

THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE

Written between July 1870 and May 1871, first published in 1871, and widely circulated by 1872, "The Civil War in France" by Karl Marx addresses the General Council of the International. The aim is to provide workers worldwide with a clear understanding of the heroic struggle of the Communards and the historical lessons to be learned. The addresses were given during significant events: the first in July 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War, the second in September 1870 after Bonaparte's army defeat, and the third in May 1871, two days after the Paris Commune's defeat.

Originally published as only the third address, Engels later compiled a new edition in 1891, including the first two addresses for additional historical context. The book delves into the events surrounding the Paris Commune, providing insights into the first workers' government. Engels' 1891 introduction is included, separated into an initial introduction and a postscript. The chapters are titled for the reader's guidance in understanding the historical events discussed in each.

1891 Introduction by Frederick Engels On the 20th Anniversary of the Paris Commune

Due to France's economic and political evolution since the 1789 French Revolution, Paris had seen a trend where revolutions took on a proletarian character, led by the working class. After victories, the working class, armed and victorious, demanded the abolition of class conflict between capitalists and workers. However, attempts to disarm the workers by the bourgeoisie led to the defeat of the workers after each revolution, notably in 1848.

In 1848, the liberal bourgeoisie's efforts for electoral reform led to a republic, but the workers' armed presence forced their demands. The subsequent struggle ended in the workers' defeat, showcasing the bourgeoisie's cruel revenge against the proletariat standing as a distinct class.

The Second Empire, established by Louis Bonaparte, exploited France economically and politically but also fueled industrial development. However, the empire's chauvinistic aspirations, especially regarding the left bank of the Rhine, led to wars. The Paris Revolution of 1870 resulted in the collapse of the empire, but the subsequent republic faced external threats. The conflict between the bourgeois government and armed proletariat escalated, leading to the formation of the Paris Commune in March 1871.

The Commune, predominantly proletarian, enacted significant reforms and resisted disarmament attempts by the bourgeois government. As external threats intensified, the Commune's focus shifted to defending Paris. The Commune's class character became evident in its decrees and actions, challenging the existing societal order. The Commune's eventual defeat by the Versailles forces in May 1871 marked a brutal massacre and mass arrests, highlighting the ruling class's ruthless response to working-class demands.

Frederick Engels, in 1891, reflected on these events on the 20th anniversary of the Paris Commune, emphasizing the savagery displayed by the ruling class when the working class sought its rights.

The First Address July 23, 1870

In the November 1864 Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association, it was emphasized that the collaboration of the working classes for their emancipation could not coexist with foreign policies driven by criminal motives, exploiting national prejudices and wasting people's lives and resources in wars. The International aimed for a foreign policy rooted in morals and justice, governing international relations based on principles applicable to private individuals.

Louis Bonaparte, who gained and sustained power through class conflicts and external wars, considered the International a threat. Prior to a plebiscite, he falsely accused the International of a plot against him. The real offense of the French branches was their public opposition to the plebiscite, asserting that it meant supporting despotism and war. Despite widespread rejection in industrial centers, the rural areas tipped the balance in favor of the plebiscite, celebrated by European ruling classes as a victory over the French working class.

The July 1870 war plot mirrored the coup d'état of December 1851. Initially seen as absurd, it was exposed when officially announced. The Paris members of the International issued a manifesto against war, uniting workmen of different nations in opposition to war proclamations. The German working class expressed solidarity with the Paris manifesto, rejecting national antagonism and emphasizing the working class's role in deciding on peace and war.

The French working people's sentiments were revealed in public peace demonstrations, countering manipulated war fever. The death knell of the Second Empire in France had already sounded. Germany's defensive war, initiated by Prussia's conspiracies with Louis Bonaparte, prompted German workmen to advocate for the power of people to decide on peace and war. The International's principles spread widely among the German working class, ensuring that the war did not devolve into aggression against the French people.

The English working class extended fellowship to the French and German working people, convinced that the alliance of working classes globally would ultimately eliminate war. Despite official hostilities, messages of peace and goodwill exchanged between French and German workmen signaled the emergence of a new society, where international peace would prevail under the rule of labor, as advocated by the International Working Men's Association.

○ **INTERPRETATION**

The passages outline the historical events in France from the aftermath of the 1789 French Revolution to the aftermath of the Paris Commune in 1871. Here are some key points and interpretations:

1. **Revolutions and Class Struggle:** The history of Paris reflects a recurring pattern of revolutions led by the working class. Despite initial victories and demands for the abolition of class conflict, attempts by the bourgeoisie to disarm the workers resulted in their defeat, as seen notably in 1848.
2. **Second Empire:** The establishment of the Second Empire by Louis Bonaparte had economic and political consequences, fostering industrial development but also leading to chauvinistic aspirations and wars. The Paris Revolution of 1870 caused the collapse of the empire, leading to the formation of the Paris Commune in 1871.
3. **Paris Commune:** The Commune, characterized by a predominantly proletarian composition, enacted reforms and resisted disarmament attempts by the bourgeois government. Its class character challenged the existing societal order, leading to a brutal defeat by Versailles forces in May 1871, illustrating the ruling class's harsh response to working-class demands.
4. **Frederick Engels' Reflections:** In 1891, Engels reflected on the Paris Commune, emphasizing the brutality displayed by the ruling class when the working class sought its rights. This underscores the historical struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

International Working Men's Association (IWA): The passage refers to the IWA's principles outlined in the November 1864 Inaugural Address. The IWA opposed collaborations tainted by criminal motives and aimed for a foreign policy rooted in morals and justice, advocating for international relations based on principles applicable to private individuals.

