

Seattle's Radical Fiefdom is Eerily Familiar

“‘Autonomous zone’ has armed guards, local businesses being threatened with extortion.”

That was quite a [striking headline](#) to behold. My immediate reaction was, “Oh my gosh, the Paris Commune is back!”

Except that it wasn't Paris, and it wasn't 1871. It was Seattle, Washington, USA – *today*. According to multiple reports, radical protesters seized a six-block area of the city. They declared it a police-free fiefdom, posted armed guards at its perimeter, began extorting money from local businesses (normally called “taxation”) and were even requiring residents to provide ID to enter their own homes.

The Paris Commune that lasted just 70 days in the spring of 1871 was born amid the ruins of France's wartime loss at the hands of Prussia in the fall of the previous year. When the Prussians captured France's Emperor Napoleon III, the monarchy collapsed, and the French Third Republic was born. In Versailles, just a few miles from Paris, its leaders sat on their hands as Parisians stewed in the toxic juices of defeat, resentment, and a rising tide of Marxist-inspired class warfare. The voices of the big mouths increasingly drowned out those of the more moderate citizens who preferred to get the city back to normal and work for a living.

On March 18, 1871, the socialist radicals seized the upper hand in the City of Lights. They occupied government buildings and ousted or jailed their opposition. It was a “People's Revolution” (unless you were one of the people who didn't support it). Karl Marx's [communist scribblings](#) provided the radicals – called “Communards” – with their primary inspiration, but Marx himself later criticized their failure

to immediately seize the Bank of France and march on the government in Versailles. In the early days of the Paris Commune, however, he hoped he was witnessing a fulfillment of his own delusions:

The struggle of the working class against the capitalist class and its state has entered upon a new phase with the struggle in Paris. Whatever the immediate results may be, a new point of departure of world-historic importance has been gained.

Alistair Horne in his book, [*The Terrible Year: The Paris Commune of 1871*](#), tells us that the Communards, like their ideological comrades of the 1789 French Revolution and the like-minded Cambodian Khmer Rouge of two centuries later, trashed whatever they could of the customs and history they didn't like. For instance, they tossed out the calendar and voted to reinstitute the one concocted by the Jacobins of the 1790s. The Terror was back in power. Writes Horne:

The Grand Hotel was sacked; there were repeated threats to confiscate all private property; hostile newspapers were suppressed; mounting 'spymania' caused the arrest of many innocent Parisians (including Renoir, who narrowly escaped lynching while working at his easel)...[T]here was even talk of levelling Notre Dame.

The new regime established by the Communards arguably got a couple things right: It abolished the death penalty and conscription. But true to its Marxist roots, it also seized all church properties and made them state assets, arrested many priests and held them as hostages, abolished interest on debts, and promised lots of "free" stuff to its favored groups.

It was pretty much 70 days of chaos, tyranny, and stupidity – draped in red flags and political correctness. If

you spoke out for free speech or private property, you got shouted down, beat up, or put away. Just like at UC Berkeley, or Oberlin College, or maybe even Seattle if you give its newly-birtherd commune a few more days.

In the end, it all came crashing down. The Paris Commune, when it finally came under direct assault by the Versailles government, disintegrated into a bloody heap. Those who lived by the sword ended up dying by it. Thousands were killed in its final days.

Next year will mark the 150th anniversary of the disaster in Paris. Marxists are planning to commemorate it as if its lunacy is something to be proud of. They never learn.

For some strange reason, I think that the demise of the Communards was entirely predictable. If you seize power for the purpose of forcing others to buy into your deranged, anti-human vision, some of those other humans will eventually give you a taste of your own medicine. That's what happened in Paris in 1871 and I won't be surprised if that's what will yet happen in Seattle in 2020.

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