

The Family Heritage Series

A weekly discussion of Americanist truths and traditions for those "heirs of all the ages" who will have to preserve that most important inheritance of all — freedom.
Produced by the Movement To Restore Decency.



Volume II

Lesson Seventy-Three

Revolution In Europe

LESSON IDEA

To show how international revolutionaries during the Nineteenth Century used the same techniques, and the same false promises, to incite insurrections and to topple governments in country after country.

PREPARATION

If you are not familiar with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) or the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of the Roosevelt era, gather some information for the discussion suggested. Information on women's lib, welfare spending, and President Ford's recent proposals for fighting inflation by higher taxation would also be helpful.

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IN THE SAME YEAR Karl Marx was supposedly originating the idea of a working-class revolution, professional revolutionaries were already at work creating one in France. In fact, for at least ten years they had been plotting, through a network of secret societies and lodges, the wreckage of all European nations and civilization.

One of the agents for this conspiracy reported in January 1846 on the prospects for success: "The journey that I have just accomplished in Europe has been as fortunate and as productive as we had hoped . . . The fall of thrones is no longer a matter of doubt to me now that I have just studied the work of our societies in France, in Switzerland, in Germany, and as far as Russia. The assault which in a few years and perhaps even in a few months from now will be made on the princes of the earth will bury them under the wreckage of their impotent

armies and their decrepit thrones. Everywhere there is enthusiasm in our ranks and apathy or indifference amongst the enemies. This is a certain and infallible sign of success . . ."

France was ripe for revolution. Her government was corrupt, as it had been since the revolutionary upheaval of 1789. There was opposition to political reforms as well as a callous indifference to the interests of the people. Alexis de Tocqueville, a leading French patriot, warned his fellow politicians of the coming danger. After citing some of the most blatant examples of corruption, he said: "The evils I point out will bring about the gravest revolutions; do you not feel by a sort of intuition that the soil of Europe trembles once more? Is there not a breath of revolution in the air? . . . Do you know what may happen in two years: in one year, perhaps tomorrow? . . . Keep your laws if you will, but for God's sake change the spirit of the Government. That spirit leads to the abyss . . . My profound conviction is that we are sleeping on a volcano."

De Tocqueville's warning, however, was ignored — and those who were intent on burying "the princes of the earth . . . under their impotent armies and decrepit thrones" worked harder to magnify the corruption in the minds of the people. With sad eyes and long faces, they moaned that the system was beyond reform, change was futile. Their answer to this cry of despair was a theoretical workers' paradise, where there would be no greed or jealousy or corruption, and where everyone would share all goods equally. When their listeners had accepted the bait of their

promised paradise, they sank the hook. All that was necessary to make paradise a reality was to destroy the existing system; every tradition and institution must be uprooted and smashed, to clear the way for the "new world order." Many swallowed this revolutionary bait, and waited only for their leaders to announce the start of the insurrection.

IN FEBRUARY of 1848, the same month that the *Communist Manifesto* was coming off the printing presses in England, two revolutionary newspapers in France issued a call to arms. Within two days, Paris, a city of wealth and culture, had become a grim battlefield – the trees along the great boulevards were felled, streets were barricaded, paving stones torn up, and gun shops looted. Against this menacing spectacle of death under the red flag of international revolution, the government and police offered little more than token resistance. The king abdicated, the royal family fled, and in the space of a few hours the monarchy was swept away and the Social Democratic Republic proclaimed.

"But now," writes Nesta Webster in *World Revolution*, "the men who had brought about the crisis were faced with the work of reconstruction – a very different matter. For it is one thing to sit at one's desk peaceably writing about the beauties of revolution, it is quite another to find oneself in the midst of a tumultuous city where all the springs of law and order have been broken; it is one thing to talk romantically about 'the sovereignty of the people,' it is less soothing to one's vanity to be confronted with working-men of real flesh and blood insolently demanding the fulfilment of the promises one has made them. This was the experience that fell to the lot of the men composing the Provisional Government the day after the King's abdication"

"Seated around the council table were the men who for the last ten years had fired the people with enthusiasm for the principles of the First Revolution Suddenly the door of the council chamber burst open and a working-man entered, gun in hand, his face convulsed with rage, followed by several of his comrades. Advancing towards the table where sat the trembling demagogues, Marche, for this was the name of the leader of the deputation, struck the floor with the butt end of his gun and said loudly: 'Citizens, it is twenty-four hours since the revolution

was made; the people await the results. They send me to tell you that they will brook no more delays. They wish for the right to work – the right to work at once.' "

The angry workmen were urged to have patience and to understand that "in the face of so many crying needs the government must be given time to formulate its schemes." In reply, Marche, as spokesman for the workers, finally said: "Well, then, yes, we will wait. We will have confidence in our government. The people will wait; they place three months of misery at the service of the Republic!"