Louis Bonaparte's Opposition to IWA: Louis Bonaparte perceived the IWA as a threat to his power, leading to false accusations and the International's public opposition to the plebiscite. The victory of the plebiscite, celebrated by European ruling classes, marked a setback for the French working class.

Solidarity and Opposition to War: The passage describes international solidarity against war, with the Paris members of the International issuing a manifesto against war. The German working class expressed solidarity with this manifesto, emphasizing the working class's role in deciding on peace and war. The English working class also extended fellowship, envisioning a society where global working-class alliance would eliminate war.

In summary, the passage depicts a historical narrative of class struggle, revolutionary movements, and international solidarity among working-class movements in the face of oppressive ruling classes and militaristic policies in France during the 19th century.

The Second Address September 9, 1870

In our initial manifesto dated July 23, we proclaimed that the demise of the Second Empire in Paris was imminent, and it would conclude as it had started—a parody. It was emphasized that the governments and ruling classes of Europe were complicit in enabling Louis Bonaparte to orchestrate the ferocious farce of the Restored Empire for 18 years.

Even before the commencement of actual war operations, we considered the Bonapartist bubble a thing of the past. Our apprehensions about the German war potentially deviating from its strictly defensive nature were proven right as the war of defense concluded with Louis Bonaparte's surrender, Sedan capitulation, and the proclamation of the republic in Paris.

The Prussian military camarilla faced a challenge as King William had pledged to wage war against the Emperor of the French, not the French nation, emphasizing a defensive stance. To overcome this obstacle, the stage managers manipulated liberal German middle-class sentiments, which sought to assert their civic independence by supporting secret designs of conquest.

The annexation of Alsace and Lorraine was justified by some German patriots as a material guarantee against French aggression, a plea we scrutinize. While acknowledging the strategic advantages of these regions for France, we question the validity of making military considerations the basis for fixing national boundaries. The lesson from history suggests that such territorial impositions only sow the seeds of future conflicts.

The advocates of Teutonic patriotism argue for German safety over glory and portray the Germans as an essentially peaceful people. However, we highlight historical contradictions, including German invasions in 1792 and other military actions. We question the notion that the present military system in Germany serves as a guarantee for peace.

Concerns are raised about the potential alliance between Germany and Russia, with historical agreements between Gorchakov and Bismarck paralleling the 1866 war situation. The annexation of French territory could force Germany to become a tool for Russian aggrandizement or lead to a future war involving Slavonic and Roman races.

The German working class, despite their support for the war, now demands guarantees to ensure their sacrifices were not in vain. They call for an honorable peace for France and the recognition of the French republic. The German Social-Democratic Workmen's Party's Central Committee insists on guarantees and protests against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine.

The French working class faces challenges amid the establishment of the republic, with misgivings about the Provisional Government's composition and potential Orleanais restoration. The duty of the French working class is emphasized in building the future under the opportunities of republican liberty.

The English workmen take measures to pressure their government to recognize the French republic. They also call for opposition to the dismemberment of France, which certain parts of the English press advocate.

Finally, a call is made for sections of the International Working Men's Association in every country to rally the working classes to action, highlighting the potential consequences of inaction leading to more international conflicts and the triumph of the ruling classes. The concluding slogan is "Vive la Republique!"

The Capitulation of France

On September 4, 1870, the proclamation of the republic in Paris was swiftly embraced throughout France. However, a group of opportunistic lawyers, led by Thiers and Trochu, seized the Hotel de Ville, claiming to represent Paris. Despite early knowledge of their intention to capitulate, Paris allowed them to assume power, provided it was dedicated to national defense. To defend Paris against the Prussian threat, arming the working class was essential, turning the conflict into a revolution against the French capitalist and the government.

Trochu's plan for capitulation was evident from the beginning, and instead of informing Paris of the truth, the impostors opted for a strategy of famine, deception through manifestos, and false assurances of non-capitulation. Jules Favre even admitted that they were defending themselves not against Prussian soldiers but against the working men of Paris. The Government of National Defense, in its capitulation, revealed itself as a government of France by Bismarck's prisoners, an act so base that even Louis Bonaparte had hesitated to accept it.

Members of the Government of Defense had personal motivations for their actions. Some, like Jules Favre, were involved in fraudulent activities, while others, such as Ernest Picard, engaged in questionable financial dealings. Thiers, the consummate politician, had a long history of deceit, betrayal, and avarice. He charmed the French bourgeoisie with his intellectual cunning but consistently worked against the interests of the people.

