

THE IMPACT OF THE PARIS COMMUNE IN THE UNITED STATES

Samuel Bernstein

The Paris correspondent of the New York *World* reported in April 1871 that the Commune had been plotted by the International Workingmen's Association.¹ His source was *Le Gaulois*, a monarchist tinged sheet, which charged that the rise of the Paris Commune on March 18th had been the denouement of a well-laid conspiracy of which the principal ringleaders were Karl Marx and the General Council of the International. The charge was correct insofar as the Commune was the intellectual offspring of the International. But this sprawling body, centered in London, had done absolutely nothing to bring it about, as Frederick Engels later wrote to F. A. Sorge in America.² Everything about the Association refuted the charge of the French paper—its loose make-up, the weakness of its branches, and its incurable impecuniousness. It had never been a secret body, organized for conspiratorial purposes; its French branch was completely disordered on the eve of the Commune, as the General Council's emissary in Paris reported on February 28, 1871;³ and its treasury was so empty that the Council in London was often embarrassed by rent-arrears for its modest meeting place. Actually the International had already been the object of calumny. A short time before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, Marx told his colleagues of the Council, "the International was made the general scapegoat of all untoward events."⁴ But the charge against it respecting the Commune was of another character, for it had rallied to the defense of the revolution in Paris after its outbreak. To be sure, The Second Address of the General Council on the Franco-Prussian War, dated September 9, 1870, had forewarned the Parisians against any attempt to upset the French Republic.⁵ However, the Council was powerless before the events. As its minutes show it accepted the inevitable and stood loyally by the Commune. Ten days after it became the revolutionary government of the French capital the Council unanimously accepted Marx's proposal "that an address be issued to the people of Paris."⁶

I

The Paris Commune had international significance, and therein lay its historical importance. In all countries of the western world it had numerous vilifiers as well as defenders. In the United States the chorus of abuse grew crescendo-like. Calumny of the Parisians became a pattern of thought. Press and pulpit, platform and pamphlet alike drew heavily on the dictionary of defamation to paint the Communards as the vilest specimens of the race of bipeds. American newspapers and periodicals in general, like the British, aligned themselves with Versailles and systematically presented Paris as the hotbed of savages and bandits. They were at once

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foes of family and religion, antagonists of private property and government. Consequently no quarter was to be given them.

No one, as far as we know, has yet found a way of measuring the extent to which the American press and pulpit shaped public opinion on the Paris Commune. But it is safe to assume that the volume of abuse caused Americans, irrespective of social status, to look upon it with repugnance. Its defenders formed but a small fraction of the population. Their brief in its behalf will find space later in the article. For the present we shall concentrate on the case presented by its revilers.

No political or economic issue in the United States, save governmental corruption, received more headlines in the American press of the 1870's than did the Paris Commune and the International Workingmen's Association. Every big newspaper gave readers the impression that the foundations of organized society had crumbled. Anarchy, assassination, slaughter, incendiarism, streets covered with human gore—such blood curdling scenes were monotonously reported in the news. There were predictions that other Marats and Robespierres would arise and the screaming mobs, too, to demand the heads of the rich. An example of the irresponsible reporting was the case of Auguste Blanqui, the dreaded revolutionary of the nineteenth century. Though he had been arrested the day before the rise of the Commune and was a well-guarded prisoner,⁷ the American press advertised him as the mastermind of its Central Committee.⁸ One correspondent wrote, as if under Thiers' direction, that he had inherited Marat's mantle. "His presence signifies constant turmoil and insurrection." If he ever achieved power, the Guillotine would be set up again.⁹

Newspapers, outside of New York City, by and large followed its press. Thus, according to the Cincinnati *Daily Gazette*, Paris was still the "den of wild beasts" it had been during the first French Revolution,¹⁰ a view shared by the Chicago *Tribune*.¹¹ Less original was the Wisconsin *State Journal* with such commonplace epithets as "mob rule" and "reign of terror."¹² Both the *Morning Bulletin* and *Evening Bulletin* of San Francisco were persuaded that the "violent reds" were "destroying genuine republicanism and individual liberty, and reviving the worst events of the First Revolution."¹³ The warning by Versailles that the Commune was but the initial stage of a worldwide conflagration, directed by the First International, was echoed by the *Washington Star*.¹⁴ Frederick Douglass' weekly charged the Communards with mobocracy, vandalism and terrorism like that of 1792.¹⁵ The Philadelphia *Ledger* and the Pittsburgh *Daily Gazette* reiterated the fabrications of the better known newspapers.¹⁶

Since the press in American cities leaned by and large on the major newspapers of New York our purpose would be better served if we centered attention on them. From their lead articles and editorials on the Commune several theses emerge which can be stated as follows: The people in France, and by implication the people in the United States, were unfit to have a hand in government; given the socialist character of the

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Commune, violence was inevitable; the Communards were communists, commanded by the International, awaiting the order to overrun other countries; finally, the Commune might also come to America. Let us consider the theses in their order.

The common people exhibited their political incapacity by their reliance on terror and theft, contended the Commune's denigrators. From the viewpoint of the *New York Tribune*, Paris was a "burlesque Republic," backed by recruits from the gutters and drinking shops, and supported by the seizures of property.¹⁷ The *New York Times* confessed a nostalgia for the dictatorial system of Louis Napoleon. Bad as his Empire was, "it at least kept off a worse thing—The Universal Republic."¹⁸ The *New York Herald* was more blunt. The Bonapartes, it said on April 1, 1871, "were the proper doctors for those virulent revolutionary disorders of Paris." Americans should revise their opinion of Bonapartism, urged the *New York Journal of Commerce*. Louis Napoleon's coup d'état of 1851 had been "a good investment in human life." The shortest way to end the Parisian madness was to free the Emperor and allow him to march on the capital at the head of an army. Failing that, the Germans should intervene.¹⁹

It may be noted parenthetically that there were dailies and weeklies that rejected the Napoleonic straightjacket. For the Commune, they claimed, had at least demonstrated the failure of arbitrary rule and centralization. It had shattered the machinery of both and raised the banner of federalism.²⁰

The Commune was socialistic, declared its foes, and they were correct in estimating it so. Not that its program spelled out socialism. Such as it was, it reflected Proudhonist aspirations and revealed an abiding respect for private property. But the Commune showed its ultimate, socialist, intentions both in its social legislation and in its policies. Its socialistic character, however, did not have violence as its sequence, save in the imaginations of reporters. They equated the Commune's socialism with anarchy, which they in turn gave a forbidding definition;²¹ they described it as Fourierist or Saint-Simonist, or even as Marxist. Whatever label they pinned on socialism, they saw it attended by violence. Yet, correspondents visiting Paris, we shall show, were surprised by the courtesy and orderliness of the people, and by their respect for property and churches.

