VIOLENCE AND VINDICTIVENESS IN THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii

LIST OF FIGURES iv

Chapter

I. BACKGROUND TO THE CIVIL WAR 1

II. EVENTS FROM MARCH 18TH TO APRIL 2ND 23

III. INITIAL CIVIL AND MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE CIVIL WAR 36

IV. VENGEANCE AND COUNTER-VENGEANCE BY THE COMBATANTS IN APRIL AND THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF MAY 46

V. BLOODY WEEK 61

VI. ENGLISH AND AMERICAN REACTION TO THE VIOLENCE IN FRANCE 74

VII. AFTERMATH 91

BIBLIOGRAPHY 109

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	Map of Paris and Environs	37
2.	Map of Paris: South-West	62
3.	Map of Paris: North-East	63
4.	Map of Paris: North-West	64
5.	Map of Paris: South-East	65

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND TO THE CIVIL WAR

The centennial of the famous Commune of Paris is upon us. We live in a time of social unrest and a condition not far removed from civic strife. The Commune was one of the most remarkable of civil wars. Its special characteristic was an exceptional amount of hatefulness and vengeance-seeking displayed by both sides during the course of the conflict. The state of mind which prevailed might be aptly captured in a tale recounted by the American ambassador to France, Elihu B. Washburne, concerning Gustave Chaudey, a prominent journalist who was one of those executed near the end of the Commune. According to Washburne, Raoul Rigault, the public prosecutor of the Commune, and the most ruthless of the Communards, said to Chaudey's child, whom he took into his arms, "Ah my child! You will see us very soon shoot your father."[1] This incident became one of many enacted by the Communards and the Versaillese during the weeks of atrocity, reprisal, and outrage in Paris from March 18 to May 28, 1871.

Since the protagonists, those representing the regular French government installed temporarily at Versailles, and

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[1]Elihu B. Washburne, Recollections of a Minister to France, 1869-1877 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), p. 197.

the radical Republicans in Paris, felt very strongly about the issues at stake, they resorted to every tactic, often descending to brutality and vengeance to punish the foe. This violence and vindictiveness were the culmination of a variety of frustrations to which the French had recently been subjected. For more than twenty years they had been under the sway of the more or less benevolent dictatorship of Napoleon III. They had fallen into war with Germany under the aegis of Napoleon's nephew, only to be badly defeated and have their capital besieged and starved into capitulation. Having cast off the government of the third Napoleon, they were having great difficulty in working out a stable democratic regime. First there was the weak, siege-driven Government of National Defense from September, 1870, to January, 1871. This was followed by the nationally elected, but very conservative, government headed by Adolphe Thiers, mid-nineteenth century France's most durable politician. By the end of the siege of Paris and the conflict with Germany, the rural and upper middle class urban conservatives and the radicals of the cities, particularly Paris, were in a condition of deep misunderstanding and conflict. These background factors make more understandable, though not more forgivable, the violence of the Commune of Paris.

Such was the situation in brief. Now let us examine the state of France from the origins of her war with Germany to

the spring of 1871, the better to understand the intricacy of events which led up to the Commune of Paris. Oddly, Spain's quest for a new monarch, provided the occasion for the war. The husband to a Portuguese princess and a Catholic, Leopold of Hohenzollern, was among the first choices for the crown of Spain. The fact that he was a relative of King William I of Prussia made the possibility of his accession to the Spanish throne repugnant to France. When his accession seemed imminent, France vehemently protested to William and his great chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. William agreed that Leopold should abstain from taking the Spanish crown. Not content with this victory, Napoleon III, through Comte Vincent Benedetti, the French ambassador to Berlin, approached William to ask for "guarantees" that a Hohenzollern would never again consider the Spanish throne. The Prussian king refused. He became somewhat rankled, and one of his aides wrote Bismarck of William's attitude. Bismarck edited this telegram to fit his own desire of forcing France into war, and, after its publication, both Paris and Berlin were ready to go "to the Rhine."[2]

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[2]Michael Howard, The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870-1871 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 55; and Robert C. Binkley, Realism and Nationalism, 1852-1871 (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1935), pp. 294-95.

France soon found herself in the middle of a war she had not bargained for. Instead of achieving an immediate and great victory, the French soon realized that they were inferior in equipment and numbers. Though the French army had fewer men, it had the advantage of a professional corps of long-term soldiers. However, this was lost through careless planning. Once the Germans began to succeed in their campaigns, nothing stopped them. On September 2, 1870, the Germans won the decisive Battle of Sedan, and the emperor was captured. By 4 P.M. on September 3, the empress received a telegram from Louis Napoleon, which announced to her and France the unfortunate turn of events. "The army has been defeated and captured; I myself am a prisoner. Napoleon."[3]

Not only did Sedan mark the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian war, but it also terminated the Second Empire of Louis Napoleon. On September 3rd, the government officially received the news of Louis Napoleon's capture. News of the event created a public demand for a new government. On September 4th a mob entered the legislature and a new government was proclaimed:[4]

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[3]Edward S. Mason, The Paris Commune: An Episode in the History of the Socialist Movement (New York: Howard Fertig, 1967), p. 59.

[4]Edmond De Goncourt, Journal des Goncourt (Paris: Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1898), Vol. XVI, p. 20; and

> Citizens of Paris, the Republic is proclaimed. The government has been named by acclamation. It is composed of citizens: Emmanuel Arago, Crémieux, Jules Favre, Jules Ferry, Gambetta, Garnier-Pagès, Glais-Bizon, Pelletan, Picard, Rochefort, Jules Simon. General Trochu [already military governor of Paris] is charged with full military powers for the national defense. He is called to the presidency of the Government. The Government asks the citizens to be calm. The people must not forget that they are in the presence of the enemy. The Government is, above all, a Government of National Defense.[5]

By 4 o'clock the Government of National Defense, consisting of a wide variety of Republicans, was in power. However, because of its failure to reflect the will of the people, this government never enjoyed stability and security.

The Government of National Defense was immediately faced with the problem of national elections. The cabinet, therefore began its rule by voting to postpone, at least until October 16th, the elections to approve the new national government because it felt that an immediate election would prove unfavorable to them as Republicans.[6] The issue became acute, however, when Bismarck refused to negotiate with a government

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[4]Edmond Lepelletier, Histoire de la Commune, Vol. I: Le Dix-Huit Mars (Paris: Mercvre de France, 1911), p. 14.

[5]Roger L. Williams, The French Revolution of 1870-1871 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), p. 83; and Jean Bruhat, Jean Dautry, and Émile Tersen, La Commune de 1871 (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1960, p. 70.

[6]Howard, The War, p. 227; and Williams, The French Revolution, pp. 89-90.

which did not legally represent the entire country. The administration then changed the voting to October 2nd, with municipal elections to follow.[7] The radicals denounced the election as treason because they felt that their September 4th revolution was being thrown away. They, therefore, created the Republican Central Committee of the Twenty Arrondissements, a kind of shadow government which dealt with the most pressing municipal problems of the siege. Jules Favre, Foreign Minister and a politician who would ultimately wield great power in the Third Republic, still dealt, all the same, with matters concerning the war and he was backed by the radical Republicans in his decision to continue the conflict. Therefore, the radicals were aroused when they learned that Favre had been negotiating with Bismarck without giving the "people" a chance to beat back the Prussians. Their anger resulted in a march on September 22nd to the Hotel de Ville. At this time, they asked for a postponement of national elections, for an election for the Commune, and for a vigorous military effort against the Prussians. Minister of Finances, Ernest Picard dispersed the mob only by announcing a Prussian attack.[8] This march and the absence of an immediate

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[7]Williams, The French Revolution, p. 90; and Amaury Dréo, Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale. Procès verbaux des seances du Conseil (Paris: Charles-Luvauzelle, 1905), p. 128.

[8]Williams, The French Revolution, pp. 93-94; and Dréo, Proces-Verbaux, pp. 149-50.

armistice led the Government of National Defense to postpone elections.

Soon another march on the city hall took place to protest government action. A major in the National Guard, Gustave Flourens, on October 5th, led ten battalions[9] to ask for weapons and for the chance to clash with the Prussian besiegers. The administration ignored him, and again postponed the elections until the end of the Prussian siege. Flourens returned on October 8th but General Trochu, fearing insurrection, denied all arms. This second denial prompted Flourens to resign. Because he and Auguste Blanqui, a famous old radical, expressed to commanders of the National Guard the desire to overthrow the government, Trochu secured an arrest order from the cabinet.

During this political turmoil, military activities continued, although the French position was quickly deteriorating. As the later Marshal Ferdinand Foch put it:

> The defeated French Army was thrown back into Metz. Its final destruction was merely a question of time. Before the 18th [of August] it had shown itself, whether by the feebleness of its leaders or of its resources, incapable of any maneuver to defeat the enemy, make good its retreat to the interior of the country, or of rallying the still available forces. How could it henceforward hope for better results

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[9]Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, p. 78; and Alistair Horne, The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune, 1870-1871 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 99.

> in the face of a victorious enemy, in command of the lines of communication?[10]

By defending Metz, however, General Achille Francois Bazaine detained 200,000 German troops, which otherwise would have been sent to Paris.[11] On the question of the besiegement of Paris, both sides underestimated the other. The Parisians felt that it was impossible to beset the city completely because of the twenty-mile circumference. On the other hand, the Germans felt that their investment would soon end because the French could not long stand a siege. However, Paris, during the last days of the Empire, had made provision for such an attack.[12] Though Clément Duvernois, the Minister of Commerce, collected vast quantities of food, no record was kept of the amount and no census was taken. With the refusal of the government to make rationing of supplies universal, there was no possible way to estimate how long Paris could withstand her enemy. Because of a lack of cooperation and discipline, the abundance of soldiers in the city did not contribute as much to the defense as was possible. The

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[10] D. W. Brogan, France Under the Republic: The Development of Modern France, 1870-1939 (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1940), p. 28.

[11] Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 34; Count Helmuth Von Moltke, The Franco-German War of 1870-71, trans. Clara Bell and Henry W. Fischer (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892), p. 167; and Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 76.

[12] Lepelletier, Histoire de la Commune, p. 73; and Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 37.

Parisians did want to fight, though, and at their insistence, the army launched sortie after sortie to break through the German line. The besiegers, however, were content to sit and wait.

Throughout the siege the Government of National Defense met opposition concerning elections from Tours, as well as from the radicals in Paris. A segment of the government had gone to Tours to try to organize a resistance in the provinces. On October 7th, Léon Gambetta, the energetic Minister of Interior, escaped from Paris in a balloon, and went to help the Tours delegation.[13] When he arrived, he took over the recently resigned Ministry of War, choosing Charles de Freycinet as his associate. Gambetta, at this time, replaced La Motte Rouge, whose nascent army of the Loire had been defeated by the Germans at Orleans. The minister and his colleague agreed that only civilians were capable of saving the war, and ultimately called up 578,900 in the provinces, drafting unmarried men from twenty-one to forty years of age. Added to the 260,000 men in Paris, these soldiers from the provinces gave France a sizable force.[14] Gambetta and Freycinet planned to march the provincial troops

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[13]Williams, The French Revolution, p. 97; Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 41; and Dréo, Proces-Verbaux, pp. 180-81.

[14]Williams, The French Revolution, p. 98.

to the besieged city, while the Parisian garrisons proceeded out of the city--thus catching the Germans between. However, the retired army and naval officers, placed in the leadership of the provincial army, did not add the expected vigor; and the new commander of the army, General d'Aurelle de Paladines, felt that mere numbers would not win a war, especially because of the undisciplined nature of the French troops.

During this period of troop organization, the shrewd old Thiers traveled to the various European countries, asking for aid and support.[15] Only Britain and Russia could have supplied such help. When the foreign countries suggested negotiation, Thiers returned to Versailles to deal with Bismarck. There he learned of the fall of Metz and immediately went to Paris to tell the news. At Tours Gambetta disliked the idea of bargaining because he felt that this would waste valuable time. However, the main government in Paris agreed with Thiers that negotiation probably was unavoidable.

October 30, 1870, was a black day. The following day, when Parisians learned of the fall of Metz, they began to threaten the men in power by demonstrating and calling for the resignation of the government. When Etienne Arago, Mayor

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[15]Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 81; and Brogan, France Under the Republic, pp. 43-44.

of Paris, learned of a demonstration, he notified the Prefect of Police. However, the government did not take any extra security measures because it was accustomed "to demonstrations, to visits by deputations, armed or unarmed--by officers of the National Guard . . . , that is [the government] lived in the midst of perpetual alarms without believing that one day these demonstrations might prove more dangerous than hitherto."[16] Not only was the crowd upset, yelling "no armistice" and "the levée en masse," but also the city's twenty mayors were dissatisfied with the government's performance. They formally submitted to Arago a request to secure the approval for the government to conduct elections.[17] He obtained permission, but no date for the elections was set. When the crowd appeared displeased with the government's indecision, Arago, to appease the mob, notified the mayors that the election would be held the next day. Nevertheless, at 4 P.M. the crowd broke into the room where the Government of National Defense was meeting and demanded that it resign. Though the members refused, Flourens and others simply proclaimed a new government. After some haggling, the government was rescued by loyal National Guard

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[16]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 71.

[17]Dréo, Proces-Verbaux, p. 261; and Mason, The Paris Commune, pp. 71-72.

forces.[18] In the November 3rd plebescite, the vote amounted to an approval of the National Defense regime.

In view of all circumstances, the government decided on November 1st not to prosecute the leaders of this uprising. It held the mayoral elections on November 6th. All this struck the radicals as merely clever tactics to withhold power from them.

> Whatever else it may be, a besieged city is fertile ground for the growth of suspicions and hatred. As the privations worsened, experienced more thoroughly by the poor than by the well-to-do, the population fed itself an unhealthful diet of rumor and slander. The viler the imputation, the more likely it was to be believed. The French in general have been accused of being at once the most skeptical and the most gullible people in Europe, and one can only wonder if the saying had its birth during the siege of Paris.[19]

At this point, negotiations with Bismarck were suspended. For the moment this move seemed warranted because a victory had been won on November 9th, at Coulmiers. This gave Gambetta the opportunity to demand his chance to save France.

The military success at Coulmiers, however, did not bring relief to Paris. Food supplies were becoming more scarce than ever, and the winter was cold. Paris was demanding the resignation of Trochu, accusing him of inefficiency.

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[18]Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer, France in the Nineteenth Century, 1830-1890 (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1892), p. 271; and Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, p. 80.

[19]Williams, The French Revolution, p. 103.

Yet, with all the hardships the populace faced, the people still clamored for "no capitulation." With affairs as they were, radical opposition again mounted against the Government of National Defense and, on the 6th of January 1871, Paris awakened to this poster:

> Has that government which on the 4th of September was charged with the national defense fulfilled its mission? No!
>
> We have 500,000 soldiers and 200,000 Prussians hem us in! To whom belongs the responsibility if not to those who govern us? They have spent their time in negotiating instead of founding cannon and manufacturing arms.
>
> They have refused the levee en masse.
>
> They have left in office the Bonapartists and put in prison the republicans.
>
> The policy, the strategy, the administration of the Government of the 4th of September, a perpetuation of the Empire, are judged. Give place to the people! Give place to the Commune![20]

Trochu's reply was "The Governor of Paris will never capitulate,"[21] and with the help of General Joseph Vinoy, the radicals were silenced. Paris was still in a revolutionary mood and, upon learning of the defeat of Buzenval--the final attempt by the Parisians against the Prussians on January 19th--an uprising took place on January 22nd.[22] General Vinoy

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[20]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 95.

[21]Lissagaray, Prosper-Olivier, History of the Commune of 1871, trans. Eleanor Marx Aveling (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), p. 33; and Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 96.

[22]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 96; and Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 237.

commented that each Parisian insurrection followed a military disaster. But this time Paris, at least, did have some advanced warning of the probable revolt and, as a consequence, Vinoy brought troops to Paris.

The mob, requiring an energetic leader, rescued Flourens, who had been imprisoned after October 31st, and some others from the Mazas prison. Flourens, leading the National Guard, surrouned the Hotel de Ville and, with other revolutionary leaders, presented demands to the government, represented by Gustave Chaudey, Ferry's assistant. The National Guard in the building, at Chaudey's orders, fired on the radicals.[23] They were dispersed, leaving fifty dead and wounded. Chaudey's action produced a revengeful feeling against him that would eventually lead to his murder by Raoul Rigault. By 5 P.M. all insurgents were cleared out, and Ferry sent a telegram to the mayors of Paris: "Thus it is, through the crime of a few, that this sorrowful extremity has not been spared to our glorious and unhappy Paris."[24] Later, however, when arms were issued, Chaudey's confrontation contributed to the revolutionary mood which gave birth to the Commune.

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[23]Horne, The Fall of Paris; and Frank Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871 ("The Universal Library"; New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965), p. 229.

[24]Mason, The Paris Commune, pp. 97-98.

Much of the steam of the uprising had been lost when the unpopular Trochu resigned on the morning of January 22nd. His successor, General Vinoy, a reactionary, firmly repressed such actions.

