BE ABOLISHED AMONG ALL  
CADRES WORKING IN PROLETARIAN STATE  
ORGANS, AND THESE CADRES MUST NOT ENJOY  
ANY SPECIAL PRIVILEGES**

How to prevent degeneration of the state organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat? The Paris Commune took a number of exploratory steps in this matter, and adopted a number of measures which, tentative as they were, had most profound and far-reaching significance. These measures provide us with important revelations.

Engels said: “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.”<sup>26</sup>

The masses were the real masters in the Paris Commune. While the Commune was in being the masses were organized on a wide scale and they discussed

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26 Engels, Introduction to “The Civil War in France,” Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 13.

important state matters within their respective organizations. Each day around 20,000 activists attended club meetings where they made proposals or advanced critical opinions on social and political matters great and small. They also made their wishes and demands known through articles and letters to the revolutionary newspapers and journals. This revolutionary enthusiasm and initiative of the masses was the source of the Commune's strength.

Members of the Commune paid much attention to the views of the masses, attending their various meetings and studying their letters. The general secretary of the Commune's Executive Committee, writing to the secretary of the Commune, said: "We receive many proposals every day, both orally and in writing: some are from individuals and some are sent in by the clubs or sections of the International. These are often excellent proposals and they should be considered by the Commune."<sup>27</sup> The Commune, in fact, seriously studied and adopted proposals from the masses. Many great decrees of the Commune were based on proposals by the masses, such as abolishing the system of high salaries for state functionaries, canceling arrears of rent, instituting secular education, abolishing night work for bakers, and so on and so forth.

The masses also carefully checked up on the work of the Commune and its members. One resolution of the Communal club of the third *arrondissement* said: The people are the masters... if men you have elected show signs of vacillation or stalling, please give them a push forward to facilitate the realization of our aims—that is, the struggle for our rights, the consolidation of the Republic, so that the cause of righteousness shall triumph. The masses criticized the Commune for not taking resolute measures against the counter-revolutionaries, deserters and renegades, for not carrying out imme-

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27 *Protocols of the Meetings of the Paris Commune*, Vol. I, p. 386.



diately the decrees it passed, and for disunity among its members. For example, a letter from a reader appeared in the April 27 issue of *Le Pere Duchene* saying: "Please give members of the Commune a jolt from time to time, ask them not to fall asleep, not to procrastinate in carrying out their own decrees. Let them make an end to their private bickering because only by unanimity of view can they, with greater power, defend the Commune."



**Announcing the establishment of the Paris Commune**

The provisions for the replacing and recalling of elected representatives who betrayed the interests of the people were not empty words. The Commune did, in fact, deprive Blanchet of his position as a member of the Commune because he had been a member of the clergy, a merchant and a secret agent. He had smuggled himself into the ranks of the National Guard during the siege of Paris and had sneaked into the Commune under a false name. The Commune deprived Cluseret of his position as a military delegate in view of the fact that "carelessness and negligence on the part of the mil-

itary delegate nearly led to the loss of Fort Issy.” Earlier, the traitor Lullier had also been dismissed and arrested by the Central Committee of the National Guard.

The Paris Commune also resolutely did away with all the privileges of state functionaries, and in the matter of salaries it made an important reform of historic significance.

We know that states ruled by the exploiting classes invariably offer their officials choice conditions and many privileges so as to turn them into overlords riding roughshod over the people. Sitting in their high positions, enjoying lucrative salaries and bullying the people—such is the picture of officials of the exploiting classes. Take the period of the French Second Empire: the annual salaries of officials were 30,000 francs for a deputy to the National Assembly; 50,000 francs for a minister; 100,000 francs for a member of the Privy Council; 130,000 francs for a Councillor of State. If someone held several official posts at the same time, he received multiple salaries. Rouher, for instance, a favorite of Napoleon III, was at once a deputy to the National Assembly, a member of the Privy Council and a Councillor of State. His yearly salary amounted to 260,000 francs. A skilled Parisian worker would have to work 150 years to earn this amount. As for Napoleon III himself, the state treasury gave him 25 million francs a year; with other state subventions, he had a yearly income of 30 million.

The French proletariat detested this order of things. Even before the founding of the Paris Commune, it demanded on many occasions that the system of high salaries for officials be abolished. With the founding of the Commune, this long-time wish of the working people was realized. On April 1, the famous decree was issued that the highest annual salary paid to any functionary should not exceed 6,000 francs. The decree stated: Before, “the higher posts in public institutions,

thanks to the high salaries attached to them, were the object of solicitation and given out as a matter of patronage.” But “there should be no place for either sinecures or high salaries in a truly democratic republic.”<sup>28</sup> This sum of 6,000 francs was equivalent to the wage of a skilled French worker at the time. According to the eminent scientist Huxley, it was just a little less than a fifth of what a secretary to the London metropolitan school board received.

The Paris Commune forbade its functionaries from getting paid for multiple posts, and the decision of May 19 said: “Considering that under the system of the Commune, the remuneration attached to each official post must be sufficient to maintain the well-being and dignity of the one who carries out its functions... the Commune resolves: It is forbidden to give any extra remuneration for functioning in more than one post; officials of the Commune, who are called upon to serve in other capacities in addition to their usual one, have no right to any new remuneration.”<sup>29</sup>

At the same time as the Commune abolished high salaries and forbade salaries for multiple posts, it also raised the lower salaries so as to narrow the gap in the salary scale. Take the post office for example: the wages of the low-salaried employees were raised from 800 francs to 1,200 francs a year, an increase of 50 percent, while the high salaries of an annual 12,000 francs were cut by half, to 6,000. In order to ensure the livelihood of low-salaried personnel, the Commune also forbade by express provision all monetary deduction and fines.

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28 “Journal officiel,” April 2, 1871, *Protocols of the Meetings of the Paris Commune*, Vol. I, p. 79.

29 *Protocols of the Meetings of the Paris Commune*, Russian ed., Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Moscow, 1960, Vol. II, p. 335.

Members of the Commune were models in carrying out its regulations regarding the abolition of privileges, high salaries and multiple salaries for those occupying several posts. Theisz, a member of the Commune in charge of the post office, should have received a monthly salary of 500 francs according to regulations, but he would agree to take only 450. General Wroblewski of the Commune voluntarily gave up his officer's pay and refused to move to the apartment offered him at the Elysee Palace. He declared: "A general's place is with the troops."

The Executive Committee of the Paris Commune also passed a resolution abolishing the rank of general. In its April 6 resolution, the committee said: "In view of the fact that the rank of general is incompatible with the principles of democratic organization of the National Guard ... it is decided: the rank of general is abolished."<sup>30</sup> It is a pity that this decision failed to be carried out in practice.

The leaders of the state received wages which were equivalent to that of a skilled worker: they had the obligation to do more work but no right to receive more pay, still less to enjoy any privileges. This was an unprecedented thing. It truly translated into reality the catchword of "cheap government"; it removed the aura of "mystery" and "particularity" from the so-called conduct of state affairs—a means employed by the exploiting classes to fool the people. It turned the conduct of state affairs simply into one of a worker's duties and transformed functionaries into workers operating "special tools." But its great significance lay not only in this. In the matter of material rewards, it created conditions for preventing the degeneration of functionaries. Lenin said: "This, combined with the principle of elective office and displaceability of all public officers, with payment for their work according to proletarian, not 'mas-

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30 *Journal officiel de la République française*, April 8, 1871.

ter-class' bourgeois standards, is the ideal of the working class."<sup>31</sup> He added: "The abolition of all representation allowances, and of all monetary privileges to officials, the reduction of the remuneration of *all* servants of the state to the level of '*workmen's wages*.' This shows more clearly than anything else the *turn* from bourgeois to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to that of the oppressed classes, from the state as a '*special force*' for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the *general force* of the majority of the people—the workers and the peasants. And it is on this particularly striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the ideas of Marx have been most completely forgotten!... It is "good form" to keep silent about it as if it were a piece of old-fashioned 'naivete.'<sup>32</sup>

And this is exactly what the leading clique of Khrushchov revisionists has done: They have completely ignored this important experience of the Paris Commune. They chase after privileges, make use of their privileged status, turn public activities into opportunities for personal gain, appropriate the fruits of the people's labor and receive incomes that are tens of times, or even over a hundred times, greater than the wages of ordinary workers and peasants. From political standpoint to mode of living, these people have turned their backs on the working people and imitated what the bourgeoisie and the bureaucrat-capitalists do. In an attempt to strengthen the social basis of their rule they also use high salaries, high awards, high fees and stipends and other diverse methods of making money to raise up a highly paid and privileged stratum. In an

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31 Lenin, "A Proletarian Militia," *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, Vol. XXIV, p. 181.