People were led to believe that Commune was synonymous with communism. The Parisians were therefore ipso facto partitioners or destroyers of property. The equation was widely accepted in America and was used to overawe striking workers. A coal miners' strike in Pennsylvania was called "The Commune of Pennsylvania,"²² and the strikers were likened to Communards.²³ The Internationalists in the Commune, the indictment continued, were communistically inclined and were in league with other Internationalists to bring about a worldwide communist revolution. The accusations were inventions. In the first place, the Internationalists in the Commune were a small minority, opposed and outvoted by the Blanquists

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and neo-Jacobins; in the second place, they were Proudhonists, far removed from communism in its social and economic outlook;²⁴ in the third place, as we have said, the International was badly equipped to organize a general revolution. Whatever plots were laid to it with that end in view were but police tales that became the themes of a large, spurious literature both in Europe and in the United States. The organization was credited with countless forces and limitless resources. No country was safe from it. It was "a constant source of anxiety and trouble."²⁵ Rumor had it that its affiliates in Italy were plotting the assassination of the Pope.²⁶ Strikes, it was maintained, were skirmishes to test the resistance of established systems; and demonstrations were but reviews of its forces before entering upon the final struggle. The French police metamorphosed Marx into Bismarck's secret agent, for how else, asked they, could one explain his comfortable style of living?²⁷ The North American Federation of the International, that had about 5,000 members at its height, early in 1872, was believed by French police observers in the United States to have around 1,400,000 in April 1876, just as its end was nearing.²⁸

The press sounded the alarm that the Commune might rise up in America. The "roughs of New York," wrote the *Evening Telegram*, were the sort of element that could become communist.²⁹ To be sure, the threat was not imminent, the *Times* assured the public, but the horizons looked somber. Labor was organizing in the United States; the workers of all lands were steadily uniting and asserting that capital had all the advantage in the production of wealth, while those who worked were left empty-handed. Through their trade unions they were counting on "a wider and more nearly universal Republic" that could claim the obedience of every laborer . . . from Archangel to San Francisco.³⁰ Thanks to the absence of feudal traditions in America, thanks to her boundless resources and her republican system, the *Times* felt confident about the future. Still the materials which caused the Commune in Paris were in every large metropolis. New York had beneath its busy surface "a volcano of deep passions and explosive social forces." Fortunately the pressure on American workers was not as heavy; and they had dreams of becoming capitalists.³¹

The dangerous elements were present nonetheless, the warning re-echoed. The more informed among them had heard of the division of property and socialism. Others belonged to trades unions that had sworn bitter war against capital. In other words America was not immune to Communes, wrote the *Times*. "Let some such opportunity occur as was presented in Paris . . . ; let this mighty throng hear that there was a chance to grasp the luxuries of wealth, or to divide the property of the rich, or to escape labor and suffering for a time, and live on the superfluities of others, and we should see a sudden storm of communistic revolution even in New York such as would astonish all who do not know these classes." A mine was "beneath every large city—not so easily exploded in America as in Europe—but existing with all its terrible ele-

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ments even here."³² The spectre that rose above the flames of Paris haunted the United States. It was the spectre "of a toiling, ignorant and impoverished multitude, demanding an equal share in the wealth of the rich."

What was the remedy? The *Times* proposed free schooling and better facilities for acquiring land. It also saw merit in the Rochedale cooperative plan and in some form of profit sharing.³³ The New York *Herald* put its trust in the teaching of religion.³⁴ The *Tribune* relied on the untrammelled laws of economics to remove social friction.³⁵ The New York *Standard* was partial to the correctives of the *Times*³⁶ and the *World* to those of the *Tribune*, provided the government held on to the national domain.³⁷ At bottom the remedies were all alike in that they in no way impinged on the foundations of the status quo.

Something needs to be said, however briefly, on the role of clergymen in shaping public opinion on the Commune and the International. Among the more prominent and influential were Archbishop Manning of New York, and the Reverends Frothingham and Henry Ward Beecher, both of the same city. The first charged that the principal threat of the Commune was its atheism and materialism. The answer to them, he said, lay in authority and obedience.³⁸ According to the Reverend Frothingham the danger to America stemmed from the alliance of the trade unions with the Communist International,³⁹ even though it was common knowledge that American unions, in the great majority, were either indifferent or hostile to it. The third clergyman, the eloquent Henry Ward Beecher, told a large attendance in his church that the scenes of the Paris Commune were but enactments of those of the French Revolution. And since there was a certain likeness in human nature, Americans could not ignore the awful possibilities of the future. It could also happen here, unless the dangerous elements were inoculated with faith in God. He proposed, in addition to the free distribution of land, free schools and indoctrination in the belief in the next life.⁴⁰

II

Any consideration of American opinion on the Paris Commune must take into account publications and public figures who endeavored to contain the tide of denunciation. They were of course a minority, but a sturdy one, including liberals and American Internationalists. The *Weekly New York Democrat* not only blamed the Thiers government for having provoked the Parisians into revolt; it also considered the political program of the Commune worthy of incorporation into the American Constitution.⁴¹ Another weekly, the *Golden Age*, attributed the Revolution in Paris to the misrule of the Second Empire. It then proceeded to clear the Commune of the stigma of communism. The Commune, said the *Golden Age*, was nothing but republicanism. "If the Republic of America is right, the Commune of Paris was right." Had the Commune been victorious as had

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been the Republic in America, it would have been acclaimed rather than execrated by the same people who lashed it.⁴²

Such dissent from the run of opinion must have been welcome to American friends of the Commune, even though the dissenters did not understand its real essence. In this respect *The Nation*, edited by E. L. Godkin, came closest, even before the publication in the United States of the General Council's *Address on the Civil War in France*. However much the periodical marked the Commune as "one of the greatest pieces of folly and wickedness . . . ever witnessed," it nevertheless saw its true meaning: "Veritable workingmen sit in council in the gilded saloons of the Hotel de Ville," doing everything "that can be done to put out of sight or abolish all the machinery, whether moral or material, which the rich and educated classes have invented and declared to be necessary for the proper conduct of human affairs." *The Nation* thus agreed with Marx that, by destroying the old machinery of government, the Commune had taken the requisite steps to what he termed a proletarian dictatorship. The journal went on to say that the workers' government "has shown itself capable of maintaining an army, and carrying on war for two months," so that it not only gave "an air of practicalness to what all the rest of the world sneered at as impractical"; it also showed "that it is not impossible for a great crowd of persons, whom society denounces as lunatics and loafers to seize on the government of a great capital, and administer it for a time, at all events."⁴³

No contemporaneous American publication, as far as we know, assessed the Commune as well as did *The Nation*. It saw the Revolution in historical perspective and foretold its future impact. Those who hoped that its fall would spell the end of its ideas were mistaken, it declared. "These ideas . . . will live and grow." They will "not cease to spread until they have made one great attempt for the conquest of modern society, and have in that attempt shaken our present civilization to its foundation."⁴⁴

Amidst the general hysteria new ideas on the Commune were invading the public mind. Even the New York *World*, that had printed so many fantastic tales and excerpted Mazzini's indictment of the Commune,⁴⁵ gave ample space to interviews with high ranking Communards and Internationalists.⁴⁶ It did still more. On June 29 it published almost the entire text of the *Address on the Civil War in France*. Thereafter it was printed in full by *The Workingman's Advocate* in Chicago and *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* in New York. Special editions of the *Address* were issued to meet increasing demands, so that the above-named *Weekly* could say candidly: "No public document has ever been more sought after."⁴⁷