While tempers and food supplies in Paris were growing ever shorter, in the south Gambetta employed three new commanders to try to stave off defeat. Antoine Chanzy and Louis-Léon Faidherbe were ready to make the most out of the situation--which they did--but Charles Bourbaki did not feel as though the French had much of a chance. These three armies failed to deliver Paris, which had been under bombardment since January 5th. Still Gambetta hoped to continue the war. He stated on January 31st, "Thanks to Paris, if we are resolute patriots, we have in hand all the necessary means to avenge it and free ourselves."[25] But, with only eight days food supply left, the officials of the Government of National Defense decided on January 22nd, the day of the insurrection, that an armistice must be immediately sought, or else France would have to accept an unconditional surrender. Formal negotiations took place between Bismarck and Favre on January 28th.[26] Favre gained a few advantages, one of which was the inclusion of all of France in the armistice, except three

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[25]Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 54.

[26]Dréo, Procex-Verbaux, p. 615; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 84.

eastern departments--Jura, Cote d'Or, and Doubs. These sections were left to the Germans, although Favre did not mention this in his telegram to Bordeaux signed after the armistice.

> We are signing today a treaty with M. de Bismark. An armistice of 21 days is agreed upon; an Assembly is to be convoked at Bordeaux for February 12. Make this news known to all France. Have the armistice put into effect; convoke the voters for February 8. A member of the Government will leave for Bordeaux.[27]

The battalions in these three provinces fled to Switzerland to avoid surrendering to the Germans.

This armistice required the surrender of forts, the payment of 200 million francs in fifteen days, and the disarmament of 250,000 troops, and provided for the retention of arms by the National Guard and for an elected assembly to decide on war or peace.[28] For the Commune the retention of arms proved to be the most valuable clause because it provided a military force which brought them to power. Elections were set up in Paris on February 5th and in the provinces on February 8th in order to elect those officials who would decide on the future of the war. Gambetta would not recognize this method of settlement as a possible end to the struggle, and he hoped that the elections would confirm

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[27]Williams, The French Revolution, p. 110.

[28]Mason, The Paris Commune, pp. 98-99; and Brogan, France Under the Republic, pp. 54, 56.

his point of view. The outcome of the election, as far as Paris was concerned, was to give the radicals more strength than anticipated. Ten out of the forty-three elected were to become important figures in the Commune. By contrast, the provincial elections were conservative and monarchical. The radicals, who felt betrayed, called the new National Assembly "a rural majority." The Assembly chose Adolphe Thiers as "head of the executive power."

From the first meeting at Bordeaux, it was apparent that the war with the Prussians was over. When Thiers and Favre again approached Bismarck, they found the terms harsher than the ones previously given: the Germans increased the amount of payment and demanded the occupation of Paris until the treaty was ratified. Thiers, who conducted the final negotiations with Bismarck, got the indemnity payment lowered, and then shrewdly traded a German one-day march through Paris in exchange for French retention of the important fortress of Belfort in Alsace.[29]

Thiers then acted promptly to secure the ratification of terms, in order to avoid the possibility of an extensive German occupation of Paris. On February 28, he presented the the terms to the National Assembly, asking that a decision

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[29]Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 54; Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 258; and M. Calmon (ed.), Discours Parlementaires de M. Thiers (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1882), Vol. XVII, p. 20.

be made on the following day, for the Germans would enter Paris on March 1st. The deputies denounced Napoleon III and placed on him the onus "for the ruin, for the invasion, and for the dismemberment of the country."[30] The National Assembly then ratified the peace treaty, passing it with 546 for it, 107 against and twenty-three abstaining. Although the Germans, then, stayed one day only, Paris smarted with humiliation. At this time many of the radicals from Paris resigned their positions, widening the schism between the Assembly and the capital.

The Assembly passed several measures which were especially harsh on Paris. The first of these, the "law of maturities," passed on March 11th, demanded the payment of financial obligations postponed during the siege.[31] For instance, obligations begun on August 13th, which became due on April 12, 1871, had to be paid. The debts taken between August 13th and November 12, 1870, had to be paid, with interest, seven months after maturities were fixed. As the Committee of Enquiry on March 18th pointed out,

> the Assembly . . . erred in adopting a measure which it recognized later as entirely insufficient. The maturities fixed on March 13th placed a considerable section of the businessmen

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[30] Williams, The French Revolution, p. 119.

[31] Calmon (ed.), Discours Parlementaires, pp. 104-106; and Lepelletier, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, pp. 281-86.

> of Paris in a position of inevitable failure, that is to say, of ruin and dishonor.[32]

The National Assembly next repealed a measure on the delay of payment of building and land rent, which necessitated a settlement of those rents postponed because of the siege.[33] This action encouraged the landlords to demand payment of debts, and the proprietors evicted those who could not meet the demands.

The government, at this same time, appointed General d'Aurelle de Paladines commander of the National Guard.[34] The Parisians were not happy with the choice because they classified him as a Bonapartist. The populace also held de Paladines, though unjustly, responsible for the French loss of Orléans.

To climax the rage of the Parisians, the National Assembly agreed to move to Versailles so that the entire government would be in the same place.[35] Paris possessed a large radical segment which had, on several occasions, tried to overthrow the Government of National Defense and which

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[32]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 103.

[33]Jean T. Joughin, The Paris Commune in French Politics (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1955), p. 26; and Williams, The French Revolution, p. 121.

[34]Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 59; and Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 105.

[35]Lepelletier, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, p. 269; and Calmon, Discours Parlementaires, pp. 96-100.

expressed a dislike for the National Assembly. Nevertheless, Paris felt slighted because Versailles was associated with the old monarchy, and since Paris had always been the traditional capital, she wanted to maintain this unique position.

Humiliation bred a discontent which needed only organization to become effective. A new Central Committee was formed on February 6th.[36] It grew out of a meeting of representatives of National Guard units concerned about the forthcoming elections, and remained intact even after the election excitement died out. This organization probably was unrepresentative of the more wealthy sections of Paris. It was a forerunner of the Commune, since approximately one half of the initial members of the Committee became Communards. On February 24th, the Central Committee drew up a statement defining itself.

> In the end of making more precise and of presenting the duties of expressing and defending the rights of citizens, and also for the establishing and the strengthening of that unity and solidarity which must make of the citizen militia the sole national force, to the exclusion of all other, there is established a central committee of the National Guard . . . [37]

The importance of the Central Committee was that it became an unofficial source of power in Paris. It seemed to

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[36]This Central Committee is not to be confused with the Republican Central Committee, formed earlier.

[37]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 109.

demonstrate loyalty to the government only when profitable to the organization and the National Guard. The Committee stated that, if the National Assembly would deny Paris as the capital, they would declare the Department of the Seine to be an independent republic.[38] The Committee also took it upon itself to order all commanders to obey its pronunciamentos, as the following poster indicates:

> What does the population of Paris want?
> It wants to preserve its arms, to elect its commanders and to revoke them when it no longer has confidence in them.
> It wishes the army to be disbanded and sent home, in order to return to the families of France their dear ones, and to French industry its laboring population.[39]

Starting on February 26th, the National Guard took charge of military arms and equipment in Paris on a large scale.

On March 15, at its last meeting before the revolution began, the Central Committee had support from 215 battalions of National Guard. General de Paladines believed only forty battalions could be counted on to support the government. It becomes clear, then, that the Central Committee had considerable potential power. Soon this power was transformed into the Commune of Paris.

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[38]Georges Bourgin, "La Commune de Paris et le Comité Central (1871)" Revue Historique, CL (December, 1925), 33-35.

[39]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 113.

With the end of the Franco-Prussian war the political situation oscillated between legitimate and quasi-revolutionary government, as the government headed by Thiers shakily held control. Dissatisfied with both the military and political conditions, the various factions participate in increasingly heated confrontations. The French were headed for civil war.

CHAPTER II

EVENTS FROM MARCH 18TH TO APRIL 2ND

> She goes her way alone, France follows; has to follow and is irritated thereby; later she calms down and applauds; it is one of the forms of our national life . . . Paris decrees an event. France suddenly summoned, obeys.[1]

Victor Hugo's description of Paris expressed the city's spirit: for Paris would wait, as she had done during the empire, for her chance at revolution against the national govvernment--that body which did not rightly appreciate Paris's sacrifice during the Franco-Prussian war and the Parisian siege.

In the aftermath of anti-Parisian legislation, the citizens of Paris did not conceal their distrust of the National Assembly. When Thiers arrived in the city on March 15th, he saw the ugly mood prevailing and soon he would awaken more hostility between the two groups by trying to disarm the National Guard.

In prospect of the brief Prussian occupation which was part of the peace settlement, the National Guard removed military equipment to Montmartre and other faubourgs--an embarrassing move for the new National Assembly. The people in the radical faubourgs claimed the cannons belonged to them

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[1]Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 55.

rather than the nation as a whole. Thiers decided to retake these cannons because he believed that the authority and power of his government would suffer if it allowed such infringements. First, the chief executive appealed to the Parisians' sense of patriotism by publishing a sign and posting it all over Paris.

> Evilly-disposed men, under the pretext of resisting the Prussians have taken control of a part of the city . . . forcing you to mount guard under the orders of a secret committee . . . Parisians . . . you will approve our recourse to force, for it is necessary, at all costs . . . that order, the very basis of your well-being, should be reborn.[2]

Then he considered negotiating with the Central Committee, the official representative body of the Guard, but decided finally to take the cannons by a coup de main.

Thiers resolved to make his move during the night of March 17-18th.[3] At 3 A.M. the regular army was ordered to the Buttes Chaumont, Belleville, the Faubourg du Temple, the Bastille, the Hotel de Ville, Place St. Michel, the Luxembourg, the Thirteenth Arrondissement, Montmartre, and the Invalides. General Susbielle marched with 6,000 men in two brigades to the Buttes Montmartre, which turned out to be

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[2]Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 57.

[3]Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray, History of the Commune of 1871, trans. Eleanor Marx Aveling (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), p. 77; and Enquête Parlementaire sur l'insurrection du 18 mars (Versailles: Cerf, Imprimeur de L'Assemblee Nationale, 1872), p. 58.

the crucial location in this episode. The first of these brigades, led by General Paturel, gained possession of the Moulin de la Galette without trouble. The unit, led by General Jules Lecomte, had to push its adversaries, the National Guard, into the caves of the Tower of Solférino. With these victories accomplished, the surprise was complete by 6 A.M. The loyal government soldiers fared as well in the other areas of attack.

However, General Joseph Vinoy's failure to provide teams and equipment to remove the cannon and military weapons turned this triumph into defeat. At 8 A.M., when the first horses arrived, the people in the various sections were already awakening. The Parisians read a new sign approved by Thiers and his ministers:

> Inhabitants of Paris, in your interest the Government has resolved to act. Let the good citizens separate from the bad ones; let them aid public force; they will render a service to the Republic herself. The culpable shall be surrendered to justice. Order, complete, immediate, and unalterable, must be re-established.[4]

The people, especially women, irritated at what they saw and read, began to mill around among the soldiers, talking to them all the while. At the same time a group of National Guard assembled to protect the cannon of Montmartre. General Lecomte, surrounded by the Guard, ordered his men three times

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[4]Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 79.

to fire upon the insurgents, but they refused and fraternized with the crowd instead. In the end, the mob arrested Lecomte and his officers. Lecomte was then taken to the Chateau-Rouge,[5] where he gave the order to evacuate Montmartre. This news spread rapidly to the district and a cannon was fired three times, signaling the recapture of the area by the National Guard.

In other sections the crowds chastised the troops and halted the removal of the cannon. At Belleville, the Buttes Chaumont, and the Luxembourg, the citizens and the opposing force fraternized. As a result, the National Guard retained all but ten cannons. D'Aurelles and Picard appealed for support with no apparent effect. "The Government calls on you to defend your homes, your families, your property. Some misguided men, under the lead of some secret chiefs, turn against Paris the cannon kept back from the Prussians."[6]

In this incident, Thiers made two mistakes: he placed confidence in the reliability of the troops of the line, and he underestimated the resistance of the National Guard. As revolutionary fever swept the city, he decided to retreat--even the forts to the south were evacuated. His defeat

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[5]Enquête Parlementaire, pp. 62-63; and Gaston Da Costa, La Commune Vécue (Paris: Ancienne Maison Quantin, 1903), Vol. I, p. 10.

[6]Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 81.

reminded him of an historic precedent. On February 24th, during the Revolution of 1848, he recalled, "The King asked me, after affairs had taken a bad turn; what it was necessary to do. I replied to him that it was necessary to get out of Paris in order to return with Marshal Bugeaud and fifty thousand troops."[7] He left Paris with plans to return with provincial troops for a military take-over. In the interim, Paris was left in the hands of the revolutionaries.

Lecomte was taken to the Rue des Rosiers, headquarters of the National Guard of Montmartre, where the Vigilance Committee was believed to be meeting at that moment. In the nearby Place Pigalle, a National Guardsman recognized Clément Thomas, calling him "a wretch and a traitor."[8] This general represented the hated regime which had suppressed the people in the June days of 1848. Because he provided a convenient outlet for the vengeance of the Parisians, he was arrested.[9] Various officers of the National Guard tried to restrain the mob from murdering the two generals while awaiting aid from the members of a Vigilance Committee. Their efforts proved futile. Between 4 and 5 P.M. these two men were

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[7]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 126.

[8]"Clément Thomas," Grand Dictionnaire Universal, 1864, XV, 143.

[9]Enquête Parlementaire, p. 67; and Da Costa, La Commune Vécue, pp. 28-29.

shot in the garden of the headquarters--heralding the deluge of atrocities to come.

The crowd moved on through the city, and, by early evening, had surrounded the Hôtel de Ville. Jules Ferry, the only member of the government remaining in Paris, left the Hôtel. Unaware that the administration had departed, the mayors of the various arrondissements met and sent representatives to the headquarters of the regular government. Apparently they did not wield enough power to take over the administration of Paris because the Central Committee assumed the governing authority until elections could be held to select a legal, popularly supported government. The self-appointed officials felt:

> You have charged us with organizing the defense of Paris and the preservation of your rights.
>
> We are conscious of having fulfilled this mission; assisted by your generous courage and admirable sangfroid, we have overthrown the government which betrayed us . . . [10]
>
> If the Central Committee were a government, it could, to support the dignity of its electors, disdain to justify itself. But since its first pronouncement declared "that it did not intend to take the place of those whom popular opinion has displaced," it takes the part of honesty in remaining exactly within the express limits of the mandate confided to it; it remains a body of personalities who have the right to defend themselves.[11]

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[10] Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 132.

[11] Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 132.

At any rate, it was the only body that possessed enough power to assume the responsibility of government.

During the ten days in which the Committee held power, it endeavored to preserve the Republic's and Paris' local autonomy. It guaranteed regular payment of the National Guard, postponed the maturity of business obligations for a month, out-lawed the eviction of tenants, recommended the dismissal of General d'Aurelle de Paladines, and fired public employees who had been hired before March 25th.[12] These measures, in themselves, were not extraordinary unless viewed in the context of the Committee's legal limitations.

One episode of violence during the period of the Central Committee needs recounting. Most of the more prosperous citizens fled Paris for the provinces, leaving the capital to the radicals. There still remained among those in Paris a segment, including many newspaper men, who affiliated themselves with the National Assembly. On March 22nd a rally against the Committee, beginning at the Bourse, culminated in the so-called incident of the Rue de la Paix. Henri de Pène, a royalist journalist, led a crowd of several thousand through the 1st and 2nd Arrondissements to the Rue de la Paix, disarming several National Guard sentinels along the way. As the rally gained momentum, the mob shouted

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[12]Mason, The Paris Commune, pp. 133-34; and Journal des Journaux de la Commune, Vol. I (March, 1871), 105.

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"Down with the Committee" and "Down with the Assassins."[13] When this moving crowd, armed with sword canes and firearms, reached the Place Vendôme, Jules Bergeret and several radical National Guard battalions opposed the marchers. As a result of this confrontation, the crowd hissed the soldiers and shots rang out from both sides. Conflicting eye-witness accounts leave the question open as to which side actually started the melee.[14] When the firing was over, twelve were dead. The Committee felt that this incident--the only blood-letting during its reign--should be charged against the Versaillese. The Assembly, on the other hand, believed that this showed, once again, the potential criminality of the radical Parisians.

Elections to remove the burden of duty from the shoulders of the Committee were set on March 22nd but were postponed until March 26th because of the difficulty in making up voting lists. During this time the mayors of Paris and deputies in the National Assembly tried to mediate between the Central Committee and the government of Versailles.[15]

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[13]Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 113; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 144.

[14]Da Costa, La Commune Vécue, pp. 234-239; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 114.

[15]Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 60; and W. Pembroke Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of The Paris Commune in 1871; the Bombardment, Capture, and Burning of the City (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1871), p. 73.

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The mayors were selected because they had been left in charge by the national government when it left Paris. The Versaillese wanted the elections put off until April 3rd so that they would have a chance to build up troop strength for their side. The mayors presented themselves at conservative Versailles with "peace" and "conciliation" on their lips, but, because of the tricolor sashes they wore, their idealism brought little response. The conservatives referred to the mayors' actions as the "capitulation of the mayors." These officials' lack of opposition regarding the Committee's date for the election on March 26th gave the vote a quasi-legality. A showdown, negating the possibility of successful mediation, seemed inevitable.

The Committee did not give thought to the possibility that the Versaillese might not recognize their elected body.

> But, at the same time, one cannot suppose that the Assembly would dare disapprove of the Paris elections; this would be too serious a step, particularly in view of the attitude of large provincial cities ready to unite themselves with the capital.[16]

The radicals' desire to have the elections at the earliest possible date was an effort to incorporate the republican temperament of March 18th into the results of the voting.