32 Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 44.

attempt to corrode with money the revolutionary will of the people, they talk wildly about “material incentives,” saying that rubles are “powerful locomotives,” and that they should “use rubles to educate people.” Compare the Khrushchov revisionists’ activities with the “naivete,” as they see it, of the Paris Commune and one can see clearly what is meant by servants of the people and masters of the people, what is meant by state organs being turned from servants of society into masters of society. “... Do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like?” Engels wrote, “Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.”<sup>33</sup> Similarly, we can say: Do you want to know what a degenerated dictatorship of the proletariat looks like? Then look at the “state of the whole people” of the Soviet Union under the rule of the Khrushchov revisionist clique.

**THE PROLETARIAT SHOULD BE ON GUARD  
AGAINST THE ENEMY’S PONEY PEACE  
NEGOTIATIONS WHILE HE IS REALLY PREPARING  
FOR WAR, AND EMPLOY REVOLUTIONARY DUAL  
TACTICS TO DEAL WITH COUNTER-  
REVOLUTIONARY DUAL TACTICS**

The Paris Commune bequeathed us great and inspiring lessons. Many are positively valuable; others offer the lessons of bitter experience.

Leadership of the Commune was shared by the Blanquists and Proudhonists. Neither were revolutionary parties of the proletariat. Neither understood Marxism or had experience in leading the proletarian revolution. Impelled forward by the proletariat, they did certain things correctly, but because of their lack of political consciousness, they also committed many mistakes.

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33 Engels, Introduction to “The Civil War in France,” Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 14.

One of the chief of these was that they fell victim to the enemy's peace negotiations fraud while he was really preparing for war. They had the enemy pinned to the wall but they failed to press home their victorious attack and wipe him out. They let the enemy gain a breathing space under cover of his sham peace negotiations and in that time he was able to reorganize his forces for a counter-attack. They had the chance to expand their revolutionary victory, but they let it slip through their fingers.

All exploiting classes in history employ the counter-revolutionary dual tactics of violent suppression and deceitful talk of peace either alternately or simultaneously. While their preparations to attack the people are not yet complete, or when they themselves are under attack by the revolutionary forces, they frequently resort to a "peace" intrigue to deceive the people. Once they think themselves strong enough to defeat the revolutionary people, they raise their butcher's knife and start a bloody slaughter. These were exactly the dual tactics Thiers used against the Paris Commune.

# COMMUNE DE PARIS

**La Commune de Paris DÉCRÈTE :**

- 1° La conscription est abolie ;**
- 2° Aucune force militaire, autre que la garde nationale, ne pourra être créée ou introduite dans Paris ;**
- 3° Tous les citoyens valides font partie de la garde nationale.**

Hôtel-de-Ville, le 29 Mars 1871.

**LA COMMUNE DE PARIS.**

IMPRIMERIE NATIONALE. — No 1371.

## **Decree of the Commune on the National Guard**

After Thiers' hasty flight to Versailles, he had only some 15,000-16,000 troops and police left. These remnant forces, few in number and low in morale, were no match for the armed forces of the workers of Paris who had the advantage both in numbers and morale. In addition, Paris was only 18 kilometers from Versailles, and the Parisian workers' armed forces could easily have covered that distance in one day. Speaking of the situation at the time, Thiers himself had to admit: "Those were the worst days of my life. The view spread around Paris was: 'Versailles is finished; as soon as we get there the soldiers will refuse to fight.' I was certain it would not be this way, but meanwhile, if we had been attacked by 70,000 or 80,000 men, I would not have wished to answer for the firmness of the army, riddled as it was by a feeling of overwhelming numerical inferior-



ity.”<sup>34</sup> In this situation, in order to maintain his foothold in Versailles and gain time to reorganize his counter-revolutionary forces, Thiers, crafty as he was, vigorously pressed ahead with his deceitful “negotiations” and laid down a smokescreen of “peace.”

First of all, he instructed the various mayors of the Paris *arrondissements* to hold talks with the Central Committee of the National Guard on the question of the Commune elections. They were to complicate matters as much as possible during the talks so as to drag them out and absorb the Central Committee’s attention till such time as Versailles was ready to attack. The National Assembly, colluding with the mayors of the *arrondissements* in their phoney “talks,” also agreed to hold municipal elections in Paris. As a result, the talks dragged on for eight days, but the date of the Commune elections was put off again and again. This gave Versailles a breathing space, while the Commune lost its opportunity to strike at this counter-revolutionary lair and clear it out. Later, the mayors disclosed the truth about these fake negotiations which covered preparations for war. Tirard confessed: “The main aim that we pursued by this opposition was to prevent the Federalists from marching on Versailles ... our resistance for several days gave the government a chance to organize its defense.”<sup>35</sup> Desmarest, too, divulged: “I considered it necessary to continue to take the risk, thereby winning time for the Versailles government to arm itself.”<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, Thiers loudly harped on his “peace” theme of “not interfering in Paris” and professed he was resolved to “maintain the Republic.” As Marx pointed out, Thiers was, from the very beginning, anxious to accompany his banditti-warfare against Paris with “a

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34 Adamov, *op cit.*, p. 211.

35 Kerzhentsev, *op cit.*, p. 208.

36 H. P. O. Lissagaray, *Geschichte der Kommune von 1871*, Rutten & Loening, Berlin, 1956.

little by-play of conciliation... On the 21st of March, when still without an army, he had declared to the Assembly: 'Come what may, I will not send an army to Paris.' On the 27th March he rose again: 'I have found the Republic an accomplished fact, and I am firmly resolved to maintain it.'"<sup>37</sup> With this talk, Thiers was trying to rally the old Republicans around him and prettify his reactionary regime; to dupe the provinces and inveigle the middle class; to throw Paris off its guard and isolate the proletariat. His "non-interference" cloaked an insatiable lust for slaughter; his words about "maintaining the Republic" were another way of saying that he was going to strangle the proletarian republic.

While pushing his fake "negotiations" and laying down a smokescreen of "peace," Thiers was also feverishly preparing for armed suppression of the Commune. He collected a motley crew of soldiery and begged Bismarck to release French war prisoners; he sent his agents among the prisoners to incite them against the Commune and to give them training; he formed groups of gendarmes, cavalry and bombardiers needed for his attack on Paris. He sent a large number of secret agents into Paris to collect military intelligence. To blockade Paris he ringed it with fortifications and artillery positions; he started a propaganda campaign and launched a barrage of calumnies against the Paris Commune to prepare public opinion for suppression of the uprising. After two weeks or so of many-sided preparations Versailles began its armed assault on Paris in early April.

From the beginning of April to the beginning of May, Thiers's forces were still relatively weak. As the Prussians had not released many prisoners, his military offensive was not able to develop rapidly and the possibility of victory over Paris was not great. So in this period, Thiers carried on his armed attacks as well as his comedy of conciliation. On the one hand, he contin-

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37 Marx, *The Civil War In France*, *op cit.*, p. 79.

ued his butchering of Communards and implored the Prussians to release more French prisoners; on the other hand, he used the Ligue d'Union Republicaine de Droits de Paris and other such bourgeois organizations for "mediation," to deceive and induce the Commune to lay down its arms, hand over its power, and so win in that way what he could not win on the battlefield. On April 27, for example, he said to the Assembly: "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."<sup>38</sup> On 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 Clement Thomas and Lecomte."<sup>39</sup>

But about two weeks later, after the Prussians had released a great many prisoners and Versailles had got together a force of 130,000, and MacMahon had assured him that he could shortly enter Paris, Thiers discarded all such pretences of "peace," negotiations" and "non-interference." He immediately 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."<sup>40</sup> He said, "I shall be pitiless! The expiation will be complete, and justice will be stern!"<sup>41</sup> He told his Bonapartist banditti that they had state licence to wreak vengeance upon Paris to their hearts' content.