The press could not avoid noticing the International's statement on the Commune. The *Golden Age* and *The Nation* each found in it confirmation of its own forecast; the one regarded the *Address* as "a pungent, angry and manly defence of the Paris Commune"; it attested to the fact that the Commune was a praiseworthy example of self-government; the other

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weekly, in keeping with its prediction, believed that the *Address* would make the International more audacious.⁴⁸ Metropolitan dailies, too, looked upon the piece as a validation of their earlier views. For the *Star* it dispelled all doubts about the Commune's aim of controlling all economic life.⁴⁹ The *Times* discovered in it evidence to justify its premonition that the Commune was but the first of further conflicts for the achievement of a new social order.⁵⁰ The *World*, though full of praise for the vigor and literary merit of the *Address*, saw in it a warning to statesmen and men of property. No people was exempt from the plague of popular movements.⁵¹

The controversy over the Commune was becoming less one-sided as its defenders were entering the debate. The weeklies cited above were aided by the press of the American sections of the International that were increasing in number and uniting under a central committee. True, this press was limited in circulation. *Le Socialiste*, founded in New York on October 7, 1871, which soon became an official organ of the International, reached only French-speaking people. It was in this small sheet that appeared serially, from January to March 1872, the first French translation of *The Communist Manifesto*. *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*, another official organ, represented the English-speaking Section 12, which in time developed into a dissident group. Despite the *Weekly's* lapse in discipline and its criticism of the Commune's policies, it stood by the Parisian government and, as we said above, published the full *Address*. On December 30, 1871, it reprinted the first English translation of *The Communist Manifesto* that had appeared in England in 1850 in the *Red Republican*. The most important labor paper of the time, *The Workingman's Advocate*, did not endorse all the principles of the Commune. Still it reprinted the *Address* and rejected the villainous charges of the newspapers. It furthermore declared that the Commune had arisen out of conditions that were also present in the United States.⁵² The coal miners' strike in Pennsylvania, it owned, was not unrelated to the Revolution in Paris. Both aimed "to establish and define strictly the rights of producers."⁵³

The limited press, it is safe to say, had less effect in dispelling the misrepresentations of the Commune than had a small number of American journalists in Paris. Notable were Frank M. Pixley, writing in the San Francisco *Chronicle*, William Huntington in the Cincinnati *Commercial*, George Wilkes in the New York *Herald* and finally Alfred Russell Young in the New York *Standard*. The accounts of the last two were the best considered and the most convincing. Wilkes' reports to the *Herald* disputed everything printed on the Commune. Moderation, decency and justice were virtues discovered in the government of Paris. It had guarded public morals, religion and property, he wrote; the stories of plunder and incendiarism merely testified to their authors' wild imaginations.⁵⁴

The most authoritative report by an American and the one which provoked chroniclers of the Commune was that of Alfred Russell Young. His paper, the New York *Standard*, had vied with others in heaping abuse

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on the Communards. It happened that in May 1871, the State Department sent him on a secret mission to Europe. Curiosity led him to every part of Paris. He examined barricades, attended club meetings, entered churches and roamed the streets of Montmartre, reputed to be the center of "ruffians." He soon learned that the Communards had been libeled. A study of the facts showed him that not they but the Versailles had begun the shooting of prisoners "and unarmed men in cold blood." What about the pillaging? In making the rounds of the clubs, he wrote, he had not heard a single proposal for partitioning, not an appeal for plunder. Never had he seen "a more orderly city." Montmartre was quiet, although it had no police. In his walks through its narrow streets he had never been troubled or questioned. "I saw no drunkenness, no ruffianism, no pillage. I saw one crowd of at least thirty thousand men and women, and it was orderly and good-humored as though it were a gathering at a New York county fair." Were the Communards infidels, ransackers of churches? Young had expected to find the Church of the Madeleine converted into "a stable or wine cellar." Instead it was a quiet place of worship, guarded by a sentry. "The Madeleine," he said, "received more harm from the shots of the Versailles soldiers in combat than from the Commune during the siege."⁵⁵

To newspaper editors who reproved him for his exposé of their mendacious stories, he replied:

It would have been so much easier, so much more popular, so much more acceptable, to home people, to have united in the chorus of anger that seemed to come from the English written press; to have shared the agitations of correspondents, who looked at Paris from the terrace of St. Germain and telegraphed their emotions to New York; to have written a wild article or two, freshened up with the rhetoric of the Reign of Terror. But what we saw and what we heard and what impressions they made upon us—a stranger in a strange and deeply interesting land, among people whose history we had read with affection and deep emotion—we felt called upon to write and print. In that shape truth came to us, and we spoke it.⁵⁶

Young's report was one of the most valuable aids to the sobering of American opinion on the Commune. Wendell Phillips, the former Abolitionist, appraised it as "the ablest, most brilliant and searching of all essays on the Commune."⁵⁷

The same paper that carried Phillips' estimate of Young's story also carried articles by W. J. Linton, the renowned engraver and former British Chartist. Their purpose was to clear the Commune of the slander that had been flung at it. Linton did not share all its principles, but he was at one with it "as far as wanting *some better social ordering than that of the Bonapartes and the Fisks.*"⁵⁸ Perhaps his association with Chartists and European socialists had equipped him to get at the underlying objective of the Commune. He could see from his vantage point that it had brought to the surface "the question of the abolition of misery."⁵⁹

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The bulk of American intellectuals and men of letters, like the European, either gave little thought to the Commune or were downright hostile. Only a small minority sided with the Commune and even with the International. Of that number were Wilkes and Young, Linton and Phillips. One could also find among them American Positivists, champions of moral persuasion, who, though critical of the Communards' political and repressive acts, praised them for having abolished the standing army and repealed the capital penalty. Like their British confrere, Frederick Harrison,⁶⁰ they rebuked the Commune's defamers and the falsifiers of its record.

Prominent in the tiny category of intellectuals who stood by the Commune was Wendell Phillips, of one of the first families of Massachusetts. His name had been a symbol of Abolitionism. Once its cause had triumphed, he declared: "We sheathe no sword. We turn only the front of the army upon a new foe."⁶¹ The foe was corporate wealth and the wage system. Unlike other Abolitionists, he had the faculty of seeing the cadenced flow of change and continuity. Slavery once gone, the problem of wage labor absorbed him thereafter.⁶² It came upon him slowly that the slave question was but part of the labor question.

His objective was workers' welfare, and his understanding of it was akin to what Jacksonian democrats had advanced. Capital, by his definition, was "but frozen, crystallized labor"; and labor, "but capital, dissolved and become active." Their antagonism was injurious to both, for neither one could exist without the other.⁶³ "Laws to protect labor from capital, and employer from his workmen," he said in January 1871, "will be needless when each man is both capitalist and workman, equally interested as employer and employed."⁶⁴ His ideal society was one of small, independent producers, bound together in a community. It was the sort of ideal once exemplified by a New England town, where, to cite him, were neither rich nor poor, "all mingling in the same society, every child at the same school, no poorhouse, no beggar, opportunities equal, nobody too proud to stand aloof, nobody too humble to be shut out."⁶⁵

Phillips never squared his economic theory with advancing capitalism. He never penetrated its inside to study its workings. The best he could do was to place his trust in labor and in its international solidarity.