Thiers' political career involved shifting allegiances and opportunistic maneuvers. He betrayed allies, incited riots, and demonstrated a lack of principles. Despite his hypocritical speeches about necessary liberties, Thiers consistently favored the enslavement of labor by capital. His foreign policy led to the humiliation of France, from the London convention to the capitulation of Paris in 1871.

The capitulation of Paris closed the treacherous dealings of the September 4 usurpers with the enemy, initiating a civil war against the republic and Paris. Thiers, eager to protect the interests of land and capital, sought to disarm Paris and suppress any resistance. The conspirators, backed by Prussia, aimed to shift the costs of the war onto the producers of wealth by overthrowing the republic. Paris, faced with threats, demonstrations, and oppressive measures, resisted these attempts.

A question arises about Thiers' financial dealings, suggesting a loan of two billion francs benefiting him and other members of the government. The conditions allegedly included a substantial consideration for private gain and payment deferred until after the "pacification" of Paris. Thiers and Jules Favre shamelessly sought the immediate occupation of Paris by Prussian troops, but Bismarck had different plans, as he openly shared with the people of Frankfurt upon his return to Germany.

- **INTERPRETATION**

The Second Address, dated September 9, 1870, provides a detailed analysis and perspective on the political events of the time, primarily focusing on the Franco-Prussian War and its aftermath. Here are key points and interpretations:

1. **Demise of the Second Empire:** The address starts by reiterating the prediction made in the initial manifesto that the Second Empire in Paris was on the brink of collapse. It characterizes the entire period of the Restored Empire (18 years) as a farce orchestrated by Louis Bonaparte, with complicity from European governments and ruling classes.
2. **German War and Defensive Nature:** The address criticizes the manipulation of the German war by emphasizing that even before the actual war operations, they considered the Bonapartist regime a thing of the past. It notes that the war of defense took an unexpected turn with Louis Bonaparte's surrender, the capitulation at Sedan, and the proclamation of the republic in Paris.
3. **Manipulation of German Sentiments:** The address accuses the Prussian military camarilla of manipulating liberal German middle-class sentiments to justify the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, which is seen as a departure from the initially declared defensive stance.
4. **Questioning Territorial Impositions:** The address questions the validity of making military considerations the basis for fixing national boundaries, arguing that history shows such territorial impositions lead to future conflicts.
5. **Concerns about German Safety and Alliances:** The text raises concern about the potential alliance between Germany and Russia, warning that the annexation of French territory could either make Germany a tool for Russian aggrandizement or lead to future conflicts involving different races.
6. **German Working Class Demands:** Despite initial support for the war, the German working class now demands guarantees to ensure their sacrifices were not in vain. They call for an honorable peace for France, the recognition of the French republic, and protest against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine.
7. **Challenges for the French Working Class:** The French working class faces challenges with the establishment of the republic, expressing concerns about the Provisional Government's composition and the potential restoration of the Orleanais. The duty of the French working class is emphasized in building the future under the opportunities of republican liberty.
8. **International Solidarity:** The address highlights actions taken by English workmen to pressure their government to recognize the French republic and oppose the dismemberment of France. A call is made for sections of the International Working Men's Association in every country to rally the working classes to action, emphasizing the potential consequences of inaction leading to more international conflicts and the triumph of the ruling classes.
9. **Concluding Slogan:** The address concludes with the slogan "Vive la Republique!" expressing solidarity and support for the French republic.

Paris Workers' Revolution

The primary hindrance to the counter-revolutionary conspiracy was the armed presence in Paris, necessitating its disarmament. The Bordeaux Assembly was transparent in its intention to disarm Paris, as evidenced by Thiers' surrender of the city to Vinoy, Valentin, and Aurelles de Paladine. Despite Paris being urged to surrender its arms under the pretext that the National Guard's artillery belonged to the state, this claim was false. The Central Committee had safeguarded the artillery, considering it private property exempt from general surrender.

The seizure of Paris's artillery was a prelude to the broader disarmament plan aimed at suppressing the September 4 Revolution. However, this revolution had become France's legal status, recognized by the conqueror and legitimized by foreign powers. The National Assembly in Bordeaux owed its authority to this revolution, and without it, the 1869 Corps Legislatif, disbanded by revolution, would take precedence. Paris faced the choice of acknowledging a superficial transfer of power or standing as the champion of France's revolutionary regeneration.

Despite Paris's weakened state after a five-month siege and famine, it bravely resisted disarmament. The Central Committee, initially adopting a defensive stance, faced provocations from the Assembly, Executive, and military buildup but refrained from initiating civil war. Thiers initiated hostilities by sending Vinoy against Montmartre to seize National Guard artillery. The attempt failed, leading to the March 18 Revolution, with the Central Committee assuming provisional government status.

From March 18 until Versailles troops entered Paris, the proletarian revolution refrained from typical acts of violence, except for the executions of Generals Lecomte and Clement Thomas and the Place Vendome incident. Lecomte, involved in a failed attempt against Montmartre, was shot by his own men due to previous orders to fire on unarmed gatherings. Clement Thomas, once a quartermaster-sergeant turned general, had a history of antagonism toward the working class. Both generals were executed as retribution.

