Two Paths to Change

Compare the Paris Commune and the rise of the SFIO

TOT.C.2.1.B "France's Paris Commune and the rise of the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière,"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two actions taken by the Commune, circle two details about how the SFIO organized or sought change, and write 1 beside one detail about workers in each movement.

From a Paris Council to a National Party

1. In March 1871, Paris workers and National Guard members faced a crisis. France had lost a war to Prussia, and many Parisians distrusted the new national government, which met outside the city in Versailles. When government troops tried to take cannons guarded by the National Guard, resistance spread. Parisians elected a council that declared the Paris Commune. Its supporters wanted local self-government and a society less shaped by wealth and inherited power. The council ruled a city under siege, not all of France. Its short life would become a lasting reference point for later socialists.

2. The Commune acted on some workers' demands. It barred employers from imposing fines on workers and ended night work for bakers, whose shifts had often begun before dawn. It also ordered plans for workers' cooperatives to run workshops whose owners had fled, although war left little time to carry out this plan. In May, troops loyal to the national government entered Paris. During the bloody fighting and reprisals known as Bloody Week, thousands died, and many survivors were imprisoned or sent into exile. The Commune ended after about two months, but arguments about labor, democracy, and state power did not.

3. Decades later, socialist groups across France argued over how to defend workers. In 1905, major groups joined to form the Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière, or SFIO, a national socialist party. Figures such as Jean Jaurès and Jules Guesde belonged to its different currents. Unlike the Commune's council, created during an armed uprising in one city, the SFIO ran candidates in elections and pressed for change through national politics. Its members did not agree on every path to socialism. The SFIO inherited debates about workers' rights and political power, but it was not the Commune's surviving government.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the confrontation over cannons lead to a new source of authority in Paris?

2. Choose one Commune action aimed at workers. What problem did it address?

3. How did the SFIO's approach to seeking political change differ from the Commune's?

4. What concern connected the Commune and the SFIO, and what shows they were not the same organization?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 100 word museum label arguing whether the two movements' goals or methods changed more. Use at least one detail about each movement, and explain why the SFIO was not simply the Commune continued.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.2.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two actions taken by the Commune, circle two details about how the SFIO organized or sought change, and write 1 beside one detail about workers in each movement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the confrontation over cannons lead to a new source of authority in Paris?	**Government troops tried to take National Guard cannons, resistance spread, and Parisians elected the council that declared the Commune.**
2	Choose one Commune action aimed at workers. What problem did it address?	**Ending night work for bakers addressed shifts that often began before dawn. Other supported choices include banning employer fines or planning cooperatives for abandoned workshops.**
3	How did the SFIO's approach to seeking political change differ from the Commune's?	**The Commune's council arose during an armed uprising in Paris. The SFIO formed a national party, ran election candidates, and sought change through national politics.**
4	What concern connected the Commune and the SFIO, and what shows they were not the same organization?	**Both addressed workers' rights and political power. The Commune ended in 1871, while socialist groups formed the SFIO in 1905.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

From 1871 to 1905, the methods of French socialists changed more than their concern for workers. The Paris Commune grew from armed resistance in one city and tried to protect workers, including bakers on night shifts. The SFIO became a national party that ran candidates in elections to pursue change. Both movements connected political power to workers' lives. Government troops ended the Commune, so the SFIO was not its surviving council. Its electoral strategy offered a different route to influence, even as workers' rights remained an important goal.

Accept either a goals-focused or methods-focused claim if the label supports it with accurate details from both movements. Students should distinguish the SFIO, founded decades later, from the Commune's government.