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# PROUDHONIANA

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*an occasional miscellany*



*Number One:*

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## FEUDING BROTHERS (AND SISTERS)

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Tribunal révolutionnaire.

Le 2 décembre 1863, après douze années d'oppression  
des citoyens ~~de toute opinion~~ <sup>opposant à toute opinion</sup> de profession indépendante  
et libérale, après chacun de cinquante ans au moins  
contemporains des faits soumis à leur ~~jugement~~ <sup>appréciation</sup>, ayant  
pu dès le commencement les juger avec impartialité  
de sont réunis au nombre de trente-six et consti-  
tués spontanément en jury, après quinze jours de li-  
bération, ont rendu contre Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte,  
actuellement empereur des Français, le verdict  
~~suivant~~ ci-après.

1<sup>re</sup> Question. - Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, arrêté à  
Strasbourg le 30 octobre 1836, ~~pour~~ <sup>comme présumé</sup> attentat  
à la sûreté de l'Etat, ~~est~~ <sup>est</sup> gracié sans jugement par le roi  
Louis-Philippe <sup>10<sup>me</sup></sup> à condition de se retirer en Amérique.  
arrêté de nouveau à Boulogne, le 6 août 1840, pour  
le même crime, et condamné par la Cour des pairs, le  
6 octobre de la même année, à une prison perpétuelle;  
~~est-il comptable d'avoir~~ <sup>est-il comptable d'avoir</sup> pendant les années 1848 notam-  
ment une journée de juin, 1849, 1850 et 1851, avant  
et depuis son ascension à la Présidence, commis contre  
les droits et la liberté de la nation?

Réponse, à l'unanimité: Oui.

2<sup>e</sup> Question - Est-il comptable d'avoir, le 2 Décembre  
1851, malgré son serment, malgré la protestation des repré-  
sentants du peuple et la résistante des citoyens <sup>Députés</sup>  
la Constitution, chassé les représentants élus par le  
Pouvoir?



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first issue of PROUDHONIANA. With the Bakunin Library project now well underway, it has been hard not to speculate about how feasible it would be to begin a similar effort to translate Proudhon's works. The job is obviously much larger, and will require a larger body of collaborators. It will probably also require some transformation of Proudhon's reputation among the prospective readers, which means at the very least establishing what a full, rich, complex place Proudhon's world was, and how lively the conversations within it really were.

This first collection is little more than a scrapbook, containing bits and pieces plucked from various parts of that world. It begins with a pair of reflections on Proudhon and his legacy, which are followed by a number of very rough, partial translations from his unpublished manuscripts, a short satire, some critical responses and an article on the death of one of his collaborators. I have organized it around a theme of conflict, and sometimes deadly conflict, between those who might have been considered brothers and sisters, political comrades and allies. I hope it gives a glimpse of some high stakes involved in the histories and at least hints at what might be at stake for us.

Future issues will contain bibliographical material, research aids, abstracts of responses to Proudhon's work, and additional translations, all with the aim of establishing the scope that a serious attempt at a Proudhon Library would have to achieve, while also laying some of the groundwork for that project.

Welcome again to the world of PROUDHONIANA.

— SHAWN P. WILBUR

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More material is available online:

[proudhonlibrary.org](http://proudhonlibrary.org)  
[blog.proudhonlibrary.org](http://blog.proudhonlibrary.org)  
[libertarian-labyrinth.org](http://libertarian-labyrinth.org)

## THOUGHTS ON PROUDHON AND HIS LEGACY

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Thursday, January 30, 2014

### THE CHALLENGE IN PROUDHON'S THOUGHT

Part of the project here has to be presenting a picture of Proudhon that is a more useful alternative to those we have inherited. I have been arguing that there is a Proudhon who is not the failed precursor we so often think of, but who is instead a pioneer who still remains in some very important ways out in front of us, waiting for us to catch up. So what is the defining character of that Proudhon's thought? I still can't think of a more exemplary text for addressing that question than *The Philosophy of Progress*. In the past, I've indicated his central concerns fairly broadly, but let me repeat two short passages from that work, in order to zero in on a very important dynamic. First, there is the "if I could live a thousand years" passage, which constantly comes back to me as a sort of challenge, as I try to engage with Proudhon's thought as a living, ongoing project:

"If, then, I could once put my finger on the opposition that I make between these two ideas, and explain what I mean by Progress and what I consider Absolute, I would have given you the principle, secret and key to all my polemics. You would possess the logical link between all of my ideas, and you could, with that notion alone, serving for you as an infallible criterion with regard to me, not only estimate the ensemble of my publications, but forecast and signal in advance the propositions that sooner or later I must affirm or deny, the doctrines of which I will have to make myself the defender or adversary. You would be able, I say, to evaluate and judge all my theses by what I have said and by what I do not know. You would know me, *intus et in cute*, such as I am, such as I have been all my life, and such as I would find myself in a thousand years, if I could live a thousand years: the man whose thought always advances, whose program will never be finished. And at whatever moment in my career you would come to know me, whatever conclusion you could come to regarding me, you would always have either to absolve me in the name of Progress, or to condemn me in the name of the Absolute."

And then there is this:

"What could a few lapses, a few false steps, detract from the rectitude of my faith, the goodness of my cause?... You will please me, sir, to learn for yourself what road I have traveled, and how many times I have fallen along the way. Far from blushing at so many spills, I would be tempted to boast of them, and to measure my valor by the number of my contusions."

This is, in many ways, Proudhon at his best. And one of the things that we know about Proudhon is that he was not always at his best. But Proudhon himself seems to have known that, and provided us with a challenging view of what he himself thought was constant in his thought.

The first passage contains everything we need to identify Proudhon as, on the one hand, a thinker with fixed commitments (opposition to the absolute, commitment to progress) and, on the other, a thinker whose thought is always changing and will never be complete, even if he could live a thousand years. The second passage simply reminds us that if your thought is constantly evolving, even for a dozen years, let alone a thousand, you're going to spend a good deal of time being at least partially wrong.

In terms of our critical encounters with Proudhon in the present, we need to be clear whether we are engaging with those commitments that he considered essentially eternal or whether we are dealing with evolutions in their application to particular problems. We can then judge Proudhon on the consistency with which he applied his own principles, and we can differ. But the way that we overtake Proudhon's thought is not by pointing to another of his hard-earned contusions, but by traveling, and falling, and picking ourselves up again (and again), and showing ourselves finally capable of advancing that project (opposition to the absolute, commitment to progress) across the lost time and forward beyond what we might expect a long-lived Proudhon to have accomplished.

If we really want bragging rights over the grand old man, it seems that our challenge is clear: Think about all that Proudhon accomplished between 1839 and the beginning of 1865. Consider the potential of the project he set in motion. Now think of the nearly 150 years that have passed since his death, and the almost complete neglect of his project. What would it take for us to make good on the promise of that restless, experimental, determined, anarchist thought, even just to pick up it where Proudhon left it in 1865, let alone to realize the promise of the years lost?

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Monday, February 10, 2014

## PROUDHON'S THOUGHT AS A POTENTIALLY TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE WITHIN CONTEMPORARY ANARCHISM

I'm through the first couple of days, and I expect the bulk of the action, in a marathon week-long "Ask Me Anything" session on Reddit's DebateAnarchism forum. So far, it has been a surprisingly civil and instructive experience, and certainly an interesting way of testing out my rapprochement with the "mutualist" label. Many of the questions haven't strayed far from the common questions of coexistence—"can theory X be compatible with theory Y"—or those concerning the basic concepts and vocabulary that dominate the usual capitalist vs. anti-capitalist debates, but, as I had hoped, there have been a few opportunities to break a bit of new ground. The most interesting of those instances, I think, came when a friend asked a question about the future of mutualism, which summons up for me all my ambivalences about school-building with the movement, but also seems to require tackling some specific applications of Proudhonian sociology that I've been approaching rather gingerly so far. The answer is probably bolder than anything I've written yet on what I see as the potential of mutualism, so I'll just reproduce it here in its entirety:

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Q.—Where do you see the (Neo-)Proudhonian side of Mutualism, or even Mutualism as a whole, in the next 15-20 years? Do you think it will be as known about and understood as anarchist Communism has become?

A.—15-20 years can be a long time. 20 years ago almost nobody knew much about Proudhon and mutualism except a few phrases. Even the standard dismissals were less well-known before mutualism started to reemerge and give people an occasion to be dismissive. So things can change rapidly. On the other hand, it's one thing to make people aware that there is another school of thought out there and another to push past the mostly rote rejections. And what I take to be the "best case" for mutualism is sort of complicated, so that's an additional difficulty.

I don't think there's any point in entering a popularity contest with communism or any of the other tendencies that people have built ideologies and firm identities around. If I have decided that "mutualism" is probably a good label to organize around, it was also pretty easy for me to walk away from that label for the better part of the last year and simply do the same work without the pretense that I was engaged in any sort of school-building.

It seems likely that mutualism or the Proudhonian element in anarchism will thrive to the extent that it can be made practically relevant to current struggles. There are all sorts of way in which the Proudhonian sociology might enrich our understanding of those struggles, but most of them will involve

overcoming both theoretical and ideological resistances. The basic challenges are to make up for 150 years of lost time, and, of course, to shift the perception of Proudhon's thought which has developed to explain and defend the neglect. That means that proponents are going to have to be very, very on top of their game, engaging seriously not only with the ideas that they consider fundamentally "their own," but with the ideas of the tendencies that currently hold a kind of hegemony within the anarchist movement.

It isn't going to be enough to just do battle with those who oppose mutualist ideas without really knowing them. It's going to be necessary to show that the whole history of anarchism might well have developed differently, and that the potential common ground between, say, mutualism and communism, not only exists but enriches communism, should it be acknowledged.

We might, for example, attempt to tackle the question of mutualism and the radical labor movement. Proudhon's "The Political Capacity of the Working Class" potentially has a lot to offer to those with a class-struggle focus. It certainly offers us a very different Proudhon than the one who was concerned about the efficacy of strikes in 1846, and it gives us a window in on the background of the First International. I'm back to work translating it. But let's say that a year from now we have a nice, clear English version of the text. There is still a work of interpretation and integration to be done—probably before much of anyone can be convinced to even read the thing. It's not enough to present the facts from 1864. It's necessary to drag them into the present, and even into a somewhat different present than most anarchists live in. We have a document from the relatively early days of the workers' movement, and we want to transport it into the waning days of a certain sort of workers' struggle. How do we make the ideas in it living and new? How do we account for the 150 years of development that we can assume Proudhon would have given the ideas, had he lived that "thousand years" he talked about? Part of the answer is undoubtedly to attempt to push things farther towards that more general model of "agro-industrial federation." Another might be to attempt to integrate the theory of individualities and collectivities from the works of the 1850s more completely into the proposals in "Political Capacity"—or even to scrap the material from 1864, except as a kind of dated example of implementation (the way I'm inclined to treat the mutual bank), in order to reimagine a 21st century application. But what does a model of class struggle, for example, look like, if we employ Proudhon's sociology? Social classes are easy to recognize as collective actors and as such they have to be incorporated into our understanding of social relations. But the sort of understanding of individual and collective interests we draw from Proudhon is going to mean that class solidarity looks rather different than it might to most self-identified class-struggle anarchists. Some theoretical problems are solved by acknowledging that the interests of, say, the working class (as a collective actor) may be different from, and even opposed in some instances, to those of individual workers. As a consequence, the practice of solidarity in struggle probably requires some

rethinking. The gains, in terms of insights into the dynamics of class societies, seem significant, and it seems they ought to pay off in terms of improved practice. But there is always going to be that moment when those committed to the interests of the working class have to come to terms with the fact that such a commitment walks a fine line between anarchist solidarity and an anti-anarchist external constitution of society by classes. Now, for neo-Proudhonians, I would hope that these sorts of awkward awakening would gradually become familiar, if not necessarily less traumatic. But if you haven't already signed on for the project, some of these adjustments are probably going to seem pretty damn extreme, costly and counter-intuitive.

Again, if we can correct the mistakes in Proudhon on sex/gender/family/etc—not, in my mind, a very difficult project, but a serious stigma to overcome nonetheless—then we're faced with a version of the same can of worms. Rethinking the politics of identity and identification around sexes, genders, families, etc., that are collective actors with potential interests of their own might well provide some exits from some really troubling cul-de-sacs, but the cost and perceived risk involved in rethinking the details is going to be substantial. In the end, I'm not sure that a shift from what we have now to a mutualized framework would be much more radical than the changes that have occurred in the related discourses in the last fifteen years, but the direction of the shift, and the negative perceptions to be overcome, mean that it would be a much more against-the-grain sort of transformation.

Face it, the approach that we've associated ourselves with poses all sorts of threats to our certainty and comfort, even in our own beliefs, at a time when there is already way too damn much uncertainty and discomfort, and in an era that is arguably at least a bit fundamentalist just about any which way you look. For me, the discoveries that the notion of "anarchy" was always a bit more complicated than we thought in Proudhon's thought, the engagement with the ungovernability of anarchism, and the possibility of an absolutist anarchism, have all been exciting and useful work, but I expect a lot of people will have wildly varying mileage...

If there are people willing to be serious, committed gadflies, teasing out the instances where there are theoretical or practical advances to be made by applying Proudhon's thought, who are also willing to cover most of the distance to meet those of other tendencies who might be open to those insights, well, mutualism might well make a fairly serious, important mark on anarchism in the next couple of decades. But that "if" is obviously a pretty serious conditional...



## FROM THE MANUSCRIPTS

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Ms. 2971

### MORAL EDUCATION

I always see the fathers of families, sufficiently enlightened regarding the value of religious fables, worry nonetheless about the Education to give their children, and ask on what the moral principles that they will be taught will rest.

Morals and superstition have been so thoroughly mixed together that the majority of men do not manage to separate them, and, for them, to destroy the latter it is always a matter of compromising the former.