The Place Vendome incident, where a mob attempted to break through National Guard lines, resulted in casualties. The working-class revolution, showing restraint, spared the "men of order" despite their violent history. The Central Committee's reluctance to continue civil war allowed the Party of Order to participate in elections on March 26, leading to the election of the Commune.

Thiers launched a second campaign against Paris in April, marked by atrocities against prisoners and brutal treatment. Despite a Commune decree on reprisals, Thiers continued atrocities, including the massacre of prisoners. Houses sheltering National Guards were burned, and the shooting of prisoners resumed until the end. Thiers boasted in bulletins about the National Assembly's peaceful sessions, emphasizing his nonchalant demeanor amid ongoing atrocities and political maneuvering

○ **INTERPRETATION**

The passage describes a critical period in the aftermath of the September 4 Revolution in Paris, detailing the challenges faced by the revolutionary forces, particularly the Central Committee, against the counter-revolutionary efforts led by Adolphe Thiers and the Bordeaux Assembly. Here are key points and interpretations:

1. **Disarmament Threat:** The primary obstacle to the counter-revolutionary conspiracy was the armed presence in Paris, necessitating its disarmament. Thiers and the Bordeaux Assembly transparently intended to disarm Paris, with Thiers surrendering the city to key military figures for this purpose.

2. **False Pretext for Disarmament:** Paris was urged to surrender its arms under the pretext that the National Guard's artillery belonged to the state, but the Central Committee considered it private property exempt from general surrender.
3. **Legal Status of the September 4 Revolution:** The September 4 Revolution had become France's legal status, recognized by conquerors and legitimized by foreign powers. The National Assembly in Bordeaux owed its authority to this revolution.
4. **Resistance to Disarmament:** Despite being weakened after a five-month siege and famine, Paris resisted disarmament. The Central Committee faced provocations but initially refrained from initiating civil war. Thiers initiated hostilities, leading to the March 18 Revolution, with the Central Committee assuming provisional government status.
5. **Proletarian Revolution's Restraint:** From March 18 until Versailles troops entered Paris, the proletarian revolution showed restraint, refraining from typical acts of violence. The executions of Generals Lecomte and Clement Thomas and the Place Vendome incident were noted exceptions.
6. **Execution of Generals Lecomte and Clement Thomas:** Lecomte was shot by his own men for his involvement in a failed attempt against Montmartre. Clement Thomas, with a history of antagonism toward the working class, was also executed as retribution.
7. **Place Vendome Incident:** A mob's attempt to break through National Guard lines at Place Vendome resulted in casualties. Despite this, the working-class revolution showed restraint by sparing the "men of order" despite their violent history.
8. **Reluctance to Continue Civil War:** The Central Committee's reluctance to continue civil war allowed the Party of Order to participate in elections on March 26, leading to the election of the Commune.
9. **Thiers' Second Campaign:** Thiers launched a second campaign against Paris in April, marked by atrocities against prisoners and brutal treatment. Despite a Commune decree on reprisals, Thiers continued atrocities, including the massacre of prisoners.
10. **Political Maneuvering Amid Atrocities:** Thiers boasted about the National Assembly's peaceful sessions in bulletins, emphasizing his nonchalant demeanor amid ongoing atrocities and political maneuvering.

In summary, the passage illustrates the complex dynamics and challenges faced by the revolutionary forces in Paris during this period, emphasizing the resistance against disarmament, the restrained approach of the proletarian revolution, and the brutal actions taken by Thiers and the counter-revolutionary forces.

The Paris Commune

In summary, the text discusses the establishment and principles of the Paris Commune, which emerged on March 18. The Commune aimed to empower the working class and challenged the existing state apparatus. It rejected the idea of simply taking control of the existing state machinery, as it considered it a tool of class oppression. The centralized state power, developed during the era of absolute monarchy, had evolved into an instrument of capitalist class domination.

The text contrasts the Commune with previous forms of government, highlighting how the state power, particularly during and after revolutions, became increasingly repressive. The Paris Commune sought to break away from this pattern by establishing a working-class government with both executive and legislative functions.

Key measures of the Commune included the suppression of the standing army, the substitution of armed citizens, and the transformation of public service, education, and judicial systems. The Commune aimed to decentralize power, with elected representatives responsible to and revocable by the people. It also aspired to serve as a model for other industrial centers, advocating for self-governance of producers.

The text emphasizes the international and inclusive nature of the Commune, extending its sympathies to workers worldwide. It critiques the actions of the bourgeoisie, particularly during the Second Empire, and applauds the Commune for its internationalism. Additionally, the text mentions specific measures taken by the Commune, such as the abolition of night work for bakers and the surrender of closed workshops to worker associations.

Overall, the Paris Commune is portrayed as a bold experiment in self-governance by the working class, challenging the established order and advocating for social and economic emancipation.

In the aftermath of the Commune's suppression, the Versailles government employed harsh measures against it, suppressing free expression nationwide, forbidding delegate meetings, imposing extensive surveillance, burning Parisian papers, and scrutinizing correspondence. The National Assembly stifled any defense for Paris. Facing Versailles' brutal external attacks and internal corruption, the Commune, had it resembled M. Thiers' government, would have betrayed its purpose by pretending to maintain liberal norms in a time of conflict.

