**International: A Lesson from the Paris Commune: Theoretical construction & Negative Effects of Blanquism and Proudhonism on the Commune Revolution**

**——Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Paris Commune**

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Editor's note: **On March 18, 1871, the Paris working class and the working masses staged an armed uprising, overthrew the bourgeois reactionary government, and subsequently established the Paris Commune, the first working-class regime in human history. However, due to the immature leadership and policy errors of the Paris Commune, it failed under the brutal suppression of powerful enemies. An obvious internal cause of the failure was the insufficient theoretical preparation and theoretical armament of the Paris Commune. On May 30, 1871, Marx systematically summarized the lessons learned from the Paris Commune and published the pamphlet "The Civil War in France". While commemorating the heroic and fearless struggle of the Paris Commune, we must deeply understand and learn from this painful lesson.**

150 years ago, the Paris Commune established the world's first proletarian regime. In French, the Paris Commune has always been called "La Commune de Paris", and the spark of the communist movement has been ignited since then.

On March 18, 1871, workers and working people in Paris revolted against the traitorous bourgeois government, and 10 days later established their own regime, the Paris Commune. The Paris Commune introduced a series of governance measures, including democratic elections for public officials, stipulating that salaries do not follow job promotions, the right of the masses to supervise and dismiss "people's servants", the implementation of an eight-hour workday, the promotion of gender equality, the announcement of the separation of church and state, the popularization of primary education and the establishment of vocational education, welcome of foreign revolutionaries to join the Commune, and the practice of the internationalist principles of the proletariat. Marx praised it as a first "working class government" in essence, and "the dawn of the great social revolution that will forever liberate mankind from class society."

However, after the establishment of the Paris Commune, it did not form a strong organizational leadership, did not consciously unite the peasants to expand the revolutionary camp, did not decisively control the financial lifeline by confiscating the Bank of France, and did not seize the opportunity to concentrate on dealing with the enemy's encirclement and suppression. As a result, it was brutally suppressed two months after taking of power.

The Paris Commune movement was a courageous attempt of the proletarian revolution and a fruitful beginning of the proletarian dictatorship. Paris Commune movement played a pioneering role in the international communist movement. At that time, Marx and Engels, who were living in London, had been paying close attention to and strongly supporting the revolutionary actions of the Paris Commune.

On May 30, the third day after the last batch of fighters died, Marx delivered a report entitled "The Civil War in France" to the General Council of the First International, systematically summarizing the Paris Commune movement and deeply analyzing its historical significance and lessons learned. See. **https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/civil\_war\_france.pdf**

In 1891, on the 20th anniversary of the Paris Commune, Engels supplemented and deepened the relevant discussions in "The Civil War in France". The important discussions of the revolutionary mentors have strengthened our understanding and experience of the extreme importance of theoretical construction in the communist movement.

The Paris Commune established a leadership body that combined deliberation and execution, which was named as the Commune Committee.

However, its fatal shortcoming was that it did not have direct and specific guidance of Marxism and did not achieve the correct combination of ideology and theory. Therefore, it did not form a conscious and consistent leadership group that could implement the will of the working class through correct leadership actions. The leadership of the Paris Commune was mixed and divided in theory. A few people had only heard of certain principles of Marxism but had not yet known them. The majority of the Commune Committee adhered to Blanquism, while the minority of its members were mostly believers in Proudhonism.

**Blanquism**

Blanquism was a revolutionary adventurist trend of thought that has existed since the mid-19th century. It was named after its representative figure, Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), and was once prevalent in the French workers' movement.

Blanqui inherited the conspiracy tradition of some utopian communist egalitarians in the late 18th century, and was keen on a small number of revolutionaries to plot riots, overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie, establish a revolutionary dictatorship of a small number of people, and immediately realize communism.

Marx once admired Blanqui's fighting spirit, argued that Blanqui was a revolutionary leader, and tried to introduce him to the **First International.**

However, Marx gave a ruthless criticism of Blanqui's adherence to utopian communism and being influenced by revolutionary adventurism, and firmly opposed his subjective creation of the revolutionary development process through the conspiracy of the so-called "revolutionary alchemist", and especially emphasized that the proletarian movement is a conscious and independent movement of the vast majority of people.

Engels later also criticized Blanqui: "Blanqui imagined all revolutions as sudden changes achieved by a small number of revolutionaries." Blanquism is essentially different from proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship. Engels pointed out that Blanqui was primarily a political revolutionary; he was a socialist only in terms of emotion, that is, in terms of sympathy for the suffering of the people; however, Blanqui had neither a socialism theory nor a definite practical plan for transforming society; Blanqui simply believed that a well-organized minority, as long as they made some attempts at revolutionary change at the right time, could attract the masses and thus achieve a victorious revolution.