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[16]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 148.

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On March 24th, an unexpected attempt at conciliation appeared. General Paul Brunel negotiated with Adam, mayor of the 1st Arrondissement, and Méline, one of his adjutants. With the added help of the administrators of the 2nd Arrondissement, a final decision was reached that elections would be held on March 30th.[17] Momentarily Paris rejoiced, but the national government and the Central Committee squelched this enthusiasm because neither would accept the date. The Committee announced its disapproval because delay would allow the Versaillese to make military preparations. While the National Assembly was in no hurry to make its position clear, Thiers emphasized to the mayors three minimum necessities: "(1) the election in Paris of 'republicans devoted to the maintenance of order,' (2) the avoidance of bloodshed and (3) the gaining of time in which to recognize the army."[18]

When delegates from the Central Committee interviewed the mayors on March 25th, they sanctioned the elections for the next day.

> The Central Committee of the National Guard, with which is allied the deputies of Paris, the mayors and adjutants, convinced that the sole means of avoiding civil war, the shedding of blood in Paris, and, at the same time of securing the affirmation of the Republic, is to proceed immediately to the elections, convokes for

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[17] Enquête Parlementaire, pp. 99-100; and Journal Officiel, Vol. I (March, 1871), 109.

[18] Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 150.

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> for to-morrow, Sunday, all of the citizens in their electoral colleges.[19]

The radicals, then, gained their objective to hold the election in the midst of revolutionary fervor. Out of a possible 485,569, 229,167 votes were cast, a large number in view of the fact that eligible voters had left Paris during the siege. Since only sixty-four of the ninety seats were claimed, a by-election was necessary. Of the twenty-six absent members, twenty from the western half of Paris were moderates who objected to the radical movement. The by-election, held on April 16th,[20] seated several more men in the Commune, increasing the number to eighty-one. Because of light voter turn-out, many seats were not contested.

The Commune, composed largely of unknown radicals, lacked homogeneity in either political affiliations or personal traits. Several socialist parties retained the allegiance of various members of the Commune. One group of socialists espoused the International, that group set up to encourage cooperation between labor and radical movements. The Blanquists followed the teachings of Auguste Blanqui, who favored dictatorship as the medium to social justice and equality. The descendants of Robespierre, the Jacobins,

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[19]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 153.

[20]Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, p. 144; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 199.

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another group represented in the Commune, embraced a more political than social view of revolution. Since the Proudhonists' natural unit in society was a commune, they saw the Paris organization as a move away from centralization.

Paris now lay in the hands of its newly elected city government or the Commune. The inauguration of the Commune was a spectacular affair. National Guardsmen encircled a platform in front of the Hôtel de Ville, singing the "Marseillaise."

> Today we have the privilege of viewing the most glorious popular spectacle that has ever met our eyes or stirred our soul; Paris greeted and acclaimed its Revolution; Paris opened a white page of the book of History and there one inscribed its puissant name.[21]

Charles Beslay, the doyen of the Commune, addressed the first assembly of the Municipal Assembly on March 28, 1871. This first meeting resulted in simple reforms, which could pass with a minimum of internal friction. On the second day, March 29th, ten commissions were formed, which replaced the various ministries. The general temper of the assembly represented a continuation of feelings expressed by the radicals since the beginning of the Third Republic. Paschal Grousset, editor of "L'Affranchi" said, "The Commune is essentially a council of war."[22]

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[21]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 162.

[22]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 164.

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A certain number of deputies from Paris who sat in the National Assembly, including the later famous Georges Clemenceau, still hoped for conciliation between the national government and the Commune. They resigned, as a gesture, to form the "Republican Union of the Rights of Paris." When this effort came to nought, Thiers made ready to take the offensive. He was encouraged by the attitude of the Communards.

With the Commune officially inaugurated and conciliation efforts having aborted, the radical city government and the conservative Versailles regime hovered on the brink of civil war. Thiers was building up his military forces rapidly, and by the beginning of April was ready to launch an attack on the capital.

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CHAPTER III

INITIAL CIVIL AND MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Once the Commune had established itself as a municipal controlling body, problems arose concerning its authority, its function, and its responsibilities. The difficulty stemmed from the questionable legal basis by which it claimed jurisdiction and from the dispute as to the proper nature of a revolutionary government. The militant delegates in the Commune favored the complete abandonment of legal procedure, urging that a revolutionary government had no need to concern itself with such matters. The less radical, on the other hand, wanted to maintain some semblance of legality so that the Commune could command respect and authority, to place it on a parallel basis with the Versaillese. Very early, the militant Communards dictated the policy. A military catastrophe and a political fiasco resulted from the extremists' domination of Communal affairs.

At Versailles, Thiers rebuilt the regular army. By the end of March he announced, "The organization of one of the finest armies that France has ever possessed is being completed. Good citizens may then take heart and hope for the end of a struggle which will be said, but short."[1] Meantime

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[1]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 182.

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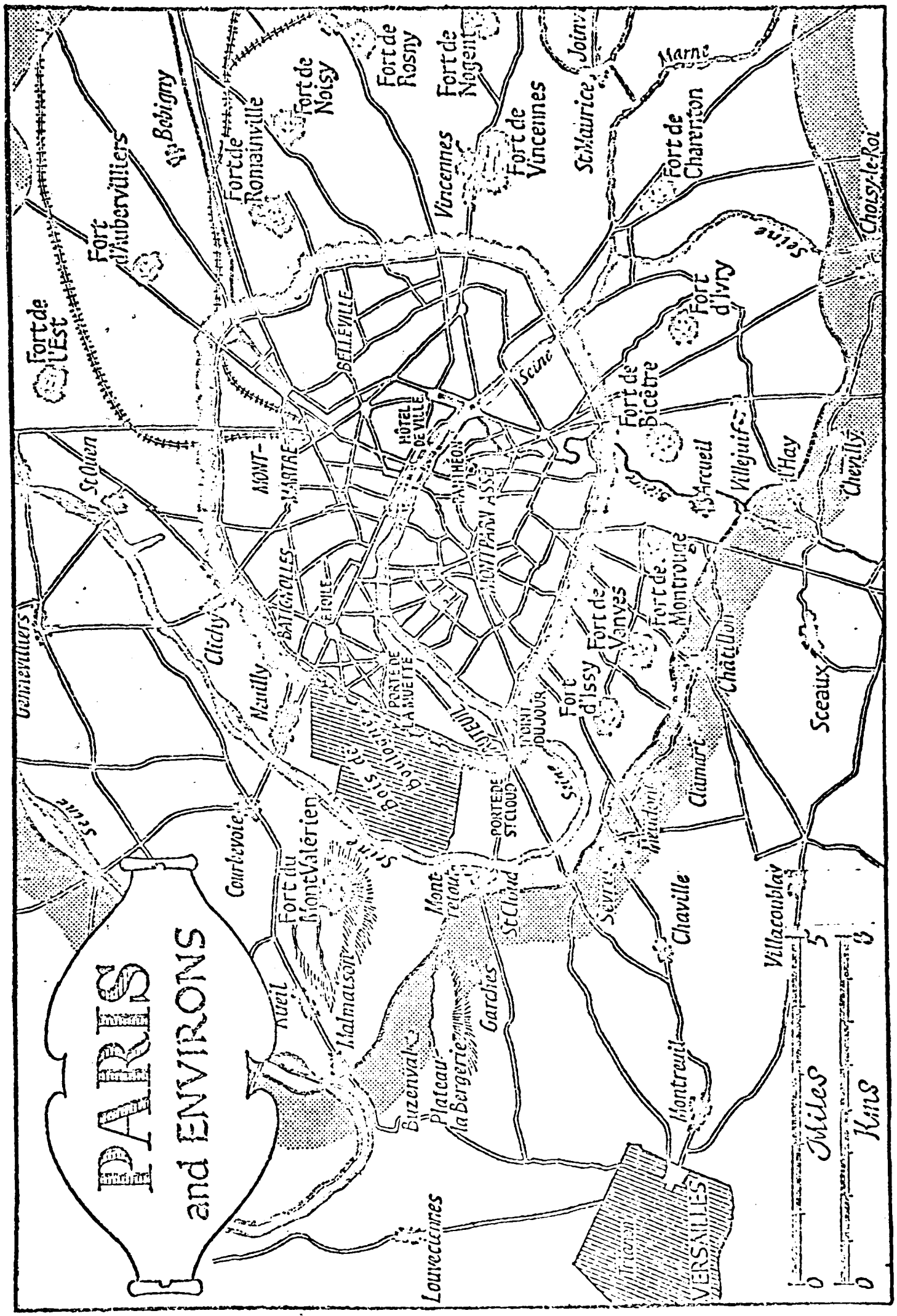

From Alistair Horne, The Fall of Paris (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), front endpaper.

the Commune was not using its time as well. Torn between the politics of the Commune Assembly and the desire of some of the hotheads for a march on Versailles, it dawdled while danger approached.

Protests against indecision mounted. The radical newspapers demanded an expedition against the foe.[2] It appeared that the enemy ought to be quickly engaged, for many of the villages between Versailles and Paris leaned in the capital's favor. Courbevoie, Nanterie and Pateaux, those villages protecting Neuilly, one of the key areas, were pro-Commune. Suresnes and Garches were pro-Versailles, while Rueil awaited an indication of which side was stronger.

For his cause, Thiers called together his Council of War on April 1st in order to begin what became the second siege of Paris. On April 2nd trouble began. Federals in Courbevoie, along one of the main routes to Versailles from Paris, saw a man dressed in a costume which looked like a general's uniform with braid and stripes. This was Dr. Pasquier, the chief military surgeon of Vinoy's staff. The National Guards precipitously shot Dr. Pasquier.[3] The

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[2]Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, p. 97; Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 161; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 182.

[3]Georges Laronze, Histoire de La Commune de 1871 (Paris: Payot, 1928), p. 130; and Da Costa, La Commune Vécue, p. 340.

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question as to who actually began the fighting remains open, however, because Vinoy and his regular troops were on their way to take over the new flimsy barricades of the Communards at Courbevoie, Neuilly and elsewhere. The Communards, however, actually were responsible for the first death, always a psychological fact of some importance. Remembering the execution of the two generals, Lecomte and Thomas, plus Pasquier's death, the army made ready for a vendetta. Following the physician's death the federal troops under Louis Rossel evacuated Courbevoie. The retreat was the first setback for the Communards, but it forecast what was to come.

The Commune responded to the defeat with a poorly conceived counteroffensive. The Commune army set forth to Versailles without artillery, provisions, or any medical services. Since there was no discipline among the men, the soldiers walked down the road, making no effort at concealment. The general plan was for three columns to proceed toward Versailles, attacking from the main routes. Jules Bergeret and Gustave Flourens led an army down the first road, on the right bank of the Seine to Bougival, while Emile Eudes tried to take Meudon along the second and shortest way. Emile-Victoire Duval, responsible for protecting Eudes' flank,

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proceeded along the third route, roughly parallel to the first.[4]

Meantime, no one had considered the important fortress of Mont Valerien. It had been abandoned by Thiers on March 19th, but had been reoccupied by the regulars on the 20th at the insistence of Vinoy. The first army, led by Bergeret and Flourens, ran into heavy fire from the fort. Thereupon, the already disorganized men completely lost such sense of direction as they had. Part of the column fell back to Paris, while the other half pressed on toward Versailles. During the fighting Flourens and Duval were ruthlessly executed.[5] Federal soldiers found in "regular uniforms" were shot; other captives were marched to Versailles.

The consequence of the Versaillese executions was the "Law of the Hostages" enacted by the Commune Assembly on April 5th.

> Art. 1: Every person suspect of complicity with Versailles shall be immediately indicted and imprisoned.
>
> Art. 2: A jury shall be set up within twenty-four hours to take cognisance of the crimes referred to it.

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[4]Ernest Alfred Vizetelly, My Adventures in the Commune (London: Chatto & Windus, 1914), p. 146; Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, p. 98; and "Renewed Fighting Before Paris," The Times (London), April 4, 1871, p. 9.

[5]Jacques Chastenet, Histoire de la Troisième République, L'Enfance de la Troisième, 1870-1879 (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1952), p. 92; Williams, The French Revolution, p. 137; Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, p. 104; and "The French Civil War," New York Times, April 6, 1871, p. 1.

> Art. 3: The jury shall render its decision within forty-eight hours.
> Art. 4: Every accused person detained by the jury shall be the hostage of the People of Paris.
> Art. 5: Every execution of a prisoner-of-war or partisan of the regular Government of the Commune shall be immediately followed by the execution of a triple number of the hostages detained by virtue of Article 4, to be chosen at lot.
> Art. 6: Every prisoner-of-war shall be brought before the jury, which shall decide whether he is to be immediately released or detained as a hostage.[6]

This decree provided a legal pretext for the incarceration of prominent people in Paris believed to be in sympathy with the Versaillese. Even before the Law of the Hostages Raoul Rigault had begun to arrest notables. On April 2nd he seized Louis Bonjean, ex-President of the Cour de Cassation, and Jean Baptiste Jecker, a Swiss banker of questionable reputation. The imprisonment of Mg. Georges Darboy, the Archbishop of Paris, on April 4th began the arrest of over one-hundred clergymen[7] by the end of the month.[8] Though the stories of the execution of the Communard military leaders by the Versaillese created some pressure to shoot these prisoners, Eugène Protot, Delegate for Justice, succeeded in preventing this. "We must act legally, draw up, discuss and

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[6]Vizetelly, My Adventures, p. 162; and Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, p. 231.

[7]Chastenet, Histoire de la Troisième République, p. 93; and Brogan, France Under the Republic, pp. 64-65.

[8]Georges Bourgin, "Aperçu Sur L'Histoire de La Commune," Revue Historique, CLXIV (1930), 88-96.

adopt, if we approve it, a proposition instituting a mode of reprisal, still keeping within the bound of law," he said.[9] Through his efforts, as well as those of Charles Delescluze and Gustave Lefrancais, the lives of these prominent hostages were temporarily preserved.

The Decree of the Hostages helped to sharpen the differences between the more and less radical factions of the Commune. Another issue arose with reference to the April 16 by-election. The radicals felt that it was a waste of time for a revolutionary government to worry about election technicalities, while the others wanted to preserve all legalism. In the end the Communards' factionalism, as well as their military incompetence, cost them their control of Paris.

While the Commune struggled over questions of revolutionary practice, the actual fighting was approaching a climax. After the April 3 setback, a newly appointed Executive Commission[10] chose, as Delegate for War, Gustave Paul Cluseret--an adventurer of questionable character but of some military ability who had served in the American Civil War. Under him were Generals Walery Wroblewski, Jaroslaw

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[9]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 197.

[10]Following its inauguration, the Commune set up nine administrative divisions: Executive, Military, Financial, (Labor, Industry, Exchange), Education, Public Services, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Supplies. The Executive Commission was the seat of leadership.

and Ladislas Dombrowski, and Napoléon La Cecilia,[11] all of them quite capable men.

Cluseret and his subordinates, in the face of civilian interference, tried to reorganize the Commune's military effort. Cluseret set up a court martial on April 16th with the aid of the Commune's Executive Commission, because the Council of War, which had previously dealt with discipline, had not been rigorous enough. Because Cluseret knew many suspected him of being ambitious for too much power, he allowed his Chief of Staff, Louis Rossel, to preside over court martials. Cluseret also tried to reorganize the army[12] by spelling out the exact duty of each unit and by calling on those in Paris from seventeen to thirty-five years of age to serve in the defense of the city. However, the unpopularity of his administrative policies caused a three-way split among the Military Commission, the Commune Assembly, and the moribund Central Committee.

Cluseret's position was fatally underminded by a military event, the evacuation of Fort Issy on April 27. Though he was not responsible for its loss and personally recaptured it, the fickle Commune Assembly proceeded to dismiss

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[11]Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 194; Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 205; and "The Commune," The Times, May 8, 1871, p. 5.

[12]Gustave Paul Cluseret, Mémoires du Général Cluseret (Paris: Jules Livy, Éditeur, 1887, Vol. I, p. 254; and Horne, The Rise and Fall of Paris, pp. 318-19.

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

him and then arrest him on May 1. Cluseret was succeeded as Delegate for War by Rossel. An open struggle between military and civilian authority followed. Rossel sought to introduce a number of changes into the structure of the army. Although his reorganization was intended to improve conditions, his actions were mistaken for a bid for dictatorship. The reviving Central Committee at first opposed his leadership, then later backed him to the extent of offering him the dictatorship. However, its approval came after the second fall of Issy on May 8th, and Rossel, unaware of the Central Committee's backing, resigned, asking to be imprisoned as Cluseret had been.[13] Those in favor of radical civilian leadership won out, appointing Polish general Jaroslaw Dombrowski to command the army, and the Jacobin, Charles Delescluze, as civil Delegate for War.[14] By the time Delescluze succeeded Rossel, the siege of Paris was rapidly coming to a climax.

Meanwhile, another result of Cluseret's debacle at Fort Issy was the proposal by Jules Miot, one of the radicals, that a Committee of Public Safety be established. Despite the opposition of the Commune moderates, who feared the rise

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[13]Williams, The French Revolution, p. 144; M. Winock and J. P. Azéma, Les Communards (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964), p. 143; and Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, pp. 240-41.