"Two days later," continues Mrs. Webster, "the National Workshops, which were to provide the promised employment, were opened The result was inevitably disastrous, necessary work being insufficient, the workmen were sent hither and thither from one employer to another, useless jobs were devised that necessarily proved discouraging to the men engaged on them, whilst the workers in the skilled trades for whom no employment could be found had to be maintained on 'an unemployment dole.' "

Does this solution to unemployment sound familiar? Can you think of any comparisons in our country? [*Explain the WPA and CCC of the Roosevelt era, the present welfare system, and the President's proposal to impose a five percent surtax to finance public works programs for the jobless.*]

Why does this solution, of government financing jobs, always fail? What's wrong with it? [*Emphasize the faulty premise: when the State provides work or payment for useless jobs, incentive is destroyed and laziness is encouraged. A man who no longer has to depend on his own efforts to seek and find employment loses his initiative; those who are prone to laziness become more so. Moreover, the funds to pay unemployment doles can only be raised by*

FOR SERIOUS STUDENTS

The secret societies and lodges, mentioned briefly in this lesson, which fathered so many revolutions like those in France and Russia, are well described in Professor John Robison's *Proofs Of A Conspiracy*, first published in 1798. This important study, long out of print, is now available in paperback for one dollar from most American Opinion Bookstores, or from American Opinion, Belmont, Massachusetts 02178. We highly recommend it.

taxing those who are still working, which automatically reduces the spending power of the community and creates more unemployment.]

IN FRANCE in 1848, more welfare experiments followed, each based on the same principle and each a failure. As the workingmen became increasingly hungry and more angry, the paradise promoters made longer speeches, and offered greater hopes. The only desire of the Provisional Government, said the socialist word merchants, is "to march with the people, to live for them, if necessary to die for them." "The people," shouted one of the workers in reply, "expect more than words."

The situation soon grew so desperate, and the disillusionment so great, that after four months of revolutionary rule, the promoters of violence were themselves routed from power by the guns of the mob — but not before ten thousand Frenchmen lay dead or wounded in the streets.

1848 was, indeed, the year of revolution; but France was not the only nation to suffer such convulsions. Between March 1 and May 15, socialist insurrections erupted in Baden (Germany), Vienna, Berlin, Venice, London, Spain, and Naples. During the course of the year no less than sixty-four outbreaks occurred in Russia. All fizzled like wet firecrackers, but the scars they left did not heal easily. Within the short time period of four years, for example, France was hurled from revolution to anarchy to dictatorship.

It might be logical to assume that the leaders of these revolutions, faced with indisputable evidence of defeat, would abandon their unworkable theories and look for better answers; but this was not the case. Knowing they could not provide a better life for workers, why do you suppose they persisted in their plots to destroy governments and civilization? *[In the discussion, emphasize the hypocrisy of Karl Marx and others like him, as shown in previous lessons. It was not the welfare of the workers that motivated these men, but the desire for power. Socialism and Communism were merely convenient ladders to use in gaining control of government.]*

The Franco-Prussian War was the next major event that the secret societies and Communist organizations used as a stepping stone to political power in France. Every fault of the government,

every battlefield retreat, every imperfection was once again magnified. Soon Frenchmen began blaming each other once again for every national inconvenience. The triumphal entry of the Prussians into Paris on March 1, 1871, touched off the next revolution. Again, the French national flag was lowered, and the red flag of international revolution was raised. This time, however, the governing body, called the Commune, was led not by Frenchmen, but by an odd assortment of international revolutionists. According to Nesta Webster, there were nineteen Poles, ten Italians, seven Germans, two Americans, two Russians, two Rumanians, two Portuguese, and an Egyptian, a Belgian, a Hungarian, a Spaniard, and a Dutchman in the service of the Commune.

This assemblage of allegedly progressive thinkers, however, had nothing new to offer; their only "solution" was to recreate the horrors and instruments of the French Revolution of 1789. They revived the ten-month calendar of 1793 and even the names of the first revolutionary newspapers. A Committee of Public Safety was again formed, the churches again desecrated, the images of the saints broken or dishonored, pictures slashed, ornaments pillaged, altars used as gambling tables, and pulpits filled with blasphemous speakers. "Marriage, citizenesses," bellowed one female revolutionary, "is the greatest error of ancient humanity. To be married is to be a slave." The audience thundered its approval as she demanded the Commune give pensions to the illegitimate wives of the National Guards. "All for the free women, none for the slaves!" was the cry of 1871.