Therefore, "Blanqui was a revolutionary of the past generation." (See "Collected Works of Marx and Engels", Volume 18, pages 580-581)

It was precisely under the influence of Blanquism that the Paris Commune Committee made a series of political mistakes. For example, it was satisfied with Paris city as a stage for activities, and its military activities were slow to expand to other provinces. It was ineffective in organizing military resistance, and it also refused to form an alliance with the peasants, and failed to respond to the revolutionary enthusiasm of various places in a timely manner, and to expand the scope of the revolution and the revolutionary camp in a timely manner. As a result, Paris Commune Committee inevitably led to a tragic defeat when the counter-revolutionary forces launched a fierce counterattack.

**Proudhonists**

The members of the Paris Commune Committee, apart from Blanquists, were mainly Proudhonists. Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), who was called "a petty bourgeois utopian" by Marx, had died when the Paris Commune was founded.

However, as a trend of petty bourgeois socialism and anarchism, Proudhonism had a relatively broad social influence since the mid-19th century, and therefore, together with Blanquism, occupied the minds of the leaders of the Paris Commune.

On the one hand, Proudhonism opposed the private ownership of capitalists and landlords, and advocated that all people are born equal and that everyone has the right to enjoy the products of their own labor; on the other hand, it advocated reasonable personal possession and "freedom", "equality" and "independence", and regarded them as the highest requirements of universal human reason.

Therefore, Proudhonism opposes capitalism, but praised capitalism for giving people independence and freedom; Proudhonism pursued communism and equality for all, but argued that the complete elimination of private ownership will deprive people of their independence and freedom.

Therefore, Proudhonism argued that neither communism nor capitalism is completely rational, and the ideal society is a third form society with equality, independence and freedom. The way to achieve the petty-bourgeois private ownership society where "all people are balanced" is "better to burn private property with a slow fire than to impose new forces on it and carry out a massacre" (Lusenbei: "History of Political Economy", Volume 3, pp. 218, 219), that is, humanity should take the path of social reformism and anarchism.

Proudhonists were only a minority in the Paris Commune Committee, but, as Engels said, apart from Proudhon's works, workers had no other spiritual food for nearly 20 years, Proudhon’s influence was considerable.

As a result, in the financial and economic fields under the jurisdiction of Proudhonists, the revolution was extremely ineffective, and the national bank and the economic lifeline of the bourgeoisie were not controlled in time, which lost the great opportunity to force them to compromise with the Paris Commune. Moreover, disturbed by Proudhonism's anti-centralization and anti-authoritarian anarchism, the leading organs devoted themselves to the pursuit of democratic forms.

The Commune Committee did not have a presidium or a permanent chairman, and there was no leadership core. Each meeting was presided over by the members in turn, and many things were often discussed but not decided, and implemented but not effectively implemented. What's more, Proudhonists adhered to "direct democracy" and opposed centralized and unified leadership, as a result the Commune was full of factional struggles. It was only in the last bloody week that the factions had to join forces to deal with the government forces, but it was too late.

The above signs of the Paris Commune movement show that the majority of the Commune Committee "were socialists because of their proletarian revolutionary instinct" and directly reflected and embodied the will of the working masses, which ensured that some of the governing measures were correct. However, the rationality and theorization of the leading organs obviously did not meet the actual needs of fully organizing the masses to fulfill the mission of the Commune.

**"Without revolutionary theory, there will be no revolutionary movement."**

The Paris Commune ultimately failed, and its legacy was profound. At that time, the Paris Commune movement was still in the spontaneous stage of the proletarian revolution. The dissemination and application of Marxism had not yet been popularized among the revolutionary masses to make the revolutionary forces consciously act; Marxism had not yet gone deep into the specific practice of the revolution to make the leadership group consciously unified.

Having learned the lesson of the failure of the Paris Commune, under the specific guidance of the revolutionary mentor, the theoretical construction of the proletariat and its political party has been continuously strengthened, and various erroneous thoughts have been continuously criticized with scientific revolutionary theories.

A strong and powerful revolutionary leadership group has been continuously created with scientific revolutionary theories, and the masses have been mobilized and organized with scientific revolutionary theories. The scientific revolutionary theories have been continuously used to arm the mind and guide practice. In the process of learning, thinking and practicing, the international communist movement has been elevated to a rational height, winning a series of new victories such as the Russian October Revolution and the Chinese Revolution.

**"History is the best textbook."**

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune movement, appreciate the truth and practical power of Marxism, and deeply learn and understand the innovative theories of CPC in the new era, so that the red flag raised by the martyrs of the Paris Commune will fly high on the land of China.