I am an honest man, says a father, and I know where I stand on the question of the cults. I do not need religion to lead me as a man of honor. But my children must be educated, and I know what that costs. It disgusts me to preach superstition to them. We must speak to them of morals, but on what basis?...

Voltaire was of that opinion: he dismissed his servants and closed the door when his friends debated religion.

That difficulty, however childish it is when we examine it up close, is serious, and I know a lot of people whom it torments and troubles.—I have been myself, like everyone, brought up short by it. We absolutely desire an external *sanction* for the law, a mark of dignity, something that astonishes, that conquers wills and prostrates consciences.

However, it is not in this way that things occur. The capital error here, which comes from a lack of observation, is that we have not studied the march of human conscience in its ascent towards moral law.

We have not seen that the moral law only penetrates the soul slowly, that it requires that long education and a sustained practice in order for it to be saturated and impregnated with it.

There are the final reasons for the long childhood of man.

There also is found the motive of the law regarding minority and majority; the age of discernment and irresponsibility.

The jurists, without looking at it in any other way, without giving reasons, will fix the age of reason at 13, 14, 16, or 18 years of age; etc. What can all those say? Nothing.

The basis of moral education is industrial education.

The one who does not learn to work, who does not work, will never be moral: noble or thief, rich or poor, in society, their manners are without basis, their faith without guarantee.

Now, the moral law is a second nature in man, which is introduced by the attraction of the justice that all men demand, and of the idea according to which each aspire.

I say to my little girl: That thing is ugly, and she abstains from it. The same sentiment of self-esteem, which makes her hate worn, dirty clothing, makes

odious to her certain words that we have told her were ugly, or not very pretty, and that she understands can in fact hardly be so.

Her mistakes, her little grimaces, everything that is objectionable in her, and that one would suppress right away, rise first to her mind, then gradually make the good, just and honest descend into her heart...

There is no other education to follow, no other sanction than that embrace of Conscience.

To form a man, a woman, from the moral point of view, is a long work, for every day, which demands diligent care and an energetic will.

What resistance can a young girl make who suspects the stories of the catechism of lies, her confessor of a lack of virtue, hell of being a fable, who doubts that all the women are like her, inclined to voluptuousness, who tells herself that things as they are are unjust, that virtue is trickery, etc.?...

But if little by little, instead of crumbling principles, we inculcate her with the true truth, namely, that dignity is a beautiful and precious thing, that to give oneself to a lover, without guarantee, is to enslave herself, to soil herself; that love is a holy thing, that it is necessary to guard her heart, rather than spread her love on an unworthy object; that the liberty of life depends on it; etc., etc. Oh! Then the resistance will be vigorous.

Everything is in this word *prostitution!*... for the woman.

For the man, everything is in this word: *coward*. There is not a crime, nor misdemeanor, nor theft, nor selfish act, that does not come among men through *cowardice!* Stupidity is itself only a form of it.

Yes, it is on self-esteem, on the exalted sentiment of individual beauty and dignity, not on utility, that morals must be founded; as for religious ideas, the facts prove their powerlessness more than abundantly.

Also the priests have axioms of despair: main are called, but few are chosen. Of 100 men, Mr. P.... tells me, I have hardly found 5 who are honest. We accuse human perversity, selfishness, etc., etc.

I believe it well. The naïve, misled man, placed in a setting of hypocrisy, rebels: it is the last act of his virtue. From this point of view, it is a mass of crimes, remanded to the Cours d'Assises, that are the acts of courage and virtue.

## The Extremes

*Avoid the extremes, and seek the happy medium*, says the Wisdom of the Nations.

That aphorism, of course, is very true: but it must be well understood.

It is up to philosophy to look into it and demonstrate it.

I say that every extreme, in itself, is false and implies a contradiction; but by extreme I mean the element constitutive of every synthesis, an element to which it does not [ ], which constitutes it [i.e. synthesis] that much better as it is found employed more energetically.

Thus, the proprietor is a constitutive element of the social order, necessary, indispensable.

To deny it implies a contradiction.

In the common language we say: Property must be *curbed*, not pushed to the extreme.

I will correct that language, which lacks scientific exactitude, and say: property, in itself, strong or weak, powerful or controlled, as you like, is exclusive, fraudulent, sinful, selfish, and wrong; it contains within it, theft.

However, that same property, such as it is, is indispensable to human order; and it is even because of this that it is necessary. Remove that individualist character, and [ ] you render it powerless....

It is not the extreme, [ ] property, that is to be avoided: that extreme always exists, since it is the very principle....

Here, all the happy mediums in the world are lies, pure arbitrariness.

It is necessary to balance property with a contrary principle, which is, as you prefer, collectivity or community.

(There is no moderate community: community in itself is as bad as property.... It calls, not for a corrective, shears, a gardener to fight it, a [ ] to geld it: it needs a balance.

The two principles must be joined, married, mutually penetrating, in a manner to form a [ ].... Thus:

Theory: *Everything that can be appropriated must be appropriated; everything that can be grouped, even among the things appropriated, must be grouped.*

(Similarly with *Competition, Credit, Government*, etc.; division of labor, collectivity.)

Other antinomies are subject to a different law, for example, that of *Dead weight—live weight*. It is certain that we tend, and will constantly tend, to reduce one and increase the other: that is the law of Progress. Cf. [ ] *Dead weight, live weight*, pages 11-12.

My Testament,  
or Society of Avengers.

Summary of principles, facts, and complaints, against the exploiting caste.

Exhortation to the proletariat to organize and take action against their oppressors, by any sort of means, until the avengers take a hand, and justice is done.

To write slowly and in my own hand, 25 copies, to be distributed and disseminated after my death.

To write down clearly the principles of economic right.—Bring out above all those that make up the right of the masses and guarantee leveling;—collective force, gratuity of public services, determination of values;—assurances;—corporations; marriage; family; land-rent; state; taxation; general disarmament.—

Right of revendication<sup>1</sup>, by secret judgment; and of execution.—

Recall the principles concerning *war*, *penal law*, *regicide*, and *insurrection*.

Such acts are never good in themselves: on the contrary, they are only rendered excusable in certain cases. The *political offense*, so casually dealt with, is an offence: but it can be the case that the provocation being such, the greatest part of the fault is with the prince, or [illegible word], and the right is with the rebel, or tyrannicide.

So repeat this phrase often: What you will do, by acting as I recommend to you, will not be pleasant; but yours will be a case of legitimate defense, legitimate vengeance; you can be excused.

Thus:

1. Exposition of the facts: situation of the laborer and the privileged; social iniquity in economics, politics, taxation, etc., etc.

2. Exposition of the rights: what may be. Forms of redress to be carried out, reforms indicated, practical, simple, and forbidden.

3. Theory of revendication by force: war, insurrection, tyrannicide, and secret vengeance.

The time has come to organize those things.

By the fact of the publication of this Testament, the Society of Avengers exists. Never gather. No need of secret meetings, rolls, papers, or offices. You have principles, a law, a faith, a hope, wrongs to avenge, the world to save, and your dignity to safeguard.

Your right, invincibly established, clearer than the precepts of the Decalogue, is confirmed by the refusal of discussion, la proscription directed against the writer who, for twenty, 30, or 50 years, has wanted to proclaim it.

Today, all politics tends to the glorification of immorality, to impunity for theft.

There is no more remedy; it is necessary to strike.

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<sup>1</sup> The right to assert a claim, to demand restoration.—Translator.

To distinguish the innocents from the guilty. . . .

To limit oneself to a single sort of communication between supporters: that the principles are true, that the right is certain, that the oppression is flagrant, and the vengeance excusable.—Certain that these ideas exist, the strong and heroic man, who feels he has the power to cut down an enemy, has only to seek some endorsers, some accomplices: when he has them, let him act.

Never strike any but public, notorious crooks; principal agents of the system, bigwigs. . . .

To commence operations when the Testament has been read everywhere.

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Collect and classify a mass of misdeeds and crimes, and show in what sense it is systematic.

Atrocious [ ] of the worker; degeneration of the races.—Corruption of women and girls.—Strike down all these great culprits.

The sensual, selfish, obscene life of the exploiting aristocracy.

Games, dances, concerts, spectacles, feasts [ ] to all tastes; rest, pleasure, the seven deadly sins and all their progeny; that is what they cultivate. The institutions have committed them to the guard and management of an immense capital, [ ]; ils ne domptent qu'à la [ ]. Like [ ], whom I cite in my notebook, they only exist for [ ] and [ ]. Their maxim is that of Sardanapalus: Drink, eat, play and f...

It is necessary to exterminate [ ]. They are fattened for the sacrifice, said [ ]. It is time;—whoever adheres in their heart to the principles contained in this Testament, is part of the Society of Avengers; they are [ ].

Also, do not forget the reprisals.

Every culprit struck should be a notorious enemy of the Revolution, and bear on their corpse a sign that indicates that they have been sacrificed by an avenger.

Every prosecution directed against an individual as a suspect of having, for this reason, struck a great criminal, will give rise, if it ends in a conviction, in reprisals.

If the killer has been seized in flagrante delicto, and if it is proven that the individual is an avenger, he should be released under penalty of reprisals practiced as much against the judges, imperial prosecutors, public prosecutors, examining magistrates, as on the jurors.

— Some will rail against the society.—Let them rail.—The grievances are there; let them refute them.—The principles are there;—let them recognize them.—The reforms are there; and [manuscript breaks here.]

...

Justice.

*My testament.*

The just man has a right of life and death over the criminal, the father over the rebellious child, the husband over the adulterous wife and her accomplice, the brother over the immodest sister and her seducer, the citizen over the traitor and usurper.

Every citizen is a censor of customs, a guardian of peace and order.

— to be established: Federations;

Universal suffrage;

The *mnémosyne* ;

The judiciary.

Thus, we will make a monthly column for politics and political economy.

It will be weekly for everything else.

Do not forget the courts.

## DEATH PENALTY

This idea contains a great stock of immorality.

The abolition of the death penalty leads to that of the penal colony, odious to see and think about, more odious than the guillotine, as torture is more odious than death itself. The abolition of the prison leads in its turn to that of all the corporal punishment or loss of civil rights.

(Cf. E. DELATTRE, *Devoir du suffrage universel*, where he seeks to establish that society does not have the right to punish, *but only to put the dangerous individuals where they can do no harm*.—In truth, the advantage would be great for them.)

I have always feared that these philanthropists, so solicitous of life, so avaricious of the blood of the criminals, are hypocrites who have a great need of pardon themselves, since they feel that if we knew their hearts, we would demand their heads.

Prosecution and punishment [*vindicta*] is a sacred thing. It is an affirmation of the conscience, like right itself. Every man is a justice-bringer [*justicier*], as he is moral: the police justice is only the transference that we make of our own right to justice, in the interest of the impartiality of the judgments, to some established judges, sheltered from the passions.

I hope that that abolition should take place, because then the good citizen, hunted to their last entrenchment by the villains and the immoral would not inherit to make themselves executioners and enforcers. De Maistre has not said it all: the infamy attached to the function of the executioner is the sign of our degradation.

## Revolutionary Tribunal.

December 2, 1863, after a dozen years of hardships, some citizens of independent, liberal professions, of all shades of opinion, each at least fifty years of age, current [ ] with the facts submitted for their assessment, having been able to judge them with majority from the beginning, are gathered in the number of thirty-six and, constituted spontaneously as a jury, after fifteen years of deliberation, have rendered against Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, presently Emperor of the French, the verdict below:

1<sup>st</sup> QUESTION.—Is Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, arrested at Strasbourg, October 30, 1836, accused of an attack on the security of the State, then pardoned without judgment by the king Louis-Philippe under the condition that he withdraw to America, then arrested again at Boulogne, August 6, 1840, for the same crime, and condemned by the Court of Peers, October 6 of the same year to a perpetual prison, later restored to liberty and elected, in 1848, President of the Republic, guilty of having, during 1848 (notably in the June Days), 1849,

1850 and 1851, before and since his election to the Presidency, conspired constantly against the rights and liberties of the nation ?

*Response*, unanimously: Yes.

2<sup>nd</sup> QUESTION.—Is he guilty of having, on December 2, 1851, despite his oath, despite the protests of the representatives of the people and the resistance of the citizens, destroyed the Constitution, dismissed the representatives and usurped political power? [7]

*Response*: Yes, unanimously.

3<sup>rd</sup> QUESTION.—Is he guilty of having perpetrated that attack by means of the theft of public funds, the corruption of the army and civil servants, the massacre of citizens, in Paris and in the departments, the transportation and ruin of patriots?

*Response*: Yes, unanimously.

4<sup>th</sup> QUESTION.—The votes of December 1848, December 1851, March and December 1852, June 1854 and June 1863, can they be considered as ratifications or absolutions of the crimes for which the accused is rebuked?

*Response*: No, unanimously. Universal suffrage is only worthwhile as long as it is in accord with Right and Liberty. Universal suffrage is subject to error: the aforementioned votes are the proof of it. Justice is infallible and inviolable; violated, it demands reparation.

5<sup>th</sup> QUESTION.—Can the twelve years of the government of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, dating from the coup d'état of 1851, through the good will that they have procured for the citizens, through the development of fortunes, morality and public liberties, as a justification of his pretensions of 1836 and 1840, and reparation of crime of December 2?

*Response*: No, unanimously.—The Nation, under this regime of violence, misappropriation, lies, venality and prostitution, has not ceased to wane. Tax, debt and difficulties have accumulated; the public spirit is perverted; opinion has been stifled; la tribune et la presse forced to lie or keep silent; justice enslaved; monopoly, concessions and bribes encouraged and organized; individual liberty and property delivered to the most ignoble despotism. Outside France, great [8] military expeditions, without aim, without results, without any motive but the glory of the prince or the service of his fantasies, have been undertaken: if they all honor our bayonets, they are the shame of the nation, on which they have attracted the scorn and hatred of Europe. In short, the imperial government, founded on crime, continued by crime, and can only be considered as a series of follies and crimes.—The attacks of 1836 and 1840, judged according to the effects [     ], appearing in all their criminality [     ].