The Commune, unlike traditional governments, didn't claim infallibility. It openly disclosed its actions and shortcomings. Various individuals, including those disconnected from the current movement, interfered in the revolution, some with genuine revolutionary history, others merely repeating anti-government rhetoric. The Commune, lacking the time to evolve, grappled with these challenges.

The transformation in Paris under the Commune was remarkable. It shed the superficiality of the Second Empire, no longer catering to international elites. Paris became safe, devoid of morgue displays and nocturnal crimes. The Commune member noted the absence of assassination and theft, suggesting that the police had taken their conservative allies to Versailles.

Contrasting this, Versailles embodied the old world, a gathering of remnants from defunct regimes, fueled by the vanity of its leader, Thiers. The Assembly represented everything dead in France, sustained only by Bonapartist generals' swords. Paris

epitomized truth, while Versailles propagated lies through Thiers. Thiers denied the bombardment of Paris, portraying the Commune as criminals. The Paris Thiers spoke of was a distorted version, not the authentic populace, but a facade of affluent, idle Parisians, observing the civil war as entertainment.

In essence, the text explores the stark differences between the Commune's Paris and Thiers' Versailles, highlighting the Commune's challenges and the deceptive narrative constructed by Thiers.

○ **INTERPRETATION**

The text provides an interpretation of the establishment and principles of the Paris Commune, contrasting it with the actions of the Versailles government in the aftermath of its suppression. Here are key points and interpretations:

1. Commune's Establishment and Principles:

- The Paris Commune, established on March 18, aimed to empower the working class and challenge the existing state apparatus.
- It rejected the notion of taking control of the existing state machinery, considering it a tool of class oppression that had evolved into an instrument of capitalist domination.
- The Commune sought to break away from the repressive nature of previous forms of government, establishing a working-class government with both executive and legislative functions.
- Key measures included the suppression of the standing army, substitution of armed citizens, and transformation of public service, education, and judicial systems.
- The Commune aimed to decentralize power, with elected representatives accountable to and revocable by the people, serving as a model for self-governance in other industrial centers.

2. International and Inclusive Nature:

- The Commune extended its sympathies to workers worldwide, critiquing the actions of the bourgeoisie during the Second Empire and applauding the Commune for its internationalism.
- Specific measures, such as the abolition of night work for bakers and the surrender of closed workshops to worker associations, were implemented.

3. Suppression and Harsh Measures by Versailles:

- The Versailles government employed harsh measures against the Commune after its suppression, stifling free expression nationwide, forbidding delegate meetings, imposing extensive surveillance, burning Parisian papers, and scrutinizing correspondence.
- The National Assembly suppressed any defense for Paris, facing external attacks and internal corruption.
- The Commune, had it resembled Thiers' government, would have betrayed its purpose by pretending to maintain liberal norms during conflict.

4. Challenges Faced by the Commune:

- The Commune didn't claim infallibility and openly disclosed its actions and shortcomings.
- Various individuals, some with revolutionary history and others repeating anti-government rhetoric, interfered in the revolution, posing challenges for the Commune.

5. Transformation in Paris under the Commune:

- Paris underwent a remarkable transformation under the Commune, shedding the superficiality of the Second Empire and becoming safe.
- The absence of morgue displays and nocturnal crimes was noted, suggesting a change in law enforcement practices.
- The text contrasts the truth represented by Paris with the lies propagated by Thiers in Versailles.

6. Contrasting Paris and Versailles:

- Paris under the Commune epitomized truth, while Versailles represented the old world, sustained by remnants from defunct regimes and led by Thiers' vanity.
- Thiers denied the bombardment of Paris and portrayed the Commune as criminals, constructing a distorted narrative that did not reflect the authentic populace.

In essence, the text explores the ideological and practical differences between the Paris Commune and Thiers' Versailles, emphasizing the challenges faced by the Commune and critiquing the deceptive narrative constructed by Thiers to discredit the revolutionary movement.

The Fall of Paris

The initial effort of the slaveholders' conspiracy to suppress Paris by enticing the Prussians to occupy it was thwarted by Bismarck's refusal. The second attempt, in March 18, resulted in the defeat of the army and the government fleeing to Versailles. Thiers, unable to gather support from the provinces, had to hastily assemble a diverse army with imperialist war prisoners granted by Bismarck. Facing difficulties with provinces and dwindling approval, Thiers shifted tactics with municipal elections and repressive laws. His conciliation acts were a facade to deceive provinces, Parisian middle class, and republicans in the National Assembly.

Thiers, who initially declared he wouldn't send an army to Paris, later claimed to support the republic. However, he suppressed the revolution in Lyons and Marseilles while appeasing the Orleans princes in Dreux. Thiers' relations with provinces worsened, with demands for conciliation and recognition of Communal liberties. To bolster his power, Thiers rushed municipal elections, hoping to gain moral and physical force.

As Thiers intensified his bandit-warfare against Paris, he attempted a play of conciliation to deceive provinces, middle class, and republicans. Facing challenges, he passed repressive laws, foreshadowed the fate of Paris, and hurried elections to consolidate power. Thiers' pursuit of conciliation was a political maneuver to hide the betrayal of Paris by some republicans in the National Assembly.