[14]Laronze, Histoire de La Commune, p. 536; and Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 344.

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

of a dictatorship, the Committee was voted.[15] Some Communards stopped attending meetings regularly thereafter. The creation of the Committee of Public Safety, and with it the complete triumph of the Commune radicals, prepared the way for the worst atrocities associated with the radical government during the last weeks of its existence at the end of May.

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

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[15]Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, pp. 238, 240; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 242.

CHAPTER IV

VENGEANCE AND COUNTER-VENGEANCE BY THE COMBATANTS IN APRIL AND THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF MAY

"The great Revolution had its festivals, the Forty-Eight its banquets: the Commune had its demolitions."[1] Revolutionary Paris seemed to thrive on such anti-establishment attacks as exemplified by the crowds drawn to witness the burning of the guillotine and the demolition of the Vendôme Column. After the beginning of the revolution, clubs had grown up in churches and other buildings to give the militant Parisians an opportunity to propagandize and vent their feelings. Amidst this atmosphere the Commune leadership began to take measures which reflect the extent to which this revolution had vengeance as its last motif.

Let us examine the most notorious of the Commune's acts of vengefulness. These included: the arrest of Darboy and other hostages, the destruction of the guillotine, of Thiers' home, and of the Vendôme Column, and the planned destruction of the Louis XVI and Bréa chapels.

The Commune devoted its attention to its hostages. The Communards wreaked their hate upon various persons,

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[1]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 280.

especially the clergy.[2] Georges Darboy,[3] a liberal Catholic who was out of favor with the Pope was seized by the Communards on April 4th at his residence, the Palace of the Archbishop. Rigault, the Prefect of Police, assured the Monseigneur that he was only a "hostage" and would be treated with the respect his office signified. In reality, however, the Prefect treated him like a common criminal. The Commune's officials accused the Cleric of counterrevolutionary conspiracy, and when he tried to answer, Rigault interrupted, "You have been doing it for eighteen centuries now. It won't go on. Since you deny all conspiracy, justice will enquire into it. Meanwhile I shall hold you. You will be questioned later."[4]

The Commune imprisoned the Archbishop in Mazas prison. After two weeks of this confinement, the Papal Nuncio discussed the possibilities of Darboy's release with the American Ambassador, E. B. Washburne. The Ambassador obtained a pass from Rigault to see the Cleric, and the jailers welcomed him as a friend of the Archbishop. The Prelate

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[2]"The Reign of Terror--Arrest of Priests," The Times, April 8, 1871, p. 1.

[3]R. Limouzin-Lamothe, "Georges Darboy," Dictionnaire de Biographie Française (1962), X, 162-63.

[4]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 196; and Adrien Dansette, Religious History of Modern France, Vol. I: From the Revolution to the Third Republic (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961), p. 321.

appeared haggard and in ill health, and Washburne told him of his dire situation. Although his future prospects looked grim, Darboy had no words of reproach for his prosecutors. Instead, he said, "I have no fear of death; it costs but little to die; I am ready. That which distresses me is the fear of what will come to the other prisoners--the drunken men, the cries of death, the knife, the hatchet, the bayonet."[5] Before leaving, Washburne made application to have newspapers and other reading material sent. He also proposed to visit soon again, for he could see the Darboy was in great danger.

On his second visit, he noticed a change from the first set of guards to a new group of the worst type. Washburne was unable to communicate freely with Darboy because guards were present throughout the visit.[6]

The Communards hoped to be able to exchange the radical leader in Thiers' hands for Darboy. In their opinion the exchange would be worth, Auguste Blanqui[7] captured by the Versaillese on March 17th.[8] Because Darboy on May 7th agreed

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[5]Washburne, Recollections, p. 164.

[6]Washburne, Recollections, pp. 173-74.

[7]M. Prevost, "Louis-Auguste Blanqui," Dictionnaire de Biographie Française (1952), VI, 644-47.

[8]Lepelletier, Histoire de la Commune, pp. 62-63; and Louis Fiaux, Histoire de la Guerre Civile de 1871 (Paris: G. Charpentier, Editeur, 1879), pp. 302-303.

to use his influence with Thiers to stop the executions and to agree to exchange prisoners, Lagard, one of Darboy's proteges, went to Versailles to conduct negotiations. He promised to return to Paris afterward, but once he was safe, he stayed. Thiers, however, could not make the exchange because the National Assembly did not think that the Archbishop was in danger. In addition, Thiers felt that negotiating with the Communards would mean that he was granting them "de facto" recognition. He preferred, in the end, to leave the Communards the victims of their own dilemma. If they killed the hostages they would make themselves infamous, and if they freed them they would look like fools. Also, a suspicion existed that, once these trades began, the Communards would seize all the clergy and demand exchanges, much in the same way Latin American radicals are kidnapping foreign embassy officials for barter today.

For three quarters of a century the rallying cry of the revolutionaries had been anticlericalism. The Communards felt that Catholicism was identical with reaction. This frame of mind finally led them, at the end of the Commune, to choose the first over the second solution to the dilemma.

In addition to the imprisonment of religious and other hostages, the Commune engaged in the destruction of certain public monuments, notably the famous Vendôme Column. In the early part of the Commune, the government, as a symbolic act,

approved of destroying a guillotine "for the purification of the [11th] arrondissement and for the preservation of the new liberty."[9] Thus, on April 7th this "servile instrument of monarchic domination" was burned in front of a statue of Voltaire.[10] At the destruction, a large crowd gathered and, as proof of the special occasion, a battalion of the National Guard attended. Men, women, and children shook their fists at the burning guillotine and shouted "huzzas." Burning the guillotine, however, actually contradicted the revolutionary tradition of the Commune, since it was the guillotine that was used by the sans-culottes in the Great Revolution.

The first actual destruction of a building illustrates exceptionally well the spirit of vengeance which underlay so many of the Commune's acts. The Commune took the ridiculous step of ordering Thiers' lavish home in Paris destroyed. A few Communards objected that the National Assembly would appropriate more money for a new house than the old one was worth, but the majority was not dissuaded by mere common sense. Beslay resigned in protest over this decision.[11] Though the Communards seized the house on April 14th, actual

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[9]Laronze, Histoire de La Commune, p. 137; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 280.

[10]Laronze, Histoire de La Commune, p. 138; and Washburne, Recollections, pp. 85-86.

[11]"Latest Intelligence," The Times, May 15, 1871, p. 7.

destruction did not begin until May.[12] Thiers' home befitted his material success, for it contained valuable art objects, tapestries, and Renaissance paintings. On May 11th, the Commune Journal Officiel called for the linen to be removed from the house and sent to hospitals.[13] The Bibliothèque and National Museum requisitioned art objects and books, while the furniture was to be auctioned after being displayed in sales rooms. The Garde Meuble, or State Furniture Depository provided vans for the transportation of these material objects. Proceeds from the sale of the furniture and the broken-up bricks[14] were to go to war widows and orphans. Mr. Perry H. Smith from Chicago tried to buy Thiers' things, but was unable to do so. The site of Thiers' home was then to be made into a public square.

The Communards also planned to destroy the Louis XVI and Le Bréa memorial Chapels. Shortly after his restoration in 1814-15, Louis XVIII ordered an excavation to locate the bodies of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. The badly disintegrated remains were reassembled in two coffins and ceremoniously removed to St. Denis. This act offended the defenders of the revolutionary tradition in France.

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[12] Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, p. 371; Chastenet, Histoire de la Troisieme Republique, p. 98; and New York Times, May 14, 1871, p. 1.

[13] Journal Officiel, Vol. II (May, 1871), 465.

[14] "The Siege of Paris," The Times, May 17, 1871, p. 5.

> It was certainly laudable to honor the dead, but the publicity of all these commemorations seemed to contradict the king's official promises to throw a veil over the sad past. It disturbed all those who had directly or indirectly participated in the Revolution.[15]

In 1816,

> Louis XVIII decided that a commemorative monument called "Chapelle Expiatoire" would be raised at the expense of the state in that part of the old cemetery of the Madeleine [where the remains had been found.] This monument was not raised until 1826, by the Architects Fonatine and Lebas. It cost around two million francs. In an artistic point of view it has a funeral-like air in keeping with its purpose. It is of medium height in sombre black and gray marble.[16]

Accordingly, the Communards, reviving the old wounds dating back to 1793, decided to destroy the structure which symbolized martyred monarchy and a reproach to revolution.

The Le Bréa Chapel derived from a different circumstance of France's long history of internal strife. It commemorated General Jean-Baptiste Le Bréa, a leader on the side of Order in the June Days of 1848. Seeking to negotiate the rebel's surrender prior to the attack on the Fontainebleu district on June 25, Le Bréa was taken into custody by the insurgents and accidently executed by his own men. The chapel subsequently erected in his honor was regarded by the Communards

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[15]Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, The Bourbon Resotration, trans. Lynn M. Chase (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966), p. 78.

[16]"Chapelle Expiatoire de Louis XVI," Grand Dictionnaire Universel, 1878, Premier Supplément, 503.

as an insult to them, for they considered themselves as the inheritors of the '48 revolt. Therefore, they planned to destroy it because it was "a permanent insult to the first Revolution and a perpetual protest against the People's Justice."[17] The decree concerning it stated:

> Whereas the Bréa chapel situated in Paris, 76, Avenue d'Italie, is a permanent insult to the conquered people of June and to men who have fallen for the cause of the people,
> It is decreed:
> Article 1. The Bréa chapel shall be destroyed.
> Article 2. The square of the chapel shall be called the "Place de Juin."[18]

Destruction, however, was superceded by the entrance of the Versaillese.

Symbolically the climactic destructive act was to be the elimination of the Vendôme Column.

> The pulling down of the Vendôme Column was looked upon by friend and foe alike as the Supreme revolutionary act of the Commune; and even to-day it is almost the only fact that is connected with that movement by the historically uninformed. . . . the official and defiant destruction . . . did seem to contemporary observers something more tangible, more menacing than such measures as the breaking-up of bourgeois Stateforms by the composition of the Commune. To the Communards themselves, it was their first public holiday--except funerals.[19]

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[17] Journal Officiel, Vol. II (May, 1871), 372. Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, p. 164; and "The Commune," The Times, May 8, 1871, p. 5.

[18] Maxime Du Camp, Les Convulsions de Paris, Vol. IV; La Commune a L'Hôtel de Ville (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1880), p. 92; and Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 239.

[19] Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 283.

The main objection to the column was that its statue of Napoleon Bonaparte represented non-republican leadership in France. The statue of Bonaparte atop the column reminded the Parisians of their subjugation to Napoleon III, and especially of their recent defeat by Germany due to him. The radical paper Le Cri du Peuple, edited by Jules Vallès, on April 4, 1871, called for the destruction of the monument. On April 12, the Commune decreed its destruction as a symbol contrary to the idea of universal fraternity.

> The Commune of Paris,
> Considering that the imperial column in the Place Vendôme is a monument of barbarism, a symbol of brute force and false glory, an affirmation of militarism, a negation of international law, a permanent insult by the victors towards the vanquished, a perpetual threat to one of the three great principles of the French republic, fraternity, DECREES:
> First and only article: The column in the Place Vendôme will be demolished.[20]

The Commune executive committee gave the job of tearing down the monument to two experienced engineers. Up to this point, the demolition had been confined only to the statue of Napoleon on top, but the radical journalist Félix Pyat urged that the entire column should be removed. Finally on May 1, 1871, the revolutionary government signed a contract for the destruction.

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[20]Gerstle Mack, Gustave Courbet (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), p. 167; and Vizetelly, My Adventures, p. 185.

> Between the Commune of Paris . . . and citizen Iribe, civil engineer, member of the Positivist Club of Paris and acting in that capacity . . . it has been agreed as follows:
> . . . citizen Iribe undertakes to accomplish on May 5, anniversary of the death of Napoleon I, the successful overthrow of the said column . . . except the pedestal which will be destroyed by the Commune of Paris, on the following conditions: The operation will be performed . . . for 28,000 francs payable . . . in cash immediately after the demolition. . . . he [Iribe] will be responsible for damage to the monument itself, but he affirms his ability to avert any danger to neighboring buildings during or as a result of the operation. He also personally guarantees payment to the owners of such buildings for any damage they may suffer. The Commune of Paris undertakes . . . to assist the project by any means in its power.[21]

Because the necessary arrangements were not concluded by May 5, Iribe postponed the operation, first until May 8, then until May 16.

By the time the appointed day arrived, several inhabitants covered their windows with paper because they were apprehensive that the column might fall near their apartments. The Vendôme plaza was decorated with flags and flowers. A large crowd was on hand. Jules Miot, Edmé-Marie Gustave Tridon, Théophile Ferré, Félix Pyat, Eugène Protot, and Georges Cavalier, all Commune leaders, were present. The crowd repeated a quatrain from Victor Rochefort's Mot d'Ordre.

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[21] Fiaux, Histoire de la Guerre Civile, p. 649; and Mack Gustave Courbet, pp. 268-69.

> Tyran, juche sur cette echasse,
> si le sang que tu fis verser
> pouvait tenir dans cette place,
> Tu le boirais sans te baisser![22]

Several Communards made speeches and placed red flags on the pedestal of the column. Glais-Bizoin, one of Gambetta's assistants in the Franco-Prussian War, stood on the statue waving his hat. "Vive la Commune!" could be heard. The Times of London reported that the Vendôme Column fell at ten minutes to six on May 16th. "The concussion was nothing like what had been expected. No glass was broken or injury done to the Square . . . It was forbidden to take away any fragments, and people were searched before leaving the Square."[23] Some said an American would buy the wreckage, but others felt it would go into a cannon. At any rate, the Journal Officiel of April 20 announced:

> The materials composing the column in the Place Vendome will be offered for sale. They are divided into four lots: two lots of construction materials, two lots of metal. The lots will be disposed of separately by means of sealed bids addressed to the administration of Engineers [of the War ministry], 84 rue Saint-Diminique-Saint Germain.[24]

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[22]Vizetelly, My Adventures, p. 279; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 285. Tyrant, perched on this scaffold pole,/ if the blood that you shed/ could be kept in this place/ You would drink it without bending down!

[23]Mack, Gustave Courbet, p. 270; and "The Fall of the Vendome Column," The Times, May 17, 1871, p. 5.

[24]Mack, Gustave Courbet, p. 267; and Journal Officiel, Vol. II (April, 1871), 10-11.

After the destruction, artillery and marine units evacuated everyone from the Place Vendôme. The crowd dispersed to the Hôtel de Ville, where a band played the "Chant des Girondins," and Commune leaders Miot, Henri Champy, and Gabriel Ranvier announced that the Place Vendôme was henceforth to be known as the Place Internationale.

The demolition of the column created some dissatisfaction within Paris itself, and more importantly, it caused the Versaillese to want more revenge. Marshal Marie Edmé MacMahon, Commander, reported to his army:

> Soldiers! The Vendôme Column has just fallen. The foreigner respected it, the Commune of Paris has overthrown it. Men calling themselves Frenchmen have dared to destroy that witness of your fathers' victories against the coalition of Europe, beneath the eyes of the Germans. Did they hope, those infamous scoundrels, to efface the memory of the military virtues, of which that glorious monument was the symbol, by this attempt upon the national glory? Soldiers, if the memories recalled to us by the Column are no longer engraved upon bronze, they will at least remain living in our hearts and, taking them as our inspiration, we shall give France a new pledge of bravery, devotion, and patriotism.[25]

In addition, the Communards' action increased provincial France's dislike of the Commune, for the Vendôme Column was a symbol "of the glorious history of France, the value of which the recent disasters of the war with Germany had not lessened."[26] But, as the Commune saw it:

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[25]Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, p. 270; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, pp. 286-87.

[26]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 239.

> The Floréal[27] will be glorious in history, for it consecrates our break with militarium, that bloody negation of all the rights of man . . .
>
> The Commune of Paris accepted the duty of destroying this symbol of despotism; it has fulfilled it. It proves thus that it placed right above might and that it prefers justice to murder even when the latter is victorious.[28]

Sure enough, after the Commune was over, the National Assembly proceeded to order the restoration of the column, the only change being that the statue of Napoleon at the top was not replaced.

Meantime, the Versaillese were little better. Since buildings in Paris were what they wished to preserve, and there were no structures representing radical ideals in their hands, they concentrated on mistreating persons. The Versaillese began their atrocities at Courbevoie, recounted in Chapter Three. Flourens, one of the federal generals leading the campaign, had taken refuge in a hotel in Rueil following the retreat. The Versaillese surrounded his hotel and when

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[27] M. J. Sydenham, The French Revolution (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), p. 57. According to M. J. Sydenham in his The French Revolution, "by the decree of 5th October, the year was 'rationaly' divided into twelve months of thirty days each, with five complementary days . . . each month was similarly divided into three periods of ten days each, every tenth day . . . being a day of rest. By further decree . . . each month was given a 'natural' name appropriate to its season, and every day of the year was distinguished by the title of something natural or agricultural." Floréal = The month of flowers--April 20 - May 19.