6<sup>th</sup> QUESTION.—In the absence of reparations, can Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte at least invoke, as an extenuating circumstance, his birth, his education, the popularity of the first Emperor, the prestige of the *Napoleonic idea*, whose kingdom he felt himself called to found, or finally, the state of agitation in which France has found itself since the February Revolution?



*Response:* No, unanimously.—Far from being able to invoke the Napoleonic succession in favor of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, as in 1793 one invoked in favor of Louis XVI the inheritance of a monarchy of fourteen centuries, that succession is a fact more in support of the accusation, in the sense that it extends solidarité in the crime to the whole Bonaparte family, but especially to the usurper of Brumaire, escaped from the Isle of Elba. History, today better known, proves that that [ ] family has been fatale à la France and that its head, the first Emperor, was in all regards our evil genius. Finally, we have been convinced by his memoirs, written at Saint Helena, that all his thought had a single aim, that of seducing public opinion and ensuring the later the restoration of his dynasty. The usurpation of December 2 is the consequence of the usurpation of 18 Brumaire; the government of Napoléon III is only the second edition, barely modified, of the government of Napoléon I; the [9] maxims of the one are those of the other; and the same though directs them. Let us judge the first Empire by the second; let us judge the second by the first. As for the pretention of having *saved* the Nation from anarchy and pillage by the coup d'État, it is only one of those miserable prettexts with which tyranny is dressed up, everywhere and always, which are refuted by their own contradiction. A nation can have only one thing to fear, no matter the difficulties it finds itself in: to lose its liberties and its rights. From which it results that the only manner of saving it is to respect right, and see that the law are observed, that the observers themselves must maintain the constitution and liberty. The history of the last twelve years demonstrates it.

7<sup>th</sup> QUESTION.—What punishment must be inflicted on Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte ?

*Response:* Unanimously, the punishment due to *perjurers*, to *public concessionnaires*, to *assassins*, to *corrupters of morals*, to *parricides* and *tyrants*, death, seven times death.

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(Proceedings with be made against Napoléon, son of Jérôme,  
Morey, Mathilde, Walewski,  
the Empress *Eugénie of Teba*,  
and all the accomplices of the *coup d'état* and makers  
of the Napoleonic tyranny.

ANONYMOUS

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## THE FEUDING BROTHERS.

Democratic and Social Reckoning for the Year 1849.

A Terrible and Jovial Drama in One Act



The stage represents a newspaper office. — To the right, on the mantelpiece, sits a red cap perched on a mushroom; to the left, a library, on the shelves of which sprawl the works of Vadé and a copy of the *Billingsgate Catechism*, bound in red Moroccan leather; in the foreground, close to the door, a sturdy broom-handle.

### CHARACTERS:

Brother		CONSIDERANT.
Brother		PROUDHON.
Brother	Louis	BLANC.
Brother Pierre	LEROUX.	

(The scene takes place under the Republic.)

### SCENE ONE.

Brother CONSIDERANT (making a pince-nez with the eye at the end of his tail, and looking down his nose at brother Proudhon in an impertinent manner.)

I would be done with you, Mr. Proudhon. You are mad, my good man, mad with one of those follies which inspires a legitimate disgust. It is that sad sickness of the mind which gives to your writings the odor of hatred and that tawny color that characterizes them... Your life has been nothing but denigration and wounds; you have made a name for yourself only by detracting from the very people whose ideas you exploit. There is nothing, nothing, you understand, nothing serious about you, not a shred of an idea, not a wisp of thought. A zero—very large and bloated, full of noise and venom, I admit—but the numeral zero, and nothing else, that is your score... You have spoiled everything, burned everything, Mr. Proudhon, to make a name for yourself... If your outward, historical name is Erostratus, your private name is more sinister still: you call yourself *destruction*... I find in you, in a word, in the sphere of

principles and ideas, that mysterious and sacrosanct character, that de Maistre found in the ancient and quasi-pontifical conception of the executioner.

(He lets his pince-nez fall and crosses his arms in a attitude defiant stance.)

Brother PROUDHON (steadying his glasses on his nose and taking two steps back, like a man who wants to pull a pistol from his pocket to fire on his adversary.)

I will be done with you, Mr. Considerant! It is necessary to have your mind dazed, for twenty-five years, by the mephitic vapors of the phalanstery, to conduct oneself in a manner as vacuous as Mr. Considerant. The *Démocratie Pacifique*, daily organ of the so-called societary school, is a sort of spillway for all the mad absurdities and impurities of the human mind. That spillway has for a symbol the name of the greatest hoaxer of modern times: Fourier. For real aim, it has a speculation of unprincipled schemers... There is no theory of Fourier, no social science according to Fourier; consequently, no phalansterian socialism. There is only a collection of charlatans, of which you (you, the subscribers of the *Démocratie!*) are the miserable dupes... Your inability, monsieur Considerant, shines out despite you... Your speech is like a horn coated with lead, a cracked cymbal. You are dead, dead to democracy and to socialism... What speaks, what writes, what jargonizes, what rattles on under the name of Victor Considerant, is only a shadow, the soul of a dead man who returns to demand prayers from the living. Go, poor soul, I will recite for you a *de profundis* and give you 15 sols to say a mass.

(He leaps for the broomstick, and, with a blow as deft as treacherous, pierces the eye on the tail of Considérant, who loses his name *Victor* in the battle.)

## SCENE II.

Brother Pierre LEROUX (making a comb with the five stiffened fingers of his left hand, and with the other anxiously twisting the middle button of his beaver coat at the proprietor).

You are a Malthusian, an eclectic, a liberal, an individualist, a bourgeois, an atheist, a proprietor.

(He lets out a plaintive *Oh! Oh!* and signs himself with a charm, an offering of filial devotion from citizens Pauline Roland and Jeanne Deroin.)

Brother PROUDHON, (having let out a roar of laughter as mocking as it is satanic).

Listen, dear Theogloss, I will spare you today all the follies and absurdities that you have spread against me. I would make you suffer too much by noting them. You may characterize my ideas, as is your right; but I forbid you from characterizing my intentions, or else I will characterize you yourself, and mark you so aggressively and so hotly, that it will be remembered in the future generations. That will be a more certain means for you of being reaching posterity than the *triad*, the *circulus* and the *doctrine*.

(*He takes him by the ears. — Scene of hair-pulling.*)

### SCENE III.

BROTHER LOUIS BLANC (waddling and finishing a sandwich spread with *his favorite democratic delicacy*, a filet of venison with pineapple puree.)

You are a gladiator by profession, a flesh-ripper renowned among the people, a panegyrist of tyrants (*redoubling the volubility of his language*); a juggler, a tender of limes, a sower of doubts (*he nearly chokes in rage*); a prompter of discord, a snuffer of light, a calumniator of the people (*he lets his sandwich fall*); a sort of Thrasyarchus, of Lysander, of Tallien (*he stamps on his sandwich*); a sophist, a Philippist, a Hellenist, a Galimafron, a giant, a proud, vain, rude, brutal idolater of yourself, a Satan, a schoolboy, a Herostratus, an *enragé*, and finally a *free student* of the College of Besançon.

(He pretends he wants to pick up his sandwich and darts between the legs of his interlocutor, to make him, in the way kids do, fall backwards at full length.)

PROUDHON, (solemnly taking brother Louis Blanc by the ears and setting him back on his feet in front of him).

Child, child, you are only a pseudo-socialist and a pseudo-democrat, the stunted shadow of Robespierre, a puny nibbler of political crusts, a crass ignoramus, the vainest, most vacuous, most impudent, and most nauseating rhetorician, produced, in the most garrulous of centuries, by the loosest of literatures... But I excuse you, seeing your extreme youth.

(He gives him a little pat on the cheek; but the child pokes him in the eyes.  
Radical boxing.)

## EPILOGUE.

We no longer see anything on the field of battle but a punctured eye, a pair of shattered spectacles, a fistful of hair and a slice of buttered bread.

We hear, as the curtain falls, a strident voice which murmurs: They have devoured one another with a truly brotherly appetite. That is all that remain of the Vadiuses of demagoguery and the Trissottiuses of socialism! *requiescant in pace!!*



L'Assemblée en récréation

## Henriette, artiste, "Letter to Proudhon" (1849)

"En amour, la propriété c'est le viol." One of the major voices in French feminist circles around the time of the 1848 Revolution signed her name as "Henriette, artiste," and was probably Henriette Wild. She argued with Jenny d'Hericourt on the subject of celibacy in the pages of the *Voix de Femmes*, and she wrote a strange and interesting open letter to Proudhon in the pages of *La Démocratie pacifique* (January 5, 1849). The heart of the letter comes when Henriette hijacks Proudhon's famous phrase, "Property is theft"—"la propriété c'est le vol" in French—and changes it to say that "in love, property is *rape* or *violation*," while she proposes a Sainte Proudhonne, a female Proudhon, as the spirit of the future. It's pretty good stuff, and makes me want to go find her debate with Jenny d'Hericourt.

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Mr. Proudhon,

Bad Christian, hateful socialist, you pursue monopoly in its material, individually perceptible, which is good; but, when it is attacked in its affective form, you put yourself in the way and cry scandal! You want the dignity and equality of men, and you reject the dignity and equality of the sexes! Women, you say, has nothing more to claim, and her duty is to remain in the refuge for which nature has created her.

Pity on your sophistry! Shame on your ideas of resignation regardless! In this revolutionary time, when the voices of all the oppressed cry out, the voices of women will be raised bravely and maintained, without fear of being drowned out by yours. Do you understand me, Mr. Proudhon?

On the operative stage, women were only allowed to take their place when it was well established, by the courage of a few, that their voices contained a particular strength that nothing could replace. That principle of exclusion no longer offers anything but a warning in our times, and you doubtless know what it has cost the feeling of humanity to maintain in some holy chapel the proud and impious challenge cast on the prerogatives of women. (?)

So install women everywhere, for without her no concert is possible and pleasing to God. The higher spheres of all the harmonies demand it of us, and we will appear in spiritual concert, as in political and social cooperation.

Our mysticism displeases you, O Saint Proudhon! Well! a little time and be born, I am sure that a holy Proudhonne who, with robust faith and courage in the face of every ordeal, will come to scrutinize our society more profoundly. That Sainte Proudhonne will doubtless discover that other property which has escaped the view of her patron. Sainte Proudhonne will tell us, in clear and precise terms, that women and their particular essence, love, by dint of being sold, of being sacrificed in pure loss and being worn down in the institutions where you have confined them, now makes the shame and misfortune of humanity. Sainte Proudhonne will see well that the love ruled by you, and become the right of the strongest, constitutes the most sinful of properties, and, under the empire of its convictions, will take hold of your most audacious formula.

Sainte Proudhonne will demonstrate clearly to the world and to her sisters, that in love, property is violation.

O Saint Proudhon! The combat will be harsh then between man-force and woman-love, and the apathetic world will rue this good time when, by mysticism alone, women communicated with the new spirit.

Master Proudhon... I'll stop! May these few words make you look twice at these things you want to trample underfoot!

The question of women will not bring you any happiness. All your history in this regard proves it. But it is a misfortune that the love of a woman could perhaps banish. In the meantime, believe me, refrain from speaking of them, and if the religious champions to whom you have lent a hand demand of you the reason for your silence, respond.... anything, even the most banal thing, and tell them in conclusion.... that, in the end, the women do not concern you.

Henriette..., artist.

[Henriette Wild]

## Disagreement Regarding the Posthumous Publication of Unpublished Works by P.-J. Proudhon.

We receive the following letter:

Paris, November 16, 1865.

Dear editor,

The *Presse* of November 16 takes up again, after some literary journals, the question of the posthumous works of Proudhon, and the manner in which you intend to publish them. Your article contains two things: the principal et un incident. Let us begin by eliminating the incident:

*Two persons*, you say, have abstained from signing with us and associating with an act of literary dishonesty. Allow me to observe to you that these two persons are better positioned than us in journalism to explain the motives of their abstention; perhaps they would give others than those you lend them.<sup>2</sup>

The incident dealt with, let's get to the core.

The introduction to *The Theory of Property* is composed of several parts:

1) Citations extracted from the older works of Proudhon:

2) Connecting phrases such as: "Chapter IV of the study on goods is titled: ECONOMIC BALANCES: Worker and masters; buyers and sellers, etc.," or: "Speak of taxation, I said."

3) Some phrases constructed exclusively with parts of phrases written by Proudhon, like this other "What was I attacking above all in 1840? The right of increase, that right so inherent, so intimate to property that, where is does not exist, property is nothing;"

4) Some handwritten notes scattered in the last manuscript;

5) Some phrases that Proudhon said to us in conversation and with remain in our memory;

6) Finally, the famous article of Mr. Paignon.

All deductions made, there remains in the 62 pages of the introduction, we believe, 90 lines or 3 pages. Thus the summary has been, in reality, on our part only a work of ordering, made with Proudhon, of published and unpublished work.

That is our defense, if indeed it matters to the true prouthonians, to the partisans of the political, economic,

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<sup>2</sup> The six literary executors listed in *The Principle of Art* are J. A. Langlois, A. A. Rolland, G. Duchêne, F. G. Bergmann, G. Chaudey and F. Delhasse. Chaudey and Rolland did not sign the notice in *The Theory of Property*.



religious and moral reforms elaborated by Proudhon, who, in this debate, have still not spoken.

For ten days, epithets have been bestowed: impertinent, impious, dishonest, profaners. Against us, who have only shared with the great thinker the works and struggles, the trials and prison, is raised a clamor to make us proclaim the miracle. The Proudhonian doctrine is thus finally triumphant!...