The members of the Paris Commune were not at one as regards Thiers' counter-revolutionary dual tactics. Most of them had a muddled understanding of the

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38 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

nature of the reactionary classes and entertained illusions of peace. After the victory of the Paris uprising, some representatives of the middle and petty bourgeoisie proclaimed the idea of realizing internal peace through elections, saying that “better vote, than kill ... only a unanimous, imposing, overwhelming vote can prevent conflict and preserve Labor.”<sup>42</sup> They said that “only elections can calm down minds, pacify the streets, restore trust, secure order, create a regular administration and, finally, stop the hated struggle in which the Republic will perish in torrents of blood.”<sup>43</sup> The Central Committee of the National Guard also called for “benevolence” and “magnanimity” and that they should make “that one glorious word: Fraternity” their slogan for their actions. They wrongly believed that setting up the Commune through elections would avert civil war. They ordered the removal of barricades from the streets and at the same time made preparations for elections, several times entering into negotiations with the mayors of the *arrondissements* of Paris over the date, process, method and technical matters of the elections.

But votes did not have the magic power to turn weapons of war into silk and jade. They did not “pacify the streets” nor “preserve Labor.” On the contrary, Paris, busily engrossed in elections and negotiations, missed the opportunity to strengthen the revolutionary forces and neglected to take the necessary steps to extend the revolution’s victory. She failed to close her gates or take control of communications. The reactionaries were left to come and go as they pleased. She failed, among other things, to attack Versailles. Versailles, however, got the chance to strengthen the counter-revolutionary forces and complete preparations to attack Paris.

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42 Kerzhentsev, *op cit.*, p. 214.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 214-5.

Some members of the Commune did see through Thiers' counter-revolutionary dual tactics; they exposed the sham peace he was peddling and also sharply criticized the illusion, which the bourgeois organizations disseminated, that conciliation could be achieved through compromise. They likewise censured the false sense of peace that prevailed in the Commune. For example, at the May 4 meeting of the members of the Commune, Grousset Paschal, a member, said: "Citizens, the situation is serious ... because it is several weeks now since the reaction put on the mask of conciliation and this mask has not yet been torn away."<sup>44</sup> "To continue to talk about conciliation after the repeated declarations of the Versailles government; to talk about conciliation when the cannons are thundering, when our brothers are falling under the bullets of the Versailles murderers—that means to commit treachery, that means to weaken the defense of Paris, that means to prompt citizens to show weakness and incline them to desertion; that means in fact to talk about capitulation and defeat."<sup>45</sup> Revolutionary journals and mass organizations also exposed the counter-revolutionary plot of "peace negotiations" and criticized the illusion that there could be conciliation. The Manifesto of the Central Committee of the Women's Union for the Defense of Paris and Care of the Wounded solemnly pointed out: "No, it is not peace, but rather war to the end that the working women of Paris come to proclaim! Today, conciliation would be treason!... This would be to deny... the enfranchisement of the worker by himself!"<sup>46</sup> The clubs all along resolutely opposed compromise and refused to allow its advocates to attend their meetings. Some of them even sent delegations to the Commune to declare that those who advocated cessa-

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44 *Protocols of the Meetings of the Paris Commune*, Vol. II, p. 99.

45 *Ibid.*

46 Adamov, *op cit.*, pp. 40-41.

tion of the war with Versailles should be branded as traitors. What a pity it was that these correct views were not wholly accepted, and that right up to the time the Versailles banditti started to attack Paris, there were still many who were not awake to the facts and were still engrossed in the work of election of members to the Commune. At that time Lissagaray, an eyewitness of what was happening, wrote: "All Paris listened to the wild cannon fire. No one had thought that there would have been an attack of this kind. Since the 28th, people have been living in blind trust—undoubtedly the guns are firing salutes and at worst it is a misunderstanding."<sup>47</sup> But when it was ascertained that it was not a misunderstanding but a deliberate, long-premeditated attack, because of inadequate preparations, both political and military, it was, despite heroic and determined resistance, already too late.

While Versailles was sharpening its knives, Paris was casting votes; while Versailles was preparing for war, Paris was holding talks. The result was that the Versailles banditti with their butchers' knives entered Paris. They shot captured Commune members and soldiers; they shot refugees who sought sanctuary in churches; they shot wounded soldiers in hospitals; they shot elderly workers, saying that these people had caused repeated uprisings and were hardened criminals; they shot women workers, saying that they were "women incendiaries," and that they resembled women only "when they are dead"; they shot child workers, saying that "they'll grow up into insurgents." This carnage which they called "hunting" lasted throughout June. Paris was filled with corpses, the Seine was a river of blood and the Commune was drowned in this sea of blood. More than 30,000 people were massacred and over 100,000 people were incarcerated or forced into exile. This was the return Versailles gave Paris for her

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47 Lissagaray, *op cit*.

“benevolence” and “magnanimity.” This was how it ended its trick of false peace talks and real war preparations. This was a bitter lesson written in blood. It teaches us that the proletariat must carry the revolution through to the end; that fleeing bandits must be pursued and destroyed, that drowning rats must be beaten to death; that the enemy must not be given a chance to regain his breath.

If it can be said that 95 years ago, most of the members of the Paris Commune failed in time to see through Thiers’ plot of fake peace talks and real war preparations and that this was mainly because of lack of sufficient experience and understanding, then today, when the Khrushchov revisionists are doing everything they can to serve US imperialism’s fake peace and real aggression, it is certainly not a matter of lack of understanding. The Khrushchov revisionists have gone over completely to a renegade position and are collaborating with the US imperialists in the attempt to strangle the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the national-liberation movement by counter-revolutionary dual tactics. However, the times are progressing, people are progressing and the revolution is progressing. The revolutionary people are learning better and better how to use revolutionary dual tactics, and how to carry the revolution through to the end. The imperialists, revisionists and all reactionaries together with all their varieties of counter-revolutionary dual tactics will finally be thrown by the people into the garbage bin of history lock, stock and barrel.

Commemorating the 21st anniversary of the Paris Commune, Engels wrote: “Let the bourgeoisie celebrate their 14th of July or their 22nd of September. The festival of the proletariat everywhere will always be March 18.”<sup>48</sup>

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48 Engels, “Greetings to the French Workers on the 21st Anniversary of the Paris Commune,” *Collected Works of Marx*

Today, as we mark the festival of the proletariat—the 95th anniversary of the Paris Commune uprising—a look at the world shows a great revolutionary situation where “The Four Seas are rising, clouds and waters raging; the Five Continents are rocking, wind and thunder roaring.” History has fully borne out the prediction Marx made 95 years ago when he said: “But even if the Commune is crushed, the struggle will only be postponed. The principles of the Commune are eternal and cannot be destroyed; they will declare themselves again and again until the working class achieves its liberation.”<sup>49</sup> “The Paris Commune may fall, but the Social Revolution it has initiated, will triumph. Its birth-stead is everywhere.”<sup>50</sup>

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*and Engels*, Russian ed., State Publishing House of Political Literature, Moscow, 1962, Vol. XXII, p. 291.

49 “Text of the Speech by Karl Marx on the Paris Commune,” *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Russian ed., Vol. XVII, p. 629.

50 Marx, “The Civil War in France (Second Draft),” *op cit.*, p. 220.



# Long Live The Victory Of The Dictatorship Of The Proletariat!

## THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PARIS COMMUNE ARE ETERNAL

March 18 this year marks the centenary of the Paris Commune. Full of profound feelings of proletarian internationalism, the Chinese Communists and the Chinese people under the teaching of their great leader Chairman Mao warmly celebrate this great “**festival of the proletariat**”<sup>51</sup> together with the proletariat and the revolutionary people throughout the world.