[28] Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, p. 265; Journal Officiel, Vol. II (May, 1871), 537.

he emerged, Captain Desmarts cleaved his head in two.[29] The body was then removed to Versailles in a cart. Another of the generals, Duval, sought safety at Chatillon, only to be routed the following day. The regular troops immediately shot all those wearing federal uniforms. Those remaining, including Duval, were taken prisoner and marched to Versailles. On the way, Vinoy met the group, calling them "hideous scum." "Is there a chief?" "Myself," said Duval.[30] Another advanced, saying he also was a leader. At this point three prisoners including Duval were shot. The regular army, during this time, also killed insurgents at Chatou because they were "deserters from the regular Army."[31] These murders were probably intended to avenge the death of Dr. Pasquier. General Gaston Gallifet issued this proclamation:

> War has been declared by the bands of Paris. Yesterday, the day before, and to-day they have assassinated my soldiers.
>
> It is a war without truce or pity that I declare against these murderers. I have had to make an example this morning; may it be a salutary one! I do not desire to be again reduced to such an extremity.
>
> Do not forget that the country, the law, and right are at Versailles and in the Assembly, and

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[29]Winock and Azéma, Les Communards, p. 130; Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 166; and "The Civil War in Paris," The Times, April 6, 1871, p. 9.

[30]Winock and Azema, Les Communards, p. 134; Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 168; and "The Fighting Before Paris," The Times, April 8, 1871, p. 8.

[31]Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 310; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 169.

> not with the grotesque body at Paris which calls itself the Commune.[32]

Disregarding normal military procedures, the Versaillese openly massacred prisoners of war, as in the case of four National Guards of the 185th Battalion. When they were surprised by the regulars at Belle-Epine on April 25th, they had no recourse but to surrender. Although the regulars treated their prisoners with respect at first, the four men were doomed. A captain of the Chasseurs approached and, without a word, shot one of the National Guards. He shot another in the chest, but did not fatally wound him; then he killed the two remaining.[33] The hate precipitated by such acts prompted the Communards, including Rigault, to call for the murder of the Versaillese leaders that had been captured.

Thus, both the Versaillese and Communards vented their feelings of hostility on each other. Though the destruction of the Vendôme Column stood out as the climactic incident of this period, the Versaillese's reprisals increased the casualties, foreshadowing the bloodbath to come. The ruthless and destructive acts committed by both federals and regulars helped to escalate the brutality of the civil war, finally culminating in the infamy of Bloody Week.

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[32]Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, p. 105; Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 169; and Winock and Azéma, Les Communards, p. 135.

[33]Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, pp. 180-81.

CHAPTER V

BLOODY WEEK

> The forts may be captured one after another, the ramparts may fall. Not a man of the enemy shall pass into Paris. If M. Thiers knows anything of chemistry he will catch our meaning. Let the army of Versailles rest assured that Paris will suffer all things rather than surrender.[1]

These words from the pen of Jules Vallès, one of the radical editors, express the mixture of frenzy and ferocity with which the Communards confronted the Versaillese, as Thiers' army tightened its hold on the environs of Paris. Simultaneously, the besiegers' mood continued to be little better than the Communards. The resultant collision led to "Bloody Week," famed as the classic no-holds-barred finish to a civil war. The week of violence and vindictiveness witnessed the spilling of more blood than during the Reign of Terror.[2]

The events of the terrible week began with the Versaillese breaking into the city limits of Paris on May 21. The first word of the entry came by means of Alfred-Edouard Billioray, reading a communique from General Dombrowski:

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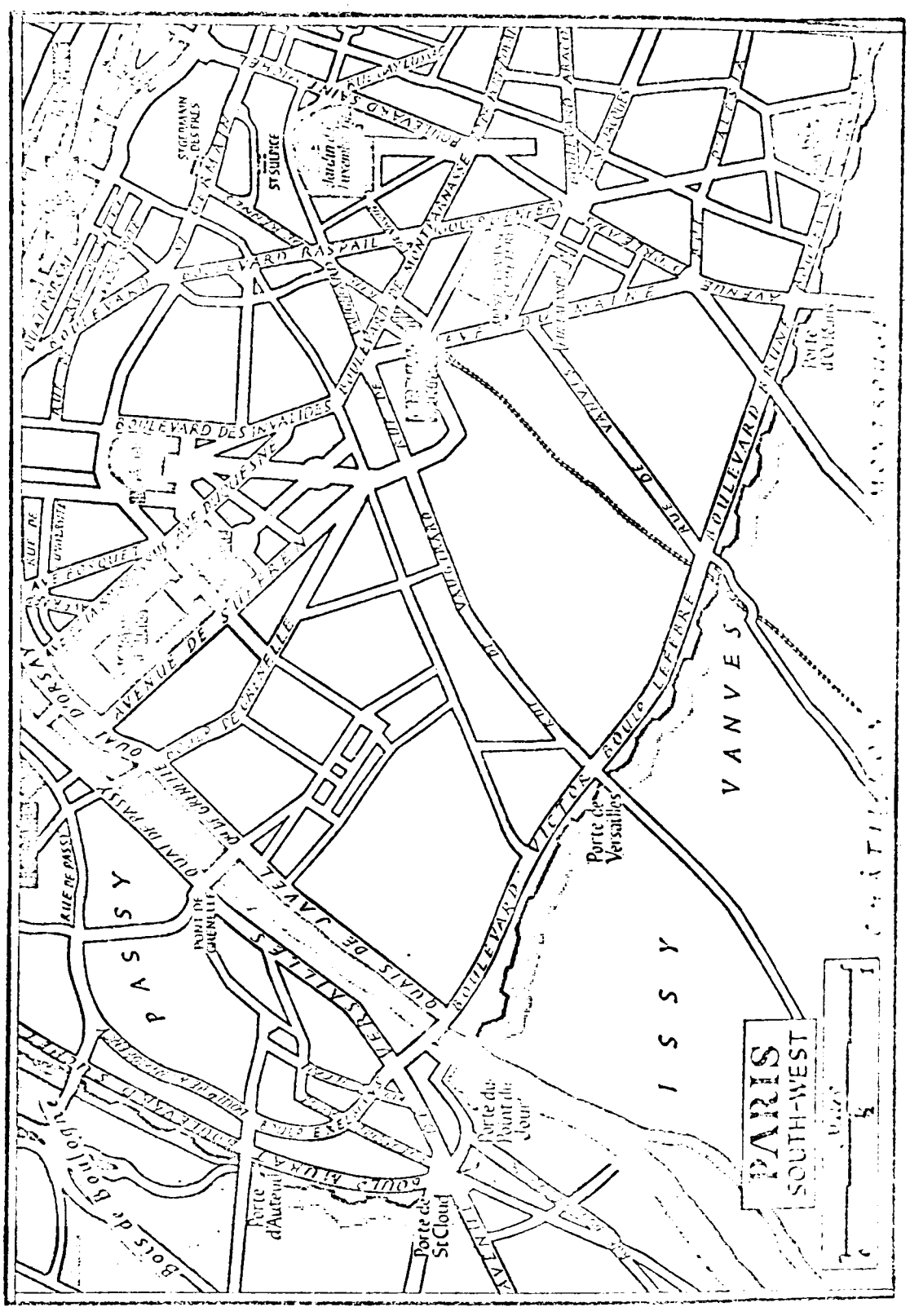
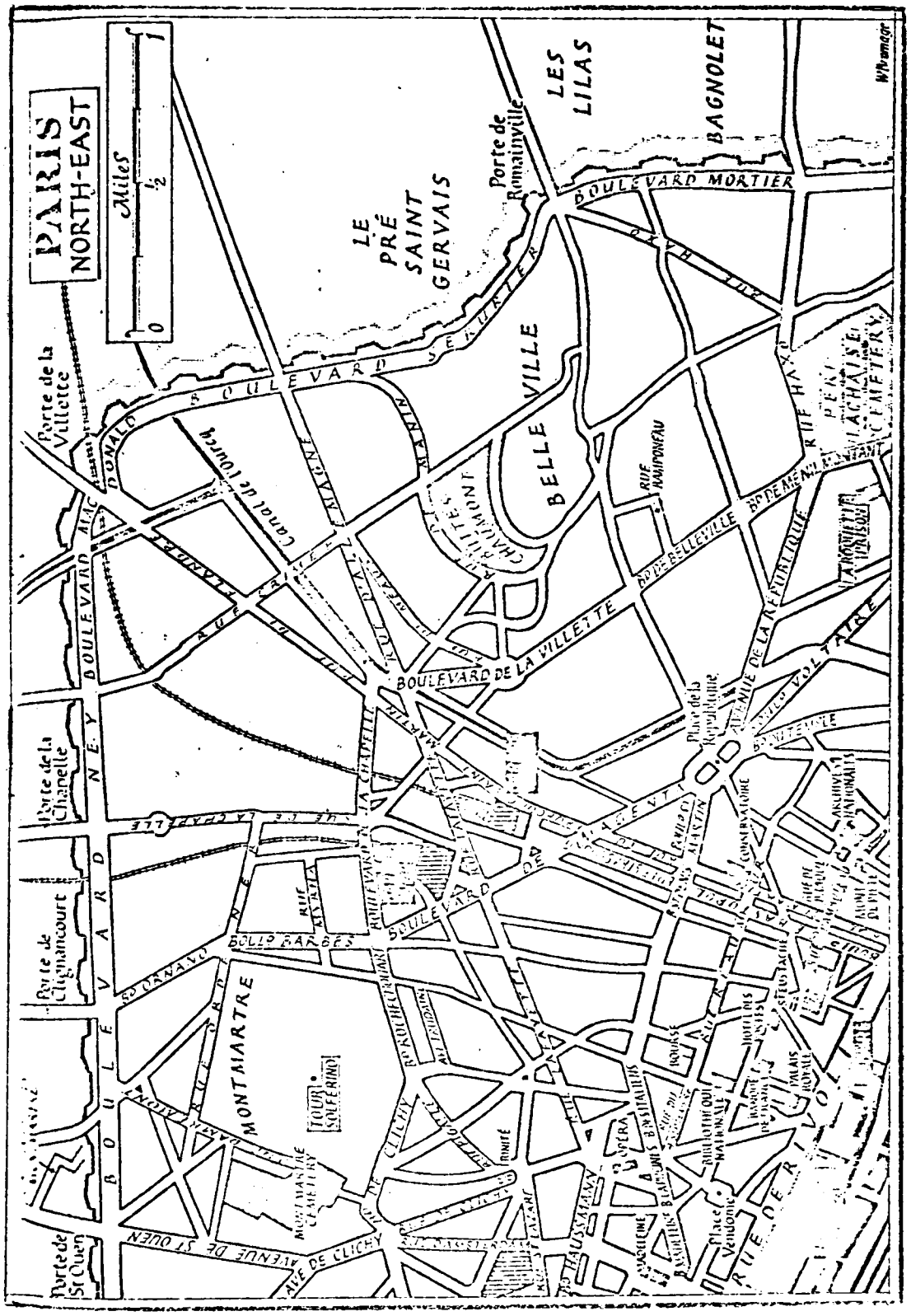
[1]Arthur G. Knight, "Distinguished Incendiaries of the Commune," Month, XXXVII (1879), 228.

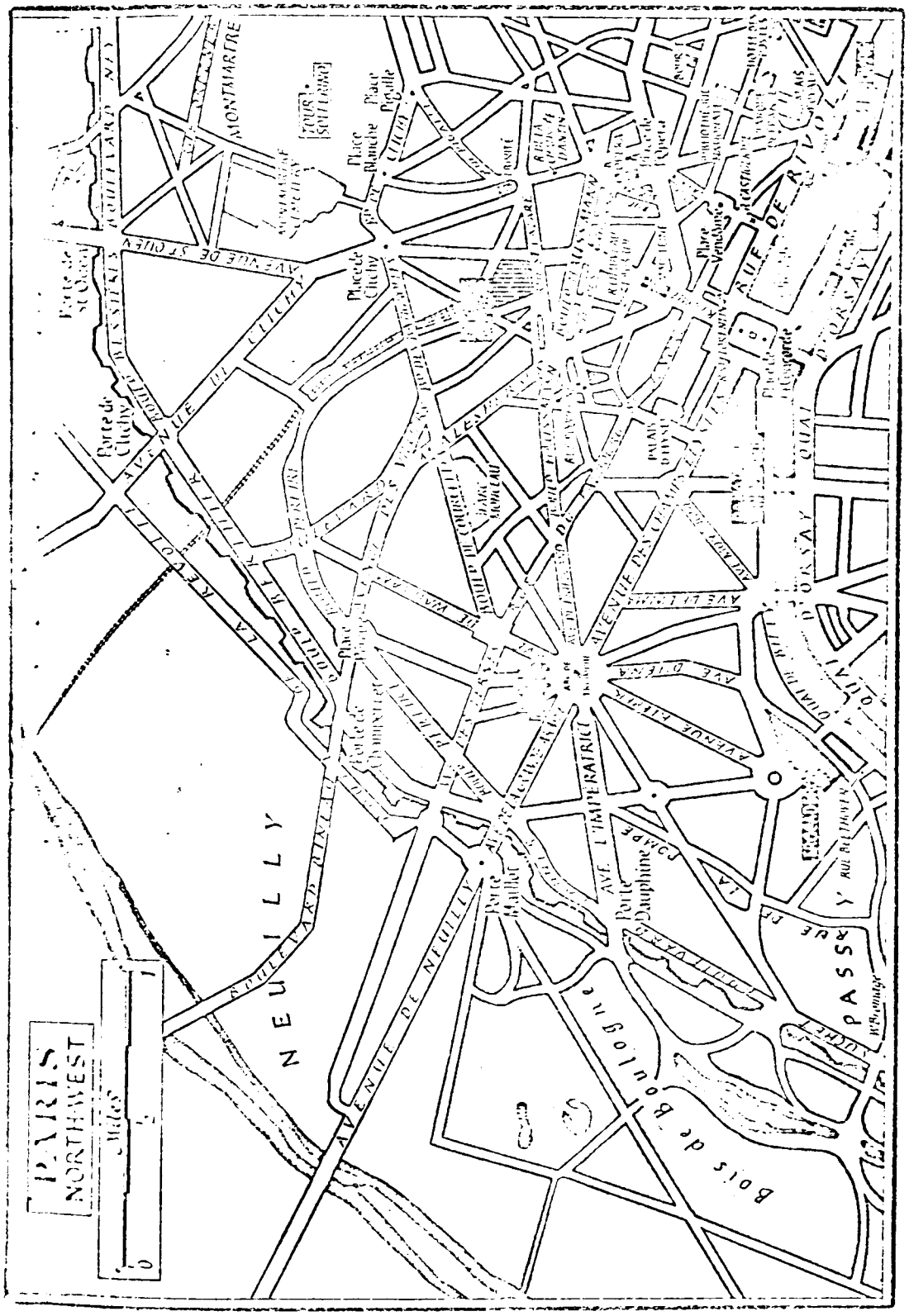
[2]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 371; Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 294; and Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 418.



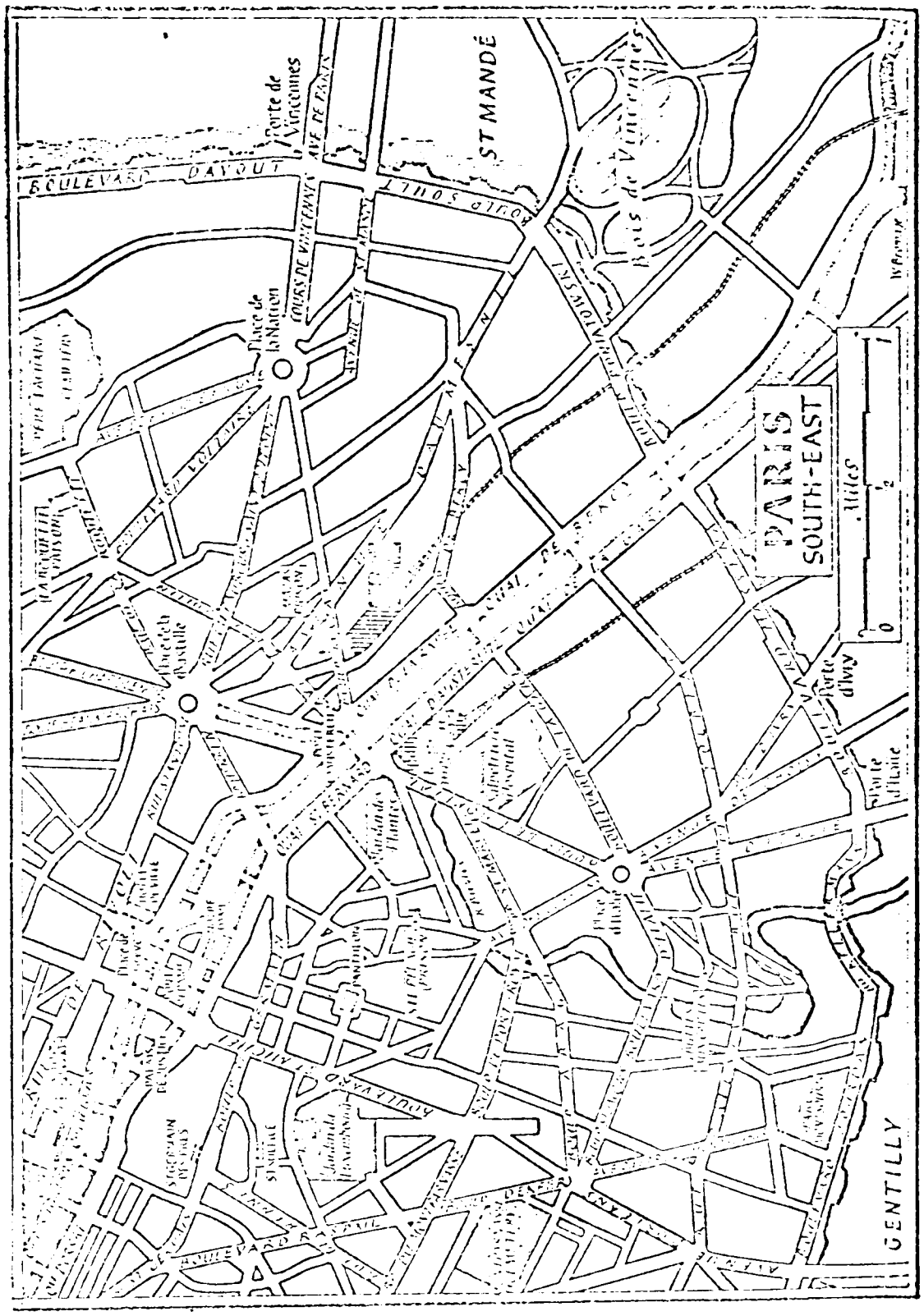
From Alistair Horne, The Fall of Paris (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 368.