When come to her from all sides,  
These children she has not carried at her breast?<sup>3</sup>

Some men of letters who have never fumbled with the least economic, political, or social question; some Catholics who prompted the last three-year sentence for the author of the *Justice*; some Jacobin absolutists who have cried out against him: *Stupid federalist*; some proprietors who put the income from property well above its political function: some old fighters, become the conservatives of tomorrow: some satisfied sorts from all times: these are, from Mr. Barbey d'Aurevilly all the way to Mr. Bauer, the people who have raised their voices against us.

What a difference with what took place only ten months ago! Proudhon expressed himself before us one day in these terms:

The so-called democratic papers have said nothing of my *Theory of Taxation* (awarded a prize by the council of state of the canton of Vaud and published in France in 1861). The conspiracy of silence already existed; I have not even had on this occasion the honor of the assaults. (Phrase quoted on page 64 of our Introduction.)

Proudhon is dead, as Mr. de Girardin said so well, of the silence observed around his work and the suffocation of his thought.

He is dead, and so here he is, passed to the state of God, and, to employ the vigorous expression of the excellent Bergman, to the state of the Dalai Lama of whom one worships even the excrement. *Et stercora adorabant*.

But these are not enthusiasts. There is an asp under the flowers that are lavished on the tomb of Proudhon. Proudhon once dead, must remain dead: that is what they want. He left seventeen works, where he continues the struggle, the propaganda from beyond the grave. This scandal must be cut

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<sup>3</sup> From Jean Racine, *Athalie*; my translation.

short by smothering the thinker under the crowns bestowed on the artist.

Well, no, the fighter is not dead: we see it from time to time. But for the posthumous work to bear its fruits, it must be published in an intelligible manner. The editors have not been chosen from among these enthusiasts of the next day, fortunately.

"Put an end to a work which must inevitably detract from the intellectual legacy of the celebrated writer," our friend Darimon advises us."

If the question was only literary, if it was a question of novels, of sonnets and ballads, we would not have worried about it. But the question is political. The public must have the whole of Proudhon's thought, even if some of his present eulogists receive blows in exchange for their swings of the censer. Four or six remain to us to be done, and they will.

Accept, Mr. Editor, our attentive salutations.

J. A. LANGLOIS, G. DUCHÈNE.

Let us exclude from the debate the personality of Mr. Langlois or Mr. Duchêne. It is not at issue. No one thinks to put in doubt their devotion to the Proudhonian cause, nor the good faith that they bring to the work in which they are engaged. If someone did that, you would see us on the front line to defend them. They are old comrades at arms; I battle them only by complaining.

What the public complains of, is that instead of publishing the posthumous works of their master as he left them, Mr. Duchêne and Mr. Langlois les rework, arrange, and assemble them, as they say in the preface to the book on art.

To find this manner of proceeding bad, it is not necessary to be guided by a political passion; it is enough to be a man of taste. That is how it happens that Duchêne and Langlois encounter, uniting in a common criticism, people belonging to the most opposed camps. There is nothing astonishing about seeing, in these circumstances, a friend of Proudhon, Mr. Darimon, agree with Mr. Barbey d'Aurevilly, one of his adversaries; it is the opposite which would be strange. In questions of good sense, there can be no dissent.

At base, Duchêne and Langlois share the sentiments of the whole world. They feel so strongly that to make alterations to the work of a dead author is to profane it, that they strive to prove that the additions made by them to the *Theory of Property* consist largely of verbatim quotes taken from Proudhon himself. But even this admission condemns them; they plead extenuating circumstance; it is not a right that they assert, and in that alone they have been right.

Within the limits that my two excellent friends put on their work, to my [other] friends they still go too far. That in order to make the fragments left by Proudhon intelligible, as they say, they supply some notes intended to clarify the text, no one contradicts; but that they make Proudhon speak as if they had in

them the very mind and soul of the master, that is what everyone is permitted to find detestable.

MM. Duchêne et Langlois conclude their letter with a sentence that proves they are determined to continue, despite the good advice that comes to them from all sides. We are sorry for them, for their obstinacy (the word is not too hard) they will certainly attract indiscreet questions. Already it is said in public that neither they nor anyone else received the mandate from Proudhon to publish his posthumous works, that Proudhon had limited himself to designating six persons charged with overseeing the republication of his Complete Works, and that he had not given a mandate to anyone to revise his unfinished manuscripts. One adds that not only do Langlois and Duchêne act without title, but that the true Proudhonians, — to borrow their expression, — deplore the way they have treated the unpublished works of their leaders, and have let them know. Some go even further: it is said that the publisher, the honorable Mr. Lacroix, is, on this point, of the opinion of the friends of the famous publicist.

If this was so, one need not despair of seeing Mr. Duchêne and Mr. Langlois come to repentance. It is unfortunate that two men of heart and intelligence persist in pursuing a labor that earns them such severe and unanimous cautions. — Alfred Darimon. *Presse*, November 18, 1865.

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We receive the following letter:

Monsieur,

The *Presse*, in its issue for the 16<sup>th</sup> of this month, has addressed to us, under the signature BAUER, some advice and criticism on the manner of understanding the publication of the works of Proudhon. We are clearly charged with dishonesty. At two o'clock, we had given an answer: We have learned that the article signed Bauer was by Mr. Darimon. Then, after reflection, we declared that to Mr. Darimon the response should not be the same as to the signatory behind which he thought he could hide his greatness. We have withdrawn our letter, and we have replaced it with another: the new one appeared on November 18, but with the suppression of six words.

Mr. Darimon, so severe regarding our arrangement of the works of Proudhon, which he considers dishonest, knows perfectly that that suppression of six words constitutes a falsification. We have said, in citing a phrase from the article:

"Put an end to a work that must necessarily harm the intellectual heritage of the famous publicist," we advise friend Darimon UNDER THE SIGNATURE OF M. BAUER."

The suppression of these words: "Under the signature of Mr. Bauer," renders completely unintelligible the qualification of friend; and that is why we are obliged to correct that

gracieusetés that Mr. Darimon because of the twisting of our thought, believes he must pour out on us, and on Proudhon as well. Mr. Darimon promises, if we are attacked in our devotion and good faith, to put himself "in the first rank to defend us." Thank you! When we are no longer enough to defend ourselves, we will accept some auxiliaries, but of our own choice.

M. Darimon calls himself the *friend* of Proudhon; we will publish some letters that show how the living Proudhon understood that somewhat posthumous friendship.

He maintains that we *plead extenuating circumstances*, proof that we lean toward his position. It is an error: we intended to give a sample of our work, not to make a plea.

He speaks of *benevolent opinion*. No euphemisms: the Darimon-Bauer article accused us of dishonesty. Others have said: impertinence, nonsense, profanation, impiety, sacrilege. The givers of opinions belonging to politics are all simply people who fear the **étrivières** of the posthumous publications, and they will have them. They have attempted to stifle under the pact of silence the work of the living Proudhon; it is by force of hosannas, of acclamations, that they want to stop the work of Proudhon now that he is dead.

Mr. Darimon threatens us with indiscrete questions:

"Already, it is said..." he writes. We accept neither the *sayers* nor the *said*: it is necessary to name them, and not longer shelter attacks or insinuations under pseudonyms. Already the article of November 10 insinuated that we only have our mission from Madame Proudhon. Under the signature of Mr. Bauer, that could pass for a slip of the tongue; written by Darimon, it was an insinuation. What! If Proudhon had named his posthumous editors, wouldn't Darimon have been at their head?

We received unanimous and stern warnings.—Unanimous! This is the story of all Paris reviewers. None of those who bought the book on Art have complained, and the claims regarding the new book have only come from those who received their copies gratis. Put 25 or 30 journalists in Paris, that is the whole unanimity.

Finally, regarding the threat that we will be brought, willingly or unwillingly, to repentance, our profession of faith is without reservation. The day when the advice of Barbey d'Aurevilly, Darimon and consorts will be taken on the publication the works of Proudhon, is the day that Duchêne and Langlois will retire; and if they have not been able to prevent the profanation, they will at least remain neither accomplices nor spectators.

It is not necessary that Mr. Langlois and Mr. Duchêne seem isolated on that question any longer. Here is the opinion of Mr. Bergman:

If, par impossible, Proudhon has been able to believe that all his papers were worthy of being published *in full* and *as-is*, they would not have been addressed to us; he would have said to his wife: When I am dead, bear these papers to the printing house; let them be printed without omission, without changing an iota.

Calvin said somewhere: Man is idolatrous by nature, a phrase truer and more profound than we think. We, the six, are not foolish idolaters of Proudhon to the point of prostrating ourselves before the leaves that he has blackened with his ink. If we pushed our admiration to that point, we would end by falling into cretinism. The shade of Proudhon would grow angry, and cry out to us: Back, blunderers! Have you, by chance, confused me with the Dalai Lama, whose idiotic sectarians even worship his excrement. Do you want someone to apply to you these words of the prophet: *Et stercora adorabunt?* Print what deserves to be printed from my works, and as it deserves to be printed, cut away what is not new, nor true, nor finished, nor aptly written, and respect my memory, taking care of reputation, as I would do it myself.

Mr. Delhasse, who has already maintained that thesis in the same sense as us, when it was raised from the beginning, has not changed his mind.

Mr. Chaudey and Mr. Rolland are in Paris; they have signed with us the book on Art, where the organization is much more considerable than in *The Theory of Property*. Mr. Chaudey especially, on the same question of *servile publication*, has shown that one could not be more decided. Have they made their *peccavi* since? Let them say so and we will know on whom to count. Receive, Mr. editor, our attentive greetings.

J.-A. LANGLOIS. G. DUCHÊNE.

In this long letter, that wishes to be mean, but is only ridiculous, only two points deserve to be addressed.

The first is the accusation of falsification, motivated by the suppression of these six words: "under the signature of Mr. Bauer." I was unaware that these six words contained the negation of the word *friend*; otherwise, I would have let them remain. It is quite obvious, in fact, that I was, just eight days ago, the friend of Mr. Langlois and Mr. Duchêne, and that today I am no longer. But I have not displayed so much malice there; if I deleted these sacramental words, it is because they constitute an inaccuracy: it had been declared to these gentlemen, in the offices of the *Presse*, that, while written by Mr. Bauer, the article of which they complained had been elicited by me, and that I assumed all responsibility for it; as soon as I put myself in front of the person of our

collaborator, Mr. Bauer no longer had anything to do with our debate, and, to remove any pretext for suspicion, I made him disappear.

I come to the second point, which is the more important. Mr. Langlois and Mr. Duchêne do not want me to call myself Proudhon's friend. I thank these gentlemen for finally furnishing me with the occasion that I have long watched for to clear up a question close to my heart. I will not attempt to deny the disagreements that existed between Proudhon and myself since the elections of 1863; they have erupted in public.

Proudhon included me in the condemnation pronounced by him against what he called the *sworn democracy*. But it is important to know the situation that these differences had created between us. Proudhon, in a circumstance where he had put in the balance some convictions and an old friendship, showed himself a man of heart. You will see what treasures of sensitivity that were in that mind, so firm and inflexible in appearance.

In the month of March 1863, he was troubled by some attacks of which, at the approach of the electoral period, I was the object. **Il me fait dire** by Mr. Langlois, whose letter I have in front of me:

Darimon and I separated in 1857 on the electoral question, and it is still probable that we will still be separated on the same question in 1863. But he is nonetheless a man who has principles and an upright conscience.

A few days later, seeing the attacked redoubled, Proudhon proposed to me a plan of conduct that, leaving me free to act as I intended, put me outside the polemic that he intended to engage against the partisans of the vote. It was obvious that he sought the means of not harming me. "I would rather," he wrote to me, "know that you were dead than not reelected." The following letter, at the same time that it shows his perplexities, indicates clearly what his feelings were in my regard:

Paris, April 18, 1863.

My dear Darimon,

I send you, attached, my letter of March 13, that I asked you for in order to make a copy, which I have not had time to do, it being too long. In rereading it, I notice that I am much more concerned with your interests than my own thesis, and I have let escape certain expressions that I could not use today. I do not regret them, however, in that they reflect my friendship for you; but I must in my turn, make some reservations there, in your interest.

My anti-electoral brochure has gone to press. I presume it will appear on Tuesday or Wednesday.

From the point of view of doctrine, I have a theory of universal suffrage, a commentary on the Constitution of 1852,

and finally a demonstration of that proposition that universal suffrage is the corollary of the federative principle.

In what concerns the coming elections, it is a distinction of practical politics in which, after having justified my conduct in 52, 57 and 63, I show that, according to the principles, and while all the forms, conditions and guarantees of universal suffrage are violated by the present régime, the duty of the citizens is to abstain until the government has satisfied their demands, and recognized, by a certain number of amendments, the sovereignty of the nation. I will see at the same time what abstention is worth, as an electoral demonstration, what it perhaps **appelle**, what, in the present circumstances, it will produce.

There are certainly a few attacks here and there against the old democracy, against the newspapers, the authors of the electoral Manual, etc., but nothing personal relating to any candidate.

You see by that, my dear Darimon, that I can not say to you today as I did in my letter of March 1, written before the composition of my work, when I only possessed my subject *en bloc* and had not calculated its practical significance; I can no longer, I say, say to you, for example, that the difference in our behavior does not imply any divergence of system, that we will organize our maneuvers, etc.

My practical conduct results directly from the theory that I have developed; it tolerates no exception on my part. I truly regard, after a month of consideration, the vote as compromising, unfortunate, contrary to our true interests, and leading to the sacrifice of principles. In addition, you will shortly have my work, and you can judge the obligations in conduct that it imposes on me. Thus, we can not coordinate our maneuvers: that would dishonor all of them; all that we can in this delicate circumstance, since you maintain your candidacy, is to stay true to the friendship, not to speak of other, except in cases where it would be a question of our personal worthiness, to avoid anything that could put us in conflict. This will be easy for you, it seems to me, because I have not raised the issue about persons, and as for the differences in our conduct, you will always have the recourse to say, without needing to discuss ideas, that your individual position seems to you, to command you to reappear before the voters.