Consistent with this trust, he stood firmly by the Paris Commune. It was fallacious to present it as communist, he declared, for it had no such program. Nor had it been concocted by a cabal of cutthroats, as slander had it. The evidence showed that "the movement was the unanimous wish of all Paris." The city was so peaceful that the Stock Exchange refused to close. To the charge of pillage he replied: "The leaders arrested are poor. Those who fled are poorer still." But the indictment accused them of wilful bloodshed. Thiers "set the example," he answered. He refused all exchange of prisoners and shot every Communard, "men, women and children, especially every leader." The Communards,

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he continued, were genuine patriots who had refused to make peace with Napoleon and who made a desperate effort to lift France from her degradation. Phillips chided American journalists for having catered to prejudice. Had they appreciated the merits of the Communards they might have likened them to the American revolutionaries of 1776.⁶⁶

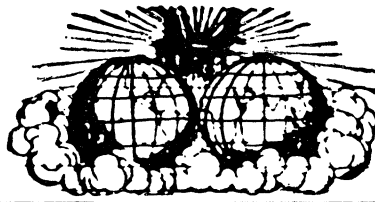
Phillips held his convictions to the end. He told a reporter in 1878, when the issue of socialism was warmly debated, that America had nothing to fear from it. The press had misrepresented it as it had the Paris Commune. The Commune "was not socialistic primarily," he said, "but grew more and more that way." Was America suited to the spread of socialism? asked the reporter. Phillips did not think so, but he saw no harm in publicizing its principles. If America ever became socialist, it would be through the ballot-box, provided, he added, "force is not used by the other side."⁶⁷

Did Phillips join the First International? We cannot say with certainty. Our only evidence is the news from New York to the General Council in London that he entered the ranks of the International.⁶⁸ But news from that source sometimes conveyed anticipation rather than fact.

III

During the hard times of the seventies, the hysteria over the Paris Commune and International took on new life. Meetings of unemployed and peaceful demonstrations to present demands to municipal officials were, in the opinion of the *World*, for example, "The Commune in City Hall" and "The Red Flag in New York."⁶⁹ The hand of the International was seen in every strike and every petition. They were the doings of foreign subversives, the *Times* charged, of a "dangerous class" that looked for an opportunity "to spread abroad the anarchy and ruin of the French Commune."⁷⁰ The explosive rhetoric might have caused city dwellers to lock their doors, but they were not an answer to the bread and butter question raised by the Long Depression begun in 1873. Perhaps on account of that the terrifying headlines were persistently spread throughout the nation.

It is not the intention here to enter into the many solutions of the social problems that cropped up during the seventies. Suffice it to say that many *isms* were laid before the public, from Social Darwinism and Positivism to Christian Socialism and Socialism. Of all these solutions the last one alone caused deep apprehension, for in July 1876, four parties and societies, totalling nearly 3,000 organized socialists, united to form The Workingmen's Party of the United States. Press and pulpit again sounded the dreadful warning that it could happen here. Socialism, they said, had been the aim in Paris; its emergence as a nation-wide movement in the United States was the best evidence that the hydra-headed monster had crossed the Atlantic. At the time of the railroad strike of 1877, captions



THE CURTAIN RAISED

Interview with Karl Marx,
the Head of L'Internationale

REVOLT OF LABOR
AGAINST CAPITAL

The Two Faces of
L'Internationale—
Transformation of Society—
Its Progress in the United States

What the Association Had to
Do with the Commune, &c.

LONDON, July 3.—You have asked me to find out something about the International Association, and I have tried to do so. The enterprise is a difficult one just now. London is indisputably the headquarters of the association, but the English people have got a scare, and smell international in everything as King James smelt gunpowder after the famous plot. The consciousness of the society has naturally increased with the suspiciousness of the public; and if those who guide it have a secret to keep, they are of the stamp of men who keep a secret well. I have called on two of their leading members, have talked with one freely, and I here give you the substance of my conversation. I have satisfied myself of one thing, that it is a society of genuine working-men, but that these workmen are directed by social and political theorists of another class. One man whom I saw, a leading member of the council, was sitting at his workman's bench during our interview, and left off talking to me from time to time to receive a complaint, delivered in no courteous tone, from one of the many little masters in the neighborhood who enjoyed him. I have heard this same man make eloquent speeches in public inspired in every passage with the energy of hate towards the classes that call themselves his rulers. I understood the speeches after this glimpse at the domestic life of the orator. He must have felt that he had brains enough to have organ-

ponent of the statecraft that sets him in motion. I know some of your members, and I can believe that they are not of the stuff of which conspirators are made. Besides, a secret shared by a million men would be no secret at all. But what if these were only the instruments in the hands of a bold, and I hope you will forgive me for adding, not over scrupulous conclave.

Dr. M.—There is nothing to prove it.

R.—The last Paris insurrection?

Dr. M.—I demand firstly the proof that there was any plot at all—that anything happened that was not the legitimate effect of the circumstances of the moment; or the plot granted, I demand the proofs of the participation in it of the International Association.

R.—The presence in the communal body of so many members of the association.

Dr. M.—Then it was a plot of the Freemasons, too, for their share in the work as individuals was by no means a slight one. I should not be surprised, indeed, to find the Pope setting down the whole insurrection to their account. But try another explanation. The insurrection in Paris was made by the workmen of Paris. The ablest of the workmen must necessarily have been its leaders and administrators; but the ablest of the workmen happen also to be members of the International Association. Yet the association as such may in no way be responsible for their action.

R.—It will still seem otherwise to the world. People talk of secret instructions from London, and even grants of money. Can it be affirmed that the alleged openness of the association's proceedings precludes all secrecy of communication?

Dr. M.—What association ever formed carried on its work without private as well as public agencies? But to talk of secret instruction from London, as of decrees in the matter of faith and morals from some centre of Papal domination and intrigue is wholly to misconceive the nature of the International. This would imply a centralized form of government of the International, whereas the real form is designedly that which gives the greatest play to local energy and independence. In fact the International is not properly a government for the working class at all. It is a bond of union rather than a controlling force.

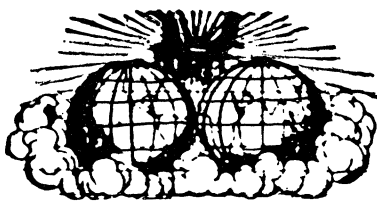
R.—And of union to what end?