From Alistair Horne, The Fall of Paris (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 399.



From Alistair Horne, The Fall of Paris (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 373.



From Alistair Horne, The Fall of Paris (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 394.

> Dombrowski to Ministry of War and Committee of Public Safety. The Versaillese have entered by the Saint-Cloud Gate. I am taking steps to repulse them. If you can, send me reinforcements. I answer for everything.[3]

The Versaillese had been invited in by Ducatel, an amateur spy, who waved a white flag and shouted for the regulars to enter the city.[4] Fearing a trap, a naval officer approached and, finding that the whole section was deserted, decided that the invitation was genuine. The regulars entered at this point and then opened other gates to ease the ingress into the city.[5]

Now that the enemy was actually seizing different points in the city, the Commune, as an organization, began to disintegrate. This permitted an extremist like Raoul Rigault to wreak his vengeance on the hostages in his custody. Rigault's first victim was Gustave Chaudey, who it will be remembered, was held responsible for the order to fire on the radical demonstrators back on January 22nd. Chaudey was sitting in his cell correcting an "Ode to Liberty" when Rigault arrived

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[3]Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, p. 243; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 308.

[4]Ludovic Halévy, Notes et Souvenirs; 1871-1872 (Paris: Ancienne Maison, 1889), p. 57; and Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, p. 242.

[5]Gaston Da. Costa, La Commune Vécue (Paris: Ancienne Maison Quantin, 1905), Vol. III, p. 81; Halevy, Notes et Souvenirs, p. 1; and Laronze, Histoire de La Commune, p. 576.

at the prison. "Was it you who from the Hôtel de Ville asked for troops to clear the Square?" Chaudey answered, "I was doing my duty."[6] Rigault remarked that Chaudey's orders had resulted in the death of one of his friends and stated that he would be put to death. Chaudey insisted that he was a firm republican, but Rigault retorted that his allegiance to republicanism was on the level of the Versaillese. With no more formality, not even an official condemnation by the Commune, Chaudey was marched out to die. When the firing squad failed to execute the man promptly, the prison staff had to complete the job. Then three constables were brought forth.[7] Rigault dictated an accusation against them. "'Whereas the Versaillese have entered Paris; whereas their friends are firing upon us from the windows; whereas it is time to put an end to these activities,' the prisoners were to be shot immediately."[8]

The most celebrated of the mass executions was that of Archbishop Darboy and other clergy. About 6 P.M. on Wednesday the 24th of May, a group of forty National Guardmen, called the "Vengeurs de la République," with some officers,

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[6]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 334.

[7]Vizetelly, My Adventures, p. 325; and Washburne, Recollections, pp. 197-98.

[8]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 335; and Laronze, Histoire de La Commune, p. 591.

arrived at Roquette prison, to which the men earlier had been transferred. The party asked the prison director to release the hostages. At first he refused, asking that formal orders be produced.[9] After these had been obtained, the director gave up six prisoners. A silence came over the executioners while they waited for the names of the prisoners to be called; the last name was Monsigneur Darboy. The Guard ordered the hostages out of their cells, and at the staircase they embraced each other. Though Darboy was weak from disease, he gave his arm to Chief Justice Bonjean, with the Abbé Deguerry on the other side. When the men descended the stairs, a lieutenant silenced the clamorous spectators by saying, "That which comes to these persons today, who knows but what the same will come to us tomorrow?"[10]

Since it was already dark, the Communards used lanterns to conduct the victims to the high wall where the executions would take place. They stood firm and silent, especially the great Darboy. After he shook hands and gave a benediction, the republicans placed him at the head of the line. He did not die after the first volley but crossed himself

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[9]Marc-Andre Fabre, Les Drames de La Commune; 18 Mars-27 Mai 1871 (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1937), p. 129; Fiaux, Histoire de La Guerre Civile, p. 528; and Chastenet, Histoire de La Troisième République, p. 101.

[10]Washburne, Recollections, p. 183.

three times before he fell.[11] Afterward the assassins mutilated the bodies and later took them for burial.[12]

In another incident, a group of Dominican Fathers of the Albert-le-Grand School at Arcueil had earlier been arrested. A federal officer had learned that the regular army had executed some of his colleagues and cried out, "If that's the way of it, we had better mop up the lot."[13] The Guard shot five clerics dead when they were forced out into the Avenue d'Italie.

This type of vengeance reigned throughout Bloody Week; but never more so than the incident occurring in the Rue Haxo. Here were massacred not only ten priests but also thirty-six gendarmes and four Imperial police. Because fighting was getting more desperate and the Parisians were hearing of massacres by the Versaillese, the National Guard, led by Emile Gois and encouraged by a crowd of people, shouted "the hostages! Kill them! Kill them."[14] Though

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[11]Fiaux, Histoire de La Guerre Civile, p. 529; Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 71; and Chastenet, Histoire de la Troisième République, p. 101.

[12]Washburne, Recollections, p. 185.

[13]Andrien Dansette, Religious History of Modern France, Vol. I: From the Revolution to the Third Republic, trans. John Dingle (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961), p. 322.

[14]Chastenet, Histoire de la Troisième République, p. 103; Dansette, Religious History, p. 323; Fabre, Les Drames, p. 192; and Fiaux, Histoire de la Guerre Civile, pp. 550-51.

Eudes, Alavoine, and Varlin tried to prevent the massacre, the execution took place, with one corpse receiving sixty-nine bullet wounds. Several Guardsmen were also wounded.[15]

In addition, the fear of treachery, whether founded or not, caused the Communards to kill their own men. In one incident, Captain Charles de Beaufort was brought before Rigault's friend, Theophile Ferre, by the Guards of the 66th, and tried for disloyalty. Though no evidence could be produced, the crowd clamored for his death. Ferre signed the death warrant and the young man was executed before the mob.[16] Meantime, many by-standers among the populace engaged in reporting to the Versaillese people whom they believed to be Communards. J. Audeoud expressed how the bourgeois felt in turning in these men to the regulars.

> The idea of the fate which awaits them does not excite people's pity; far from it. All of us wish to see them die in torment. We should like to appease our hatred with the sight of their torture, for we are no longer men but savage beasts. To-day no one dare ask pity for these monsters, no one dare say that the repression is going too far. Anyone who risked preaching this idiotically philanthropic idea would get a good hiding at the very least.[17]

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[15] Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 360.

[16] Laronze, Histoire de La Commune, p. 607; and Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 71.

[17] Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 355.

The reciprocal hate generated by both Communards and Versaillese resulted in the exchange of atrocities. The Versaillese came from the provinces, where a great animosity and dread of Parisians stirred feelings and prejudices.

> Largely rural in background, the Versailles troops had an instinctive hatred of Paris: resentment of snubs both imagined and real; regarding urban workers as abnormalities in French society, as people who organized riots at home in times of war and whose lack of patriotism was merely proved by the destruction of a monument of French glory, as people who took sole credit for suffering in the late war without awareness of the agonies of rural France, enabling them to accuse rural France of indifference to the outcome of the war and of a callous sellout to Prussia.[18]

Because of this feeling on the part of the Versailles troops, they disobeyed orders in taking prisoners. Instead, numbers of victims were cut down for no better reason than that they resembled a famous Communard or that they were caught in the crossfire of indiscriminent violence.[19] Even those who did not actually participate in the actions of the Bloody Week were not exempt. Jean-Baptiste Millière was one such example. Though friendly to the Commune, he did not actually participate in it. Nevertheless, Garcin, a military leader of the Versaillese, ordered him to ask forgiveness

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[18] Williams, The French Revolution, p. 150.

[19] Fiaux, Histoire de la Guerre Civile, p. 573; Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 344; and Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 72.

for his wrongs on the steps of the Panthéon. Though he refused, he was forced to kneel; and died with "Long live the people! Long live Humanity!" on his lips.[20] Many prominent Communards met their deaths at the hands of the brutal regular troops. The enemy found Rigault in a boarding house. He had gone to the rue Gay-Lussac, where he had rented a room under an assumed name. The Versaillese had just broken into this street and they followed him to this hotel where he surrendered. Though the soldiers had not recognized him, they started to take him to a court-martial when he shouted, "Long live the Commune!" With this, a sergeant shot Rigault in the head.[21] The body was left in the gutter, where women stripped it and insulted the dead man.

As the Versaillese advanced and broke through the barricades, much as with the case of Rigault, the massacre of the Parisians continued. Those in the capital city were fighting for the life of the Commune and their own lives as well. As Bloody Week came to a close the bloodshed and violence did not abate. On May 28th the Versaillese entered the

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[20]Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, p. 400; Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, p. 262; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 357.

[21]Louis Rossel, Rossel's Posthumous Papers (London: Chapman and Hale, 1872), p. 167; New York Times, June 11, 1871; Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, p. 382; and Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 397.

Fortress of Vincennes and shot nine officers, though a promise had been made to spare all. On that same Sunday morning, the Versaillese had shot 147 Communards in Père-Lachaise cemetery, leaving them where they had fallen.[22]

The Bloody Week not only saw the massacre of many Frenchmen, but it also witnessed the burning of some of the capital city. As with the killings, each army used the destruction of buildings to serve its own purpose. The Communards have always contended that most of the buildings they burned were for reasons of military necessity.[23] Some of the great fires were set by the incendiary shells of the Versaillese.[24] The Ministry of Finance went up in flames because of this. Because of the documents inside, the Ministry blazed on, though its fire at one time was thought to be extinguished.

> Now began those tragic nights which were to strike seven times . . . There were nights that were louder, riven by more awful lightnings of a more awful grandeur, when the flames and the cannonade enveloped all Paris; but none left a more funereal impress upon the imagination.[25]

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[22]Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 414; and Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, p. 265.

[23]Edith Thomas, The Women Incendiaries (New York: George Braziller, 1966), p. 168; and Williams, The French Revolution, p. 150.

[24]Williams, The French Revolution, p. 150; and Rossel, Rossel's Posthumous Papers, p. 149.

[25]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 321.

The chief burnings were the work of the Commune in its death throes. Communard Paul-Antoine-Magloire Brunel, under Gabriel Ranvier's orders to burn down all houses in the way, set out to try to do just that on May 23rd. Brunel managed to set afire the fashionable area between the block Number 13 of the Boulevard Malesherbes and the corner of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. He also intended to burn his headquarters, the Ministry of the Marine, but these plans aborted. These fires, as well as the ones set by Brunel along the rue Royale, halted the advancement of the regulars. As time passed, more and more buildings were set on fire as a last resort to halt the Versailles troops. Because they were military positions, such as areas and buildings as the rue Royale, the Croix-Rouge, and the Legion of Honor were sacrificed.[26]

The Tuileries also was burned, though some question arises as to the reason. Some authorities said that it also was sacrificed for tactical reasons, while others contend that Bergeret wanted this palace burned as a symbol,[27] much in the same way the Bréa Chapel was to have been destroyed. Bergeret watched the burning with apparent satisfaction,

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[26]Winock and Azéma, Les Communards, pp. 156-57; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 336.

[27]Rossel, Rossel's Posthumous Papers, p. 149.

writing of it, "The last vestiges of Royalty have just vanished."[28]

Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador wrote on May 25th that there were "Fires in all directions, the air oppressive with smoke and unpleasant odours, the incessant roar of cannon and musketry of all kind of strange sounds . . . "[29] His hope for an immediate end did not materialize. Four hundred private homes were ablaze, as was the Prefecture of Police and the Palais de Justice. Ferré ordered Léon-Guillaume-Edmond Mégy to wreck these two public buildings and to set them on fire. With the burning of the Hôtel de Ville, there was a solid wall of flames along the Seine water front from the rue de Rivoli, to the Tuileries and to the Place Lobau.[30] Several famous buildings were saved, however, among them the Théâtre Chatelet and the Louvre. The staff in the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital opposite Notre Dame squelched the flames in the cathedral in order to save injured men inside.[31]

Because the burnings were such an effective part of the city's defense, stories began to circulate about petroleuses,

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[28]Vizetelly, My Adventures, p. 330; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 333.

[29]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 338.

[30]Bruhat, Dautry, and Tersen, La Commune, p. 254; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 336.

[31]Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 70; and Vizetelly, My Adventures, p. 231.

who were purportedly women paid to set buildings on fire. The story of the petroleuses became popular during Bloody Week but no one knows for sure if there actually was such a band of women. Though many people in the city discounted the story, others fully believed it. Colonel Hofmann from the U.S. Embassy wrote, on May 26th, "Kerosene is the madness of the hour. Peaceable housewives are closing the cellar openings that come out onto the sidewalks, under the absurd pretext that gangs of women are roaming the streets and throwing kerosene into cellars, then setting fire to it."[32] Certainly those fighting for the Commune denied the existence of such women. Because women helped in building the barricades and in fighting, it is possible they might have lit some fires for military strategy. Article 14 of the statutes of the Union des Femmes pour la Defense de Paris et les Soins aux Blessés stated that any money left after administrative cost would go for kerosene.[33] Whether or not the petroleuses actually existed does not lessen the horror of the destructiveness of fire.

The burning of Paris by the Communards as a military strategy perhaps illustrates best the basic problem which plagued the Commune until it had its back to the wall. The

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[32]Thomas, The Women, p. 167.

[33]Thomas, The Women, p. 169.

lack of coordination, direction and initiative that the Commune exhibited in political affairs held true of the military action as well. Much in the central city was burned, sometimes by direction and sometimes not. One of the reasons for the Communards' doing this was to insult the Versaillese by destroying various traditional shrines when their increasingly frustrated military efforts made defeat obvious.

Meantime, the Versaillese systematically closed in on Paris. The regular troops advanced despite the fires; barricades rose everywhere, with women and children contributing their efforts to repulse the regulars. The Versaillese's desire on the 23rd was to take Montmartre and the Right Bank. Fighting the women's battalion in the Place Blanc, the regulars drove them to the Place Pigalle. Women, it might be noted, were fierce fighters and also were the ones who cried for the most blood in the executions.[34] The 24th of May was to be devoted to clearing the Left Bank, the fortress of the Luxembourg, and the Panthéon. By the 25th, the Commune was making its last desperate attempts to hold Paris. The Place Vendôme fell and regular troops pushed on to the Bourse. With Paris almost in their clutches, the

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[34]John B. Marsh, "The Last Days of the Commune," The Gentleman's Magazine, CCXXI (1871), p. 238; and Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 290.

Versailles forces formed a fan-like pattern. The Pont-au-Change formed the axis, with the left wing along the rues du Faubourg Saint-Martin and de Flandre and the right wing encompassing the streets east of the Boulevard Saint Michel.[35] Despite each advance, the Federals continued to fight and to die. At last the fighting ended on May 28th when the last redoubt of the Communards at Père-Lachaise cemetery fell to the regulars.

The events of Bloody Week left Paris exhausted from the onslaught of terror and bloodshed. Although the Commune had not committed more than a few executions prior to May 22nd, the ensuing bloodbath took 877 Versaillese and between 17,000 and 20,000 Parisian victims.[36] The obsession with reprisal displayed by both sides had brought things to such a pass. The horrors of Bloody Week were the worst instance of urban unrest in the entire nineteenth century.

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[35]Winock and Azéma, Les Communards, pp. 148-49; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 347.

[36]Williams, The French Revolution, p. 151; and Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 418. These figures are an average for the widely varying estimates recorded by a number of prominent figures or government agencies at the time.

CHAPTER VI

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN REACTION TO THE VIOLENCE IN FRANCE

> Human nature shrinks in horror from the deeds that have been done in Paris. The crimes of the Insurgents have surpassed the most gloomy forebodings of what would be accomplished under the Red Flag. The burning of Paris was diabolical; the shooting of the hostages "a deed without a name." But it seems as if we were destined to forget the work of these maddened savages in the spectacle of the vengeance wreaked upon them. The wholesale executions inflicted by the Versailles soldiery, the triumph, the glee, the ribaldry of the "Party of Order," sicken the soul.[1]

The horrors experienced in France from March to May, 1871, produced as assortment of feelings on the part of foreigners. Great Britain and the other European countries had been approached by Thiers, representing the French government, during the initial stages of the Parisian Government of National Defense. Since that time, at the first sounds of grumblings in France, the outside world took a keen interest in the civil strife. The English and American governments and press reacted to the French civil war. The Times of London and the New York Times focused on the actual events of war, what the war meant, and what the far-reaching effects would be. The emphasis shifted from stress on the Commune's misdeeds to an equal condemnation of the Versaillese' cruelty.