This is one of the sorrows of life that individual considerations constantly come to separate the most united of men. I would give I do not know what, right now, to free you, from all points of view, from this cursed reelection. Since your colleagues all run, and you think you should follow them, let me at least be permitted to hope that when this grand

ceremony is complete, you will do justice to my views, and I will not have any other wrong in your eyes that to have, in this as in so many things, dared to confront the prejudice of the multitude.

Greetings and friendship to Mme. Darimon, as well as to Gabriel.

I shake your hand.

P.-J. PROUDHON.

These feelings, which do so much honor to the great writer, have not been contradicted once during the election period. A few days before the vote, the *Courrier du Dimanche* felt authorized to state that Proudhon considered me from now on as an enemy. I remarked to Proudhon everything that this expression contains that is excessive and personal. Proudhon wrote:

Passy, May 8, 1863.

Shed that word enemy, which escapes in the heat of the electoral fray and that, in my opinion, and if need be despite you, I withdraw: the fact nonetheless remains that we are in the position of political adversaries. The protest that has just been sent to the newspapers shows it, alas! more than would all declarations of war, and despite all the reservations we could make...

Now could you be stirred to this point by the words of a journalist, an adversary, a competitor? My opinion is that you should drop this subject... All you can do here is to make Mr. Jauret and M. Girardin, or any other say: "If the *Presse* is well informed, the political opposition that now exists all too truly between Mr. Proudhon and Mr. Darimon, with concerns the issue of voting, and especially the list of only nine, does not involve any private and personal enmity, no hate, no low regard, and you do not think that it will ever go further..."

**Tout à vous,**

P.-J. PROUDHON.

I limit myself to these citations, which I could multiply. Do I mean, after that, that our relations had remained the same? No; whatever efforts good-hearted men make, it is impossible that some strains, however restrained they may be, will not leave their traces. But I have the right to say that, until his last day, while regretting that I followed a different political line than his own, Proudhon preserved his esteem and friendship for me.

So I have not committed an act of usurpation by presenting myself as a friend of Proudhon. The sensitivities of Mr. Duchêne and Mr. Langlois prove that they never understood the feelings of their master. They want to make a hard, dry sectarian of a good man, who was full of tolerance. Do they find that he had too many friends? — Alfred Darimon.



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To the preceding observations, we add the following letter that closes the debate. — E. Bauer.

Paris, November, 19 1865.

Mr. Editor,

The recent publication of *The Theory of Property* of Proudhon has given place, and the *Presse*, and in several other papers, to various protests against the editors. It has been remarked, on this occasion, that our two signatures are lacking in the preface and they have asked us for explanations.

It is difficult for us to give them. The absence of our signatures appears by itself to have a sufficient meaning. It seemed to us that by removing our names, we would rid ourselves of responsibility enough to no longer be taken to task, and many sorts of decorum prescribed for a silent dissent. We hoped thus to facilitate the reestablishment of harmony.

We feel today that we can no longer keep silent, and what causes us to explain ourselves, what has made it a necessity for us, is the following passage from the letter published in the *Presse*, November 18, by Mr. Langlois and Mr. Duchêne:

Two persons, you say, have abstained from signing with us and associating with an act of literary dishonesty. Allow me to observe to you that these two persons are better positioned than us in journalism to explain the motives of their abstention; perhaps they would give others than those you lend them.

All misunderstanding must end here.

Is someone has lent us, as a motive for abstention, an accusation of literary dishonesty against Mr. Langlois and Mr. Duchêne, they are completely mistaken, and we **tenons à ce qu'on le sache**. It would go against all our feelings to interpret our dissent in that sense. But if they themselves wanted to give to understand that we have had other motives to remove our signatures than those that have been signified by us so clearly and on repeated occasions, we would be obliged to tell them that they fall into an error that is no less strange.

The disagreement between them and us, regarding the publication of *The Theory of Property*, has always been limited to this:

1) We have made an objection to their theory of organization, as being of a nature to make the public believe that we took more liberty with the texts of Proudhon than we had the right to take.

2) We have indicated to them, as absolutely lacking in literary propriety, the pretention of making Proudhon speak, through the use of the form *I*, in a historical introduction of sixty-two pages, that it was easy, in our opinion, to make just as complete, just as clear, and just as instructive, by speaking as simple editors and by distinguishing with care the interpolations of the texts cited, as by giving the appearance of acting the part of Proudhon. We have maintained that all their reasons to justify the use of that form, were so many reasons that imposed, on the contrary, the use of the third person. We have objected that what happened could not have been more shocking, if the result had been to attribute to Proudhon's pen the citation of a newspaper article several months after his death.

Our correspondence with these gentlemen will bear witness to all that. They can, if they wish, produce it before the public.

But the letter from these gentlemen to the *Presse* proves, as we had sensed, that, beneath the theory of organization, there was the germ of a more general disagreement. We have to note today that this disagreement bears, in fact, on all the posthumous publications.

But here again, it is good to rule out any uncertainty.

We desire, as much as these gentlemen, the publication of all the unpublished works of Proudhon.

We want, like them, for the public to have all the thought of Proudhon.

We attach as high a value as them to the slightest notes of Proudhon.

We believe ourselves to be friends as intelligent as they of the talent and ideas of Proudhon.

We do not recall any more than them before the responsibility for any of the works of Proudhon. It is for us a true regret of not being able to associate our names with the publication of *The Theory of Property*.

But we do not accept the interpolations without a distinct sign that indicates them to the public in their text. In order for it to be known that these gentlemen have only put 90 lines of their own composition in an introduction of 62 pages, they must say so after the fact. It seems preferable to us that the reader can discern these 90 lines and immediately and with a simple glance.

We do not accept that they complete the thought of Proudhon with some phrases retained from his conversation, other than in notes or appendices.

We do not accept that they every make Proudhon speak with the pronoun *I*, when the writing is not by him, and that even when it would be writers considering themselves as his

sons. We know well enough that sons do not always replace their fathers well.

We do not accept that it was necessary, for the clarity of the series to have recourse to transitions, to sutures, to splices, etc. All of that becomes useless and puerile, as soon as one renounces the use of the *I*.

We do not accept that the posthumous works of Proudhon could only be published in an *intelligible manner* by the process of these gentlemen.

We do not accept that the effect of their intervention should be to transform into a regular work what would be, without them, would only be a hodgepodge.

We believe that a hodgepodge from Proudhon can be of interest by itself, and that it can await the critics.

We believe that the series of his ideas can manifest itself very sufficiently by a very simple ordering of these textual notes, when he has only left notes, and by his own text, when he has left a finished text.

All these divergences between these gentlemen and us, in the manner of understanding our common mandate, do not lack, as you can see, some gravity. They are complicated by a disagreement that is just as great on the very nature of that mandate, and we must, in order to finish, also explain ourselves on that point.

Six of Proudhon's friends have been specifically designated by him to the confidence of his widow for the reprinting of his works.

When it was a question of manuscripts, this designation has naturally appeared applicable to the posthumous publications as well as to the reprints.

That mandate was not at all legal: it did not result from a testament, but from a note dictated by Proudhon to his older daughter, only having the character of a recommendation.

We have been, by this title, invested with the confidence of Mme. Proudhon. We are nothing except through that confidence, and we are obliged to justify it. It obviously depends on Mme. Proudhon to continue or withdraw it, as she wishes.

In the disagreement that divides us, it is up to Mme. Proudhon, and to her alone, that it belongs to make her will prevail. Mr. Langlois and Mr. Duchêne would only, like us, submit to it. We do not know how they could have written that phrase: Whether we remain four or six, it must be, and it will be.

In that state of the question, Mr. Delhasse and Mr. Bergmann, who have still known things from afar, would have to say their word as well as us; all the friends of Proudhon would have to have their say; public opinion will also have its

own; and it will be up to Mme. Proudhon, thus enlightened, to make known to the house of Lacroix, charged with the publication, how she intends to settle the debate.

Please accept, Mr. Editor, the expression of our very distinguished consideration.

"GUSTAVE CHAUDEY, ABRAAM ROLLAND."

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La Presse. 16/11/1865.

The publication of the last work of Proudhon, *Theory of Property*, just brought forth an interesting question. We know that the work remained unfinished. Two friends of Proudhon thought they could fill the gaps in the manuscript. They have added, among other things, a long introduction, including 62 pages of the 246 that make up the work, in which they make Proudhon speak in the first person, absolutely as if these 62 pages had been written by him. Let us hasten to say that, in the preface, these two gentlemen have taken care to warn the reader and indicate their reasons for acting in this way.

These motives have not appeared sufficient to two persons to whom Mme. Proudhon has entrusted the publication of the posthumous works of her husband, for their names do not appear at the end of the preface of *The Theory of Property*. They have found, we are assured, that Proudhon, and the public, have been dealt with in too cavalier a manner and, out of respect for the memory of the master, they believed they should abstain.

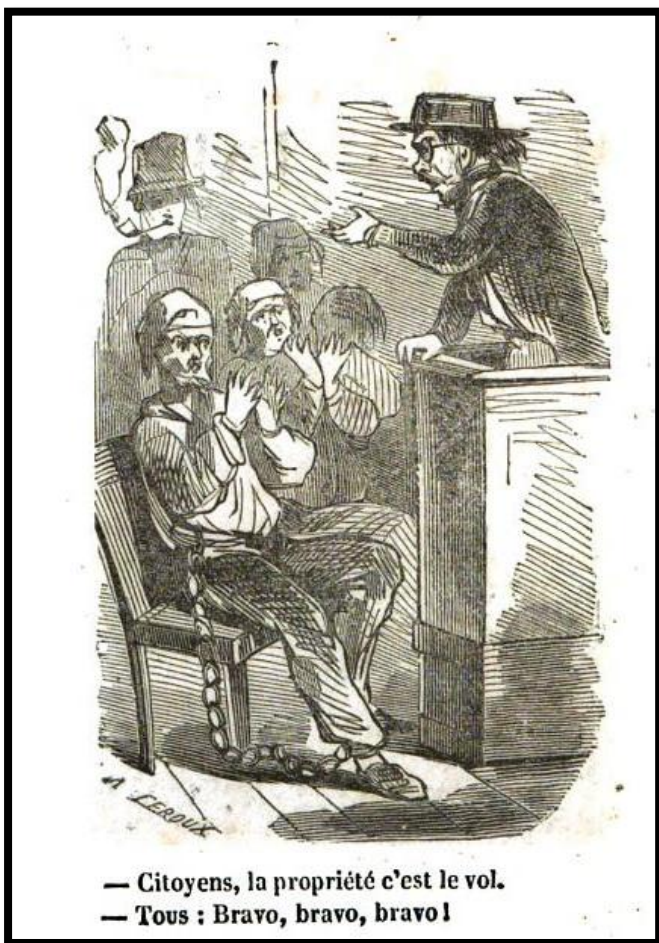
The question raised by this incident, and which is debated by several literary journals, is this: Do the individuals who preside over the publication of the unpublished works of an author have the right to address the shortcomings in the manuscript and make, subject to the notes that he has left, a work of organization that substitutes for his own style that of the editors. Is the status as disciples of a thinker a sufficient title to legitimate such reworking of an unfinished work?

We believe that to ask these questions is to resolve them. The respect owed to a dead author, as well as literary integrity, demand that we publish fully and without changing anything, the manuscripts that they have left. Better an unfinished sketch, in which we see the stamp of the master, than a painting finished by some more or less skilled disciples. At all times, we have risen up, and with good reason, against these editor-arrangers, who consider a manuscript as a canvas on which they can embroider at their ease.

The editors of Proudhon are people of heart and intelligence. So we believe that it is sufficient that some warning inform them of public opinion in order for them to put an end to a work that must necessarily harm the intellectual heritage of the famous publicist.—E. Bauer.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
MR. PROUDHON  
AND  
HIS PRINCIPLES  
BY





“The heart of the proletarian, like that of the rich man, is only a cesspool of boiling sensuality, a seat of hedonism and impostures.”

— P -J. PROUDHON,  
(Representative of the people.)

## THE HISTORY OF MR. PROUDHON.

I have been, for an entire month, delivered to the "jackals of the press and the owls of the gallery. Never has a man, neither in the past or in the present, been the object of as much execration as I have become, simply because I make war on the cannibals."

P. J. PROUDHON

No, citizen Proudhon, you will not persuade me that there are still cannibals among us in France. As for the owls of the gallery and the jackals of the press, they have attacked your evil doctrines and your detestable pride. If this is why you and your friends lavish abuse on them, they can be proud of it; for you have judged yourself in these few lines: "The slanderers of the Republic are those who rend it because they understand it; those who betray and exploit it, because they make light of everything, the Republic as well as the monarchy and religion."

Mr. Proudhon's principles are not new, no matter what he says; he has found them while flipping through the *Encyclopedia* of d'Alembert and Diderot; he has found them in the infamous boudoir manuals, which appeared at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; he has found them in the writings of Dulaurens and Morelli, of d'Holbach and the elder Mirabeau, that *friend of men*, who was the hardest, most merciless man of his century. From all of that, and his own evil thoughts, he has made what he calls his system.

The citizen Proudhon claims to represent *socialism*! This producer of poison puts a false label on his bottles of arsenic. What does he hope to achieve with that maneuver? To kill property, or to kill socialism?

Both perhaps....

And it is because I see him as the adversary of socialism and property that I want to fight him to the bitter end. It is not at the moment when philanthropy attempts to reform the prisons, that we should let the whole society be demoralized by a proud, wicked annalist.

Mr. Proudhon is not a socialist; he is a demolisher. He is not an ardent, committed partisan; he is a sophist. To attract attention to himself, he does care if he strikes fairly. He prefers to strike hard. This is why he has cried *PROPERTY IS THEFT*, when he could have said with justice: *The abuse of property is theft*.