Bismarck capitalized on the chaos, forcing Thiers to send plenipotentiaries for peace. Thiers, eager to crush Paris, accepted unfavorable terms, including continued Prussian occupation and using Bonapartist troops against the Commune. The peace treaty signed on May 10, 1871, marked the end of the Commune.

As Thiers resumed conciliation acts, the brutal suppression of Paris continued. The provinces rejected Thiers, and municipal councils openly opposed the Versailles Assembly. Bismarck summoned Thiers to finalize peace, solidifying Prussian influence. The fall of Paris showcased the collusion between the conquerors and the conquered governments against the working class. Thiers' role highlighted the demise of bourgeois society and the international nature of class struggle.

The International Working Men's Association faced vehement attacks from governments, accused of conspiracies and subversion. However, it was merely a global alliance of advanced working men, representing the inevitable class struggle arising from modern society. The Commune's legacy and its martyrs symbolized the dawn of a new society, while its oppressors were condemned by history. The General Council of the International expressed solidarity with the Paris Commune and condemned the ruthless suppression orchestrated by Thiers.

○ **INTERPRETATION**

The passage outlines a series of events during the Paris Commune in 1871, focusing on the actions of Adolphe Thiers and the response of the International Working Men's Association. Here are key points and interpretations:

1. **Slaveholders' Conspiracy and Bismarck's Refusal:**

- The initial effort to suppress Paris by enticing the Prussians to occupy it was thwarted by Bismarck's refusal.
- The second attempt on March 18 resulted in the defeat of the army, forcing the government to flee to Versailles.

2. **Thiers' Difficulties and Shifting Tactics:**

- Thiers faced challenges in gathering support from the provinces, leading to the assembly of a diverse army with imperialist war prisoners granted by Bismarck.
- Faced with dwindling approval, Thiers shifted tactics with municipal elections and repressive laws, presenting conciliation acts as a facade.

3. **Deceptive Actions of Thiers:**

- Thiers, initially declaring he wouldn't send an army to Paris, later claimed to support the republic.
- He suppressed the revolution in Lyons and Marseilles while appeasing the Orleans princes in Dreux, worsening relations with the provinces.
- Thiers rushed municipal elections to gain moral and physical force, using conciliation as a political maneuver to hide the betrayal of Paris by some republicans in the National Assembly.

4. **Bismarck's Influence and Peace Treaty:**

- Bismarck capitalized on the chaos, forcing Thiers to send plenipotentiaries for peace.
- Thiers accepted unfavorable terms, including continued Prussian occupation and using Bonapartist troops against the Commune.
- The peace treaty signed on May 10, 1871, marked the end of the Commune.

5. **Continued Suppression and Opposition to Thiers:**

- As Thiers resumed conciliation acts, brutal suppression of Paris continued, leading to opposition from the provinces and municipal councils.
- Bismarck summoned Thiers to finalize peace, solidifying Prussian influence.

6. **Collusion and Class Struggle:**

- The fall of Paris showcased collusion between conquerors and conquered governments against the working class.

- Thiers' role highlighted the demise of bourgeois society and the international nature of the class struggle.

7. International Working Men's Association:

- The International Working Men's Association faced attacks from governments, accused of conspiracies and subversion.
- It was described as a global alliance of advanced working men, representing the inevitable class struggle arising from modern society.

8. Legacy of the Commune:

- The Commune's legacy and martyrs symbolized the dawn of a new society, while its oppressors were condemned by history.
- The General Council of the International expressed solidarity with the Paris Commune and condemned the ruthless suppression orchestrated by Thiers.

In summary, the passage portrays a complex series of events during the Paris Commune, highlighting Thiers' deceptive tactics, the influence of external forces like Bismarck, and the resilience of the working class. The role of the International Working Men's Association is underscored as a global alliance advocating for the inevitable class struggle in modern society.

Engels' 1891 Postscript

I was unexpectedly tasked with revising the General Council of the International's Address on The Civil War in France and providing an introduction. Therefore, I can only briefly touch on the key points here. I'm prefacing the more extended work with two shorter addresses of the General Council on the Franco-Prussian War. The importance of these addresses, crafted by Marx, lies in their keen insights into the character and consequences of significant historical events. They serve as exemplary instances of Marx's ability to grasp the essence of unfolding events. In Germany, we continue to face the repercussions foreseen by Marx.

The first address discusses the aftermath of the July Revolution in 1830, the December 1851 coup by Louis Bonaparte, and the subsequent events that shaped Germany. The second address delves into the preliminary peace treaty between France and Germany in 1871 and the plebiscite held by Napoleon III. It highlights the consequences of Germany's defensive war turning into a war of conquest, leading to prolonged Bismarckian rule and an anti-socialist campaign.

As for The Civil War in France, written just after the fall of the Commune in 1871, Marx provides a clear analysis of its historical significance. The majority of the Commune consisted of Blanquetttes, while a minority, members of the International Working Men's Association, represented Proudhon's socialism. Despite differences, the Commune initiated measures that challenged the old state machine, advocating for democratic principles like universal suffrage, recallable officials, and equal wages.

