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"TAKING ONE'S PART IN THE REVOLUTION": A COMPARISON OF WOMEN'S LABOR AS TOOLS OF REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN FRANCE, VIET NAM, AND POLAND

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This article assesses three events that traditionally highlight the labors of men, but which demonstrate the integral roles played by women's labor: the 1871 Paris Commune, Viet Nam's American War during the 1960s and early 1970s, and the rise of Poland's Solidarity during the 1980s. Arguing for increased and consistent attention to the hows and whys of women's participation in regime change and related warfare, this analysis exposes and compares gendered omissions in the customary narratives of these major events, revealing women's collective involvement in political upheavals and the warfare that can accompany them. This article argues that despite their obscured visibility, women nonetheless "took their place without begging for it," demonstrating that women's collective labor contributed substantially to the maintenance, and potentially the outcome, of large-scale political, military, and national actions.

The revolutionary 1871 Paris Commune brought the Parisian working classes to the center stage of French national political, military, and social conflict, both in its brief success and in its violent repression by the nascent French Third Republic (1870–1940).[1] Repression of the Commune by military and police forces of the government of "Moral Order" resulted in the deaths of somewhere near 30,000 residents of Paris during the last "Bloody Week" of May 1871, the vast majority being of the popular classes. Prior to the Commune, initiated on March 18, 1871, the people of Paris had survived four-and-one-half months of Prussian siege as the Franco-Prussian war dragged to a close. During the siege, "*Citoyenne* Destrée" proclaimed, "The Social Revolution will not be operative until women are equal to men. Until then, one has only the appearance of Revolution," suggesting that prior to the Commune's eruption, at least some believed women's full participation in revolution and its aftermath was a precondition for success.[2] Shortly thereafter, Parisians briefly created their own government and ran their city in direct opposition to a republic they found too conservative and oppressive for their needs. In the century and more since the Commune, scholars and activists have often assessed this "working man's revolution," as Marx saw it, by focusing on the military capabilities of National Guard troops defending Paris or the political makeup of the Commune's male

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leadership with little attention paid to the hundreds of thousands of female laborers who could not vote in the municipal or National Guard elections that determined formal leadership. These women nonetheless "took their place without begging for it," as infamous *communarde* Louise Michel, described, with women's actions sometimes disrupting and undermining not only conservative non-republican ideals but also male-oriented republican traditions of citizenship, including soldiering.[3]

Arguing for increased and consistent attention to the hows and whys of women's participation in regime change and related warfare, this essay links *communarde* experiences to those of women in two decidedly different contexts, both with outcomes that contrast sharply with the Commune's demise: Viet Nam's American War during the 1960s and early 1970s, which led to the withdrawal of U.S. troops, and the rise of Poland's Solidarity during the 1980s, which ultimately contributed to the defeat of communist rule.[4] Comparative aspects are exploratory, but as women's frontline labors in regime change receive more global and historical attention, the beginnings of a theme emerge. In all three cases reviewed here, women's collective labor—not merely exceptional individual acts—contributed substantially to the maintenance and potentially the outcome of large-scale political, military, and national actions. Women also played significant roles in the genesis of both the Commune and Solidarity and had been involved in anticolonial efforts in Viet Nam long before the Americans arrived in the 1950s. However, in all three nations, women's direct involvement did not translate into equal rights or respect during or after regime change; if anything, victors tended to desire some form of retrenchment into normalized female submission. That being the case, women's consistent participation in these three situations remained obscured behind a veneer of assumptions and records that draws attention to men's actions. Scholarship on women's involvement in these individual events has begun to increase, constructing a useful base for comparison. Exposing and comparing gendered omissions in customary narratives reveal women's collective involvement in political upheavals and the warfare that can accompany them. Consequently, comparisons that bring attention to women's labors on behalf of regime change can not only alter our understanding of seemingly masculinized topics such as a working-man's revolution, Solidarity's founding fathers, or Uncle Ho's strategies but also potentially raise questions about other settings.

Workers, Warfare, and Women

Women's involvement in France's 1870–1871 international and civil wars provides an analytical hub for noticing and understanding the roles that laboring women, as a group, have played during political, even revolutionary, upheaval, also exposing the significance of their status in the aftermath. Centering male action in analysis—and not actively looking for women's presence—has frequently rendered invisible the gendered realities of how resistance movements are created and sustained, as well as the relevance of women as crucial members

of the working classes. When assessing women's wartime labors more generally, authors often place them in "support" categories, implying that women's roles, as such, are secondary, even marginal, which recent scholarship begins to dispute; this methodology does not tend to situate men's labors as secondary, even if they occupy similar support roles. Likewise, until the past twenty years or so, discussions of the "making of the working class" revolved around the work and class of men, even when records suggested there was more to the story. Yet as far back as 1964, Commune historian, Jacques Rougerie, quoted an October 1871 report on the post-Commune industrial and commercial situation in Paris, which estimated that more than 100,000 *ouvriers* (workers) had been killed, imprisoned, or were missing from Paris, noting that "this number does not include the women."[5] The male totals are astounding, approximating one-fourth of the prior male (trade) worker population in Paris, with some occupations so greatly affected that virtually no workers appeared available. In contrast, the survey assessed none of the trades occupied by women, concealing their presence and significance in formal reports on workers. While invisibility can serve a purpose, working women's names fill other records, suggesting a historical oversight and therefore, misunderstanding about their significance in events and the full effects the Commune's suppression had on the Parisian labor force.

An analysis of women's contributions must take the lives of women seriously, as Cynthia Enloe (2004) forcefully argues, and must creatively prioritize sustained attention on the wide array of sources, often scattered, which indicate laboring women's presence on the historical stage, rather than concentrate solely on traditional record sets that often forefront men's activities and priorities. This is especially true when a sheath of anonymity cloaks women's actions—especially those of nonelite, nonexceptional, laboring women—or when named individuals later disappear from the record, receding into invisibility. My work on the Commune also assesses women's lives in relation to the discursive elements permeating them. The larger project therefore includes not only the "informal, private, casual conversations, shared jokes, gestures, and rituals," found in oral interviews, memoirs, and letters, but the official and public discourse of groups and institutions—such as that found on posted government calls to service or noted in military, police, or government files. While military records, diplomatic messages, and political meetings readily expose male-centered actions, they tend to blind historians to women's presence, leaving the "uncurious," as Enloe labels them, to recreate a historical absence that did not originally exist.[6]

While supporters of the Commune hoped to avoid *Citoyenne* Destrée's mere "appearance of Revolution," they were not alone in misunderstanding, and at times, misrepresenting, the role of working women during revolutionary change; Polish and Vietnamese accounts of their recent histories also hide women's contributions. Socialists and would-be revolutionaries of the Commune era and later, including Marx and Lenin, analyzed the perceived successes and failures of the Commune as the first proletarian, or working man's revolution, with Lenin counting the success of his revolution by how many days