One hundred years ago the proletariat and the broad masses of the people of Paris in France staged a heroic armed uprising and founded the Paris Commune. This was the first proletarian regime in the history of mankind, the first great attempt of the proletariat to overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Paris Commune abolished the army and police of the reactionary bourgeois government and replaced them with the armed people; the gun was in the hands of the working class.

The Paris Commune broke the bourgeois bureaucratic apparatus enslaving the people, founded the working class’s own government, adopted a series of

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51 Engels, “Message of Greetings to the French Workers on the 21st Anniversary of the Paris Commune”, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 22, p. 331.

policies to safeguard the interests of the working people and organized the masses to take an active part in running the state.

In the fight to found and defend the proletarian regime, the heroes of the Paris Commune displayed extraordinary revolutionary initiative, soaring revolutionary enthusiasm and self-sacrificing heroism, winning the admiration of the revolutionary people generation after generation.

Although the Paris Commune failed as a result of the military onslaught and bloody suppression carried out by butcher Thiers in league with Bismarck, its historical contributions are indelible. As Marx said: The glorious movement of March 18 was **“the dawn of the great social revolution which will liberate mankind from the regime of classes forever.”**<sup>52</sup>

While the battle was still raging in a Paris darkened by the smoke of gunfire, Marx declared: **“But even if the Commune is crushed, the struggle will only be postponed. The principles of the Commune are eternal and cannot be destroyed; they will declare themselves again and again until the working class achieves its liberation.”**<sup>53</sup>

What are the revolutionary principles that Marx and Engels, the great teachers of the proletariat, summed up on the basis of the practice of the Paris Commune?

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52 Marx, “Resolutions of the Meeting in Honour of the First Anniversary of the Paris Commune”, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 18, p. 61.

53 Marx, “The Record of a Speech on the Paris Commune”, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 17, p. 677.

In a word, **“the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.”**<sup>54</sup> The proletariat must use revolutionary violence to **“break”** and **“smash”**<sup>55</sup> the old state machinery and carry out the **dictatorship of the proletariat.**<sup>56</sup>

In expounding this principle, Marx stressed: The first premise of the dictatorship of the proletariat **“is an army of the proletariat. The working class must win the right to its emancipation on the battlefield.”**<sup>57</sup> Only by relying on revolutionary armed force can the proletariat overthrow the rule of reactionary classes and go on to fulfill its whole historical mission.

Marx also said: The state of the dictatorship of the proletariat will **“be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time.”**<sup>58</sup>

As Lenin said: **“One of the most remarkable and most important ideas of Marxism on the subject of the state”** is **“the idea of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ (as Marx and Engels began to call it after the Paris Commune).”**<sup>59</sup> To persist in revolutionary violence to smash the bourgeois state machine and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, or to maintain the bourgeois state machine and oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat—this has been the focus of repeated struggles between Marxism on the one hand and revisionism, reformism, anarchism and all kinds of bourgeois and

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54 Marx, *The Civil War in France*, *op cit.*, p. 61.

55 Marx, *The Civil War in France*, *op cit.*, p. 66.

Marx, “To L. Kugelmann”, April 12, 1871, *Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the Paris Commune*, second Chinese ed., People’s Publishing House, 1971, p. 215.

56 Marx, “On the Seventh Anniversary of the International”, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 17, p. 468.

57 *Ibid.*

58 Marx, *The Civil War in France*, *op cit.*, p. 64.

59 Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 24.

petty-bourgeois ideology on the other, the focus of repeated struggles between the two lines in the international communist movement for the past hundred years. It is precisely on this fundamental question of the dictatorship of the proletariat that all revisionism, from the revisionism of the Second International to modern revisionism with the Soviet revisionist renegade clique as its center, has completely betrayed Marxism.

A century's history has proved to the full that the Marxist theory of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat is invincible.

Forty-six years after the Paris Commune uprising, the proletariat of Russia, led by the great Lenin, won victory in the October Socialist Revolution through armed uprising, opening up a new world era of proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship. Lenin said: On the path of breaking the old state machine, the Paris Commune **“took the first world-historical step ... The Soviet Government took the second.”**<sup>60</sup>

Seventy-eight years after the Paris Commune uprising, the Chinese people, led by the great leader Chairman Mao, won victory in the revolution. Chairman Mao blazed a trail in establishing rural base areas, encircling the cities from the countryside and finally taking the cities. He led the Chinese people through protracted revolutionary wars in overthrowing the reactionary rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, in breaking the old state machine and bringing about in China the people's democratic dictatorship, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Since then Chairman Mao has been leading the Chinese people in continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and advancing triumphantly along the socialist road.

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60 Lenin, “First Congress of the Communist International”, *Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 28, p. 443.

Fighting bravely, advancing wave upon wave and supporting and encouraging each other in the past century, the proletariat, the oppressed people and oppressed nations of the world have been promoting the socialist revolution and the national democratic revolution and have won most brilliant victories. As Comrade Mao Zedong points out: **“This is the historic epoch in which world capitalism and imperialism are going down to their doom and world socialism and people’s democracy are marching to victory.”**<sup>61</sup> The cause of the Paris Commune is spreading far and wide at a higher stage in the new historical conditions. The world has undergone an earth-shaking change.

In commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels, with jubilant revolutionary feeling, told the European working class: **“Thus the Commune which the powers of the old world believed to be exterminated, lives stronger than ever, and thus we may join you in the cry: Vive la Commune!”**<sup>62</sup> Today, the flames of the revolutionary torch raised by the Paris Commune are ablaze throughout the world, and the days of imperialism, social-imperialism and all reaction are numbered. In celebrating the centenary of the Paris Commune at such a time, the Marxist-Leninists, the proletariat and the revolutionary people the world over have all the more reason to shout with unbounded confidence: Long live the Commune! Long live the victory of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat!

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61 Mao Zedong, “The Present Situation and Our Tasks, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 4, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 167.

62 Marx and Engels, “To the Chairman of the Slavonic Meeting in London in Celebration of the Anniversary of the Paris Commune”, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 19, p. 271.

In commemorating the Paris Commune, we should study the Marxist-Leninist theory of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, learn from historical experience, criticize modern revisionism with the Soviet revisionist renegade clique as its center, adhere to the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary line, and unite with the people of the world to win still greater victories.

**IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANT FOR THE  
REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE TO TAKE HOLD OF  
THE GUN**

The historical experience of the Paris Commune has fully demonstrated that taking hold of revolutionary arms is of the utmost importance to the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Explaining the experience of the Paris Commune, Lenin referred to Engels' important thesis that the workers emerged with arms from every revolution in France and that, therefore, the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois, who were at the helm of the state. On this conclusion of Engels', Lenin commented: "**The essence of the matter—also, by the way, on the question of the state (*has the oppressed class arms?*)—is here remarkably well grasped.**"<sup>63</sup>

The Paris Commune was born in the fierce struggle between armed revolution and armed counter-revolution. The 72 days of the Paris Commune were 72 days of armed uprising, armed struggle and armed defense. The very fact that the proletariat of Paris had taken hold of the gun struck the greatest terror into the hearts of the bourgeois reactionaries. And a fatal error of the Paris Commune lay precisely in the fact that it showed excessive magnanimity towards counter-revolution and did

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63 Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 74.

not march on Versailles immediately, thus giving Thiers a breathing space to muster his reactionary forces for an onslaught on revolutionary Paris. As Engels said: **“Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day if it had not made use of this authority of the armed people against the bourgeois? Should we not, on the contrary, reproach it for not having used it freely enough?”**<sup>64</sup>

Comrade Mao Zedong has concisely summed up the tremendous importance of armed struggle and the people’s army and advanced the celebrated thesis **“Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”**<sup>65</sup> He points out: **“According to the Marxist theory of the state, the army is the chief component of state power. Whoever wants to seize and retain state power must have a strong army.”**<sup>66</sup>

Violent revolution is the universal principle of proletarian revolution. A Marxist-Leninist party must adhere to this universal principle and apply it to the concrete practice of its own country. Historical experience shows that the seizure of political power by the proletariat and the oppressed people of a country and the seizure of victory in their revolution are accomplished invariably by the power of the gun; they are accomplished under the leadership of a proletarian party, by acting in accordance with that country’s specific conditions, by gradually building up the people’s armed force and fighting a people’s war on the basis of arousing the broad masses to action, and by waging repeated struggles against the imperialists and reactionaries. This is true

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64 Engels, “On Authority”, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 18, p. 344.