Marx critically examines the economic and political aspects of the Commune, highlighting its departure from Proudhonist doctrines and the ultimate demise of both Proudhonist and Blanquist schools of socialism. He emphasizes the Commune's attempt to break away from the oppressive state machinery, promoting a truly democratic state. Marx concludes with a reflection on the state as a tool of class oppression and the necessity for the working class to discard it in the pursuit of a liberated society.

This reassessment of the Paris Commune serves as a crucial reminder of the working class's struggle for emancipation and the significance of challenging traditional state structures.

Frederick Engels

London, on the 20th anniversary

of the Paris Commune, March 18, 1891.

○ **INTERPRETATION**

This passage introduces the task of revising the General Council of the International's Address on The Civil War in France and provides context through two shorter addresses on the Franco-Prussian War. The focus is on Karl Marx's keen insights into historical events and their continued relevance in Germany. The main points can be summarized as follows:

1. Importance of the Addresses:

- The addresses, written by Marx, are praised for their insights into the character and consequences of significant historical events. They exemplify Marx's ability to grasp the essence of unfolding events.
- The addresses on the Franco-Prussian War in Germany are particularly noteworthy for their relevance and foresight into the repercussions faced by Germany.

2. Content of Shorter Addresses:

- The first address discusses historical events such as the aftermath of the July Revolution in 1830, the December 1851 coup by Louis Bonaparte, and subsequent events shaping Germany.
- The second address explores the preliminary peace treaty between France and Germany in 1871, the plebiscite held by Napoleon III, and the consequences of Germany's defensive war turning into a war of conquest, leading to prolonged Bismarckian rule and an anti-socialist campaign.

3. The Civil War in France (Analysis by Marx):

- Marx's analysis of The Civil War in France, written just after the fall of the Commune in 1871, is highlighted for its historical significance.
- The Commune is described as primarily consisting of Blanquettes, with a minority representing Proudhon's socialism from the International Working Men's Association.
- Despite ideological differences, the Commune initiated measures challenging the old state machine and advocating for democratic principles such as universal suffrage, recallable officials, and equal wages.
- Marx critically examines the economic and political aspects of the Commune, emphasizing its departure from Proudhonist doctrines and the ultimate demise of both Proudhonist and Blanquist schools of socialism.
- The Commune's attempt to break away from oppressive state machinery and promote a truly democratic state is highlighted by Marx.

4. Conclusion and Reflection by Engels:

- The passage concludes with a reflection by Frederick Engels on the 20th anniversary of the Paris Commune in 1891.
- Engels emphasizes the significance of reassessing the Paris Commune as a crucial reminder of the working class's struggle for emancipation and the importance of challenging traditional state structures.

In summary, the passage underscores the enduring relevance of Marx's insights into historical events, particularly the Paris Commune, and emphasizes the ongoing struggle for working-class emancipation and the need to challenge oppressive state structures.

The July 1830 revolution in France.

Louis Bonaparte's coup d'état on December 2, 1851, initiating the Bonapartist rule of the Second Empire.

The transition from the first republic in 1792 to Napoleon I's First Empire (1804-14), which significantly expanded French territory but faced setbacks in Russia.

The peace treaty between France and Germany signed in Versailles on February 26, 1871, ceding Alsace and East Lorraine to Germany and requiring France to pay 5 billion francs in indemnities.

Napoleon III's plebiscite in May 1870, manipulating questions to stifle dissent against his regime, leading to persecution of dissenters and mass protests.

Napoleon III's declaration of war on Prussia.

The Prut River, forming part of the border between Romania and Russia.

The Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, a medieval union of feudal principalities and towns under an emperor.

The integration of the Electorate of Brandenburg with Prussian Dutchy in 1618, later gaining sovereignty from Poland in 1657.

The Treaty of Basle signed by Prussia and the French Republic in 1795.

Marx's observation on Germany's historical progression leading to racial conflicts.

Marx's comment on feudal resurgence in Germany after Napoleon's fall, reinforcing feudal-monarchist systems and exploiting peasants.

The Tuileries Palace in Paris, a residence of Napoleon III.

English workers' campaigns for recognizing the French Republic in 1870.

England's involvement in coalitions against revolutionary France and early recognition of the Bonapartist regime.

English press support for the Confederate South during the American Civil War.

The Société Générale du Crédit Mobilier, a French bank tied to the Second Empire's government, which went bankrupt in 1867.

Riots in Paris in 1831 and Thiers' involvement in suppressing insurrections in 1834.

Thiers' role in quelling Paris insurrections in 1834 and enactment of repressive September Laws in 1835.

Thiers' military fortification plan around Paris in 1841, seen as a move against popular protests.

French intervention against the Roman Republic in 1849 to restore papal authority.

The Party of Order, a conservative coalition during the Second Republic.

The London Convention of 1840 siding against France's support of Mohammed Ali in Egypt.

Thiers' request to Bismarck to use French prisoners against the Paris Commune.

Extreme reactionary factions in the Chamber of Deputies during the Restoration.

The reactionary National Assembly of 1871, dominated by monarchists and landlords.