it outlasted the Commune's seventy-two. However, whatever their roles may have been, hundreds of thousands of working women did not bear mentioning. During Poland's Solidarity's underground efforts, leaders called on people to "live as if we are free," with women acting *as if* they were free and equal, suggesting again that taking one's place "without begging for it," rather than official protocols, could create change. Yet, few recall what Anna Walentynowicz did before Lech Walesa jumped over the shipyard fence in Gdansk, "beginning" a social revolution that had already begun. Until Shana Penn's *Solidarity's Secret: The Women Who Defeated Communism in Poland* recently exposed the fundamental role women played in the development and eventual success of Solidarity, even feminists showed reticence in believing that women played central roles, having bought into the "hunky male" images of the workers' union.[7] While Vietnamese women had actively engaged themselves in warfare for centuries and more recently in the defeat of French colonial forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, Ho Chi Minh officially mobilized women as he called for an all-out *people's* effort against the U.S. in 1965 and 1966.[8] Many have become aware of Vietnamese women's participation in the American War, but only within the past few years have monographs such as Sandra C. Taylor's, *Vietnamese Women at War: Fighting for Ho Chi Minh and the Revolution*, and Karen Gottschang Turner's, *Even the Women Must Fight: Memories of War from North Vietnam*, revolutionized understanding of that war—and its "long-haired warriors," as some have termed female fighters. Likewise, in general, interdisciplinary scholars have tended to overlook women's participation in social or revolutionary upheavals and their outcomes, dedicated a singular chapter to women, or have only noted exceptional women in a paragraph or footnote.[9] Examining the questions and sources left unattended by scholars can counter the incuriosity that underlies inattention to women's lives and can point to other relevant questions and sources that document them. As was the case at the Gdansk shipyards and at Diem Bien Phu, women actively and visibly engaged in the Commune from the first hours.

Women's Labors in Behalf of the Commune, Ho's Viet Nam, and Solidarity

On March 18, 1871, the Commune erupted. It began differently than had the siege-era attempts of October 31, 1870 and January 22, 1871, in which male citizens endeavored to seize formal political power with verbal and published statements of intent. Instead, in the early morning hours of March 18, women's shouts and threats spontaneously rained down on French government soldiers and the cannon they had been sent to seize, many of which Parisians had paid for and made during the siege. Women of Montmartre, a workers' district of Paris, then covered the cannon with their bodies. The crowd spent the morning berating the military with their angry verbal taunts, challenging men's political protocols, military orders, and social masculinity. Poor military planning that left soldiers unable to remove the cannon quickly contributed to the persuasive arguments that made soldiers unwilling to proceed. Just as Polish soldiers

refused to fire on workers during the protests of the 1970s, French troops refused to fire on Parisians protesting their presence; as with Jaruzelski in Poland, French president, Adolphe Thiers, bided his time, waiting to increase army allegiance and for the people's uprising to weaken.[10] Crowds of women, National Guards, and children shouting, *Vive la Commune*, accompanied the troops' retreat from the city.[11] The Commune's initiators saw themselves and their cause as representing the egalitarian interests of *le peuple*, a rallying phrase during both the Franco-Prussian War and later Commune. Born less than twenty years after the Paris Commune, Ho Chi Minh's global education exposed him to the Commune's history, and his "people's war" also claimed equality as a foundational principle.

Ho Chi Minh drew women into his movement and anti-imperial wars by fighting illiteracy, rejecting structures that kept women in deferential feudal relationships with men, and by declaring, "Women are half the people. If women are not free, then the people are not free," echoing Citizen Destrée's argument from an earlier century. Since the 1930s, the communists' platform had indicated that if women did not take part in the struggles, they could never emancipate themselves, suggesting the role that women's agency should play in creating a communist social revolution. During wartime, Ho argued, Vietnamese women bore three responsibilities: caring for children, keeping production going, and fighting. These obligations therefore encompassed virtually any labor that women could do; the three responsibilities generously accommodated women's consistent battlefield presence as well as their ability to "be a soldier when the enemy comes and a civilian when he leaves." By the Tet offensive, Ho's calls had mobilized more women than ever, filling as many as 50 percent of guerrilla positions in the lowlands and at least 12 percent in the highlands, most often with the enemy unaware of their presence, or, until 1968, even the existence of the now-infamous underground tunnels. While scholars and other analysts overlooked the point for some time, Ho's three responsibilities indicate that women's wartime activities often reflected traditional women's roles, while simultaneously going beyond them, eliminating any divide between a masculinized battlefront and a feminized home front.[12] While the success of insurrectional movements and guerrilla warfare has long relied on the decimation of formalized fronts, gendered or otherwise, a conscious "strategy of invisibility" on the part of women can take advantage of perceptions about their traditional domestic roles, even as they create and sustain an underground movement.[13]

Impressions of Solidarity's germination have obscured women's presence during Poland's protracted insurrection. As Solidarity participant Barbara Labuda explains, "Everyone in Poland knows that women started the 1980s underground, but no one bothers to talk about it." Images of women associated with Solidarity, then and since, have tended to highlight Lech Walesa's wife at home with children or his lapel pin depicting the Black Madonna. However, the firing of crane operator Anna Walentynowicz initiated the Gdansk shipyard strike. "Anna the Proletariat," as a 1995 film titled her, was perhaps not a feminist, but certainly a fighter. The injustice of her firing in August 1980 under

an artificial premise ignited the growing workers' movement. Walentynowicz and other women began to disappear from the record as Solidarity became more powerful, even though during the years of the underground, "Men thought they were in charge, but women pulled all the strings." The gender bias of Solidarity's male members aided the invisibility of the underground's women agents, even as these same men knew that women were hiding, feeding, moving, and informing them, as well as publishing Solidarity's tracts and newspapers. While she later believed she had made a mistake, Walentynowicz told Shana Penn, "At the beginning of the strike, a man came to pick me up and he said the workers wanted me to lead the strike. I said to him that I don't want to do it because if a woman becomes the head of a strike, it will diminish the seriousness of the event. If I had become head of the strike, people would have said, 'Woman, back to your pots.' And that is why Walesa took over the leadership." As Walentynowicz added, the meaning of the August events diminished due at least in part to an absence of understanding about them. Once martial law was declared in December 1981, mass arrests ensued, which focused on men, lending credence to the notion that men were the only activists. Given that the opposition was so vested in maleness—its own and Solidarity's—Solidarity's women utilized a "camouflage of female-ness."[14] As in this case, even when women crowd the historical stage, gendered mind-sets can render them unobtrusive.

Karen Gottschang Turner points out for Vietnamese forces that, "Although we know from other sources that thousands of women were in the field by [1966], they do not yet appear in the military reports." Even without women documented in those particular records, photographs and other sources indicate their presence and the same documents report that with women's participation, "work was getting done more efficiently" and "volunteers were taking their turn with rifles and shovels."[15] By 1969, women could formally join the army, with some highly decorated. By that same year, women made up 33 percent of the skilled workers and scientific cadres, with women employed as 60–80 percent of the North's workforce. Since the North was fighting a total war, women's roles included caring for children sent to the countryside to save them from the American bombings. Responding to Sandra Taylor's question about her omission from prominent American accounts of the war, General Nguyen Thi Dinh noted male resentment, commenting, "Oh, I understand. Men do not like to talk about women generals. Even Vietnamese men and we have a history of famous women generals." Still, the vast majority of women involved in the American War were more or less anonymous.[16] Only a few among the anonymous masses write memoirs exposing their experiences, although these sources prove especially useful for understanding the range of women's actions.