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[1]The Times (London), June 1, 1871, p. 9; and Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 417.

Long after the end of the Commune on May 28th, the newspapers carried the obituaries of prominent Frenchmen who fell on behalf of either the Parisian government or the national government during this period.

In Parliament Lord Elcho broached the question of what was to happen to those Parisians who had destroyed the city and who escaped from France.[2] Another time, a query arose from a member of the Commons concerning the execution of insurgents without trials during the events from March 18 to May 28.[3] In the United States The Congressional Globe reported that Mr. Haldeman proposed this resolution:

> "Resolved," That this House has witnessed with profound regret the angry severity with which the French Government, of which M. A. Thiers is the head, has pursued prisoners captured by it from the government called "the Commune" in Paris.[4]

However, the objections of various members in the House of Representatives defeated this resolution. Congress, then, took little more than passing note of what was taking place. This lack of official attention reflected the repugnance of the episode to the American public.

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[2]Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series: Commencing with the Accession of WILLIAM IV, Vol. CCVI (London: Cornelius Buck, 1871), May 26, 1871, p. 1327.

[3]Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, June 2, 1871, p. 1435.

[4]F. Rives and J. Rives and George A. Bailey, The Congressional Globe (Washington: Office of the Congressional Globe, 1872), December 18, 1871, p. 200.

> In regard to French internal politics, we [Americans] had a certain impatience, a sort of annoyance because the French did not, according to our ideas, settle down and behave themselves. We could not see why a republic should continue to be so unstable, and for explanation fell back on our old ideas of French fickleness and French immorality.[5]

Not all reactions, however, were wholly unfavorable:

> A few individuals of vision, like Wendell Phillips and Julia Ward Howe, and a few friendly papers, recognized that behind the revolution were some sincere and worthy impulses: the earnest wish to maintain the Republic; the desire to save France from dismemberment; the distrust of the great monarchist majority in the Assembly and the conviction that it had made a dishonorable peace; and even the principle of decentralization, of local self-government, as against the absolutism of a central power. But even these expressed regret that there had been recourse to force, and were horrified by the excesses committed . . . Many persons saw only the mob element, and allowed it to confirm or revive their former prejudices.[6]

By comparison, the newspapers, both American and British, reacted immediately and strongly to the events of the first month of the Commune. At the outset of Paris' determination to defy the national French government, The Times of London supported Thiers' purpose of making the capital submit:

> The insurgents in arms must be at once attacked. The lesson must be impressed on them, at whatever cost, that the first necessity of society is obedience to the laws promulgated by its will

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[5]Elizabeth Brett White, American Opinion of France From Lafayette to Poincare (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), p. 213.

[6]White, American Opinion, p. 208.

and to officers duly appointed while executing such laws.[7]

The paper was quick to attack the reported bloodshed of the initial days of the Commune:

> The news from Paris is most alarming. The Republic has received its baptism of blood.
>
> It would be useless, and worse than useless, to attempt to disguise the importance of these events. It is, perhaps, the worst symptom of the emergency that a readiness to shed blood on the least provocation goes hand in hand with an almost universal aversion from manly fighting. The insurgents at Montmartre avow no political objective; their aims are negative; they desire to do nothing but oppose the Executive and retain in their own hands the means of destruction. Courage, honor, the very sense of shame, have died out of them under the terrible experience of the war, and they have become utterly useless and contemptible, in their own words, mere canaille, --barely worth the shot that must be spent upon them.
>
> The work of the Executive Government at this moment is to maintain the authority of law among a populace as passionate in its fickleness and as cruel in its passion as beasts of prey. These may seem harsh words, but we pass no judgement on the inhabitants of the faubourgs of Paris in stating the facts in their condition. It is a matter of the first necessity to the whole country that these disturbances should be put down. The existing Government reigns by the best of all possible rights.[8]

The New York Times likewise took a dim view of the rebels' situation in the early days:

> It [France] is no longer a nation, but a bear-garden of contending factions--a State settling

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[7] The Times, March 20, 1871, p. 8.

[8] The Times, March 20, 1871, p. 8.

> down into chaos, and ripe for another despot with his "whiff of grapeshot."[9]

Reporters for the London paper also recounted their impressions of the atmosphere during the first days of revolutionary rule.

> To go from one group to another and listen to the curious combination of baseness and imbecility which characterized the utterances of the speakers, was interesting as a psychological study, for it left one in doubt whether some curious magnetic current of insanity was not sweeping over the surface of men's brains, and suggested the horrid idea that the whole population was going mad either under the intoxication of success or the influence of horror . . . [10]

This account of the prevailing mood in Paris was at once accurate and prophetic of the unreasonable acts to come.

This feeling of disgust carried over into April, when the newspapers continued to carry articles and editorials criticizing inefficiency, instability, and irrationality.

> . . . but when it is considered that they are masters of the city, masters of property and life, that they engage to kill three for one--three peaceable men for one of their soldiers--when they talk of taking "tooth for tooth," and the rest of the jaw into the bargain if they please, it is impossible to repress a shudder and to ask if there might not be found some common ground of conciliation amid these abysses. There are moments among nations fallen into decay when force becomes the only law. Will the violent convulsions in which the Commune is now

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[9] New York Times (New York), March 28, 1871, p. 4.

[10] The Times, March 21, 1871, p. 9.

> struggling be controlled otherwise than by force? I wish I could think so, but I dare not hope it.[11]

The Times blasted the lack of sound political operation which prevailed in all the Commune's control of the city.

> Paris, we are to understand, is tyrannized over by the Commune--a body of men weakened by division and by their own violence, compelled to live by plunder, and detested by all good citizens, who only long to be rid of their presence.[12]

Further:

> Apart from all questions of prudence and justice, it is impossible to avoid a conviction that the contemporary history of France displays a deplorable lack of political intelligence on the part of all who have been called to any public duty.[13]

The Times also attacked the Commune's preoccupation with senseless violence and irrelevant anti-clericalism:

> I took too much for granted at first the intelligence of men who have seized upon the capital of France. All they do is worthless and unmeaning. They abuse the Assembly, impeach men who are not in their power, seize on their property without being able to derive any benefit from it, issue decrees against churches and congregations without being able to strike at them efficaciously, break open a few coffers, plunder a few churches, imprison a few Jesuits, the Archbishop of Paris and the Curé of the Madeleine, molest and annoy many people, not daring to cut off their heads, but putting them to ransom . . .[14]

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[11] The Times, April 8, 1871, p. 8.

[12] The Times, April 3, 1871, p. 9.

[13] The Times, April 13, 1871, p. 7.

[14] The Times, April 7, 1871, p. 8.

With each new civil or military action taken, the newspapers in London and New York shuddered at the Commune's combination of ineptitude and cruelty. They recounted, as with the episode of the hostages, the crucial activities during April which would determine the improvement or deterioration of the situation.

During the early weeks of May, the two papers continued to confine their editorial comment to attacks on the Commune's vengefulness. For instance, the New York Times, in reporting on the destruction of the Vendôme Column, added its comments on the significance of the event:

> The Parisians seem to think that they have broken with the Napoleonic tradition in wreaking idle vengeance upon the record of the glories of 1805. The true significance of their act consists in the proof it affords that they are incapable of governing themselves, and are therefore ripe for a fresh infliction of personal rule. The people of the capital have profited very little by disaster if they suppose that despotism can be the work of any single man. The Communists are no wiser than their fathers, who pulled down the great monarch to make way for the great Emperor, instead of patiently seeking to found, in popular moderation and justice, the true basis of self-government.[15]

The Commune's razing of Parisian buildings received like appraisal from The Times:

> The destruction of the Tuileries, the Louvre [this is an error] and the Hotel de Ville will, perhaps, be branded in history as the most demoniacal deed of Vandalism ever perpetrated.

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[15] New York Times, May 18, 1871, p. 4.

> Not only is this barbarous ruin wrought on France by Frenchmen, on Paris by Parisians, but it was wrought without a shadow of provocation; its blackness is unrelieved even by the necessities of civil war; it is an act of deliberate and demoniacal malice. It is clear the conflagration was deliberately planned, as a mere act of revenge, when the Communists saw their cause was ruined. The buildings were fired by petroleum, and it is easy to understand how furiously such structures, filled with old woodwork, would burn when this terrible inflammatory agent had been applied to them. The Communists had threatened from the first that if forced to surrender Paris they would surrender it in ruins, and they have fulfilled their infamous threat. The spirit is nothing less than devilish which would thus consign a city to conflagration, and a population to slaughter and ruin, in revenge for a party defeat. . . . they have revealed a spirit too inhuman to have credited beforehand, and by their last act they will be "damned to everlasting fame."[16]

The paper also dwelt on the famous people executed:

> The Insurgents have fulfilled, so far as they were able, their threats against the lives of their hostages as mercilessly as their other menaces. The Archbishop of Paris, the Curé of Madeleine, President Bonjean, with priests, gendarmes, soldiers, and other victims . . . have been shot. This massacre of distinguished and inoffensive men is one of those crimes which never die, and which blacken forever the memory of their authors.[17]

Bloody Week, however, precipitated a shift in the newspapers' object of attack. For the first time the papers devoted much of their criticism to the Versaillese as well as the insurgents. At the end the New York Times said:

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[16] The Times, May 25, 1871, p. 9.

[17] The Times, May 29, 1871, p. 9.

> . . . purely fiendish as have been the transgressions of the Commune, it is doubtful whether the Government of Versailles acts either nobly or wisely in taking so fiendish a revenge. If men, women, and children are being massacred in the indiscriminate way indicated by the telegrams, there must needs be much injustice perpetrated, and the preparation made for a legacy of undying strife.
>
> In giving it the slightest claim to martydom, the Versailles Government has lent it a vitality of which its own crimes had effectively deprived it.[18]

In the aftermath of Bloody Week, The Times continued to blast the French, Versaillese and Communards alike:

> That which we seem at present to see in this outbreak of hell is the permanent creation of yawning abysses between classes, institutions, memories, and men. Paris may, perhaps, be rebuilt; but what is to wipe out the blood with which every street of Paris is now stained, and when will women cease to hand down to their children the . . . hatred of May, 1871? Where, above all, are the signs of that combined generosity, firmness, and foresight in statesmen or soldiers which alone could lay the first stone of reconciliation?[19]

Indeed, The Times concluded that:

> The French are filling up the darkest page in the book of their own or the world's history. The charge of ruthless cruelty is no longer limited to one party or to one class of persons. The Versailles troops seem inclined to outdo the Communists in their lavishness of human blood.[20]

The newspapers did not end their editorials in May but continued into June with comments on the destructions and

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[18] New York Times, May 28, 1871, p. 4.

[19] The Times, May 29, 1871, p. 9.

[20] The Times, May 31, 1871, p. 9.

evils practiced during and after the fall of the Commune on May 28th. The New York Times reported in early June:

> Apart from the senseless folly of the action [tearing down the Vendôme Column] which has drawn down upon its perpetrators the indignant contempt of civilized Europe, this piece of barbarism suggests various reflections.
>
> It might have been supposed that if Paris spared anything, it would be the Column Vendôme. It was not the glory of NAPOLEON alone that it typified, but that of France.[21]

The Times carried on the criticism of the atrocities of the Versaillese, especially noting their lack of restraint dealing with the vanquished Communards. Indeed, the paper accused the provincials of committing their horrors gleefully.[22] The Times maintained its attack on the insurgents:

> The murder of the hostages certainly presents some marks of distinction, for these atrocious acts were purely acts of vengeance; they were perpetrated against noncombatants, and could have no effect on the fortune of war.[23]

Actually, the coverage continued into the following years, even decades, as the death of prominent figures reminded the public of the affair. One article, "Last of the Commune," published on December 12, 1871, recounted the execution by the regular government of Rossel and Ferré at

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[21] New York Times, June 4, 1871, p. 4.

[22] The Times, June 1, 1871, p. 9.

[23] The Times, June 1, 1871, p. 9.

Satory.[24] The column suggested that, though Thiers claimed to have nothing to do with their deaths, he could actually have prevented them. Further on, the article included an account of each prisoner's reaction to the news of his impending death, followed by a description of the actual shooting of the men. The writer, Ashby, felt that the execution of Rossel displayed lack of wisdom. Because Ferré was as bad as Rigault, there was not much sympathy for him. Rossel, who had nothing to do with the atrocities, had many admirers. Aldolphe Thiers, the leader against the Commune and, in the opinion of The Times, "the greatest Frenchman of his time," died in 1877.[25] In his obituary he was credited with raising France from "abasement"[26] when he "crushed the Commune of Paris in 1871."[27] Editorials were written, along with the eulogies, about the value of Thiers' accomplishments in his service to his country. M. Vuillot in his Univers commented:

> He is a celebrity for the moment; he was busier than anybody but about nothing, bringing down everything to his own level. This is a poor way of filling a coffin. He had not time to know himself; God did not leave him time to die. Now see him,

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[24] New York Times, December 12, 1871, p. 5.

[25] The Times, September 7, 1877, p. 7.

[26] The Times, September 5, 1877, p. 9.

[27] New York Times, September 5, 1877, p. 4.

> perhaps among those who wish they had never lived.[28]

Even as late as 1889, obituaries concerning well-known Communards appeared. Félix Pyat's death was noted in the New York Times with the comment that he had been condemned to death "par contumace" for having incited a French civil war and for having been a leader of the Commune.[29] Thus, even twenty years later being connected with the Commune merited mention.

Such was the response of two foreign observers to the events of the Commune of Paris. In a time of urban unrest in our own society, we would do well to remember the horror which others felt toward France when their urban strife reached the level of full-fledged civil war.

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[28] The Times, September 5, 1877, p. 5.

[29] New York Times, August 5, 1889, p. 5.

CHAPTER VII

AFTERMATH

When the last gun had fired from the last barricade, Paris was like a city stricken by some natural catastrophe. Great greasy clouds of smoke hung over the smouldering houses, foul with rained-caked soot. Pools of blood, smashed streets, littered corpses, ruined barricades, ordures. Whole streets in Belleville were deserted. The order to give up all arms had been posted, and in the morning piles of rifles appeared on the pavements, no one knew whence. The east of the city was dark and tight-shut. In the silence prowled armed patrols who shot at sight.

But in the west "normal" life was flowing back. The streets were brightly lit once more. By June 3, a hysterical "normality" filled the Boulevard cafés with the shrill laughter of relief, a gaiety which sickened decent men almost as much as the slaughter.[1]

Despite the desolation, Thiers and the regular government felt joyous in victory. In order to show the French prowess to the Prussians, the review of the army was celebrated at Longchamps on June 29. Another reason for surveying the troops was to applaud the victory of the civil war. Thiers commented:

> It was the joy of a happy convalescence on a spring day, and at that moment, I found the burden I had to bear less heavy . . . Back at Versailles, I gathered at a great dinner all the military leaders; to the reception afterwards there came the greater part of the Assembly, without distinction of Right and Left. So all went off for the best on this day, which was a good day for France.[2]

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[1]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, pp. 365-65.

[2]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 373.

However, this was only a facade, for though the days of the Commune were officially over, the horrors in store for the radical Parisians remained a real part of their lives. Even after the end on May 28th, the Versaillese continued their vengefulness by means of trials, deportations and executions. It was not until years later, when much mischief had been perpetrated, that the French nation tried to correct the blunder of severely penalizing the captured insurgents.

After Paris surrendered, it was divided into four "military districts." For awhile martial justice of the most ruthless type prevailed in the areas. For instance, Ladmirault, a general for the Versaillese, made it legal to execute those who were caught firing from a house. In addition, public meetings were not allowed, a curfew for public places was enforced, and a flood of denunciations was sent to the police by informers who desired to pay back old vengeances.[3] So numerous and indiscriminant were the arrests that 1,090 persons[4] had to be released when their relatives testified for them. Unlucky ones were not even "legally" executed, being put to death at Luxembourg, the Châtelet, La Roquette and Mazas prisons and the Lobau barracks.

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[3]Williams, The French Revolution, p. 152; Vizetelly, My Adventures, p. 349; and Fiaux, Histoire de la Guerre Civile, pp. 572-73.

[4]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 365.

The only two verdicts available for captured insurgents were immediate death or transfer to Versailles for further questioning. The flamboyant and ruthless General Gallifet made the latter difficult because he would stop prisoner columns to examine individuals in the line. A writer for the Daily News commented, "I saw that it was not a good thing to be noticeably taller or smaller, dirtier or cleaner, older or uglier than one's neighbor."[5] If somehow Gallifet recognized a leader, the man was doomed. On entering Versailles, the prisoners were set upon by crowds who beat, spit and swore at them. Some of the prisoners were paraded around, while others were forced to sit in the sun to bake. If these men made it to safety, they would be sent to one of four locations: the cellars of the Grandes Ecuries, the Orangerie, the Satory depot and the stables of the Saint-Cyr military school.[6] Those who were considered especially dangerous were incarcerated in the "Lion's Den" near the Chateau Thérance. The evils and violence practiced in each retaining area reflected the terror of the whole episode.