Do these demands sound familiar? Do you hear them today? *[Discuss the women's lib movement and its demands for a spurious "freedom."]*

"The honest women of the people," says Nesta Webster, "took no part in these revolting scenes . . . [and] in the poor streets of Paris respect for religion still held sway." Not only the women, but the working class in general showed little appetite for the crushing of civilization that the Commune desired. "The cause is lost," moaned one revolutionary to another in a letter dated April 9, "it seems that the French, the working-class itself, are not much moved by this state of things. Yet how terrible the lesson is! But it is not enough. They must have greater calamities, ruder shocks . . ."

ONE OF THESE "ruder shocks" came on May 16, when the Colonne Vendôme, a famous monument erected in honor of French victories, was pulled to the ground by order of the Commune. At the time, the Commune's forces consisted of an estimated 52,000 foreigners and 17,000 released convicts. "This outrage to the national traditions of France," writes Nesta Webster, "infuriated the army of Versailles, which had been recently reinforced by returned prisoners from Germany, and on the 21st of May an entry was made to the capital . . . The 'bloody week' of street fighting followed. By the third day the Versailles troops had reached the approaches to the Tuileries [*the palace used as Commune headquarters*], and it was then that the generals of the Commune . . . set fire to the palace and the Rue Royale . . . Once again the idea of war on cities, that had . . . been carried out by the Terrorists of 1793 . . . was put into practice with terrible effect. Amongst the dregs of the populace, wretched, drink-sodden old women, degenerate boys, armed with paraffin, set out to burn down Paris . . . The Palace of the Tuileries was reduced to ashes, the Ministry of Finances; the Palace of the Legion of Honour, the Palais de Justice, the Hôtel de Ville [*City Hall*] with its treasures of art and priceless national archives — in a word the glory of old France lost to the world forever . . . and so little did the incendiaries concern themselves with the cause of the people that the Bureau de l'Assistance Publique [*Bureau of Public Assistance*], that existed solely to relieve distress, besides several houses belonging to it, of which the revenues belonged to the poor, were consumed by the flames. The granaries containing corn, wine, oil, and other provisions destined to relieve the sufferings of Paris famished by the [*Prussian*] siege shared a like fate.

"On the evening of the following day the horrible massacring of hostages was carried out. Six victims, including the Archbishop of Paris and four other priests who had been imprisoned seven weeks earlier, were shot . . . As in September 1792, men of the people were not spared, and on the 27th of May a general massacre of the prisoners, including 66 *gendarmes* [*policemen*] took place . . . But the plan . . . for the destruction of civilization was once more frustrated. Civilization had risen in self-defense as civilization will always rise, and the fiercer the onslaught the more furious will be the reaction.

When the struggle between the revolutionary army of the Commune and the forces of law and order had ended in a victory for the latter, thousands of victims strewed the streets of Paris . . . no less than 30,000 men, women, and children perished in the fray . . .

"So ended the third experiment in revolutionary government carried out on unhappy France. Even Mr. Adolphe Smith, who had hoped great things of the Commune, admits its incompetence. Sanguine revolutionists after 1871, he writes . . . 'saw that even when in possession of one of the fairest cities of Europe — with the bank of France in their hands, an enthusiastic army at their command, weapons and munitions of war innumerable — while the country was disorganized, the regular army flying in terror before the insurrection for it could not rely upon its own soldiers — still the Commune, though so strong and successful, was unable to accomplish anything. The leaders frittered away the precious moments for action in futile discussions and squabbles, till the reaction, gathering strength, organized its scattered forces and crushed them.' "

Next week we'll learn more about this terror machine of revolution, and how it finally achieved a permanent footing in Europe.

DURING THE WEEK

Ask family members to find articles in newspapers or magazines which illustrate revolutionary theory and activity in this country. Discuss the similarities between our present situation — corruption in government, distrust of public officials, welfare spending, public works programs, women's lib, immorality — and the conditions in France in 1848 and 1871. Is Communist revolution the wave of the future, as it claims, or merely a disease of the past?

The Family Heritage Series

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For parents who wish to teach their children the true meaning of liberty, responsibility, and our Americanist heritage.

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