The memoir of a Parisian *communarde*, Victorine Malenfant Rouchy, demonstrates not only a long-term association with labor in defense of Paris, but also the array of women's labors more generally. On September 4, 1870, Victorine Malenfant Rouchy led her child and her husband into the Paris crowds celebrating a new republic declared in the midst of the Franco-Prussian War. With the Prussian army marching toward Paris for what was to become a

four-and-one-half-month siege, she registered for municipal employment organized by women, producing military jackets to help support her family, which included her mother residing with them. Although she had trained as an *ambulancière* for field hospitals, military government officials denied her a post. Malenfant Rouchy wrote a letter to a newspaper, publicly reclaiming women's right as *citoyennes* to attend the wounded on the battlefield. Making use of her network of women's conduits to military officialdom, she eventually gained her desired *poste de combat*, serving throughout the war, which ended on January 28, 1871. As the Commune verged on erupting in March, Malenfant Rouchy lost her only child and another young child living with her family to the lingering effects of the devastating siege. She reported immediately for military duty in defense of the new life she thought the Commune could inaugurate. Organizing meals for military personnel, as well as still-starving civilians, she blended traditional spheres of public and private as she served, later maintaining her *ambulancière* post throughout this civil war. During the final *Bloody Week* of the Commune in May, Malenfant Rouchy dressed in boy's clothing, cut her hair, and avoided summary execution as she hid on her body, a red flag, dagger, and diary of her participation. The republican government of Moral Order—and her mother for a time—believed her dead, leading to the title of her memoir, *Souvenirs d'une morte vivante*.[17] She remained hidden in Paris for most of the next two years, yet visited her husband in prison, gaining letters of support for a reduction in his sentence.

Malenfant Rouchy's memoir is one of only a few recorded by women who occupied any of the realms of the working classes, but speaks volumes about the centrality of women during events. The fact she eventually escaped Paris and never came to trial also exposes the need to look beyond traditional sentencing and pardon records for an understanding of women's roles. Malenfant Rouchy remained a lifetime revolutionary, associating herself with anarchist causes in Europe.[18] During 1870–1871, she cared for a household, nursed the wounded, sewed military clothes, lived for days and weeks in the mud of the battlefield, and routinely observed barricade construction, although her official profession was a shoe and boot maker. Vivid descriptions of her roles as mother, daughter, and wife, as well as her internal conflicts about integrating her wartime activities with those roles, pepper her narrative. Her labor helped sustain her household and the short-lived Commune. Other women who prominently recorded their observations also fought, rhetorically and physically, for their right to be part of the revolution's front lines and the new order it promised.

Women's maintenance of newspapers sustained respective movements. Having previously discarded her feminized name for one more androgynous, *communarde* and newspaper editor, André Léo, the pseudonym of Léodile Champsieux, addressed the military leader of the Commune in a newspaper on May 8, 1871, writing, "Do you know, General Dombrowski, how the Revolution of March 18th was made? By the women . . . the necessity of taking one's part in the Revolution, is the liberty and the responsibility of every human being, with no limit except common law, without any privilege of race, or of sex."[19] Aligning

with *Citoyenne* Destrée's siege-era analysis (and Ho's later arguments), Léo declared that this revolution, started and sustained by women's efforts from March18, could relegate no one to the margins. While Léo's statement suggests a common knowledge that women indeed began the revolution, it also implies that many of the male leadership needed a reminder, similar to Solidarity's Barbara Labuda's comment about the collective memory of the 1980s underground. The dominant role of women in the publishing of Solidarity's underground newspapers mirrors Léo's role in Paris, although Léo was quite visible given that the Commune was in control, rather than in hiding. Penn summarizes, "Women shaped illegal publishing into an instrument of civic activism," founding communist Poland's first uncensored news service and digest and during martial law, making the newspaper, *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, a reality. Without this forum, one participant stated, "The underground could not have existed." Just as "Solidarity was all about voice," so was the Commune, even if the later narrative silenced some contributing voices.[20] Unlike Poland's underground news, Léo's front-page editorials frequently lent voice to issues specifically relevant to women's participation in the Commune, meeting male resistance with analysis. Léo's voice, while not representing all women, nonetheless presented arguments about women's importance to a successful revolution, which included the need to have medic and stretcher-bearer positions filled by women.[21]

In 1960s Viet Nam, women's medical skills proved invaluable, also exposing women to the dangers of combat and total war more generally. The recent introduction in English of the wartime diary of twenty-five-year-old chief physician, Dang Thuy Tram, highlights the importance of women's medical services during the American War.[22] Fresh out of medical school, Dang was accepted for advanced courses in optical surgery, but instead went to serve in the South from late in 1966 until her death in mid-1970. Throughout her diary, her work, observations, and service to the soldiers under extraordinarily harsh circumstances consistently indicate her proficiency and dedication, even when Party officials and other circumstances inhibited her desires. As she explained on October 10, 1968, "This war is an unprecedented atrocity, and we have fought back with unparalleled courage and perseverance." The following day she wrote, "My heart has stowed away all my private dreams to focus on my duties." She faced the effects of aerial bombardment, deforestation, and the devastation, by August 1967, of 70 percent of the hamlets in her station area of the coastal plain.[23] Yet her labor—and the labor of others like her—contributed to keeping soldiers alive and eventually sending the American military home. Even when not resulting in victory for the Paris Commune, women's battlefront medical experience aided the cause.

Victorine Malenfant Rouchy's work indicates the effectiveness and necessity of women's military association. She reserved the bulk of her Commune descriptions for her activities as an *ambulancière*, generally under fire on the battlefield.[24] Drawing on her Franco-Prussian War experience she noted that as of April 3, "the siege began again," this time during a civil war, with the shells raining down

on sections of Paris and its outskirts. According to Malenfant Rouchy, in her unit, "everyone wanted to march into combat," but weapons were in short supply, and some, when found, were rusted. Resonating with assessments about the French military during the Franco-Prussian War, she summarizes about the National Guard, "military organization was absolutely defective." By this time, Malenfant Rouchy had months of previous experience serving with a National Guard unit and had, yet again, "prepared everything necessary for our wounded, [given] the identical circumstances" as during the first siege. She used cognac to aid the wounded in their pain and her compatriots risked their lives for her when she came under heavy fire. She served with generally unnamed *cantinières*, "valiant *citoyennes*" with "great courage," some wounded or dying in the fighting. They often lacked supplies and more than once had to "drink from empty ammunition boxes," with clean water sometimes at a premium. Her unit lost seventy-two soldiers in one attack on May 1, times like this leaving her with the duties of caring for the dead, rather than the living.[25] Her experience, analysis, strength, and labor—and the deprivations she suffered—reflect those of other women.

As Sandra Taylor comments, to westerners unused to wars of resistance and the extraordinary abilities such conflicts demand, Vietnamese women's efforts verge on the incredulous, leaving them unknown—or ignored—in the West. Yet recruitment of women such as Ut Tich had occurred since at least the 1930s; they endured capture, torture, and death at the hands of the French, made up 20 percent of armed units in secure zones prior to 1945, had seized granaries and made up all-female fighting units in 1945, and composed two-thirds of the *dan cong* (civil porters) at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, building a tradition of women as assets in resistance. Ut Tich, ultimately the mother of six children, had first fought the French and then the Americans, involving herself in communist proselytizing, liaison work, face-to-face confrontation with troops and police, finally taking up the jobs of ambulance attendant and guerrilla. For westerners, perhaps the most memorable image of Vietnamese women's combat positions is that of armed seventeen-year-old Nguyen Thi Kim Lai as she escorted Capt. William Robinson after he was shot down in 1972, supporting the notion that "a girl could handle a rifle, defend her village, and till her family's fields."[26] As the Viet Nam context demonstrates, military categories occupied by women frequently overlapped, even when they functioned independently from the traditional domestic realm.