Dr. M.—The economical emancipation of the working class by the conquest of political power. The use of that political power to the attainment of social ends. It is necessary that our aims should be thus comprehensive to include every form of working class activity. To have made them of a special character would

came the ridiculous "plot" a peror's life—as if we want wretched old fellow. They sei members of the International. tured evidence. They prepared trial, and in the meantime the biscite. But the intended come viously but a broad, coarse f Europe, which witnessed the not deceived for a moment as and only the French peasant fooled. Your English papers ginning of the miserable affair notice the end. The French j the existence of the plot by were obliged to declare that th to show the complicity of th Believe me the second plot i The French functionary is ag He is called in to account for movement the world has ever signs of the times ought to s explanation—the growth of in the workmen, of luxury an among their rulers, the histori going on of that final transfer a class to the people, the app time, place, and circumstance movement of emancipation. B these the functionary must have pher, and he is only a *mouch* of his being, therefore, he upon the *mouchard's* explan spiracy." His old portfolio c ments will supply him with this time Europe in its scare tale.

R.—Europe can scarcely be that every French newspaper sp

Dr. M.—Every French news is one of them (taking up *La* judge for yourself of the valu as to a matter of fact. [*Reads:*] of the International, has b Belgium, trying to make his The police of London have lo on the society with which he i are now taking active measu pression." Two sentences and can test the evidence of your see that instead of being in pr I am at home in England. You that the police in England are interfere with the Internatio the society with them. Yet wh lar in all this is that the rep round of the continental press tradition, and could continu were to circularize every jou from this place.



CURTAIN RAISED

with Karl Marx,
of L'Internationale

LT OF LABOR
NST CAPITAL

Two Faces of
Internationale—
mation of Society—
s in the United States

Association Had to
the Commune, &c.

July 3.—You have asked me to
thing about the International
I have tried to do so. The
difficult one just now. London
the headquarters of the associ-
English people have got a scare,
national in everything as King
powder after the famous plot.
ss of the society has naturally
the suspiciousness of the pub-
who guide it have a secret to
of the stamp of men who keep
have called on two of their
s, have talked with one freely,
you the substance of my con-
satisfied myself of one thing,
society of genuine working-men,
workmen are directed by social
theorists of another class. One
day, a leading member of the
sitting at his workman's bench
interview, and left off talking to
o time to receive a complaint,
courteous tone, from one of
masters in the neighborhood
m. I have heard this same man
speeches in public inspired in
with the energy of hate towards
call themselves his rulers. I
speeches after this glimpse at e
of the orator. He must have
brains enough to have organ-

ponent of the statecraft that sets him in motion. I know some of your members, and I can believe that they are not of the stuff of which conspirators are made. Besides, a secret shared by a million men would be no secret at all. But what if these were only the instruments in the hands of a bold, and I hope you will forgive me for adding, not over scrupulous conclave.

Dr. M.—There is nothing to prove it.

R.—The last Paris insurrection?

Dr. M.—I demand firstly the proof that there was any plot at all—that anything happened that was not the legitimate effect of the circumstances of the moment; or the plot granted, I demand the proofs of the participation in it of the International Association.

R.—The presence in the communal body of so many members of the association.

Dr. M.—Then it was a plot of the Freemasons, too, for their share in the work as individuals was by no means a slight one. I should not be surprised, indeed, to find the Pope setting down the whole insurrection to their account. But try another explanation. The insurrection in Paris was made by the workmen of Paris. The ablest of the workmen must necessarily have been its leaders and administrators; but the ablest of the workmen happen also to be members of the International Association. Yet the association as such may in no way be responsible for their action.

R.—It will still seem otherwise to the world. People talk of secret instructions from London, and even grants of money. Can it be affirmed that the alleged openness of the association's proceedings precludes all secrecy of communication?

Dr. M.—What association ever formed carried on its work without private as well as public agencies? But to talk of secret instruction from London, as of decrees in the matter of faith and morals from some centre of Papal domination and intrigue is wholly to misconceive the nature of the International. This would imply a centralized form of government of the International, whereas the real form is designedly that which gives the greatest play to local energy and independence. In fact the International is not properly a government for the working class at all. It is a bond of union rather than a controlling force.

R.—And of union to what end?

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came the ridiculous "plot" against the Emperor's life—as if we wanted to kill the wretched old fellow. They seized the leading members of the International. They manufactured evidence. They prepared their case for trial, and in the meantime they had their plebiscite. But the intended comedy was too obviously but a broad, coarse farce. Intelligent Europe, which witnessed the spectacle, was not deceived for a moment as to its character, and only the French peasant elector was befooled. Your English papers reported the beginning of the miserable affair; they forgot to notice the end. The French judges admitting the existence of the plot by official courtesy were obliged to declare that there was nothing to show the complicity of the International. Believe me the second plot is like the first. The French functionary is again in business. He is called in to account for the biggest civil movement the world has ever seen. A hundred signs of the times ought to suggest the right explanation—the growth of intelligence among the workmen, of luxury and incompetence among their rulers, the historical process now going on of that final transfer of power from a class to the people, the apparent fitness of time, place, and circumstance for the great movement of emancipation. But to have seen these the functionary must have been a philosopher, and he is only a *mouchard*. By the law of his being, therefore, he has fallen back upon the *mouchard's* explanation—a "conspiracy." His old portfolio of forged documents will supply him with the proofs, and this time Europe in its scare will believe the tale.

R.—Europe can scarcely help itself, seeing that every French newspaper spreads the report.

Dr. M.—Every French newspaper! See, here is one of them (taking up *La Situation*), and judge for yourself of the value of its evidence as to a matter of fact. [*Reads:*] "Dr. Karl Marx, of the International, has been arrested in Belgium, trying to make his way to France. The police of London have long had their eye on the society with which he is connected, and are now taking active measures for its suppression." Two sentences and two lies. You can test the evidence of your own senses. You see that instead of being in prison in Belgium I am at home in England. You must also know that the police in England are as powerless to interfere with the International Society as the society with them. Yet what is most regular in all this is that the report will go the round of the continental press without a contradiction, and could continue to do so if I were to circularize every journal in Europe from this place.

keep, they are of the stamp of men who keep a secret well. I have called on two of their leading members, have talked with one freely, and I here give you the substance of my conversation. I have satisfied myself of one thing, that it is a society of genuine working-men, but that these workmen are directed by social and political theorists of another class. One man whom I saw, a leading member of the council, was sitting at his workman's bench during our interview, and left off talking to me from time to time to receive a complaint, delivered in no courteous tone, from one of the many little masters in the neighborhood who enjoyed him. I have heard this same man make eloquent speeches in public inspired in every passage with the energy of hate towards the classes that call themselves his rulers. I understood the speeches after this glimpse at the domestic life of the orator. He must have felt that he had brains enough to have organized a working-government, and yet here he was obliged to devote his life to the most revolting task work of a mechanical profession. He was proud and sensitive, and yet at every turn he had to return a bow for a grunt and a smile for a command that stood on about the same level in the scale of civility with a huntsman's call to his dog. This man helped me to a glimpse of one side of the nature of the International, the result of labor against capital, of the workman who produces against the middleman who enjoys. Here was the hand that would smile hard when the time came, and as to the head that plans, I think I saw that, too, in my interview with Dr. Karl Marx.