65 Mao Zedong, “Problems of War and Strategy”, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 2, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 206.

66 *Ibid.*

of the Russian revolution, the Chinese revolution, and the revolutions of Albania, Viet Nam, Korea and other countries, and there is no exception.

On the other hand, a proletarian party suffers setbacks in the revolution if it fails to go in for or gives up revolutionary armed force, and there have been serious lessons: Some parties failed to take hold of the gun and were helpless in the face of sudden attacks by imperialism and its lackeys and of counter-revolutionary suppression, and as a result millions of revolutionary people were massacred. In some cases where the revolutionary people had already taken up arms and their armed forces had grown considerably, certain parties handed over the people's armed forces and forfeited the fruits of the revolution because they sought official posts in bourgeois governments or were duped by the reactionaries.

In the past decades, many Communist Parties have participated in elections and parliaments, but none has set up a dictatorship of the proletariat by such means. Even if a Communist Party should win a majority in parliament or participate in the government, this would not mean any change in the character of bourgeois political power, still less the smashing of the old state machine. The reactionary ruling classes can proclaim the election null and void, dissolve the parliament or directly use violence to kick out the Communist Party. If a proletarian party does no mass work, rejects armed struggle and makes a fetish of parliamentary elections, it will only lull the masses and corrupt itself. The bourgeoisie buys over a Communist Party through parliamentary elections and turns it into a revisionist party, a party of the bourgeoisie—are such cases rare in history?

The proletariat must use the gun to seize political power and must use the gun to defend it. The people's army under the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist party is the bulwark of the dictatorship of the proletariat and



among the various factors for preventing the restoration of capitalism it is the main one. Having a people's army armed with the Marxist-Leninist ideology, the proletariat can deal with any complicated situation in the domestic or international class struggle and safeguard the proletarian state.

The contemporary liberation movement of the oppressed nations is an important component part and a great ally of the proletarian world revolution. The national democratic revolution and the socialist revolution are related to each other and at the same time distinct from each other; they represent two different stages and are different in character. However, to win complete victory in the national democratic revolution, it is likewise necessary to get prepared for a trial of armed strength with the imperialists and reactionaries. For the oppressed nations, it is likewise most important to take hold of the gun.

Since World War II, imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism headed by the United States have incessantly launched wars of aggression and resorted ever more frequently to such means as military intervention, armed subversion and invasion by mercenary troops to suppress the countries and people that are fighting for or have already gained independence. Incomplete statistics show that US imperialism has engineered and launched armed intervention and armed aggression on more than 50 occasions in the past 25 years. As for US-engineered armed subversion, examples are too numerous to be counted. Therefore, in order to win liberation and safeguard their national independence and state sovereignty and effectively combat aggression and subversion by imperialism and its lackeys, all the oppressed nations must have their own anti-imperialist armed forces and be prepared at all times to counter wars of aggression with revolutionary wars. The war against US aggression and for national

salvation waged by the people of the three countries of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia has set a brilliant example to the oppressed nations and people all over the world. The struggles against aggression and subversion waged by the people of many other countries and regions in Asia, Africa and Latin America have likewise provided valuable experience.

In his solemn statement **“People of the World, Unite and Defeat the US Aggressors and All Their Running Dogs!”**, Chairman Mao points out: **“A weak nation can defeat a strong, a small nation can defeat a big. The people of a small country can certainly defeat aggression by a big country, if only they dare to rise in struggle, dare to take up arms and grasp in their own hands the destiny of their country. This is a law of history.”**<sup>67</sup>

As Comrade Lin Biao says, “people’s war is the most effective weapon against US imperialism and its lack-eyes.”<sup>68</sup> The proletariat and the oppressed people and nations the world over will all change from being unarmed and unskilled in warfare to taking up arms and being skilled in warfare. US imperialism and all its lack-eyes will eventually be burned to ashes in the fiery flames of the people’s war they themselves have kindled.

## **REVOLUTION IS THE CAUSE OF THE MASSES IN THEIR MILLIONS**

The historical experience of the Paris Commune tells us that to be victorious in the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat it is imperative to rely on the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses in their millions and give full play to their great power as the makers of history. Lenin said: **“The autoc-**

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67 Mao Zedong, “People of the World, Unite and Defeat the US Aggressors and All Their Running Dogs!” May 20, 1970.

68 Lin Biao, “Long Live the Victory of People’s War!” September 3, 1965.

**racy cannot be abolished without the revolutionary action of class-conscious millions, without a great surge of mass heroism, readiness and ability on their part to ‘storm heaven’, as Marx put it when speaking of the Paris workers at the time of the Commune.”<sup>69</sup>**

Marx, the great teacher of the proletariat, highly valued the revolutionary initiative of the masses of the people and set us a brilliant example of the correct attitude to adopt towards the revolutionary mass movement.

In the autumn of 1870, prior to the founding of the Paris Commune, Marx pointed out that the conditions were not ripe for an uprising by the French workers. But when the proletariat of Paris did rise in revolt with heaven-storming revolutionary heroism in March 1871, Marx, regarding himself as a participant, promptly and firmly supported and helped this proletarian revolution. Although he perceived the mistakes of the Commune and foresaw its defeat, Marx considered the revolution the most glorious exploit of the French working class. For he regarded this movement **“as a historic experience of enormous importance, as a certain advance of the world proletarian revolution, as a practical step that was more important than hundreds of programmes and arguments.”<sup>70</sup>** In a letter to L. Kugelmann at that time, Marx expressed his fervent praise: **“What elasticity, what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians!” “History has no like example of like greatness!”<sup>71</sup>** Lenin saw in this letter a gulf between the

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69 Lenin, “The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the Russian Revolution”, *Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 15, p. 152.

70 Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 37.

71 Marx, “To L. Kugelmann”, April 12, 1871, *Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the Paris Commune*, second Chinese ed., People’s Publishing House, 1971, p. 215.

proletarian revolutionaries and the opportunists and hoped that it would be **“hung in the home ... of every literate Russian worker.”**<sup>72</sup>

Contrary to the Marxists, all the opportunist and old and new revisionists oppose the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat and they inevitably have a mortal fear of and bitter hatred for the masses, and they deride, curse and sabotage the revolutionary mass movement. When the Russian armed uprising of December 1905 failed, Plekhanov stood aloof and accused the masses, saying: “They should not have taken to arms.” Lenin indignantly criticized Plekhanov’s aristocratic attitude towards the revolutionary mass movement and denounced him as an infamous Russian renegade from Marxism. Lenin pointed out that without the “general rehearsal” of 1905, victory in the October Revolution in 1917 would have been impossible.

In 1959, when our great teacher Chairman Mao denounced the Peng Dehuai Right-opportunist anti-Party clique for slandering and opposing the revolutionary mass movement, he sharply told these anti-Marxist renegades:

**“Please look and see how Marx and Lenin commented on the Paris Commune, and Lenin on the Russian revolution!” “Do you see how Lenin criticized the renegade Plekhanov and those ‘bourgeois gentlemen and their hangers-on,’ ‘the curs and swine of the moribund bourgeoisie and of the petty-bourgeois democrats who trail behind them’? If not, will you please have a look?”**<sup>73</sup> Chairman Mao used this historical experience

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72 Lenin, “Preface to the Russian Translation of the Letters of K. Marx to L. Kugelmann”, *Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 12, p. 101.

73 Chairman Mao’s instruction on “The Correct Attitude Marxists Should Take Towards the Revolutionary Mass Movement”, August 15, 1959, where he quote’s Lenin’s “A Great Beginning” and “Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution”, *Lenin*,

as a profound lesson to educate the whole Party and urged our Party members and cadres to follow the example of Marx and Lenin and take a correct attitude towards the revolutionary mass movement.