In the case of 1870–1871 Paris, categories of *cantinière*, *ambulancière*, and *poste du combat* repeatedly overlapped. In traditional military history, the term, *cantinière*, has generally brought to mind women's food provisioning and other reproductive labor, but those serving under that rubric during the Commune likely found *poste de combat* the more appropriate identification. One "*cantinière*" received resounding accolades from her male comrades in arms. In a letter to the Commune government, published on April 10 in Léo's, *La Sociale*, seventy-three male National Guards signed a letter recognizing the service of Marguerite Gainder, *épouse* Lachaise of the 66th Battalion.[27] Noting her home address, the

undersigned commended her "*plus grande virilité* in remaining all day on the battlefield." The seventy-three described Gainder Lachaise's service in caring for all wounded, "despite the absence of all surgical services." The men wanted to call the Commune's attention to her actions so that leadership might grant her the rewards she deserved, given the "courage and unselfishness of this most accomplished *citoyenne* and republican." These men understood the necessity of this *communarde*'s labor on the battlefield, going out of their way to make its significance public. In another case, Louise Michel's memoirs describe Marie Schmitt Gaspard as a "stretcher bearer and soldier," aligning with trial and pardon records indicating Schmitt Gaspard's simultaneous association with ambulance service and weapons.[28] Traditional gendered categories of military-associated service did not keep women from frontline action, nor did those categories effectively describe their duties. As with Malenfant Rouchy's efforts, women's participation did not wait for either formal calls from the Commune's elected leadership or the establishment of formalized women's networks such as the *Union des femmes pour la défense de Paris et les soins aux blessés* (Union of Women for the Defense of Paris and Aid to the Wounded).

Organized work for women—in ateliers and at home—ultimately provided the dominant focus for the Commune's Union of Women, highlighting the organization's articulation of the most important component of this revolution for women. One of the Union's leaders, Elisabeth Dmitrieff, understood women's situation in Marxist terms, having arrived in Paris in late March 1871 under the direction of Karl Marx; however, Dmitrieff adjusted Marxist assessments, focusing especially on women's gendered plight as laborers.[29] While choosing a common masculinized surname and false passport aided her in eluding anti-Commune harassment, her signature and name appear frequently in Commune records. In a letter from the Central Committee of the Union of Women to the Commune's Commission of Labor and Exchange, a crucial link between the Union and the elected Commune government, the women argued for an end to "the exploitation and enslavement of Labor by Capital" and hoped to "facilitate urgently needed reforms, in production and producer relationships."[30] The letter identifies three points requiring attention, including a variety of work in each trade, as repetitive movement "damages mind and body"; a reduction in work hours, as physical exhaustion "destroys spiritual qualities"; and an "end to all competition between male and female workers" as their "interests are identical and their solidarity is essential" to the overall goals enunciated.[31] Above all, the letter declares that, "The reorganization of women's work is an extremely urgent matter, when one considers that in the past society, it was the most exploited form of all." As such, the Union required women's equal pay with men for equal hours of work. Even with besieged Paris under bombardment by French government forces in the midst of a total, civil war, the Union's collective priorities centered on women's well-being as laborers. If this was to be a revolution to end exploitation, women's positions must, they argued, change now.

Working women in Paris during the Commune and the siege that preceded it understood the ramifications of women's unemployment even if later statistics

did not elaborate. The Union's letter goes on to list "crafts mainly practiced by women," and, for the express benefit of women, a hope to be able to reopen workshops and factories closed in the absence of the fleeing bourgeoisie. Giving a glimpse of the prevalence and significance of women's labor to the Parisian economy, the list includes twenty-nine types of employment common among women.[32] As the October 1871 statistical account of Parisian workers indicates, severe losses affected many industries. However, the omission from that report of the gendered jobs listed on these documents indicates an underreporting of the overall labor shortage, since the numbers did "not include the women" who occupied these positions. Additionally, even the most careful statistician recording the effects of the Commune on industrial and commercial interests would not have included charwomen, rag pickers, or prostitutes as part of the labor force, as prominent as they were in 1871 Paris. Different records can describe an individual, as was the case with Eulalie Papavoine, as seamstress, prostitute, or unemployed—all possible, even simultaneously possible, if nonetheless not factored into labor statistics then or since.

Women's labor in workshops organized by the Union of Women, their labors in the military in association with the National Guard, as well as their efforts building barricades, in soup kitchens, and in education formed a core of the Commune's revolution, with their visibility at the time extant in official records. Working women's names appear on lists of those desiring employment; on the rolls of women's organizations; as signatories on bulletins, letters to male government officials, and letters to editors; in hospital or ambulance records; and in National Guard records, often as partners of male Guards. This visibility contributed to the arrest, imprisonment, deportation, or exile of thousands, with post-Commune Paris police repeatedly pleading with military leaders at Versailles to take them off their hands, as their jails were overflowing.[33] Yet when historians have noticed them at all, with recent exceptions they have not incorporated women's visible presence into their assessments of the Commune's maintenance or significance.[34] These types of records do not form the traditional focus for those interested in male political and military bodies; they also require different questions eliciting answers from the records. As with interviews with female Vietnamese combatants, these documents nonetheless expose women's occupation of insurrectional space to those who are curious.

Given the high rate of women's participation, the physical labor of vast numbers of females may have tipped the scales in favor of Ho's forces, even as male wartime labor receives most of the attention, leaving the impression that Ho's *people's war* was fought by men alone. At least by 1922, Ho linked women's oppression with colonial domination and the "'civilizing mission' of capitalism."[35] However, even Ho Chi Minh did not fully recognize or reward women's efforts as they buried the dead, repaired roads and trails, clothed and cooked for millions, and transported weaponry, food, medicine, tools, and the wounded. Most were uneducated, poor, and often invisible to the enemy as they filled various aspects of their three responsibilities. Yet the increasing number of women in combat roles in the later 1960s—fighters and so-called support

personnel—may have contributed to debates about the "cross-over point," at which Gen. Westmoreland believed death rates would disallow replacements in the field, the Communists would be eliminated, and Ho would have to concede defeat. Westmoreland, among many, refused to accept the view of Samuel Adams and others in the Central Intelligence Agency that "part-timers" were a fundamental portion of anti-American forces, with American leadership largely unaware of—or disbelieving—the primary role of women.[36] Given that only forces aligned with Ho extensively recruited or utilized women, the sheer numbers of female bodies put to the task of warfare in this case may eventually illuminate a more nuanced understanding of that war and its outcome. Many women toiled invisibly, if efficiently, in Viet Nam, but observers recorded the military bearing of some fighting for the Commune as they labored on *canonnières* (cannon boats) in the Seine using language that "would make a crocodile shudder."

While April 11, 1871 marked the official declaration of the *Union des femmes*, women had not waited that long to answer calls for naval service. By the first days of April, calls went out for *marins* to serve on *canonnières* along the Seine.[37] They were to report to the Pont Neuf, and by April 12, *La Sociale* noted eight boats in service. On April 23, artist "AC" counted twenty to thirty women serving on gunboats, some consenting to pose for him.[38] The observer noted that these "dames," as he called them, served aboard over a dozen *cannonières*. He wrote that these gunlayers told him that "more of them [women] are at La Porte Maillot, Montmartre, and other fortified places." This direction may have led AC to these locations, with female gunners at Porte Maillot forming a chronologically later subject.[39] His comments on another drawing include the note that, "Cluseret, [the Commune's current] Minister of War no longer wanted women *fédérés*" [soldiers fighting for the Commune], that he "was going to find work for them."[40] Evidently, AC's subjects in this depiction—two young women in military garb, bayonneted guns in their hands—did not get the memo.