Dr. Karl Marx is a German doctor of philosophy with a German breadth of knowledge derived from observation of the living world and from books. I should conclude that he has never been a worker in the ordinary sense of the term. His surroundings and appearance are those of a well-to-do man of the middle class. The drawing-room into which I was ushered on the sight of my interview would have formed very comfortable quarters for a thriving stockbroker who had made his competence and was now beginning to make his fortune. It was comfort personified, the apartment of a man of taste and of easy means, but with nothing in it peculiarly characteristic of its owner. A fine album of Rhine views on the table, however, gave a clue to his nationality. I peered cautiously into the vase on the side-table for a bomb. I sniffed for petroleum, but the smell was the smell of roses. I crept back stealthily to my seat, and moodily awaited the worst.

He has entered and greeted me cordially, and we are sitting face to face. Yes, I am tete-a-tete with the revolution incarnate, with the real founder and guiding spirit of the International Society, with the author of the address in which capital was told that if it warred on labor it must expect to have its house burned down about its ears—in a word, with the apologist for the Commune of Paris. Do you remember the bust of Socrates, the man who dies rather than profess his belief in the gods of the time—the man with the fine sweep of profile for the forehead running meanly at the end into a little snub, curled-up feature like a bisected pothook that formed the nose. Take this bust in your mind's eye, color the beard black, dashing it here and there with puffs of grey; clap the head thus made on a portly body of the middle height

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R.—And what is the nature of that aid?

Dr. M.—To give an example, one of the commonest forms of the movement for emancipation is that of strikes. Formerly, when a strike took place in one country it was defeated by the importation of workmen from another. The International has nearly stopped all that. It receives information of the intended strike, it spreads that information among its members, who at once see that for them the seat of the struggle must be forbidden ground. The masters are thus left alone to reckon with their men. In most cases the men require no other aid than that. Their own subscriptions or those of the societies to which they are more immediately affiliated supply them with funds, but should the pressure upon them become too heavy and the strike be one of which the association approves, their necessities are supplied out of the common purse. By these means a strike of the cigar-makers of Barcelona was brought to a victorious issue the other day. But the society has no interest in strikes, though it supports them under certain conditions. It cannot possibly gain by them in a pecuniary point of view, but it may easily lose. Let us sum it all up in a word. The working

Dr. M.—Every French newspaper speaks of the International, has been in Belgium, trying to make his name. The police of London have long looked on the society with which he is connected are now taking active measures of repression." Two sentences and you can test the evidence of your own eyes. I see that instead of being in prison I am at home in England. You say that the police in England are not to interfere with the International, but the society with them. Yet what is the result? In all this is that the reputation of the continental press is in contradiction, and could continue to be were to circularize every journal from this place.

R.—Have you attempted to test the evidence of these false reports?

Dr. M.—I have done so time and time again. I am weary of the labor. To show that I am less than a member of the International is less than what they are. I mention that in one of them I have been set down as a member of the International.

R.—And he is not so?

Dr. M.—The association could not be found for such a wild man. I am presumptuous enough to issue a declaration in our name, but I have disavowed, though, to do that I have pressed of course ignored the disavowal.

R.—And Mazzini, is he a member of the International?

Dr. M.—(laughing)—Ah, I have made but little progress in getting beyond the range of his ideas.

R.—You surprise me. I should have thought that he represented the views of the International.

Dr. M.—He represents not the old idea of a middle-class society, but seeks no part with the middle class. He has fallen far to the rear of the International. The German professors, who are still considered in France as the apostles of the cultured democracy of the future. They were so at one time, perhaps, when the German movement in the English sense, had scarcely proper development. But now they have overbodily to the reaction, and they know them no more.

R.—Some people have the opinion that the signs of a positivist element is to be seen in the International.

Dr. M.—No such thing. We are not positivists among us, and others not either. We work as well. But this is not the nature of their philosophy, which will do with popular government, and which seeks only to put the people in place of the old one.

R.—It seems to me, then, that the new international movement is to form a philosophy as well as to be for themselves.

Dr. M.—Precisely. It is hard to say, for instance, that we could hope to win a war against capital if we desisted from the political economy. We have traced one kind of relation between labor and capital. We hope to

to guide me to a secret to the stamp of men who keep have called on two of their us, have talked with one freely, you the substance of my conversation satisfied myself of one thing, society of genuine working-men, workmen are directed by social theorists of another class. One law, a leading member of the sitting at his workman's bench interview, and left off talking to o time to receive a complaint, courteous tone, from one of masters in the neighborhood n. I have heard this same man speeches in public inspired in with the energy of hate towards call themselves his rulers. I speeches after this glimpse at e of the orator. He must have brains enough to have organ-government, and yet here he devote his life to the most remarkable of a mechanical profession. and sensitive, and yet at every return a bow for a grunt and command that stood on about the scale of civility with a hunts-dog. This man helped me to one side of the nature of the result of labor against capitalism who produces against the enjoys. Here was the hand le hard when the time came, read that plans, I think I saw interview with Dr. Karl Marx. Marx is a German doctor of a German breadth of knowl-room observation of the living books. I should conclude that een a worker in the ordinary rm. His surroundings and apose of a well-to-do man of the drawing-room into which I n the sight of my interview med very comfortable quarters stockbroker who had made his was now beginning to make was comfort personified, the man of taste and of easy means, g in it peculiarly characteristic fine album of Rhine views on ver, gave a clue to his nation-cautiously into the vase on the bomb. I sniffed for petroleum, was the smell of roses. I crept o my seat, and moodily awaited

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R.—Have you attempted to contradict many of these false reports?

Dr. M.—I have done so till I have grown weary of the labor. To show the gross carelessness with which they are concocted I may mention that in one of them I saw Felix Pyat set down as a member of the International.

R.—And he is not so?

Dr. M.—The association could hardly have found room for such a wild man. He was once presumptuous enough to issue a rash proclamation in our name, but it was instantly disavowed, though, to do them justice, the press of course ignored the disavowal.

R.—And Mazzini, is he a member of your body?

Dr. M.—(laughing)—Ah, no. We should have made but little progress if we had not got beyond the range of his ideas.

R.—You surprise me. I should certainly have thought that he represented the most advanced views.

Dr. M.—He represents nothing better than the old idea of a middle-class republic. We seek no part with the middle class. He has fallen far to the rear of the modern movement as the German professors, who, nevertheless, are still considered in Europe as the apostles of the cultured democratism of the future. They were so at one time—before '48, perhaps, when the German middle class, in the English sense, had scarcely attained its proper development. But now they have gone over bodily to the reaction, and the proletariat knows them no more.

R.—Some people have thought they saw signs of a positivist element in your organization.

Dr. M.—No such thing. We have positivists among us, and others not of our body who work as well. But this is not by virtue of their philosophy, which will have nothing to do with popular government, as we understand it, and which seeks only to put a new hierarchy in place of the old one.

R.—It seems to me, then, that the leaders of the new international movement have had to form a philosophy as well as an association for themselves.

Dr. M.—Precisely. It is hardly likely, for instance, that we could hope to prosper in our war against capital if we derive our tactics, say from the political economy of Mill. He has traced one kind of relationship between labor and capital. We hope to show that it is

but the siren was the siren of 1903. I crept back stealthily to my seat, and moodily awaited the worst.