**“Revolution is the main trend in the world today.”<sup>74</sup>**

All round the globe, the people are thundering: Down with the US aggressors and all their running dogs! The strategic rear areas of imperialism have become front lines in the anti-imperialist struggle. The victorious development of the war of the three peoples of Indochina against US aggression and for national salvation has pushed the worldwide anti-US struggle to a new high. The struggle against the doctrine of the hegemony of the two superpowers is gaining momentum. The national liberation movement in Asia and Africa is shooting forward as violently as a raging fire. The struggle of the people of Korea, Japan and other Asian countries against the revival of Japanese militarism by the US and Japanese reactionaries is daily surging ahead. The Palestinian and other Arab people are continuing their advance in the fight against the US-Israeli aggressors. Revolutionary mass movements on an unprecedented scale have broken out in North America, Europe and Oceania. The workers, students, black people and other minority peoples in the United States are daily awakening and rising in a revolutionary storm against the reactionary rule of the Nixon government and its policy of aggression. In Latin America, the “backyard” of US imperialism, the long-suppressed anti-US fury in the hearts of the people has now burst forth, and a new situation has emerged characterized by joint struggle for the defense of their national interests and state sovereignty. The revolutionary struggle of the people in certain East European countries against social-imperi-

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*Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 29, p. 386 and Vol. 33, p. 35.

74 Mao Zedong, “People of the World, Unite and Defeat the US Aggressors and All Their Running Dogs!” May 20, 1970.

alism is in the ascendant. The spring thunder of revolution is sounding even in hitherto relatively quiescent areas. Reacting on and encouraging each other, these struggles have merged into the powerful torrent of the world people's revolutionary movement.

In the face of the present great revolutionary movement, every revolutionary party and every revolutionary will have to make a choice. To march at the head of the masses and lead them? To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing? Or to stand in their way and oppose them? Genuine Marxist-Leninist parties and all revolutionaries must warmly support the revolutionary actions of the masses, firmly march at the head of the mass movement and lead the masses forward.

The political parties of the proletariat and all revolutionaries **“ought to face the world and brave the storm, the great world of mass struggle and the mighty storm of mass struggle.”**<sup>75</sup> They must share weal and woe with the masses, modestly learn from them, be their willing pupils, be good at discovering their revolutionary initiative and draw wisdom and strength from them. Only by plunging into the mighty storm of the mass movement can a political party of the proletariat temper itself and grow in maturity. And only through the practice of the masses in class struggle can a correct programme or line be formulated, developed, tested and carried out.

The mainstream of the revolutionary mass movement is always good and always conforms to the development of society. In the mass movement various trends of thought exert their influence, various factions emerge and various kinds of people take part. This is only natural. Nothing on earth is absolutely pure. Through their practice in struggle and repeated comparison, the broad masses of the people will eventually distinguish between what is correct and what is erro-

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75 Mao Zedong, “Get Organized!”, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 3, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 146.

neous; they will eventually cast aside revisionism and all that is erroneous and grasp the revolutionary truth of Marxism-Leninism. A proletarian party must go deep among the masses and work patiently, painstakingly and for a long time, so as constantly to raise their political consciousness and lead the mass movement forward along the correct road.

The question of first importance for the revolution is to distinguish between enemies and friends, to unite with our real friends and attack our real enemies. The development of the revolutionary mass movement calls for the constant strengthening of unity within the revolutionary forces and the smashing of plots to split and sabotage hatched by the imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries. The people, who constitute over 90 percent of the population—the workers, peasants, students and all those who refuse to be oppressed by imperialism — invariably want to make revolution. In order to defeat US imperialism and all its running dogs, it is imperative to form a broad united front, unite with all forces that can be united, the enemy excepted, and carry out arduous struggle.

Comrade Mao Zedong points out: **“Direct reliance on the revolutionary masses is a basic principle of the Communist Party.”**<sup>76</sup> We must rely on the masses and launch mass movements when we fight for political power. We must likewise rely on the masses, launch mass movements and adhere to the mass line in all our work when we engage in the socialist revolution and socialist construction after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. **“As long as we rely on the people, believe firmly in the inexhaustible creative**

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76 From “Absorb Proletarian Fresh Blood”, editorial of the journal *Hongqi*, No. 4, 1968.

**power of the masses and hence trust and identify ourselves with them, no enemy can crush us while we can crush every enemy and overcome every difficulty.”<sup>77</sup>**

### **IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE A GENUINE MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY**

Summing up the experience of the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels explicitly stated: **“In its struggle against the collective power of the propertied classes, the working class cannot act as a class except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to all old parties formed by the propertied classes.”<sup>78</sup>** This is a condition indispensable to seizing victory in the proletarian revolution, establishing and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, and realizing the ultimate goal of abolishing classes.

The fundamental cause of the failure of the Paris Commune was that, owing to the historical conditions, Marxism had not yet achieved a dominant position in the workers’ movement and a proletarian revolutionary party with Marxism as its guiding thought had not yet come into being. On the other hand, Blanquism and Proudhonism which were then dominant in the Paris Commune could not possibly lead the proletarian revolution to victory.

Historical experience shows that where a very favorable revolutionary situation and revolutionary enthusiasm on the part of the masses exist, it is still necessary to have a strong core of leadership of the proletariat, that is, **“a revolutionary party ... built on the Marxist-**

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77 Mao Zedong, “On Coalition Government”, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 3, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 253.

78 Marx and Engels, “Resolutions of the General Congress of the International Working Men’s Association Held at the Hague”, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 18, p. 165.



**Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary style.”<sup>79</sup>** Only such a party can lead the proletariat and the broad masses in defeating imperialism and its running dogs and winning victory in the revolution.

A revolutionary situation appeared in many countries at the time of World War I. However, since almost all the political parties of the Second International had degenerated into revisionist, social-chauvinist parties, it was out of the question for them to lead the proletariat in seizing political power. Only in Russia, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party founded by Lenin, was the Great October Socialist Revolution crowned with success.

During and after World War II, the revolution triumphed in China thanks to the leadership of the Communist Party of China with Chairman Mao as its leader; in some other countries, also under the leadership of Marxist-Leninist parties, the revolution was victorious or protracted revolutionary struggles were persevered in. But in certain countries, the revolution failed because the opportunist, revisionist line had got the upper hand in the parties.

For world revolution the situation today is better than ever before. The objective situation urgently demands strong leadership by genuine Marxist-Leninist parties, and the building of proletarian revolutionary parties which completely break with the revisionist line, which are consolidated ideologically, politically and organizationally and which have a broad mass character.

To be able to lead the revolution, it is of fundamental importance for a proletarian party to take Marxism-Leninism as its guiding thought, integrate the universal

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79 Mao Zedong, “Revolutionary Forces of the World Unite, Fight Against Imperialist Aggression!”, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 4, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 284.

truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the revolution in its own country, and formulate and implement a correct line suited to the conditions of that country. With a correct line, a weak force can grow strong, armed forces can be built up from scratch, and political power can be attained. With an erroneous line, the revolution will suffer setbacks and the gains already won will be forfeited.

In leading the Chinese people's revolution through protracted struggles, Comrade Mao Zedong repeatedly pointed out: **"As soon as it was linked with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism gave an entirely new complexion to the Chinese revolution"**<sup>80</sup> and **"it has been the consistent ideological principle of our Party to closely integrate Marxist-Leninist theory with the practice of the Chinese revolution."**<sup>81</sup>

Comrade Mao Zedong further expounded this fundamental principle in his important inscription written for Japanese worker friends: **"The Japanese revolution will undoubtedly be victorious, provided the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism is really integrated with the concrete practice of the Japanese revolution."**<sup>82</sup>

A proletarian party should, in accordance with the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, use the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoints and methods to carry out deep-going investigations and study of the class relations in society, make concrete analyses of the present conditions and the history of its own country and the

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80 Mao Zedong, "Reform Our Study", *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 3, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 7.