In the case of the Commune, earning a living provides a link between women's labors, whether directly military in their focus or not. Working women's actions and attire also indicate a resistance to male Commune leadership and reveal participation in military activities distinctly disassociated from more-traditional *cantinière* roles. As the Commune had declared for all women directly associated with the National Guard, they were to receive the same pay as Guards*men*. Women's labor was a priority for the Union of Women, individual women such as Victorine Malenfant Rouchy who wrote of their experiences, and evidently for the unnamed women drawn by AC, whose bodies occupied military posts without formal permission. Women's leadership—and the physical occupation of military space—reminded (male) *communards* how central women's labor was to the economy and the Revolution. Women did not communicate similar reminders to Solidarity's (male) leadership.

Shana Penn notes that self-described single-issue movements—like Solidarity—tend to silence women, creating sex discrimination as an unacknowledged offense within movements for social change. For decades in Poland,

women had actively worked with men under the seemingly ungendered rubric of *anticommunist*. Their post-martial law strategy of invisibility encouraged a rejection of attention and gender analysis, and in general, women continued to see themselves as "all in it together" with the men of Solidarity. The term *feminist* did not exist in the Commune era (and later French feminists avowedly disassociated themselves from *communarde* actions); however, into the twenty-first century and with rare exception, the application of a feminist label disconcerted women who had played roles in Solidarity's underground and they continued to reject the moniker. Feminism existed, but not associated with Solidarity, although certainly some could argue that the *actions* of Solidarity's female underground indicate an argument for women's significance and equality with men. While Solidarity was "all about voice," the words and actions that represented that voice tended to come from women, who then credited men. Additionally, *workers*, *union leadership*, and *politicians* meant men. Solidarity came to represent an attempt to legitimize a workers union in a political structure, and in order to maintain Solidarity, women themselves determined the need for a tactic that declared, "men are our real leaders." Yet women maintained and won "a patient revolution," with its underground component, including its publications, nonexistent without them. As Anna Husarska, a Polish-born journalist later summarized, "The media and especially the print media *were* Solidarity. . . . The civil society in Poland was built through the underground press." Even Husarska, however, did not discuss the women who maintained that press. As Magdalena X phrased it, "women can only wield power when we pretend not to have any. We were all invisible. Society is made of guises."[41] What sets the Commune apart in many ways is that working women did not disguise their words, labor, and military efforts, even as they did not argue for the traditional hallmark of political rights: suffrage.

Despite women's articulated perspective of their position as laborers in the Commune's revolution, and despite the fact that most participants, observers, and later historians noticed women's presence during the Commune, women receded into invisibility—or representations—partially because they did not argue for suffrage. Women often voted, but not in the same political contexts declared important by many historians of republicanism or revolution. Suffrage during the Commune was male-only, as were the officeholders within the governing body. A call for universal (male) suffrage often accompanied male working-class protest during the nineteenth century. Women's silence on this civil right, rather than pointing to the different priorities of working women, tended to erase them from the Commune's significant contributions to labor and political history.[42] Had *communardes* rallied for the vote, they might have become part of the narrative of nineteenth- and twentieth-century suffrage fights. While prioritized in the narratives of political histories, men's traditional republican protocols could be limiting.

Given the Commune's dedication not simply to duplicate bourgeois republican protocols, minimizing the role of suffrage as *the* democratic political institution is a logical, if inconsistently applied analytical tool; neither Poland nor

Viet Nam had instituted democratic elections (universal or otherwise) for the eras under discussion, even as both rhetorically invoked women's right to full participation. The history of representative politics indicates that at least since the eighteenth century, modern political action has consistently taken many forms, the least common of which might be voting in officially sanctioned elections.[43] Women associated with the Commune exercised a myriad of political actions: petitions, letters, demonstrations and marches, the wearing of ribbons or other items exhibiting partisanship, publishing, and holding public meetings—at times participating in direct democracy in Red Clubs, neighborhood vigilance committees, and Union of Women meetings. Perhaps it is no wonder *communardes* did not press for suffrage. The lack of attention paid to this point has contributed to women's invisibility, even as scholars have long recognized men's political efforts when they have no right to suffrage. Women labored in ways that served their own perspectives and purposes—especially those related to employment and educational training. Correspondence indicates that at times, men saw them as an organized presence, and this organization aided women's objectives, which included contributing to the maintenance of the revolutionary Commune at all turns.

Similarly, while women (and men) in Viet Nam and Poland did not take part in free democratic elections, many fully participated in achieving overarching political goals. For those women who combated the American presence in Viet Nam, their political and military actions merged in behalf of the overarching goal: continual struggle until absolute victory was won. According to Sandra Taylor, this basic goal, known as *dau tranh*, included three components: *dich van*, political action among the enemy; *binh van*, political action among soldiers of the U.S. allied Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN); and *dan van*, political action among the people.[44] In this case, political action clearly encompassed a broad definition, within which women could participate fully, even as the Vietnamese had significant restrictions placed on their abilities to exercise political agency. In Poland, democratic suffrage was not available either, yet members and observers have always understood Solidarity's movement as political, even if not only so. Consequently, while scholars regularly employ alternate markers of political agency when assessing political history in communist countries, women's collective roles in political history often remain overlooked unless women avowedly fight for the vote, use the ballot to create change, or otherwise link themselves to formalized support roles in male-based politics. But why would those most marginalized from formalized political realms necessarily attempt to duplicate the structures that create that marginalization? Especially since, for Soviet and anti-imperial communist leaders, the Commune represented a pivotal historical example of defiance against traditional political, economic, and social relations, its uniqueness bears mentioning.

A number of historical circumstances separate the Commune from other attempts by representatives of the laboring classes to instigate their own political practices, as well as attempts by women to gain material equality with men of any class. These circumstances therefore spur questions for other contexts, even as

the Commune created a relatively unique moment allowing women an opportunity and the language to publicly assert their positions. Whereas Solidarity's rise to formalized power required long-term underground efforts, which created that underground as a "third space" or "borderzone" between public and private, the Commune's atmosphere was boldly public. However, like the underground, the Commune provided a space "where boundaries blur, roles and rules relax, and change takes place"; as with Solidarity's underground, the Commune was a "zone of experimentation and alternatives," although one out in the open, allowing for a variety of documentation and commentary.[45] The declaration of the Third Republic in September 1870, followed closely by a four-and-one-half month Prussian siege of Paris, inadvertently created conditions that called for, strengthened—even necessitated—women's active and visible participation in wartime defense, providing a ramp-up to their roles in Commune events. The Prussian capture of Emperor Louis Napoleon and demands, especially by Parisians, for a republic, led to an immediate change in government and military goals, as well as changing social and economic conditions in Paris. The Government of National Defense took charge soon after, but quickly fled Paris, leaving Parisians to fend for themselves—and with a fair amount of freedom from conservative leadership, now far away at Bordeaux. This abandonment of the capital by the government and many of the bourgeoisie not only amplified the economic devastation of Paris that the war and its aftermath created. The combination of wartime emergencies, an overnight change in government, absence of the ruling political and economic class, and a besieged, independent Paris dominated by laborers fostered resistance among the Parisian working classes toward Third Republic leadership, ultimately contributing to the Commune's rise.