The evil is not in property, but in the abuse of property. The abuse of a strong liquor is death; must we then cry that liquor is a poison?... That, however, is how the citizen Proudhon proceeds.

If Proudhon loved the people, he wouldn't seek to make a scarecrow of socialism. He would make it attractive, and prove finally that socialism is the principle of social happiness. He would not demand the abolition of property, but its regulation. He would not call for violence, but reason.

For thirty years the rents have increased in a frightening manner, and that is an abuse of property that must be suppressed, because that abuse attacks industry and commerce above all, and because dead capital (immovable property) kills the shopkeeper and the manufacturer. The state must itself regulate the price of rents as it regulates the price of bread. That price is no longer in proportion today; everywhere property is rented at usury. But, it is said, to touch the rent is to attack property. Did Napoleon attack property when he reduced the legal rate on money to five percent? Obviously not. Well, what Napoleon has done, the National Assembly has the right to do; let it reduce the rents to their fair value, and so that the state loses nothing, let it relieve the proprietor proportionally to the reduction of the rents and let it apply this relief to the tenant. What kills industry today is the tyranny of dead capital, it is the usurious price of sites and shops.

Here is what ordinarily happens: a merchant rents a store for a certain number of years; at the end of his lease, when he appears to renew it, his landlord demands a large increase, based on the business of the merchant, who find himself obliged to pay a tax of labor to idleness, or else he must abandon his clientele and go somewhere else to start a new establishment.

— Is it fair? Is it moral that an idle proprietor disposes in this way of the fortune and honor of the merchant, for to impose new charges on him is to perhaps put a strain on his present and his future; it is perhaps to write his name in the book of the year's bankruptcies.

Let no one say to me that this is an exceptional act, for I could name hundreds of proprietors given to this odious calculus.

The regulation of the rents by the state would be a just and useful measure, which would return large amounts of capital to industry and allow merchants to employ a greater number of arms.

I do not, however, posit that proposition as the salvation of humanity; I believe it good, but I could be in error, and it is only false prophets who would not admit as much.

What I want above all is the happiness of my country, the happiness of the people; to improve the condition of the workers is a duty for all, but the condition of the merchants is no less worthy of interest. To cast division into the heart of the people by dividing them into *bourgeois* and *proletarians*, is to do the work of a bad citizen; that work is the work of the citizen Proudhon!

Why divide France into two camps? Why close to the proletariat the ranks of the bourgeoisie? And, first of all, what is the bourgeoisie? What is the bourgeois? According to the rigorous sense of the word the bourgeois is one who does not labor, the idler who lives on his rent, in short, it is the proprietor.

According to Mr. Proudhon and his wretched following the bourgeois is just a merchant; any man who can get credit or the instruments of labor is a bourgeois; however little he possesses, citizen Proudhon calls him a thief. What, then is the citizen Proudhon? This proletarian of the pen who sells his rantings at the highest price possible, and receives 25 francs a day in the National



Assembly as well? You have done well, blond Attila of property! you are a bourgeois, but, I hasten to add, a very bad bourgeois, as you are a very bad citizen. And here is the proof: Your associate, Mr. Fauvette, a rich hosier in the suburb of Saint-Denis, could easily make the bail for your paper, but there are risks involved and you cry: The people's press is dead, and you hold out your hand to these proletarians that you fool, so that if there are losses or fines, they do not come out of your money, but from that of the people.

For twelve years I have also defended the people, but I have defended them at my cost and not at theirs, and I do not flatter them. You, citizen Proudhon, this is how you treat the proletarians whose representative you claim to be, though it is true that you only write this in works costing 8 francs volume. The people have not read you there, citizen Proudhon, but they will certainly read you in this brochure.

"The heart of the proletarian, like that of the rich man, is only a cesspool of boiling sensuality, a seat of hedonism and impostures."

Now, if you want to understand how citizen Proudhon understands fraternity, charity, and virtue, read:

"In vain do you talk to me of fraternity and love: I remain convinced that you love me but little, and I feel very sure that I do not love you."

"Charity is base mystification. Remember only, and never forget, that pity, happiness, and virtue, like country, religion, and love, are masks."

Is this the language of a SOCIALIST? That is terrible and cynical, but it is still nothing: this man will insult God; he will write the following lines without his pen breaking. He counts on the scandal we will make; what does a little infamy more or less matter to him? *People will talk about him.*

— The conclusion of social science is this: there is for man only one duty, only one religion, it is to renounce God. *Hoc est primum et maximum mandatum.*

"Let the priest finally realize that the true virtue, what makes us worthy of the eternal truth, is to struggle against religion and against God.

"God is essentially hostile to our nature, and in no way do we fall under his authority. We come to science despite him, to well-being despite him; our every progress is a victory, but which we crush divinity.

"God, there you are, dethroned and broken. Your name, so long the hope of the poor, the refuge of the repentant, this name henceforth doomed to scorn and anathema, will be hissed among men; for God is folly and cowardice, hypocrisy and lies, tyranny and misery; God is evil. So long as humanity will bow before an altar, humanity will be condemned. God, be gone! For from today, cured of fear and becoming wise, I swear, my hand extended towards heaven, that you are nothing but the executioner of my reason.

Alas! these sad blasphemies merit more pity than anger, more disgust than scorn. But, in good faith, can the man who has been so unfortunate to write such lines be the regenerator of a society?

Let us applaud Proudhon as we applaud the feats of strength of an acrobat. I agree that there is sometimes some originality in his paradoxes, and the lie is

always better dressed than the truth. But to make Proudhon the serious leaders of socialism, to intoxicate him with praise, to lavish flattery on him to kill with him, without pain and without effort, all social ideas, that is what I cannot accept. That, however, is the work of Mr. Thiers. There are more links between these men than one could believe at first. For both are enemies of property. Mr. Thiers strikes it a fatal blow by rejecting all the concessions which could save it and all the reforms which are just and useful. Mr. Proudhon attacks it from his side with the weapons of bad faith, and by appealing to the bad passions of humanity.

Thiers and Proudhon are the logicians of falsities and lies; both stand for a selfish personality and not a principle.

M. Thiers wants to repulse *the right to work*, because he does not love the people and he does love financial feudalism... Mr. Proudhon cries so loudly: — "*The right to work is communism; the right to work is the abolition of property*," only because he hopes in this way to make the right to work be rejected by the National Assembly, and to slow down the improvement of the condition of the workers and thus cast the leaven of civil war into the heart of the poor.

Is that clear?

That is how Thiers and Proudhon are heard to love the people.

In this fit of folly or frankness, the reader will choose, citizen Proudhon exposes his principles in all their nakedness. Example:

"They want labor to be financed by a few crowns, by capital, while labor must create capital from nothing and finance itself by reciprocity in exchange.

"We repudiate power and money. Our principle is the negation of every dogma; our first premise is *nothing*. To deny, always to deny is our method of construction in philosophy. It is by following this negative method that we have been led to posit as principles, ATHEISM in religion, ANARCHY in politics, *non-property* in political economy.

Thus atheism, anarchy and theft; for *non-property* is nothing else: such are the foundations of society following the spirit of the citizen Proudhon.

His system is a calumny against France and against all of society; for property is civilization. You could destroy property for a day, but it would reconstitute itself the next day, and only the proprietors would have changed. That is, you could wrest by force the paternal heritage or the fruits of labor in order to make an endowment for the robbers.

The earth belongs to no one, you say; it was stolen by the first occupant. Perhaps it was, a thousand years ago and more, something true in what you say. But our proprietors in France are legitimate proprietors.

Algeria, a fertile country that colonization will make still more fertile, will be divided among the unemployed workers, that poverty will make cultivators. In twenty or thirty years, this soil given for nothing will perhaps have a great value due to the work of the settlers. Well, according to you, these men, who have spent thirty years working the land, making it fertile, so that their children have less work and more leisure, these honest and hard-working

laborers who, in order to increase the value of the gift that France has made to them, exposed to the bullets of the Arabs and the dangers of the African climate, these proletarians, become proprietors, would thus only be thieves?

Your doctrine, citizen Proudhon, confines the worker within a hell from which he is forbidden to leave! Oh! I know that for men like you, it is necessary that the people suffer; hunger and poverty must trouble their reason so that they will listen to your poisoned advice, so that they will man the barricades when you urge them, while you remain at home, a coward trembling before your books.

Your precursor Baboeuf did not tremble, at least; he was less cynical than you, but also more courageous. To prove it, I will place your doctrines side by side:

DOCTRINES OF G. BABOEUF  
REGARDING PROPERTY.

"Property in all the goods held in the national territory is one, and belongs inalienably to the people, who alone have the right to share its use and usufruct.

"Nature has given to each man an equal right to the enjoyment of all goods.

"The land belongs to no one; the fruits of the earth belong to everyone. We declare that we can no longer suffer the great majority of men to work for the good pleasure of the extreme minority.

"The labor necessary for the upkeep of society, equally shared by all able-bodied individuals, is for each of them a duty whose accomplishment the law demands. Let there be no difference made between men but those of age and sex. Since everyone has the same needs and the same faculties, let there only be one education for them, one single nourishment. They are content with a single sun and a single atmosphere. Why would the same portion and quality of foodstuffs not suffice for all of them?

"That which is not transmissible must be frankly deducted.

DOCTRINES OF PROUDHON  
REGARDING PROPERTY.

"Property, it is robbery! He has not said, in a thousand years, two words like those. I have no other goods on the earth than that definition of property: but I hold it more precious than the millions of the Rothschilds, and I dare say that it will be the most significant event of the government of Louis-Philippe. M. Michelet responds to me that in France there are TWENTY-FIVE MILLION PROPRIETORS who will not give it up. Why does he suppose anyone needs consent?<sup>4</sup>

"Do you think that the workers will not rise in their anger, and that once masters in their vengeance, they will settle for an amnesty?

"I believe that the bourgeoisie have deserved all the evils which threaten them, and my duty is to establish the proof of their guilt.

"Property, a regime of spoliation and misery, must perish as soon as civilization gains consciousness of its own laws.

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<sup>4</sup> Is this clear? The population being thirty-five million people, Mr. Proudhon calls on the ten million non-proprietors to rob the others. That is the ethics of the cartridge.

“The French Revolution is only the forerunner of another, much great, much more solemn revolution, which will be the last.”

Property, in its principle and essence, is immoral; consequently, the code which determines the rights of property is a code of immorality; jurisprudence, that so-called science of right, is immoral.

“And justice, which orders us to come to the aid against those who would oppose themselves to that abuse; which afflicts whoever is so daring as to claim to mend the outrages of property, justice is infamous! and property which comes from this odious lineage of justice is infamous!»

How naïve and time the good Baboeuf appears next to Proudhon! It is true that Baboeuf proposed expelling the rich from their houses and lodging the poor there, leaving nevertheless necessary lodgings to the poor.

Like the citizen Proudhon, he wanted to liquidate society with or without its consent, with a little coercive medium that was known as the guillotine. Mr. Proudhon does not say the word, but we know well enough what he thinks.

The first word of the babouvist system, like that of the proudhonian system, is a bloody dictatorship.

In 1793, this was called minting coins at the foot of the scaffold.

Citizen Proudhon calls it proceeding with the liquidation without the consent of the proprietors.

The words are changed ; the things remain the same.

Proudhon's writings deserve to be burned in the middle of a prison.

He has denied and insulted God.

He has treated justice despicably.

He has made property theft.

He denies universal suffrage.

He calls charity a base mystification.

Pity, virtue, religion, and the homeland, masques.

There is nothing sacred to this man; he spreads his poison on everything. The bad passions of humanity alone find favor with him. And yet he began his life with the publication of the Fathers of the Church. Son of a poor cooper, he was educated at college for free. The mantle of *savant* has preserved the demolisher from the effects of justice, and it is because that justice has not struck him in the past that his writings are reprinted today, and abuse public morals and decency.

The bottle of poison spreads its contents in minds inclined to bad influences.

The national tribune, it is said, has dealt with this man; his doctrines could not stand the light of day, which has killed them. Think again. For fair and honest minds, Mr. Proudhon does not exist, and he knows it well. But he does not speak for honest folk. His hope was to be heard outside [en dehors], to speak to evil, envious and corrupt minds. His hope, in short, was *social war*, the most horrible and most detestable of all wars.

He has said that the *right to work* was the abolition de la property, but he lied. Property is the right of the laborer. The right to work is the guarantee of bread accorded to those that labor has still not rewarded.

Proudhon takes his example from 1793 and maintains that then property paid its debt to the Republic. The citizen Proudhon is still in error, the good citizens made some voluntary donations, but the tax imposed was not paid because France lacked money. I maintain, moreover, that if France again found itself in danger, the National Assembly would have the right to levy a tax on

income. When each citizen sheds their blood for the homeland, it is just that the rich give their gold.

Proudhon's system tends to suppress all currency. Exchange is the great remedy for all our wrongs; exchange will double the markets and make it so that instead of consuming 75 centimes, we will consume all for 7 francs 50 centimes. I have already seen exchange at work, and it is far from producing such good results;<sup>5</sup> exchange was not invented by Mr. Proudhon, any more than his fine theories on justice and property; exchange is as old as the world. In order to be able to subsist without the aid of gold or silver, all the industries would have to be able to produce equal products. So long as the great Mr. Proudhon has not found the equality of products, I defy him to make his bank of exchange the philosopher's stone of the human race.

In his horror of property, he even attacks the savings banks, that first step that the laborers make before becoming proprietors, before assuring bread for their old age. Living day to day, enjoying as much as possible and never thinking of tomorrow, such is the doctrine of pigs in manure, and of Proudhon, such is the morality that this would like to see adopted by the workers. *He loves the proletarians so much!*

He has found that a very sweet, very safe little method for killing property is to establish a national bank which will loan at 0 percent interest the 2 billion francs that it has in its fund. But where to find these 2 billions. This good Proudhon knows just the place to go. This bank, lending for nothing, will necessarily make rent and the price of properties fall; as soon as one can have money for nothing, it is certain that one could have houses and properties for nothing, and thus pay no rents of any kind. But as the citizen Proudhon is generous, he will leave the proprietors the right to make some repairs.