81 Mao Zedong, "Opening Address at the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China", September 15, 1956.

82 Chairman Mao's important inscription for Japanese worker friends, September 18, 1962, *Renmin Ribao*, September 18, 1968.

characteristics of the revolution in that country, and solve the theoretical and practical problems of the revolution independently. It is necessary to learn from international experience, which, however, should not be copied mechanically; a proletarian party should creatively develop its own experience in the light of the realities of its own country. Only thus can it guide the revolution to victory and contribute to the cause of the proletarian world revolution.

To keep on integrating theory with practice, a proletarian party must maintain close ties with the masses, go deep among them and adopt the method of leadership, **“from the masses, to the masses,”**<sup>83</sup> so that the party’s correct line and principles can be translated into mass action. At the same time it should be good at summing up experience and lessons, carry out criticism and self-criticism, persist in doing what is right and correct what is wrong in the interests of the people, and find out the laws of development through practice in struggle and then use them to guide the practical struggle.

Comrade Mao Zedong says: **“Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society.”**<sup>84</sup> To ensure that its political line is correct and its organization consolidated, a proletarian party must conduct uncompromising struggles against opportunism and revisionism of every description, against the ideologies of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes.

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83 Mao Zedong, “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership”, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 3, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 107.

84 Mao Zedong, “On Contradiction”, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 1, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 289.

The struggle between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism, the struggle between the two lines in the international communist movement, is a protracted one. For more than a decade, the Chinese Communist Party, the Albanian Party of Labor and all the genuine Marxist-Leninists of the world have together waged a resolute ideological, theoretical and political struggle against modern revisionism with Soviet revisionism as its center and have won great victories. But the struggle is by no means over. To keep on promoting the proletarian world revolution, the Marxist-Leninist parties and the revolutionary people in various countries have an important task to fulfill, namely, to continue criticizing modern revisionism with Soviet revisionism as its center and carry this struggle through to the end.

The ideologies of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes have long dominated society. The bourgeoisie invariably does its utmost to influence, corrupt and “corrode” the Communist Party ideologically by every means and through every channel, whether in developed capitalist countries or in economically backward countries; whether the status of the Communist Party is legal or not; whether before the seizure of political power by the proletariat or after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. If a proletarian party fails to wage resolute struggles against the inroads of bourgeois ideology, it cannot possibly maintain its ideological, political and organizational independence and will turn into an appendage of the bourgeoisie and its political parties. The proletarian party can bring its fighting strength into play and achieve victory in the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat only by using Marxism-Leninism as its weapon of criticism and sticking to class struggle in the realm of ideology to defeat the reactionary bourgeois world outlook with the proletarian world outlook.

## THE MODERN REVISIONISTS ARE RENEGADES FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

At the time when the proletariat and the revolutionary people of the world are marking the grand centenary of the Paris Commune, the Soviet revisionist renegade clique is putting on an act, talking glibly about “loyalty to the principles of the Commune”<sup>85</sup> and making itself up as the successor to the Paris Commune. It has no sense of shame at all.

What right have the Soviet revisionist renegades to talk about the Paris Commune? It is these renegades who have usurped the leadership of the Soviet Party and state, and as a result the Soviet state founded by Lenin and defended by Stalin has changed its political color. It is they who have turned the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and put social-imperialism and social-fascism into force. This is gross betrayal of the revolutionary principles of the Paris Commune.

From Khrushchov to Brezhnev, all have tried to mask their dictatorship of the bourgeoisie as the “state of the whole people.” Khrushchov used to say that the Soviet Union had been “transformed ... into a state of the whole people.”<sup>86</sup> Now Brezhnev and his ilk say that theirs is a “Soviet socialist state of the whole people”<sup>87</sup> and that what they practice is “Soviet democracy.” All this is humbug.

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85 “The Paris Commune and the Present”, article in Soviet revisionist *Kommunist*, No. 2, 1971.

86 N. S. Khrushchov’s report on the “Programme of the CPSU” at the Soviet revisionist “22nd Congress”, October 18, 1961.

87 L. I. Brezhnev’s report at the meeting in “commemoration” of the centenary of Lenin’s birth, April 21, 1970.

The Soviet, a great creation of the Russian proletariat, embodied the fact that the working people were masters in their own house, and it was a glorious title. However, the name “Soviet,” like the name “Communist Party,” can be used by Bolsheviks or Mensheviks, by Marxist-Leninists or revisionists. What is decisive is not the name but the essence, not the form but the content. In the Soviet Union today, the name “Soviet” has not changed, nor has the name of the state, but the class content has changed completely. With its leadership usurped by the Soviet revisionist renegade clique, the Soviet state is no longer an instrument with which the proletariat suppresses the bourgeoisie, but has become a tool with which the restored bourgeoisie suppresses the proletariat.<sup>88</sup> The Soviet revisionist renegades have turned the Soviet Union into a paradise for a handful of bureaucrat-monopoly capitalists of a new type, a prison for the millions of working people. This is the whole content of what they call a “Soviet socialist state of the whole people” and “Soviet democracy.” It is by no means the fact that “the state of the whole people is a direct continuation of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat,”<sup>89</sup> but rather that Brezhnev’s line is a “direct continuation” of Khrushchov’s line. This is essentially why Brezhnev and his like are clinging desperately to the slogan of the “state of the whole people.”

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88 In 1967, Mao said: “We can imagine that the name People’s Republic of China can be used by both classes. If we should be overthrown and the bourgeoisie came to power, they would have no need to change the name, but would still call it the People’s Republic of China... The main thing is which class seizes political power. That is the fundamental question, not what its name is.” (*Selected Works Vol. IX*, “Talks at Three Meetings with Comrades Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan,” February 12-18, 1967.)

89 “The State of the Whole People and Democracy”, article in the Soviet revisionist *Pravda*, June 7, 1970.

Their frenzied opposition to violent proletarian revolution is another concentrated expression of the betrayal of the revolutionary principles of the Paris Commune by the Soviet revisionist renegade clique. Brezhnev and his company clamorously demand of “the leaders of the proletariat to reduce violence to the minimum at every stage of the struggle and employ milder forms of compulsion”; they bleat that “armed struggle and civil war are accompanied by colossal sacrifices and sufferings on the part of the masses of the people, by destruction of the productive forces, and by the annihilation of the best revolutionary cadres.” To find a pretext for their fallacy of “peaceful transition,” this group of renegades wantonly distort history, even preaching that the Paris Commune was “initially” an “almost completely bloodless revolution.”<sup>90</sup>

The revolution of the Paris Commune was from beginning to end a life-and-death fight between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, a struggle of violence between revolution and counter-revolution. In less than six months before the Paris Commune uprising, the people of Paris had staged two armed uprisings, and both were bloodily suppressed by the reactionaries. And in the battles following the uprising, tens of thousands of workers and other working people laid down their lives. How can this revolution be described as an “initially” “almost completely bloodless revolution”? Marx pointed out: **“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.”**<sup>91</sup>

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90 Sinister anti-China book compiled by F. Konstantinov and others, Russian ed., the “Mysl” Publishing House, USSR, published in August 1970, pp. 119-120.

91 Marx, *The Civil War In France, op cit.*, p. 91.

The Soviet revisionist renegade clique has now come out into the open and is playing the part of the priests saying prayers for the exterminators. This is a monstrous insult to the martyrs of the Paris Commune!

The Soviet revisionist renegades try in a hundred and one ways to justify counter-revolutionary violence, but they curse revolutionary violence with clenched teeth. Under the rule of violence by imperialism and the reactionaries, the working people suffer unending pain and large numbers of them die every day, every hour. It is precisely to put an end to this man-eating system so as to free the people from exploitation and enslavement that the oppressed people carry out violent revolution. But the Soviet revisionist renegades level so many criminal charges against the revolutionary armed forces and their revolutionary wars, making allegations about the "sufferings of the people," the "annihilation of cadres" and "destruction of the productive forces," and so on and so forth. Doesn't this logic of theirs mean that the first law under heaven is for the imperialists and reactionaries to oppress and massacre the people, whereas it is a hellish crime for the revolutionary people to take up arms and rise in resistance?