Once Paris declared the Commune, the male leadership of the new Republic and its military, who during the siege had welcomed, even demanded the labor and efforts of women, saw the same labors and efforts as treasonous and criminal. However, many women saw their efforts as consistent, both in their goals and practice. Six months of active exercise as (nonvoting) republicans strengthened the rhetoric, organization, and practices of now-*communardes* in Paris. The fact that so many women worked in various structured fashions during the siege also means that *communarde* organization was not starting from scratch and that many of their siege-era priorities remained intact during the Commune. These included a focus on women's employment—including equal pay and nondiscrimination—education, food and medical care for the poor and the military, as well as the day-to-day needs of those closest to them. As one contributor to a Commune-era newspaper indicated, she/he had seen three revolutions and finally, "for the first time I have seen the women involve themselves with resolution . . . it seems that this revolution is precisely theirs, and that in defending it, they defend their true future."[46] A contemporary described women as the "last of the oppressed from the old order," noting their public participation as playing "a passionate role in the proletarian revolution of [18]71."[47]

One of the arenas for women's display of passionate rhetoric and critique, in addition to practical goals related to employment and education, was in the *clubs rouges* (Red Clubs) of the Commune. Public meetings during the siege had served as forums for discussion and debate, often including women and sometimes only women. During the Commune, anticlericalism and pragmatic searches for financial resources germinated the requisitioning of churches, then turned into public-speaking venues, ateliers for women's labor, arms depots, and more. Sometimes, in theory, the proceeds from requisitioning were to be diverted directly to women's work.[48] *Communarde* Sophie Poirier highlights the overlap of women's proletarian interests with their attendance at these clubs, as well as the overlap between women's siege activities and those during the Commune.

Sophie Doctrinal, also known by the last name of her male companion, Poirier, admitted after her arrest following the Commune that she had taken part in the "Black Ball Club" during the siege, and on at least a few occasions, presided at it, and at other times, she had spoken.[49] Claiming an interest only in increasing employment for women, Poirier later admitted that she visited this club, attending eleven public meetings so that she could communicate relevant information to the women there.[50] In particular, she stated that the lay ateliers had been designated a sum of 100,000 francs from the siege-era Government of National Defense to be divided among those taking part in the *associations ouvrières* (working women's associations). Women's focus on establishing ateliers unrelated to the Church was perpetual, as nuns and girls within convents provided a significant amount of the handwork produced for capitalist consumption—work that forced wages down or eliminated jobs for some women workers. For these women, secular organization of labor and education were at the crux of their revolution.

Whereas the siege-era government could marginally accommodate Poirier's behavior and interests, especially since it funded her work, after the Commune she was to pay for her past and present social—even political—sins. Under questioning, Poirier disassociates herself from the police agent's current interests in her Commune participation by saying that she "never, under any circumstances participated in politics." The link, for the police, was the fact that this focus on women's employment was associated with her "animated revolutionary ideas," which she brought forth in that siege-era club and the Commune. The police desired to bring her to trial for trying to change the government, encouraging citizens to arm themselves against other citizens—meaning Third Republic troops—and having organized and directed an association of more than twenty people, gathering daily, exhorting criminal activities.[51] For her, Poirier argued, the primary goal was women's employment, a goal much appreciated a few months earlier by the Government of National Defense. From the Republic's perspective, her participation in past and present clubs now took on treasonous tones.

Club activities reveal that women not occupying a traditional Marxist proletarian class—such as sex workers—also understood the value of their numbers

while other women understood the economics behind prostitution. *Citoyenne* Amanda, at a club at St-Séverin church, suggested on May 10 that they "organize a battalion of all the registered prostitutes (*filles soumises*) of Paris." She argued, "We are at least 25,000! Well then, they could make a regiment out of us, give us arms and we will break through the Versailles troops!," which was greeted by loud and long applause.[52] When Commune leadership refused to use prostitutes as ambulance workers, Louise Michel—likely the most well-known *communarde*—encouraged them to enter her neighborhood Vigilance Committee, asking, "who has more right than these women, the most pitiful of the old order's victims, to give their lives for the new?"[53] These women had a forum for their marginalized positions, and when hundreds of women signed a declaration to end street prostitution, they simultaneously voted for the immediate riddance of nuns from the *hospices* and prisons, allowing other women to fill those positions.[54] Often, *communardes* seemed to understand the material basis of the trade, with public free speech forums exhibiting laboring women's analysis, whether or not their ideas were put into practice.

The freedom of speech and movement accommodating women's Commune centrality not only made them visible to their enemies, but also suggests the importance women could hold for prosecutors once they became visible, something Solidarity's women clearly understood. In writing of nineteenth-century Polish women's involvement in uprisings, Marion Janion noted that poet Adam Mickiewicz believed that "one of the first symbols of [women's] equality was the fact that Polish women were punished for conspiracy and sent to Siberia on equal terms with men, after their trials in military courts even."[55] While Penn clarifies the flaws in Mickeiwicz's assessment in terms of overall equality, the point has merit in terms of how government and military officials understood women's threat. Such was the case in post-Commune France. Polish narratives offer up romanticized nineteenth-century women warriors fighting disguised as men to perform their duty in armed battle, often taking over for fallen males; Franco-Prussian War sources suggest similar positive attitudes prevailed about women's military engagement during that war. However, *communardes* remained undisguised, at times vociferous, agents of revolution, although many donned male military attire and certainly some did take up for fallen comrades, husbands or not.[56] As such, they became targets for arrests and trials if they survived street corner summary executions. Rumors swirled about women deemed *pétroleuses*, or female arsonists, and military courts held them in equivalent status with the Commune's military and political leaders, with some initially receiving death sentences. Whether innocent or guilty in fact, women's revolutionary visibility, as opposed to the invisibility of later Solidarity women, made them targets and disallowed any suggestion that women were not relevant actors. While often unseen, Viet Nam's warring women also endured all penalties from the French colonial era through the American War.

The French, Diem's forces in the South, and the American and ARVN troops all arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and executed women, with their sufferings often making radicals of them, thereby increasing their determination

and value to the war effort. As a woman who headed a medical clinic at the front for ten years summarized, "Nothing will ever frighten me again." Some imprisoned women endured years of abuse and torture, living to tell about it and escalating their defense of their cause. The resistance in the South, while not formally organized until December 1960 as the National Front for the Liberation of Vietnam (NLF), had two women among its founders: Nguyen Thi Dinh and Duong Quynh Hoa. The NLF organized the People's Liberation Armed Forces in February 1961, and the Women's Liberation Association, established much earlier in the 1940s, had dramatically increased rates of literacy among women, making assets of women in the resistance for decades to come. After the division of the country at the 17th parallel, those women who adhered to Ho's request for *stay behinds* in the South (what Diem would term the Viet Cong) helped create the terrifying "hostile territory" that American soldiers so feared. Gen. Westmoreland's *body count* as indicative of success meant that all terrain was considered hostile, leaving all occupants vulnerable to attack. Americans' fear of the jungle terrain and indigenous animals, insects, vegetation, and people occupying it aided anti-American efforts more generally, with the dread of the unseen prevalent. As frontline doctor Kim Cuc described the delivery of her child in the jungle and simultaneous bombing raids on her hospital, she nonetheless summarized, "In some ways we felt safest in the jungle, because the Americans were afraid of it." While few Americans specified the category of women when citing fears, they were part of the unseen threats that awaited the enemy.[57] Yet, defying the notion that (ungendered) victors write the history, until recently, the narratives of victorious Viet Nam most frequently thrust women back into the realms of the symbolic, with the occasional exceptional individual glorified. For the women of 1871 Paris, defeat would take a particular toll.