Satory, as an example, was equipped to house only a fraction of the people confined there. Ferrat, a

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[5]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 366.

[6]Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 411; Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 416; and Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 366.

non-commissioned officer in the National Guards, wrote his mother of what he saw in the prisons:

> On Sunday morning, I was hurrying to clasp you in my arms and hear about the dangers you must have had during the battle in your district, when I was arrested by the soldiers opposite the Magasins Réunis and taken to the Nouvelle France Barracks, where I passed the night in a cellar, the floor of which shone with mud several inches deep; it is true that to remedy this slight inconvenience the number of prisoners was so large that there was hardly room enough for us to stand upright, and then only if the fat ones pressed close against the thin. The next day, we were taken to Versailles surrounded by an escort which left nothing to be desired in the way of keeping us secure. It is quite impossible to tell you, my dear Mother, of the enthusiastic welcome the Versaillese gave us. Let it suffice you to know that the words 'brigands' and 'thieves' mingled pretty comfortably with 'murderers' and 'incendiaries.' 'Shoot them! Shoot them!'--such seemed to be the conclusion held by the Versaillese who had gathered in thick groups on our path. Strengthened by our good consciences, we remained calm and for my part, my heart was bitter. What! said I to myself, I whose whole life has been nothing but self-denial and sacrifice for others, I am to be treated like this! I a thief! I, who have had in my hands enough to make me rich and left my post as poor as when I took it up? I a murderer! I who have had in my hands the lives of a score of prisoners and set them free? Incendiary! Brigand! Poor people, they little know me who can dress me out in this character. Let us pass over this chapter of human error.[7]

The extended nightmare of the captives varied, for those who missed these horrors were loaded on twenty-five old ships, which were provided to take care of the overflow of the prisons.

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[7]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, pp. 367-68.

Parisians left in the capital still had to dodge the dangers of capture. For instance, Edouard Moreau, a member of the moribund Central Committee, was arrested in front of his wife and taken away. Others suffered similar plights, especially those men who had actively participated in the radical movement of Paris. Eugène Varlin, a labor leader, was recognized and taken to the site where Lecomte and Thomas had met their end. Though many were for shooting him in this garden, the officers paraded him in the streets, where the crowd molested and finally shot him. Thiers' comment to all ruthlessness was, "The ground is paved with their corpses; this terrible spectacle will be a lesson to them."[8] But the problem soon became one of the captors, for the corpses, great in number, began to foul the air and cause a health problem. Losses included not only people but also economic and artistic valuables. As with the estimate of the lives lost during the period of the Commune, the monetary costs were difficult to estimate. However, the figure came to between ₤9,658,108 and ₤25,000,000.[9] In addition to assessable damages, part of the economic loss must be figured for those French workers who disappeared after the Commune. Instead of France's enjoying the benefit of the

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[8]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 369.

[9]Vizetelly, My Adventures, p. 348; Fetridge, The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune, pp. 378-79.

skills of these people, those who were able to escape took up residence in other lands. This caused a shortage of working men in Paris and in turn hurt the capital economically. The artistic loss amounted to an enormous deprivation to the world because, though the Commune refrained from ruining art, buildings and structures burned in the conflict could not be replaced. Though several of the buildings were refurbished, most suffered.

For those who survived the ordeals of capture and imprisonment, the prospect of a trial was of no hope or comfort since the judges were those men against whom the defendants had fought. Some of the trials were carried out along the common law principle, enabling judges to assign capital punishment, an abuse of power supposedly abolished in 1848. Not only did the magistrates fail to act fairly, but also the lawyers offered little or, at times, no help to their clients. The infamous Third Council of War, presided over by Charles-Auguste Merlin,[10] an officer under Bazaine, held its first trial as an experiment. Included among those who came before this tribunal were: Ferré, Assi, Jourde, Grousset, Régère, Billioray, Courbet, Urbain, Victor Clément, Trinquet, Champy, Bastoul, Decamps, Ulysse

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[10]Arsène-Jules Claretie, Histoire de la Révolution de 1870-1871 (Paris: Rouge Freres, Dunon et Fresne, 187?), p. 723; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 413.

Parent, Ferrat and Lullier--all recognizable as prominent Communards or Central Committeemen.[11] Of them, three, Jourde, Ferré, and Trinquet, defended themselves brilliantly. Ferré especially showed his dynamic personality, for he would only deal with the Council of War instead of the examining judge. The letter he wrote stated:

> Whereas I have had the honour of being appointed member of the Commune of Paris by 13,700 electors of the XVIIIth district, whereas I accepted that mandate and it was my duty to carry it out loyally,
>
> Whereas, the Commune of Paris having fallen, its defenders are to suffer the usual fate of vanquished popular parties; and whereas their characters, their doctrines, their actions and even their intentions are twisted by partiality and misinterpreted in the most odious war,
>
> Whereas, the partisans of the Commune being killed, imprisoned or driven into hiding, cannot at present re-establish the truth and brand their slanders,
>
> Whereas the judges, military or civil, cannot form a properly impartial opinion of a cause against which they have taken up arms,
>
> Whereas, too, as far as I am concerned, the unspeakable treatment of which I have been the object and the cruel persecution exercised against members of my family deprive me of all means of defence,
>
> Whereas, finally, in order to safeguard his principles and dignity, these circumstances dictate to the true Republican the conduct which he must follow:
>
> For these motives,
>
> I declare that, excepting questions concerning my identity, I refuse formally to answer every other question which may be put to me,

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[11] Vizetelly, My Adventures, p. 350; and Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 422.

> and that I intend to take no active part whatsoever in the trial which is about to begin.[12]

As far as his defense went, he would not accept his lawyer's help, but, instead, pleaded his own case. Though Merlin interrupted many times, Ferré read to the end of his speech, which caused the audience to admire him. Eventually, however, he was sentenced to death. The fates of the other men who were tried in this way were Lullier, sentenced but reprieved; Urbain, sentenced to hard labor; Assi, Champy, Billioray, Grousset, Régère, Verdure, Ferrat, sentenced to transportation to a fortified place; Rastoul and Jourde, sentenced to simple transportation; Victor Clément, three months deportation; Courbet, six months deportation and rebuilding the Vendôme Column; Descampes and Parent, acquitted.[13] This tribunal also sentenced the thirty-nine members of the Central Committee of the National Guard thusly: for those present--two to hard labor for life, eight to transportation to a fortified place, three to deportation; for those who escaped, twelve to death, one to hard labor for life, eight to transportation to a fortified place, and one to hard labor for a period.[14]

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[12]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 375.

[13]Claretie, Histoire de la Révolution, p. 726; Vizetelly, My Adventures, pp. 350-51; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 420.

[14]Vizetelly, My Adventures, p. 352.

In addition, women who were accused of being petroleuses and abetting the Commune were brought to trial on September 4 and 5. Five women came before the Fourth Council of War, with the reactionary, Boisdenemetz, presiding. Though nothing specifically could be proven, except that they were living with men out of wed-lock, the five women received severe punishments--Eugénie Suétens, Joséphine Marchais and Elizabeth Rétiffe, death; Eulalie Papavoine, transportation to a fortified place; and Lucie Bocquin, ten years of hard labor;[15] following their judgments, however, they were sent to Guiana.

The trials were a farce; for, despite the pretense of legality, they were nothing more than a convenient way of getting rid of undesirables. Trial after trial condemned men on flimsy grounds. Those who had connections with the Lecomte and Thomas murders were executed--as were even those who had tried to save these two men.[16] Journalists were tried for articles written, although some had not, in fact, written those columns for which they were accused. From

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[15]Thomas, The Women, p. 187 and pp. 222-23; Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 422; and Claretie, Histoire de la Revolution, p. 727.

[16]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 377.

Paris to Versailles to Vincennes and on to Chartres, the twenty-six Councils of War[17] tried men against whom they had fought. In almost every instance of the 10,137 sentenced and 3,313 condemned in absence,[18] the only wrong committed was carrying arms against the government. But between August 7, 1871, and January 22, 1873, the judges mercilessly continued to wreak their vengeance, deepening the abyss between the French people. However, on November 28, 1871, Thiers called for a Commission of Pardons,[19] headed by Joseph Martel. This body--"Commission of Murders!" as a Left Winger branded it--was composed of fifteen men, reactionary in political affiliation. With Thiers' advice and consent, these men sitting on the Commission from 1871 to 1875 heard 6,501 cases, of which 2,502 appeals were handed out. More to their credit, however, was the fact that, of 110 death sentences, eighty-four were commuted, as were 346 of the 739 transportations. In 1875 the official list revealed the following: 270 people, death; 410 people, hard labor; 3,989 people, transportation.[20]

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[17]Horne, The Fall of Paris, p. 422; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 424.

[18]Mason, The Paris Commune, p. 292; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 443.

[19]Fiaux, Histoire de la Guerre Civile, p. 619; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 431.

[20]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 379; Mason,

The most famous of the female leaders, Louise Michel, appeared before the Sixth Council of War on December 16, 1871. Though a lawyer was provided, she preferred to defend herself against the charges of complicity in the arrest and execution of Generals Lecomte and Clément Thomas, of a plan to attempt to assassinate Thiers, and of organizing the Union de Femmes and the Vigilance Committee. This intelligent, courageous woman admitted to all charges brought before her, though she actually was not guilty on all counts.

> What I demand of you, who call yourselves a Council of War, who sit as my judges, and who do not disguise yourselves as the Commission for Pardons; you, who are military men, and who deliver judgement before the eyes of everyone: what I demand of you is the Satory Plain, where my brothers are already fallen. I must be cut off from society; you have been told to do so. Well, the Commissioner of the Republic is right. Since it seems that every heart that beats for freedom has no right to anything but a little slug of lead, I demand my share. If you let me live, I shall never cease to cry for vengeance; and I shall avenge my brothers by denouncing the murders of the Commission for Pardon . . . If you are not cowards, kill me![21]

The Commission did not vote for her death, but instead, sent her along with others to fave the horrors of Aubervie.

Others were sent to New Caledonia. On May 3, 1872, these prisoners began their journey, where nothing awaited them except, perhaps, a larger jail. The trip itself was an

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[20] The Paris Commune, p. 292; and Lissagaray, History of the Commune, p. 443.

[21] Thomas, The Women, p. 201; and Lissagaray, History of Commune, pp. 435-36.

ordeal, for the men and women were locked in cages. Many got sick and died. New Caledonia was almost uninhabitable except the natives, who still head-hunted. No profitable occupation could be engaged in. A few, the most prominent of which were Rochefort, Paschal Grousset, and Jourde escaped, but their protest against conditions only increased severities and harshness.

Many Commune participants managed to escape, usually to Belgium, the United States, Switzerland, and Great Britain, and these men and women were tried "in absentia."[22] For instance, Bergeret made it to the United States, where he lived until his death, while Cluseret ended up in Switzerland, aided by a clerical disguise. For years he wandered through Europe, eventually returning to France and in old age was elected to the Chamber of Deputies. Some of those in London managed to start life afresh but the majority, especially the semi-skilled workers, found life very hard. Police surveillance remained fairly constant for a long while. Brunel, perhaps, had the most unusual end. In England he became a member of the faculty of the Royal Navy College at Dartmouth. He led a very respectable life in these years in Britain. Those who went to Belgium and Switzerland were not given a warm reception, however. As

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[22]Bruhat, Dautry and Tersen, La Commune, p. 331; and Horne, The Fall of Paris, pp. 424-26.

for those who remained in France after they had been acquitted, they continued to be watched and restricted as to where they could live.

While the Communards faced hardships, humiliation, and death, the Left maintained a drive to erase these stigmas of the past. This campaign for amnesty finally made some headway after the Assembly was disbanded on December 31, 1875. When the elections in February, 1876, were over, 350 Republicans out of 530 members were elected to the Chamber of deputies.[23] Some pardons followed, enabling a number of Communards to return. Workers, at this time, demanded the restoration of Communards and the cry went up for amnesty. Party platforms called for support of the crusade; people celebrated openly the anniversary of March 18; wreaths were carried to Pere-Lachaise in recognition of Bloody Week; and old Communards were elected to municipal posts. All this agitation finally brought the long-anticipated full amnesty which Léon Gambetta forced through the Chamber on July 10, 1880.[24]

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[23]Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871, p. 383; and Irene Collins, The Government and the Newspaper Press in France, 1814-1881 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 177.

[24]Frederic H. Seager, The Boulanger Affair; Political Crossroad of France; 1886-1889 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 8; and Fiaux, Histoire de la Guerre Civile, p. 637.

Achieving this goal, however, did not end the Communards' work for their original ideals. They labored together until the Boulangist agitation destroyed their unity.[25] Thus, the men who gave their allegiance to the Commune finally parted ways. Because of the severity of its repression, the Commune, has enjoyed a sympathy which its performance did not merit. In the Communist world in particular, it remains, to this day, a hallowed episode:

> The memory of Louis-Napoleon's glittering masked balls at the vanished Tuileries has been swallowed up by the mists of the past; little enough is still recalled about Trochu's spiritless defence of Paris; and in France even the humiliation at Bismarck's hands is largely forgotten. But the "little flame" of the Communards continues to be kept alight. The link between the brave balloonists of Paris and the spacemen of ninety-five years later may seem a tenuous one. But the course of history often flows down strange and unexpected channels. In 1964, when the first three-man team of Soviet cosmonauts went up in the Voskhod, they took with them into space three sacred relics; a picture of Marx, a picture of Lenin--and a ribbon off a Communard flag.[26]

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[25]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, pp. 350-351; and Brogan, France Under the Republic, pp. 205-206.

[26]Horne, The Fall of Paris, pp. 432-33.

The factionalism that divided and destroyed Paris in 1871 uncannily parallels the American urban situation of today. The riots of the Sixties revealed the powder-keg potential of the explosive groups precariously co-existing in the cities of this country. Underlying the racial, campus, social welfare, and ecological crises besetting the nation's metropolises lurks the ominous shadow of an unwanted foreign war. Similarly in France a century ago, the potential for civil unrest coincided with the aftermath of an unacceptable military venture--the Franco-Prussian War. The causes for civil strife anywhere are, of course, deep-seated and diverse. Nevertheless, the scene of France one hundred years ago provides an uneasy premonition of the American problems of today.

Though divided by a century and an ocean, a comparison between the two produces parallels which can offer an insight into the seriousness of contemporary urban unrest. In both cases, the people found their leadership and government lacking. In the past two presidential elections the common complaint was that there was no choice or that the voter could only vote against, not for, a candidate. Groups in American society today are vocal, critical, and demonstrative in their efforts to get results from the slow processes of democracy. Unhappy with a military defeat in addition to the pressing economic and social problems, the French

likewise were neither silent nor inactive in their protest. The Parisians were quick to question Thiers' leadership as a bastion of conservatism in a time when liberal action was in demand. Thiers' deafness to the Parisians' complaints matches the present "credibility gap," or more correctly communication gap which has separated President Nixon and the public over the issue of Cambodia.

The malaise of the intellectual community today has taken the form of violence and demonstration, protesting socio-political issues. There have been civil disorders with marches on the capital, riots, and murders. The killing recently of several students on the Kent State campus is remindful of the skirmish of the Rue de la Paix, in the twilight period before the full onset of the Commune. These two incidents are not the only comparisons that can be drawn. Just as civil unrest in France brought the days of October 31, 1870, and January 22, 1871, so the U.S. is experiencing "demonstration days" today. Buildings, monuments, and other public property were damaged and destroyed by the French just as today radicals burn and bomb. The Parisians tore down the Vendôme Column as a demonstration of their disapproval of the history of France. On May 14, 1970, nearly a hundred years later, the students at Columbia University in New York City bombed the statue "Alma Mater," which was

a "symbol of the university."[27] The eruption of destructive acts perpetrated by mobs such as these can only be a symptom of a much more serious illness. On the other side of the political fence the "silent" majority opposes the radical activities of the new left. Drawn from the blue collar workers and Southern white conservatives, this faction is suspicious of the student radicals and Eastern establishment. Marching under the banners of the flag, a group of laborers recently not very peacefully demonstrated their discontent with anti-war feeling. Similarly, the Versaillese, composed of rural conservatives, deplored the sophistication and liberality of the Parisians. The leaders of the new left might well note that it was the provincials who succeeded a century ago in France.

The polarization taking place in this country today between the "long hairs" and the "hard hats" increasingly is diminishing the effectiveness of the moderates. If the trend continues, the nation will be divided into two factions which are totally divergent in goals and the methods for attaining them. The danger in all-out polarization is, of course, the probability of a collision between the sides. The ferocious civil war which resulted in France from just such a separation of groups illustrated all too graphically the potential inherent in the situation. Unfortunately, the cry of "Let us make the revolution, then we will ask what

for," contributes strongly to the growing resentment of radicalism. The use of force at Berkeley, Watts, and the Chicago Democratic convention of 1968 shows us that the authorities are not hesitant to use repression to put down civil strife. Constant radical talk, not necessarily even accompanied by extreme action, seems to encourage ruthless reaction. In France, the Communards set out on their own in a flurry of idealism and revolutionary spirit. In the end, they were fearfully crushed by the "establishment." In our ominous times we need now to consider what happened in France in 1870-71, and work together to prevent history from repeating itself. In the words of the philosopher George Santayana, those who do not learn from the mistakes of history are doomed to repeat them.

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