The peace treaty between France and Germany in Versailles in 1871, ceding territory and imposing indemnities.

A law deferring overdue debts, leading to bankruptcy among the petty bourgeoisie.

Participants in Louis Bonaparte's coup d'état of 1851.

Allegations of corruption in Thiers' government regarding an internal loan in 1871.

A town in French Guiana serving as a penal colony.

Paris worker uprising and the Committee of Public Safety during the Franco-Prussian War.

Breton and Corsican forces used by Trochu to suppress revolutionary movements.

A failed revolutionary demonstration in Paris in 1871, leading to government violence.

The legal basis for using force against public gatherings.

Flourens' intervention to prevent violence against the Government of National Defense.

The Paris Commune's decree on hostages to prevent executions by Versailles forces.

A system of bureaucratic appointments in bourgeois societies.

The Gironde, a bourgeoisie faction during the French Revolution, opposing the Jacobins.

Satirical liberal publications.

Reference to Professor Huxley in a German addition of a text.

The Paris Commune's decree on debt payment and interest abolition.

Rejection of debt relief measures in 1841, leading to petty bourgeoisie ruin.

A nickname for a religious order focused on educating the poor.

A political association advocating support for the Paris Commune.

Compensation for emigres after the French Revolution.

Demolition of the Vendôme Column by the Paris Commune in 1871.

Baron Haussmann's urban restructuring in Paris during the Second Empire.

Exposé of abuses in religious institutions by the Paris Commune.

French prisoners of war in Wilhelmshöhe producing cigars.

Absentee landlords in France.

The tennis court venue of the 1789 National Assembly.

Bourgeois who fled Paris during the Prussian siege.

Coblentz, a center for monarchist emigres during the French Revolution.

Royalist soldiers from Brittany during the French Revolution.

Failed revolutionary movements in Lyons and Marseilles during the Paris Commune.

Expedited military court procedures proposed by Dufaure.

Trade treaty between England and France in 1860 affecting French manufacturers.

Historical references to repression in Ancient Rome during crises.

Destruction of public buildings by British troops in Washington in 1814 and in Beijing by British and French troops in 1860.

Praetorians, elite guards in Ancient Rome.

Reference to Prussian Assembly and Bismarck's involvement.

Engels' intention in providing additional historical context.

German national liberation war against Napoleon in 1813-14.

Persecution of opposition figures in Germany in the 1820s.

○ **INTERPRETATION**

This extensive list seems to include a variety of historical events, figures, and concepts, and it seems to be part of a broader historical or political discussion. Here is a brief interpretation of some of the key elements mentioned:

1. **Louis Bonaparte's Coup d'état (1851):**

- Refers to the coup led by Louis Bonaparte, which marked the establishment of the Bonapartist rule of the Second Empire in France.

2. **Napoleon I's First Empire (1804-14):**

- The period of Napoleon Bonaparte's rule in France, characterized by significant territorial expansion and military campaigns, including setbacks in Russia.

3. Peace Treaty of 1871 (Versailles):

- The treaty between France and Germany after the Franco-Prussian War, resulting in territorial changes and indemnities.

4. Plebiscite by Napoleon III (1870):

- Napoleon III's manipulation of a plebiscite in May 1870 to suppress dissent against his regime, leading to persecution and protests.

5. Declaration of War on Prussia (1870):

- Napoleon III's decision to declare war on Prussia, a move that contributed to the Franco-Prussian War.

6. Prut River, Holy Roman Empire, Electorate of Brandenburg:

- Geographical and historical references related to the Prut River, the Holy Roman Empire, and the integration of the Electorate of Brandenburg with Prussian Duchy.

7. Marx's Observations on Germany:

- Likely references to Karl Marx's analyses of Germany's historical progression, racial conflicts, and feudal resurgence after Napoleon's fall.

8. The Tuileries Palace, Société Générale du Crédit Mobilier:

- References to the Tuileries Palace in Paris, a residence of Napoleon III, and the Société Générale du Crédit Mobilier, a French bank linked to the Second Empire.

9. Thiers' Role and Laws (1831-1849):

- References to Adolphe Thiers' involvement in suppressing insurrections, enacting repressive laws, and fortifying Paris during various periods.

10. English Workers' Campaigns and Press Support:

- English workers campaigning for recognizing the French Republic in 1870 and English press support for the Confederate South during the American Civil War.

11. The Party of Order, London Convention, Bismarck's Request:

- References to political factions during the Second Republic, the London Convention of 1840, and Thiers' request to Bismarck regarding the Paris Commune.

12. Paris Commune Decrees and Historical Events:

- Various references to actions, decrees, and historical events related to the Paris Commune, including the demolition of the Vendôme Column, Haussmann's urban restructuring, and exposure of abuses in religious institutions.

13. References to Various Historical Figures and Events:

- Mentions of figures like Baron Haussmann, Professor Huxley, Dufaure, and references to historical events, trade treaties, and military conflicts.

The list is rich in historical and political references, covering a broad range of topics related to France, Germany, and broader European history. Each point could be explored in more detail to understand its significance in the context of the larger historical narrative.