The hope of the Union of Women and many laboring women during the Commune was that eventually, reorganized, redistributed work would allow more women to support themselves and their dependants—but the Commune did not survive. Even the formal, biased Third Republic Inquiry about the events proceeding from March 18 noted that in interviews, imprisoned women "showed thankfulness towards the Commune which gave them money and power."[58] That power ended with the final, bloodletting week of May 21–28, 1871, during which government troops killed somewhere around 30,000 Parisians, thousands of those, women and children. Tens of thousands more came under arrest. Artist AC recorded the military-uniformed bodies of women, as well as bodies of young children, among the dead he sketched during that last week.[59] Malenfant Rouchy described seeing victimized children as she roamed the streets disguised as a boy.[60] Versailles troops stopped her to check her hands for gunpowder or petrol, indicating that children were not immune from suspicion or the deathly efficiency of the new machine-gun-like *mitrailleuses*. Malenfant Rouchy's mother scoured the streets looking for her daughter, finally cradling an unidentifiable body in her arms thinking that she had found her daughter, Victorine. Evidently, threats to a nominal republic could come from the thousands who could not vote, who did not appear in records of the

industries most affected by the dearth of laborers in the wake of the Commune's demise, but whom recent historians have labeled merely an "activist minority of less than 100."[61] However, passionate advocacy for proletarian change does not equate with women's equal participation, even if revolutions succeed.

While Solidarity survived due to women's efforts, as with the victorious regime in Viet Nam, its rise to national power did not advance women's needs nor recognize their contributions. In the early 1990s, when Kristi S. Long told people in Poland that she was conducting research on women in Solidarity and the lives of Polish women, she often received the same response: "The life of a Polish woman is difficult," generally followed by complaints from women about work, low wages (30–40 percent less than men's), housework burdens, sexist government restrictions, and men in general.[62] These statements almost mirror the understanding of Parisian women in 1871, one writing that current situations were "worse for us women."[63] Despite communist rhetoric of equality, women had not held significant political status in Poland for decades and by the mid-1990s, women held only 44 positions (9.6 percent) in the Sejm (Diet), the second lowest number of women representatives since 1944. Only three women held posts in the first Solidarity government, and that government dismantled the Plenipotentiary for Women and Families in 1992, deeming it unnecessary. Consequently, while many women still hoped for a united effort in behalf of men and women, women's organizations developed in order to counter Solidarity-led efforts to restrict women's rights, some with the motto, "There is no democracy without women!"[64] Their grievances *after* Solidarity gained political power resonate with the accusations of women aimed toward the elected Commune leadership. Bypassing its success in coming to and maintaining power for about ten weeks, the Commune's status as an impermanent revolution has often obscured women's strident presence during its existence and limited the significance of women's actions during a "failed" revolution. Yet, as in Viet Nam, even after a "successful" change in regime, women who were once soldiers often find respect only for "make-up, nice hair, [and] being a proper housewife."[65]

Conclusion

Forefronting *communardes*, this article argued for increased and consistent attention paid to the hows and whys of women's participation during social change and the political and military efforts aligned with those changes. Linking *communarde* experiences with those who fought against the U.S. during Viet Nam's American War and with women who participated in the rise of Poland's Solidarity during the 1980s indicates that being a curious feminist is necessary in order to gain a clearer understanding of labor, military, and political history in wide-ranging contexts. *Citoyenne* Destrée's siege-era argument against an "appearance of Revolution" that bars women from full inclusion therefore still bears attention. Suggesting the need to expand and nuance even basic terms such as *democracy*, Marion Janion described to her *Gazeta Wyborcza* readers in Poland

in 1999 that Solidarity had ultimately created a "male democracy," with women not seen as individuals, but as "family creatures." Shana Penn notes that as of 1999, the UN had cited gender discrimination as the most serious human rights abuse in Poland. According to her, not until women translated the English language report into Polish did Polish society begin to absorb the message that "women's rights are human rights."[66] In the case of Viet Nam, participants often returned home to be judged, not by their military-associated efforts, but for their capacity to bear children, with their depleted, often poisoned, bodies finding ridicule and rejection. Therefore, attention to women who do not necessarily label themselves "feminist" or otherwise act as conscious agents of women-centered projects or changes exposes wide-ranging possibilities.

While my evidence does not directly argue for broader relevancy, it might increase the likelihood that looking at apparent political change and acts of resistance in terms of what women need, want, and do might not only suggest the importance of acutely analyzing the "where are the women" question when attempting to understand seismic political shifts. It may yet aid a reassessment of the reasons why some attempts at democratic polities have not fully succeeded. That is, if a fairly consistent majority of the population is not in the purview of those who create new political and economic structures and policies, how can a successful permanent transformation occur?[67] The political structures of Poland and Viet Nam have not reflected women's foundational importance to the movements that created them or to their current societies; both nations continue to struggle for economic growth, stability, and parity with other nations in their regions. While ultimately unsuccessful, women who participated in the Commune tried to make it more than an appearance of Revolution. However, they, too, would be silenced.

Today, on the site of the Commune's women-fomented initiation in the Montmartre district stands the basilica of Sacré Cœur, one of the city's main attractions known especially for its view overlooking Paris. No plaque commemorates the Commune; in fact, private donors, and then the government of the Third Republic, built Sacré Cœur in order to "excoriate" its sins and erase the memory of it, simultaneously rendering invisible women's revolutionary space. At her trial, Nathalie LeMel heard testimony that during the last week of the Commune, she had told men behind a barricade that they were cowards and that if they would not do the job, the women would (and did). At her arrest and with "her hands and lips black, covered in [gun]powder," LeMel reportedly claimed to have fought for forty-eight hours on the barricades without eating, adding with much animosity, "we are beaten, but not vanquished!"[68] The history of women's labor in the name of revolutionary change suggests a parallel assertion, one that may contribute to recognizing that the ultimate victories of social revolutions are, at best, only half completed.

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Notes

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1. Here, the terms, *popular*, *working*, and most often, *laboring* classes are employed in describing a wide array of people who attempt to support themselves through their own labor, often quite physical in nature.
2. *La Lutte à Outrance* on January 9, 1871 (19 Nivôse 79); M. G. Molinari, *Les clubs rouges pendant le siège de Paris* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1871), 197; Martin Johnson, *The Paradise of Association: Political Culture and Popular Organizations in the Paris Commune of 1871* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1996), 235, 265.
3. I use the term, *communarde(s)*, as the universal for those who participated in events, although more traditionally, the masculine, *communard(s)*, has served that purpose. Here the term most often refers to women but encompasses participants more generally. Certainly not all those perceived to be participants at the time—male or female—formally allied themselves with the Commune. In this work, *communard(s)* will indicate only specifically male subjects.
4. In addition to my research, "Invisible Revolutions: Women's Participation in the 1871 Paris Commune" (Stewart 2006. PhD dissertation, University of Arizona), I draw especially from Shana Penn's, *Solidarity's Secret: The Women Who Defeated Communism in Poland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), Karen Gottschang Turner's, *Even the Women Must Fight: Memories of War from North Vietnam* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999), and Sandra C. Taylor's, *Vietnamese Women at War: Fighting for Ho Chi Minh and the Revolution* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1999).
5. Jacques Rougerie, "Composition d'une population insurgée: l'example de la Commune," *La Mouvement Sociale* (July–September 1964): 31–47.
6. Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 3, 5.
7. Penn (2005), *Solidarity's Secret*, 8, 220, 14–15, 5.
8. Turner (1999), *Even the Women Must Fight*, xv, 31.
9. See singular chapters in John Foran's, *Theorizing Revolutions* (London: Routledge, 1997), Louise A. Tilly and Charles Tilly, eds., *Class Conflict and Collective Action* (London: Sage Publications, 1981), and Charles Tilly's more recent, *Social Movements, 1768–2004* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2004).
10. Penn (2005), *Solidarity's Secret*, 92.
11. In the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, the National Guard of Paris represented the interests of the working classes, but was not an especially adroit fighting force. It would, however, be the military organization of the Commune.
12. Taylor (1999), *Vietnamese Women at War*, 23–24, 10, 82–83, 53.
13. Penn (2005), *Solidarity's Secret*, vii, xiii, 12.
14. Ibid., 61–62, 9, 30, 177.
15. Turner (1999), *Even the Women Must Fight*, 105.
16. Taylor (1999), *Vietnamese Women at War*, 117–118, 47, 70.
17. Victorine Brocher, *Souvenirs d'une morte vivante* (Paris: François Maspero, 1977).
18. International Institute for Social History (IISH), Amsterdam/Descaves Collection/Brocher Archive.
19. *La Sociale*, 8 Mai 1871.
20. Penn (2005), *Solidarity's Secret*, 11, 71.
21. "Aventures de neuf ambulancières," in *La Sociale*, 6 Mai 1871.
22. Dang Thuy Tram, *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace*, trans. Andrew X. Pham (New York: Harmony, 2007).