He has entered and greeted me cordially, and we are sitting face to face. Yes, I am tete-a-tete with the revolution incarnate, with the real founder and guiding spirit of the International Society, with the author of the address in which capital was told that if it warred on labor it must expect to have its house burned down about its ears—in a word, with the apologist for the Commune of Paris. Do you remember the bust of Socrates, the man who dies rather than profess his belief in the gods of the time—the man with the fine sweep of profile for the forehead running meanly at the end into a little snub, curled-up feature like a bisected pothook that formed the nose. Take this bust in your mind's eye, color the beard black, dashing it here and there with puffs of grey; clap the head thus made on a portly body of the middle height, and the Doctor is before you. Throw a veil over the upper part of the face and you might be in the company of a born vestryman. Reveal the essential feature, the immense brow, and you know at once that you have to deal with that most formidable of all composite forces—a dreamer who thinks, a thinker who dreams.

Another gentleman accompanied Dr. Marx, a German, too, I believe, though from his great familiarity with our language I cannot be sure of it. Was he a witness on the doctor's side? I think so. The "Council," hearing of the interview, might hereafter call on the Doctor for his account of it, for the *Revolution* is above all things suspicious of its agents. Here, then, was his evidence in corroboration.

I went straight to my business. The world, I said, seemed to be in the dark about the International, hating it very much, but not able to say clearly what thing it hated. Some, who professed to have peered further into the gloom than their neighbors, declared that they had made out a sort of Jesus figure with a fair, honest workman's smile on one of its faces, and on the other a murderous, conspirator's scowl. Would he light up the case of mystery in which the theory dwelt?

The professor laughed, chuckled a little I fancied, at the thought that we were so frightened of him. "There is no mystery to clear up dear sir," he began, in a very polished form of the Hans Breitmann dialect, "except perhaps the mystery of human stupidity in those who perpetually ignore the fact that our association is a public one and that the fullest reports of its proceedings are published for all who care to read them. You may buy our rules for a penny, and a shilling laid out in pamphlets will teach you almost as much about us as we know ourselves."

R.—Almost—yes, perhaps so; but will not the something I shall not know constitute the all-important reservation. To be quite frank with you, and to put the case as it strikes an outside observer, this general claim of depreciation of you must mean something more than the ignorant ill-will of the multitude. And it is still pertinent to ask even after what you have told me, what is the International Society?

Dr. M.—You have only to look at the individuals of which it is composed—workmen.

R.—Yes, but the soldier need be no ex-

cepted by the importation of workmen from another. The International has nearly stopped all that. It receives information of the intended strike, it spreads that information among its members, who at once see that for them the seat of the struggle must be forbidden ground. The masters are thus left alone to reckon with their men. In most cases the men require no other aid than that. Their own subscriptions or those of the societies to which they are more immediately affiliated supply them with funds, but should the pressure upon them become too heavy and the strike be one of which the association approves, their necessities are supplied out of the common purse. By these means a strike of the cigar-makers of Barcelona was brought to a victorious issue the other day. But the society has no interest in strikes, though it supports them under certain conditions. It cannot possibly gain by them in a pecuniary point of view, but it may easily lose. Let us sum it all up in a word. The working classes remain poor amid the increase of wealth, wretched among the increase of luxury. Their material privation dwarfs their moral as well as their physical stature. They cannot rely on others for a remedy. It has become then with them an imperative necessity to take their own case in hand. They must revise the relations between themselves and the capitalists and landlords, and that means they must transform society. This is the general end of every known workmen's organization; land and labor leagues, trade and friendly societies, co-operative stores and co-operative production are but means towards it. To establish a perfect solidarity between these organizations is the business of the International Association. Its influence is beginning to be felt everywhere. Two papers spread its views in Spain, three in Germany, the same number in Austria and in Holland, six in Belgium, and six in Switzerland. And now that I have told you what the International is you may, perhaps, be in a position to form your own opinion as to its pretended plots.

R.—I do not quite understand you.

Dr. M.—Do you not see that the old society, wanting strength to meet it with its own weapons of discussion and combination, is obliged to resort to the fraud of fixing upon it the imputation of conspiracy?

R.—But the French police declare that they are in a position to prove its complicity in the late affair, to say nothing of preceeding attempts.

Dr. M.—But we will say something of those attempts, if you please, because they best serve to test the gravity of all the charges of conspiracy brought against the International. You remember the last "plot" but one. A plebiscite had been announced. Many of the electors were known to be wavering. They had no longer a keen sense of the value of the imperial rule, having come to disbelieve in those threatened dangers of society from which it was supposed to have saved them. A new bugbear was wanted. The police undertook to find one. All combinations of workmen being hateful to them, they naturally owed the International an ill-turn. A happy thought inspired them. What if they should select the International for their bugbear, and thus at once discredit that society and curry favor for the imperial cause. Out of that happy thought

knows them no more. R.—Some people have the signs of a positivist element in their philosophy, which will do with popular government, a thing, and which seeks only to put it in place of the old one.

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Dr. M.—Precisely. It is h instance, that we could hope to war against capital if we de say from the political econo has traced one kind of relat labor and capital. We hope to possible to establish another.

R.—And as to religion?

Dr. M.—On that point I the name of the society. I atheist. It is startling, no dou an avowal in England, but the fort in the thought that it ne in a whisper in either Germa

R.—And yet you make yo in this country?

Dr. M.—For obvious reaso association is here an estab exists, indeed, in Germany, bu innumerable difficulties; in E years it has not existed at all

R.—And the United States?

Dr. M.—The chief centres are for the present among the Europe. Many circumstances tended to prevent the labor p suming an all absorbing im United States. But they are ra ing, and it is rapidly coming t with the growth as in Europ class distinct from the rest of and divorced from capital.

R.—It would seem that in hoped for solution, whatever be attained without the violent lution. The English system platform and press until m converted into majorities is a

Dr. M.—I am not so sangui as you. The English middle shown itself willing enough to dict of the majority so long a monopoly of the voting powe as soon as it finds itself outv considers vital questions we new slave-owner's war.

I have here given you as remember them the heads of with this remarkable man. I sl form your own conclusions. V said for or against the probab plicity with the movement o we may be assured that in t Association the civilized wo power in its midst with whi come to a reckoning for good

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...ature, the immense brow, and
...ce that you have to deal with
...dable of all composite forces—
...thinks, a thinker who dreams.
...leman accompanied Dr. Marx,
...I believe, though from his
...y with our language I cannot
...as he a witness on the doctor's
...o. The "Council," hearing of
...ight hereafter call on the Doc-
...ment of it, for the *Revolution*
...is suspicious of its agents. Here,
...vidence in corroboration.
...nt to my business. The world,
...to be in the dark about the
...ating it very much, but not
...rly what thing it hated. Some,
...o have peered further into the
...r neighbors, declared that they
...ort of Jesus figure with a fair,
...s's smile on one of its faces,
...er a murderous, conspirator's
...e light up the case of mystery
...eory dwelt?
...r laughed, chuckled a little I
...thought that we were so fright-
...There is no mystery to clear
...e began, in a very polished
...ans Breitmann dialect, "except
...ystery of human stupidity in
...etually ignore the fact that our
...public one and that the fullest
...proceedings are published for
...read them. You may buy our
...ny, and a shilling laid out in
...each you almost as much about
...ourselves."
...yes, perhaps so; but will not
...shall not know constitute the
...servation. To be quite frank
...o put the case as it strikes an
...; this general claim of depre-
...must mean something more
...ant ill-will of the multitude.
...ertinent to ask even after what
...me, what is the International
...have only to look at the indi-
...n it is composed—workmen.
...the soldier need be no ex-