According to the great reformer, the Republic is incompatible with property, for in February 1848 all contracts were abolished by right, property was suppressed, and if the debtors still pay what they own, it is because they wish to.

The citizen Proudhon forgets by design that the combatants of February shot thieves. He thinks he has the right to insult the Revolution of February, as he insults socialism; if he touches good ideas it is to soil them. If the Assembly takes some generous actions, he hastens to speak in order to stop them. He associates himself with reform bill in order to kill them, and calls himself the representative of the proletariat in order to have the right to harm the proletarians; if he demands an amnesty for the insurgents of June, he does so in such terms that terms that he makes the anger burst from those for whom he asks clemency. He is extremely clumsy. — Clumsy? — No, he is wicked, and that is the whole secret of the contradictions and blunders of that would-be logician.

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<sup>5</sup> See the *Société d'échange* of Marseille, founded in 1831.

He calls himself the representative of socialism, and finds only too many people disposed to believe it; the enemies of all progress are overjoyed when they encounter men like Proudhon, men who have within them a genius for evil.

"To annihilate property is not to destroy it (he would say gravely); to shoot the proprietors is not to rebuild the scaffold.

Meanwhile, the citizen Proudhon makes himself the denier of all principles, all laws, all the rights. — Why? Because that negation prepares for anarchy, and Proudhon's entire system can only live in the years of anarchy; in the supreme anarchy which comes before the end.

The citizen Proudhon denies universal suffrage, because it has produced the National Assembly and because universal suffrage, whatever one does, will always be the echo of the people, the expression of the supreme will of France. Now, Proudhon feels his isolation well; if he raises his voice it is not to convince; he does not want proselytes; if he speaks it is to prevent order from reestablishing itself, and confidence being reborn.

The day when France is happy and free, Mr. Proudhon will hang himself, or die of despair like the serpent who has lost its sting.

The day when the National Assembly gave Mr. Thiers as a rival for M. Proudhon, it constructed a pedestal for him; the cunning and bad faith of Mr. Thiers was too great in the debate. To prove the falsity of the doctrines of Proudhon, the voice of an honest man would have sufficed.

In the session of July 31, there was too much anger; since we had made the mistake of opening the platform to a man who would defile it for three hours, he necessarily only had disdain and contempt for it. the most violent interjections were met, without bringing the red of shame to the face of Proudhon; he heard, without batting an eye, the most searing truths, without a word from the heart testifying that anything beat in his chest.

This was not a fanatic or a thinker, but a sort of big grocer, fair and chubby, who promises to grow fat, and has meanwhile weighed, dissected, and distributed his merchandise; that merchandise was society, property, morality and the family.

For him everything was a fact he explained in his own way; the citizen Proudhon does not see right anywhere, not even in the National Assembly; according to him, force alone rules, and if the rebels of June had had the strength, they would have had the right. Such doctrines are not astonishing on the part of the defender of theft, who while denying the legal right delegated to the representatives of the people recognized their right to make the *constitution*. We would never finish this study if we wanted to highly all the contradictions of this alleged socialist. We believe, however, we have made them sufficiently known; after his failure, there remains to console him only the esteem and friendship of the deputy Greppo, and the calculated devotion of the young hosier Fauvety, naïve and interesting copy of *Jérôme Paturot*.

Thus we want neither Mr. Thiers nor Mr. Proudhon, because we want neither reaction nor anarchy.

Now, Mr. Thiers is reaction; Mr. Proudhon is anarchy.<sup>6</sup>

SATAN.

[George Dairnvaell]

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#### TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE.

According to his favorite paradox that property is theft, the citizen Proudhon thinks nothing of robbing all thinkers, good or bad. He has gone through Morelli's *Code of Nature*, and the *Testament* of curé Meslier, as he has plagiarized some of the better ideas of Fourier and Saint-Simon. But a good idea need not perish because the citizen Proudhon has made himself its *proprietor*; you know how to distinguish what is good in it from what is bad, and you will not let yourself be fooled by the man who does everything possible to repulse the right to labor, which will be one of the cornerstones of the Republic.

Slow, but continuous progress, that is what you will oppose to the mistrust of a people that are led astray, and to the sinister predictions of that bad copy of Nero, who only went to the faubourg of Saint-Antoine to satisfy a wicked curiosity, and to admire the sublime horror of the cannonade and the fires.

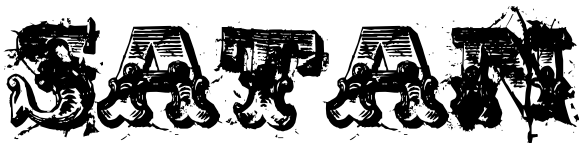
There was a more noble role for a representative, and it was in order to fill it that the brave and unfortunate Dornès fell to the fratricidal bullets.

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<sup>6</sup> The second part of this work appeared under the title: *Proudhon et les Malthusiens*.



# Response to



ON THE SUBJECT OF

MR. PROUDHON

BY

THE ARCHANGEL SAINT MICHAEL

[Jeanne Deroin]

1848

How long, O Satan, do you hope to persecute with impunity the children of the true God? You have assumed every form in order to establish your empire on the earth; now you believe your power so solidly based that you dare to reveal yourself by your true name; for it is you who suggested, to a pamphleteer misled by your perfidious inspirations, the strange thought of signing your work, which he believed his own, with your accursed name.

It is in the name of morals that you accuse and slander one of the most generous defenders of the rights of the people; it is in the name of justice that you uphold privilege; it is in the name of truth that you propagate error!

It is because Proudhon comes, like the exterminating angel, to undermine your altars and cast the anathema on your impious doctrines, it is because he wants to demolish the temple of iniquity that your adherents have raised to the golden calf, that you accuse him of insulting and denying God.

But it is time for the light to come and dispel the shadows you pour out by design over the earth to make humanity go astray from the providential way. I come to unveil your life and your works, and to announce to all that the end of your reign is near.

Hardly a few thousand revolutions of the sun of your terrestrial system separate us, O Satan, from these happy times when you lived among us, angel of light, as indicated by your original name; (Lucibel), you freely roamed the

myriad shining spheres subject to your direction, where countless phalanges of God's children lived happily.

All children of God, we are all brothers, all equal though different, all free because we accept providential direction freely and with love;

But you wanted to demonstrate the power of your free will by following an opposite course; angel of light, you became the spirit of darkness, and when, after a solemn combat, where you were struck down by me, according to the will of the Most High, and banished from the heavens where you wanted to reign, you came to the earth to found your empire, and still struggling against the law of God, opposed yourself constantly to the regeneration of those that you have led in revolt and in your fall.

It is by interpreting in a false and impious manner the holy traditions and the teachings of Christ, that you have led the human race down the subversive paths of error and suffering.

It is by interpreting falsely and in an impious manner the dogmas of the fall, the expiation and the redemption that you have misled men, fallen and transformed angel, about the path that they must follow in order to recapture their glorious privileges and arrive at the happiness for which they have been created.

The fall is the deviation from the law of love, fraternity and solidarity, from the law of labor by which every intelligent being must develop and enrich the faculties with which it is endowed; and you know well that God has put within the human domain the tree of the science of good and evil, the knowledge of truth and free will, in order to inspire in them the desire to acquire science and liberty; but he has warned at the same time that they will die the death if they eat the fruit of that tree that they have not planted and cultivated, in order to teach them that no one should possess that which they have not acquired by labor.

But you, who are the tempter, you still come to lead man astray by persuading him that God has forbidden him from acquiring science and enjoying his liberty. It is by inciting him to oppress the holiest half of himself that you give rise in his heart to selfishness and the spirit of domination, in order to stifle in him the seed of divine love and the sentiment of fraternity.

God, in his infinite foresight, had prepared the way of regeneration. He gave the earth to man as an instrument of labor, and did not permit it to produce by itself, without culture, what is necessary to the satisfaction of his needs, in order to make him understand that he must exercise and develop all the faculties with which he is endowed in order to acquire knowledge of nature and of the properties of all beings and all things, and to transform them according to his needs and desires. By giving man the mission of subjecting all the powers of nature, of conquering the sovereignty of the terrestrial globe and of appropriating it by labor, God united all the members of the great human family by a powerful link of solidarity, for that immense work can only be accomplished but the entire human race marching in harmony towards a single goal. It is only

when all men will have acquired in their successive transformations the most complete development of all of their physical, intellectual and moral faculties, that they will be perfect, that they will be happy. But the work of regeneration will be incomplete and no one will be happy as long as there is a single incomplete and suffering being on the globe.

Thus the law of expiation is the law of solidarity and association, it is the law of progress. From the childhood of humanity, God has sent, according to the needs of times and places, prophets and legislators to direct humanity and lead it towards the providential way.

But you, Satan, you wanted to reign on earth, as you had wanted to reign in heaven, you have used every means that your infernal genius suggests in order to substitute your worship for the worship of the true God; you have inspired false prophets and tyrants who come to extend the veil of ignorance and superstition over the eternal truths, and to persuade the people that God has condemned them to live in suffering; fraternity and holy equality were excluded from the earth by oppressive and unjust laws, the natural order was overturned, oppressors, false doctors and idlers were placed in the first ranks, and the laborers, successively slaves, serfs and proletarians, were relegated to the lowest ranks of society, deprived of the means to develop all their faculties and reduced to constant struggling against all the miseries born from a subversive social organization.

But your greatest crime, O Satan! It is to have accomplished your impious work in the name of God and to have thus caused his children to doubt his love, his justice, and his power.

God, the true God, wants all men to be brothers, equal and free; he created them to be happy. He dedicated the earth to all the generations, present and future, as a common good, whose products must nourish all those who inhabit it. And you have brought forth discord and hatred, inequality and slavery, by establishing property on the right of the strongest, the chance of birth, and the exploitation of man by man.

You accuse Proudhon, that courageous defender of fraternity, because he dared to say that property is theft.

Isn't property, which must be based on an equitable division of the products of labor, indeed, as you have constituted it, a spoliation of the common good for the profit of a privileged few? And it is with gold, torn from the bowels of the earth by hard-working miners, who only collect, as the price of their labors, some suffering and misery; it is with gold transformed into a conventional value that the elect of privilege, led astray themselves by infernal ruses, think they have a right to acquire what belongs to all.

With that gold, often acquired by fateful speculations, sources of ruin and misery for the people, that they, not only that which is necessary for the satisfaction for the needs of life, but, the pleasures and feasts, which should be the price of labor, the recompense and the relaxation of the worker, and the

communion of the people with their brothers and with God, by growth and happiness.

You have thus reduced humanity to vegetate under the yoke of poverty and ignorance which produces the corruption; you have put all interests in battle, based all institutions on war, on privilege, on the exploitation of man by man, and organized society in a sense opposite to fraternity, equality, liberty and justice, and, through some false doctors, you name this awful chaos a society constituted by God!

But it is you who is the creator-God of that subversive organization; thus, it is of you that Proudhon has spoken, when he said: God (the God of evil) is essentially hostile to our nature. That divinity hostile to our nature, it is you, Satan! You, the prince of darkness, who wants to extinguish the natural light that the true God makes shine in all souls, and stop the development of the most noble faculties of man! It is you who forbids science, progress, well-being, by taking from the most numerous party of humanity the means of exercising and developing the gifts that God has made to all intelligent beings, by creating them in his image. God, the true God, wants all to be happy, since he has put in all souls an ardent aspiration towards happiness and liberty.

But the moment approaches, Satan! When the mystery of the redemption will be unveiled! When you will be struck down anew and vanquished by the power of infinite love, when men will understand that you have falsely interpreted the teachings of Christ.

He has come to deliver humanity from your yoke and has taught all the renunciation of all the goods of the earth and the joys of life, as the means of reconciling all men and making them understand the holy law of solidarity which must reconnect all the members of humanity in harmony, but which strikes them with years of disorder; because humanity is like a body which suffers, when a single one of its members is suffering. Now, it reveals thus, to the elect of fortune and the powerful of the earth, that all the joys and vanities with which they are intoxicated, while so great a number of their brothers groan in slavery and affliction, are false joys and fatal illusions; that all the treasures that they possess are treasures of iniquity, because no one should appropriate the goods of the earth, as long as there is a single one of their brothers deprived of necessities.

He exhorted the weak, poor and suffering not to envy the deceptive joys and iniquitous treasures of their oppressors, not to teach them to despise the gifts of God, but finally that they do not become like those prevaricators of the divine law, by taking by violence what they possess.

The privileged and powerful of the earth, inspired and directed by law, want to persuade the people that the treasure of heaven is promised to those who suffer, in compensation for the joys of life; but they testify, by their ambition and their cupidity, by their immoderate thirst for the pleasures and enjoyments of luxury, that they do not believe in that promise and that they use it as a lure, to subjugate the people under the yoke of poverty; but the regenerative torch of

social science has projected its light on your impostures, and the people know now that, to deserve that heavenly treasure promised to all, they must work constantly to escape slavery, poverty, ignorance and corruption.

This treasure from heaven which is the reign of God on earth, the reign of fraternity and universal harmony, can only be acquired by the most complete development of all the faculties with which the heavenly father has endowed all his children, it is promised to all, and all will obtain it, when they understand that no one can be perfect, which is to say happy, as long as suffering beings exist.

And the work of redemption will only be accomplished by reparation and reconciliation.

You have convinced the elect of fortune that they owe to those disinherited of the goods of the earth only charity which degrades and withers, but Christ said: If you want to be perfect, sell your goods and distribute them to the poor. He did not demand of the rich a small part of their excess, but all that they possessed, to make them understand that it is not a gift that they make to their brothers, but a restitution.