23. Dang, *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace*, vi, 58–59, xii.
24. Brocher (1977), *Souvenirs*, 155–206.
25. Ibid., 163, 165–168, 178, 182.
26. Taylor (1999), *Vietnamese Women at War*, 18, 24–31, 10–11, 110.
27. *La Sociale*, 10 Avril 1871. Northwestern University McCormick Special Collections Library (NWU)/Siege and Commune of Paris 1870–1871/ Femme Prévost, née Gumder (sic), Marguerite, maîtresse de Lachaize (sic). Also available at the corresponding site http://www.library.northwestern.edu/spec/siege/docs/PAR01040.html (accessed 8 August 2008). Despite the use of the term, *épouse* (spouse), they were not legally married.
28. Louise Michel, *Memoirs* (Arles: Éditions Sulliver, 1998), 101, 195. Archives Nationales (AN)/BB24/747, Demande en Grâce, Gaspard (femme), née Schmitt.
29. Carolyn J. Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2004), 70–71, chaps. 3 and 6.
30. Archive de l'Histoire de la Guerre (AHG)/Ly 23, Page 1 of a letter from the Union des Femmes pour la défense de Paris, addressed from the Comité Central de l'Union des femmes à la Commission de travail et échange.
31. AHG/Ly 23/Page 2 from same letter.
32. AHG/Ly23/Page 3 from same letter. AHG/Ly 22/Union des Femmes registration lists of members for five *arrondissements* also reflect these professions.
33. Summary of relevant Achive de la Préfecture de la Police de Paris (APP) files.
34. Until 1996, the sole book-length work raising questions about women's Commune participation was Edith Thomas, "*Les Pétroleuses*" (Paris: Gallimard, 1963). Recent exceptions are Gay L. Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1996) and Eichner's (2004), *Surmounting the Barricades*, although neither attempts to address the overall significance of the Commune.
35. Turner (1999), *Even the Women Must Fight*, 8, 28.
36. Taylor (1999), *Vietnamese Women at War*, 81.
37. *La Sociale*, April 6, 1871.
38. AN/AB XIX 3353/AC, 20. In addition to the AN files, some of AC's sketches and the notes he took about his subjects are extant at NWU/Siege and Commune of Paris 1870–1871/Etchings/pf1/71, 72, 119, 120.
39. AN/AB XIX 3353/AC, 19.
40. AN/AB XIX 3353/AC, 29.
41. Penn (2005), *Solidarity's Secret*, ix, xiv, 71–72, 76, 143–144, 226, 230, 11, 235.
42. See, for example, Roger V. Gould, *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995).
43. While earlier eras have examples of wide-ranging political action, the eighteenth century brought forth more consistent use of them, especially as liberal republican and abolition movements gained momentum. For a particularly insightful analysis of women's political action when denied the vote, see, Elsa Barkley Brown, "To Catch the Vision of Freedom: Reconstructing Southern Black Women's Political History, 1865–1880" in *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, 3rd ed., ed. Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBois (New York: Routledge, 2000).
44. Taylor (1999), *Vietnamese Women at War*, 37.
45. Penn (2005), *Solidarity's Secret*, 207–08.
46. From the newspaper, *Le Vengeur*, cited in Carolyn Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades*, 72–73. The sex category of the writer remains unclear.
47. Georges Jenneret, *Paris pendant la Commune Révolutionnaire de 71* (Neuchatel: G. Guillaume fils, 1872), 140.
48. Georges Bourgin and Gabriel Henriot, eds., *Procès-Verbaux de la Commune de 1871, Tome II (Mai 1871)* (Paris: Imprimerie A. Lahure, 1945), 228–31.
49. AHG/Ly 23/Lemarchand (Doctrinal, Poirier), 4th Conseil de Guerre, 12 Juillet 1871, responses by Poirier to the search of her home.
50. AHG/Ly23/Lemarchand (Doctrinal, Poirier), Procès Verbal, 4th Conseil de Guerre, 5 Decembre 1871.

51. AHG/Ly23/Lemarchand (Doctrinal, Poirier), 4th Conseil de Guerre, 15 Fevrier 1872.
52. Paul Fontoulieu, *Les Églises de Paris sous la Commune* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1873), 225.
53. Cited in Thomas (1963), "*Les Pétroleuses*," 89.
54. *Le Cri du Peuple*, May 10, 1871. Hospices could include a variety of charitable social services including asylums, workhouses, and homes for the destitute, aged, or parentless children.
55. Quoted in Penn (2005), *Solidarity's Secret*, 258.
56. While *communardes* did not necessarily intentionally obscure their sex, W. Pembroke Fetridge described the fact that sex categories were not necessarily obvious, as, "One of the most furious defenders of [a] barricade was a woman dressed in the uniform of a National Guard. She was killed during the action, and in clearing away the bodies her sex was discovered." Fetridge, *The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune in 1871: With a Full Account of the Bombardment, Capture, and Burning of the City* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1871), 328. Gay Gullickson also summarizes in *Unruly Women* (1996) that Versailles soldiers cut open the jackets of prisoners and the dead, in order to discover their "true sex."
57. Taylor (1999), *Vietnamese Women at War*, 51, 135, 30, 32, 140.
58. Assemblée Nationale, *Enquête parlementaire sur l'insurrection du 18 Mars*, Tome III (Versailles: L'Assemblée Nationale, 1872), 313.
59. NWU/Siege and Commune of Paris/Etchings/pf1/AC/71, 120, 119.
60. Brocher (1977), *Souvenirs*, 213.
61. Robert Tombs, *The Paris Commune 1871* (London: Longman, 1999), 142.
62. Kristi S. Long, *We All Fought for Freedom: Women in Poland's Solidarity Movement* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 16.
63. Christine Planté, ed., *Tablettes d'une Femme Pendant la Commune A.-M. (Malvina Blanchecotte)* (Tusson: DuLérot, 1996), 51.
64. Elzbiata Sawa-Czajka, "International Trends: Are There Female Political Elites in Poland?" *Journal of Women's History* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 103–6.
65. Turner (1999), *Even the Women Must Fight*, 181–3.
66. Penn (2005), *Solidarity's Secret*, 290, 306.
67. While making a somewhat broader point, Slavenka Drakulic argues that for the Soviet context, politics is not abstract and that the inattention of the Soviet Union's hierarchy to the day-to-day "trivial" needs of people, represented especially by the gendered need for decent toilet paper and tampons, resulted in its inability to last in the long-term. See, Drakulic, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 30–31, 189.
68. AHG/ Ly23/688, dossier Duval Lemel, "Process Verbal."

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