...another. The International has nearly stopped
all that. It receives information of the intended
strike, it spreads that information among its
members, who at once see that for them the
seat of the struggle must be forbidden ground.
The masters are thus left alone to reckon with
their men. In most cases the men require no
other aid than that. Their own subscriptions
or those of the societies to which they are
more immediately affiliated supply them with
funds, but should the pressure upon them be-
come too heavy and the strike be one of which
the association approves, their necessities are
supplied out of the common purse. By these
means a strike of the cigar-makers of Barcelona
was brought to a victorious issue the other
day. But the society has no interest in strikes,
though it supports them under certain condi-
tions. It cannot possibly gain by them in a
pecuniary point of view, but it may easily lose.
Let us sum it all up in a word. The working
classes remain poor amid the increase of
wealth, wretched among the increase of luxury.
Their material privation dwarfs their moral
as well as their physical stature. They cannot
rely on others for a remedy. It has become
then with them an imperative necessity to take
their own case in hand. They must revise the
relations between themselves and the capitalists
and landlords, and that means they must trans-
form society. This is the general end of every
known workmen's organization; land and labor
leagues, trade and friendly societies, co-oper-
ative stores and co-operative production are but
means towards it. To establish a perfect soli-
darity between these organizations is the busi-
ness of the International Association. Its
influence is beginning to be felt everywhere.
Two papers spread its views in Spain, three
in Germany, the same number in Austria and
in Holland, six in Belgium, and six in Switzer-
land. And now that I have told you what the
International is you may, perhaps, be in a posi-
tion to form your own opinion as to its pre-
tended plots.
R.—I do not quite understand you.
Dr. M.—Do you not see that the old society,
wanting strength to meet it with its own
weapons of discussion and combination, is
obliged to resort to the fraud of fixing upon
it the imputation of conspiracy?
R.—But the French police declare that they
are in a position to prove its complicity in the
late affair, to say nothing of preceeding
attempts.
Dr. M.—But we will say something of those
attempts, if you please, because they best
serve to test the gravity of all the charges of
conspiracy brought against the International.
You remember the last "plot" but one. A
plebiscite had been announced. Many of the
electors were known to be wavering. They had
no longer a keen sense of the value of the
imperial rule, having come to disbelieve in
those threatened dangers of society from which
it was supposed to have saved them. A new
bugbear was wanted. The police undertook to
find one. All combinations of workmen being
hateful to them, they naturally owed the In-
ternational an ill-turn. A happy thought in-
spired them. What if they should select the
International for their bugbear, and thus at
once discredit that society and curry favor for
the imperial cause. Out of that happy thought

...knows them no more.
R.—Some people have thought they saw
signs of a positivist element in your organiza-
tion.
Dr. M.—No such thing. We have positiv-
ists among us, and others not of our body who
work as well. But this is not by virtue of
their philosophy, which will have nothing to
do with popular government, as we understand
it, and which seeks only to put a new hierar-
chy in place of the old one.
R.—It seems to me, then, that the leaders
of the new international movement have had
to form a philosophy as well as an association
for themselves.
Dr. M.—Precisely. It is hardly likely, for
instance, that we could hope to prosper in our
war against capital if we derive our tactics,
say from the political economy of Mill. He
has traced one kind of relationship between
labor and capital. We hope to show that it is
possible to establish another.
R.—And as to religion?
Dr. M.—On that point I cannot speak in
the name of the society. I myself am an
atheist. It is startling, no doubt, to hear such
an avowal in England, but there is some com-
fort in the thought that it need not be made
in a whisper in either Germany or France?
R.—And yet you make your headquarters
in this country?
Dr. M.—For obvious reasons; the right of
association is here an established thing. It
exists, indeed, in Germany, but it is beset with
innumerable difficulties; in France for many
years it has not existed at all.
R.—And the United States?
Dr. M.—The chief centres of our activity
are for the present among the old societies of
Europe. Many circumstances have hitherto
tended to prevent the labor problem from as-
suming an all absorbing importance in the
United States. But they are rapidly disappear-
ing, and it is rapidly coming to the front there
with the growth as in Europe of a laboring
class distinct from the rest of the community
and divorced from capital.
R.—It would seem that in this country the
hoped for solution, whatever it may be, will
be attained without the violent means of revo-
lution. The English system of agitating by
platform and press until minorities become
converted into majorities is a hopeful sign.
Dr. M.—I am not so sanguine on that point
as you. The English middle class has always
shown itself willing enough to accept the ver-
dict of the majority so long as it enjoyed the
monopoly of the voting power. But mark me,
as soon as it finds itself outvoted on what it
considers vital questions we shall see here a
new slave-owner's war.
I have here given you as well as I can
remember them the heads of my conversation
with this remarkable man. I shall leave you to
form your own conclusions. Whatever may be
said for or against the probability of its com-
plicity with the movement of the Commune
we may be assured that in the International
Association the civilized world has a new
power in its midst with which it must soon
come to a reckoning for good or ill.
R. Landor
NEW YORK WORLD, July 18, 1871.

Impact of the Paris Commune

like these were carried by newspapers and placards: "Commune in Pittsburgh," "Commune in Reading," "Commune in St. Louis," "Commune in Chicago," "Commune in Philadelphia," "Commune in New York," and the "Reign of the Commune."⁷¹

A drift to reaction set in during the decade, manifested in part by a sizable anti-socialist and anti-communist literature. It professed to show that socialism and communism were but reversions that had had their vogue in primitive societies, but they were inadaptable to America. Furthermore, the ruins of the Utopian experiments in America were proof of the utter hopelessness of ever replacing the existing order based on private property. Writers went on predicting a Commune in 1880. It would be launched by a secret workers' organization and popular uprisings that would be followed by foreign intervention and the dismemberment of the nation. It was all so fearsome.⁷²

Carried by the reactionary drift was the argument that property was insecure under universal suffrage. What America needed was a strong man, a Thiers or a MacMahon, who would make short shrift of the red menace. For if the Commune was the consequence of the popular approach, the ballot in the hands of the people was a bombshell, declared its faultfinders. Nearly all of them agreed that some form of élitism was best calculated both to cleanse the prevailing political system of corruption and to prevent classes from mauling one another.⁷³

Reaction failed to swell into a movement for want of mass support. Its principal promoters were cultivated men, wealthy and well-born, without the know-how of reaching the people. Besides, a rising economy after the Long Depression temporarily alleviated the distressing and disquieting problem of unemployment. The bogies, Commune and International, lost their hobgoblin aspects. Actually they were going out of fashion. They were replaced by the spectre of socialism.

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