The Soviet revisionist renegades want the people of all countries to reduce revolutionary violence "to the minimum," but they themselves keep on increasing counter-revolutionary violence to the maximum. Indifferent to the life or death of Soviet people, Brezhnev and his gang are going all out for militarism and the arms race, spending more and more rubles on more and more planes, guns, warships, guided missiles and nuclear weapons. It is by means of this monstrous apparatus of violence that these new tsars oppress the broad masses at home and maintain their colonial rule abroad, trying to bring a number of countries under their con-



trol. It is this apparatus of violence that they are using as capital for bargaining with US imperialism, pushing power politics and dividing spheres of influence.

The Soviet revisionist renegades want the revolutionary people to employ “milder forms of compulsion” against counter-revolution, while they themselves use the most savage and brutal means to deal with the revolutionary people.

May we ask:

Is it a “milder” form when you send large numbers of armed troops and police to suppress the people of different nationalities in your country?

Is it a “milder” form when you station large numbers of troops in some East European countries and the Mongolian People’s Republic to impose a tight control over them, and even carry out the military occupation in Czechoslovakia, driving tanks into Prague?

And is it a “milder” form when you engage in military expansion everywhere and insidiously conduct all manner of subversive activities against other countries?

What the Soviet revisionist renegades have done fully shows that they not only oppose violent revolution but use violence to oppose revolution. They put on benevolent airs, but actually they are **“the worst enemies of the workers— wolves in sheep’s clothing.”**<sup>92</sup>

And there is a Miyamoto revisionist clique in Japan, which, too, zealously opposes violent revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat and urges that it is “necessary to make every effort”<sup>93</sup> to take the parliamentary road. Racking their brains, they allege that according to the dictionary the word “violence” means “brute force” or “lawless force,” and the people should not make such

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92 Engels, “Preface to the Second German Edition of ‘The Condition of the Working Class in England’, 1892”, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 22, p. 373.

93 Sanzo Nosaka’s talk, *Akahata*, January 3, 1971.

a revolution.<sup>94</sup> They also say that some people are “frightened” by the phrase—the dictatorship of the proletariat—which is a “very inappropriate” translation, and it is necessary to “make a really accurate translation” in the future.<sup>95</sup> In order to maintain US imperialist and Japanese militarist violence and to oppose the Japanese people making revolution, the Miyamoto clique even seeks help from the dictionary, falls back on semantics and juggles with words. How modern revisionism has degenerated ideologically!

Comrade Mao Zedong points out: **“The socialist system will eventually replace the capitalist system; this is an objective law independent of man’s will.”**<sup>96</sup> Khrushchov, the arch-representative of modern revisionism, has long been swept into the rubbish heap of history. Novotny and Gomulka, who followed Khrushchov’s revisionist line, have also toppled in their turn. There can be no doubt that whoever runs counter to the laws of history, betrays the revolutionary principles of the Paris Commune and turns traitor to the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat will come to no good end.

**PERSIST IN CONTINUING THE REVOLUTION  
UNDER THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE  
PROLETARIAT AND STRIVE FOR  
STILL GREATER VICTORIES**

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94 Korehito Kurahara’s speech at a Japanese revisionists’ meeting in “commemoration” of the centenary of Lenin’s birth, *Akahtata*, April 2, 1970.

95 Kenji Miyamoto’s speech at a meeting convened by the Japanese revisionist Kyoto committee, *Akahata*, March 20, 1970.

96 Mao Zedong, “Speech at the Meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR In Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution”, November 6, 1957.

Historical experience since the Paris Commune, and especially since the October Revolution, shows that the capture of political power by the proletariat is not the end but the beginning of the socialist revolution. To consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and prevent the restoration of capitalism, it is necessary to carry the socialist revolution through to the end.

The world proletarian revolutionary movement has gone through twists and turns on its road forward. When capitalism was being restored in the homeland of the October Revolution, for a time it seemed doubtful whether the revolutionary principles of the Paris Commune, the October Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat were still valid. The imperialists and reactionaries were beside themselves with joy. They thought: Since the Soviet Union has changed through “peaceful evolution,” won’t it be possible to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat in China in the same way? But, the salvos of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution initiated and led by Chairman Mao himself have destroyed the bourgeois headquarters headed by the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shaoqi and exploded the imperialists’ and modern revisionists’ fond dream of restoring capitalism in China.

Chairman Mao has comprehensively summed up the positive and negative aspects of the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat, inherited, defended and developed the Marxist-Leninist theory of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, advanced the great theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and solved, in theory and practice, the most important question of our time—the question of consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and preventing the

restoration of capitalism. Thus he has made a great new contribution to Marxism-Leninism and charted our course for carrying the proletarian revolution triumphantly to the end. In China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong Thought and Chairman Mao's revolutionary line are being integrated more and more deeply with the revolutionary practice of the people in their hundreds of millions to become the greatest force in consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Socialist society covers a considerably long historical period. Throughout this period, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle. The struggle still focuses on the question of political power. The defeated class will still struggle; these people are still around and this class still exists. They will invariably seek their agents within the Communist Party for the purpose of restoring capitalism. Therefore, the proletariat must not only guard against enemies like Thiers and Bismarck who overthrew the revolutionary political power by force of arms; it must in particular guard against such careerists and schemers as Khrushchov and Brezhnev who usurped party and state leadership from within. In order to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and prevent the restoration of capitalism, the proletariat must carry out the socialist revolution not only on the economic front, but also on the political front and ideological and cultural front and exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the superstructure, including all spheres of culture. It is essential to enable the party members, the cadres and the masses to grasp the sharpest weapon, Marxism-Leninism, and to distinguish between the correct and erroneous lines, between genuine and sham Marxism, and between materialism and idealism, so as to ensure that our Party and state will always advance along Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line.

Chairman Mao says: **“The final victory of a socialist country not only requires the efforts of the proletariat and the broad masses of the people at home, but also involves the victory of the world revolution and the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man over the whole globe, upon which all mankind will be emancipated.”**<sup>97</sup>

The revolutionary movement of the proletariat is always international in character. Therefore, the victory of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat calls for the realization of the great slogans: “Working men of all countries, unite!”<sup>98</sup> and “Workers and oppressed nations of the world, unite!”<sup>99</sup> The proletariat of the capitalist countries should support the struggle for liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, the people of the colonies and semi-colonies should support that of the proletariat of the capitalist countries, and the people who have triumphed in their own revolution should help the people who are still fighting for liberation. This is the principle of proletarian internationalism.

The Chinese revolution is part of the world revolution. The revolutionary cause of the Chinese people is closely bound up with that of the other peoples of the world. We always regard the revolutionary struggles of the people of other countries as our own and as helping the Chinese people. We should learn from other revolutionary peoples, firmly support their struggles and fulfill our bounden duty. We should carry forward the prole-

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97 From Lin Biao’s report to the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

98 Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 70.

99 Lenin, “Speech at the Meeting of Activists of the Moscow Organizations of the RCP(B)”, *Collected Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. 31, p. 412.

tarian internationalist spirit, further strengthen our militant unity with all genuine Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations, and strengthen our militant unity with the proletariat, the oppressed people and oppressed nations of the world for the seizure of still greater victories.

A hundred years ago, Marx said of the Paris Commune: **“Whatever ... its fate at Paris, it will make *le tour du monde*.”**<sup>100</sup> This great prediction of Marx's is more and more becoming a glorious reality. Reviewing the past and looking into the future, we declare with increasing conviction: The final destruction of imperialism, modern revisionism and all reaction is inevitable, and so is the complete emancipation of the proletariat, the oppressed people and the oppressed nations! The *Internationale* written by Eugene Pottier, the poet of the Paris Commune, is today reverberating through the world. “No more tradition's chain shall bind us.” “We shall be all.” “Let each stand in his place; The Internationale shall be the human race!” Let the imperialists, social-imperialists and all reactionaries tremble in the great storm of the world people's revolution! **“The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.”**<sup>101</sup>

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100Marx, “The Civil War in France (First Draft),” *op cit.*, p. 158.

101Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 70.