And it is a restitution, because the one who possesses must not forget that his fortune, however he has acquired it, does not belong to him completely, because he has not created its source. God alone creates the raw materials and gives man the intelligence and the faculties necessary to employ them according to his needs; and his will is that each and all of his children participate in the gifts that he has made to each and all. In the end man can only acquire and possess with the aid of the progress that has been accomplished, the education he has received, and the advantages procured for him by the social organization.

Thus society should be organized so that all its members can profit from the progress accomplished, develop all their faculties, and acquire, by labor the right to possess.

But, in a society based on privilege where the smallest number possess the earth, the houses, and all the large industrial exploitations, and refuse the right to labor to their brothers of the most numerous class, property is a spoliation.

Thus, Satan! Proudhon was right to say that property is theft, that charity is a mystification: charity means love and devotion, and you want to substitute the alms which humiliate, the hand-outs that the people reject; for it is written on their flag: Live working or die fighting. He was right to say that the justice that you have instituted is infamous; it is blind; it is impious, since it punishes those who take bread to save their children from the horrors of hunger, and it protects the shameful speculations of those who work the people like dogs and reduce them to poverty; since it protects the tyrants who oppress those who only ask to live by laboring. Proudhon, the generous citizen who has had the courage to protest against the impious doctrine of Malthus and Thiers, your faith adherents, Proudhon has *broken your throne and overturned your altars*. He has shown himself a servant of the true God by unveiling your iniquities. The

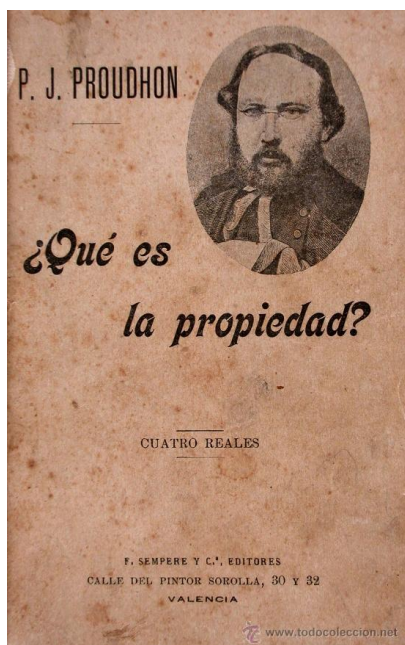
time has come, Satan, when your reign will end. Humanity, tired of suffering, seeks the light, and wants happiness.

The privileged themselves begin to understand that you have fooled them, and that there are no real joys, of certain possession or of security, possible in injustice.

And that dreadful struggle of hate and envy, of selfishness and fear, will cease when the sun of truth will rise over all, and as brothers who, encountering each other in the shadows, battle each other, they will be filled with confusion and will understand that the temple of Fraternity cannot be founded on bloody bases; they will enter in the path of reparation.

All the privileges of sex, race, birth, of caste and fortune will be abolished. They will recognize that all have the same right to education, to labor, to the joys of life, to rest and happiness. And knowing that in their successive transformations, since the origin of the world, they have been by turns oppressors and oppressed, they will pardon one another. That reconciliation will be the token of salvation for humanity, and the aurora of the reign of God, of fraternity and universal harmony.

THE ARCHANGEL SAINT MICHAEL.  
[JEANNE DERGIN]



DOCUMENTS OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

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**THE EXECUTION**  
OF  
**GUSTAVE CHAUDEY**  
AND THREE GENDARMES



EXÉCUTION DE GUSTAVE CHAUDEY

PUBLISHED BY  
EDGAR MONTEIL

PARIS, 1885

## PREFACE

If I only consulted the desire of sincere republicans to erase from their memories some funereal days during which, alas! so many people suffered, and following which so many suffered more, I would begin by pushing from my mind a crime committed against a publicist, one of our brothers in the Republic whom I personally held in high esteem. But I do not consider as belonging to myself alone what History can place in my during the course of my experience existence, et, ma parole à part, I would regard it as a theft made from historical criticism to keep to myself what was left to me by Préau de Védél, who was shot for having participated in the murder of Gustave Chaudey.

The tale of Préau de Védél is, incidentally, consistent with his deposition before the council of war, but it is more complete and more detailed.

Here is how I collected what I publish:

In 1871, I through myself into the insurrection when it broke out; is shared with the Parisians some of the sentiments that gave rise to it.

Once in the current, I followed it, not wishing to leave it before the certain danger and increasing at every hour, retained by an absurd self-esteem, since I soon condemned some acts that would surpass all that I had supposed possible.

Bit by bit, as I will publish the pieces that I have in hand and that I do not want to produce so long as they could harm certain people, I will explain myself at greater length regarding the Paris Commune. Each thing must only come in its time. That is sufficient explanations for the moment, and in order to make it understood how, made prisoner on May 24, in the morning, at the composition of the RAPPEL, how, led out to be shot with some writers and around twenty of our typographers, all guilty of having written or printed a republican sheet, I escaped death; and how I was able to meet, in prison, at the ambulance of Satory, with Préau de Védél.<sup>7</sup>

Préau was a boy around a meter and four-fifths tall. He was thin, nervous, slightly stooped, very brown; his long hair curly, his beard silky and well trimmed, his nose thin, his eyes big and bright, the expression intelligent.

The prisoners were all under capital convictions, and, they showed towards one another, when they did not know each other incidentally, a mistrust that the events sometimes justified. I was uncommunicative. Despite some rebuffs, Préau attached himself to me as well as to a companion in misfortune, Fourmage, my devoted friend, and we promptly became interested in him.

He told us that his case had been investigated, but that the instructing officer having asked for a order of dismissal in his favor, they had substituted another office. — "They didn't have, they couldn't have," he said to us, "any proof against me. I was there. I saw Chaudey fall. After? Does that make me a

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<sup>7</sup> See the *Souvenirs de la Commune*, by Edgar Monteil. Charavay frères, publishers.



criminal? They claim that I shot him. It is false, I swear to you. but there is only me that they can make atone for the crime, and they will kill me."

I asked him why he was at Pélagie? If the Commune had given him a task?

He responded that he was detained at the moment of the insurrection, that he did not want to profit from the circumstances in order to escape and had continued to keep the records of the court registry.

— "Why were you under lock and key?" I asked him.

He remained silent. It did not seem appropriate to insist.

Someone told me a few days later that had been convicted of breach of faith. I asked him if that was true, because it was painful for me not to see him as a political prisoner without blemish in his private life.

— "No," he responded, "I was there for assault and battery against a substitute prosecutor. As for what you want..."

he stopped.

— "Yes," he said, "and if you would known... After all! what does it matter!... what does it matter!... one cannot leave his mother to starve."

The love of his mother! It was obviously the motivation of the life of this poor man of around thirty years of age. He only thought of her. He spoke of her only with tears in his eyes, sobs in his throat, and he spoke of her constantly. He cried:

— "Me, it is nothing. I will be dead. But what will become of my mother?"

And when he could see her, joy came out of all his pores.

The filial love was such with this unfortunate boy, that never, my friend Fourmage and I, have we spoken of Préau without thinking of his mother, dead, fortunately, perhaps, from the shots that struck her son, and the effect that that love produced in us always prevented us from being able to imagine that the one who possessed it in his heart was capable of perpetrating the abominable crime for which they shot him.

However, the second instructing officer discovered some proof of his culpability more convincing than those discovered by the first; there was enough to establish the judgment of a council of war, and Préau de Védel, condemned to death, bravely saluted the bullets at the post of Satory and fell.

Before leaving the ambulance, he left me an account of the night of the 23 to the 24 May 1871 at Sainte-Pélagie, which I promised to publish as soon as possible. He assured me that, save for some figures, like those of the age of the gendarmes, which he did not recall, all that he told me was scrupulously exact, and as I personally knew the two main characters of the drama, Gustave Chaudey and especially Raoul Rigault, whom one of my friends had so well baptized a *sinister gamin*, I have always accepted that Préau had told the truth.

I also made, according to his indications, a drawing of the execution that gives the position occupied by the actors of the drama, taking account of the grouping of the persons in the midst of which we have to leave the necessary space to glimpse Chaudey. It is this drawing, redrawn with talent for Tauzin, which is reproduced at the beginning of the brochure.

## THE EXECUTION OF GUSTAVE CHAUDEY AND OF THREE GENDARMES

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### THE ACCOUNT OF PRÉAU DE VÉDEL

May 23, 1871, at exactly eleven o'clock at night, I was<sup>8</sup> part of a game of cards in the office of the director of the prison of Sainte-Pélagie, with Benn, clerk, and Clément, under-clerk, when the night-warden at the front gate, Berthier, came to announce the arrival of citizen Raoul Rigault.<sup>9</sup>

Benn descended immediately to meet the Prosecutor of the Commune.

Clément and I, thinking that the citizen Rigault came for a communication and that he would go up to the office of the director,<sup>10</sup> who was in bed, we left by a back door, and, arriving on the ground floor, we entered the registry.

Rigault was there with a secretary<sup>11</sup> and a police *commissaire*.

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<sup>8</sup> Extract of the prison register of the prison of Sainte-Pélagie, for the year of 1871.

For Préau de Védél.

Prisoner No.: 268.

(1st column). Préau de Védél, Gustave-Simon, son of Jean-François and Sophie de Védél, bachelor, born in Paris, September 18, 1844, residing Boulevard de Clichy, 48, profession engineer-builder. Entered March 11.

*Description:* age 27 years, height 1 meter 80, black hair, eyebrows and forehead low, brown eyes, average nose, average mouth, round chin, oval face, brown complexion, distinguishing marks (nil)

(2nd column). This 11th day of March eighteen hundred seventy-one was presented at the registry of the house of Sainte-Pélagie Mr. Préau de Védél, in execution of an order delivered by the Prefect on the date of March 11, by virtue of which the named Préau de Védél has been imprisoned by me, director, as well as recording the act.... (signed) de Lasalle.

(3rd column). By judgment of the Criminal Court of Paris, dated September 29, 1870, the named Préau de Védél, declared guilty of fraud, has been condemned to 13 months in prison (a)...

(Last column). Escaped May 24, 1871 with the director and clerks appointed by the Commune (b).

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(a) He had been transferred from Mazas.

(b) In the handwriting of M. de Lasalle. This director has since taken his retirement.

<sup>9</sup> Rigault showed some qualities in his administration of the former prefecture of police. He was perhaps the only one who, in those days, knew what he was doing. He marched straight ahead without worrying about others and did what he had decreed to be done. However, if I must believe what I have been told, that fierce prosecutor had become so infatuated with a little actress, toward the end of the insurrection, that he thought of nothing but her and Chaudey.

<sup>10</sup> The director named by the Commune was Ranvier, brother of the member of the Commune.

Benn was with them.

At the moment when we entered, Rigault said:

— “We come to execute Gustave Chaudey and the three gendarmes who are here. Give me the prison register that so I may know their names and call them.”

Benn showed him the prison register.

He only found Chaudey's name there.<sup>12</sup>

Rigault asked me then if I knew where the names of the gendarmes had been recorded.

I immediately passed him the register on which they were recorded.

Rigault kept that register in front of him and sent eight guardsmen and an officer to look in the prison post.

He sent Berthier to seek the citizen Chaudey.<sup>13</sup>

While Berthier carried out his commission, Rigault took a piece of paper from his writing-desk and dictated the following statement:

In the presence of ourselves, member of the Commune,  
prosecutor of the aforementioned Commune,  
Have been summoned:  
Gustave Chaudey, age of..... years, ex-deputy to the  
mayor of Paris;<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> That secretary was Slom (abbreviated form of a Polish name). Slom was of medium height, rather large, having a long, blond beard, a soft face, and blue eyes. He was able to escape, reached Switzerland and was employed at Vevey, by Elisée Reclus, for the geography for which he had drawn a certain number of maps. Slom reentered France after the amnesty.

<sup>12</sup> No prison register was required for the gendarmes (*Gardes de Paris*).

<sup>13</sup> Chaudey occupied cell no. 4 of the Pavillon-des-Princes, which is at the top and which is the worst. He must almost touch the ceiling with his head, the cell is so low. It is rather large and gets light through long, narrow bays, from which the view is fine. We must have no illusion about the famous Pavillon-des-Princes of Sainte-Pélagie; there is only one cell per story and those cells are large, but they are very terrible; dirty, tiled, the walls whitewashed with lime, the bed narrow, short and foul, the chairs of straw, the little tables wobbly, the broken stoves that would let you freeze in winter, there is nothing in the place you would miss.

It was in cell no. 4 that Cernuschi came quite often to see Chaudey, during his captivity.

<sup>14</sup><sup>14</sup> Extracts from the prisoner register of the prison de Sainte-Pélagie, year of 1871.

For Chaudey.

Prisoner No.: 600.

(1st column). Chaudey Gustave, son of Gabriel and Jeanne Antoine Fèvre Marie-Claire Renart.

Born at Vesoul (Haute-Saône), October 15, 1817; dwelling in Paris, rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, n° 50, profession, lawyer. Entered May 19. Description: 53 years of age,

Pacotte..... age of..... years, ex-republican guard;  
Capdevielle, age of..... years, ex-republican guard;  
Bonzon, age of..... years, ex-republican guard;  
To whom we have declared,  
While the Versaillais entered Paris;  
That there friends shot at us from the windows;  
That it is time to be finished with these schemes;  
That consequently they would be immediately executed  
in the court of this prison.

Paris, May 23, 1871.

*The Prosecutor of the Commune,*

(Signed) RAOUL RIGAULT.

*The Personal Secretary of the Prosecutor  
of the Commune,*

(Signed) SLOM.

It was while this record was being written that Gustave Chaudey entered.

The following dialogue was immediately established between Raoul Rigault and him:

RIGAULT. — Citizen Gustave Chaudey I inform you that you will be executed immediately as a hostage.

CHAUDEY. — I must suppose that you are joking with me, for I do not know why you would shoot me.

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height 1 meter 84, hair grizzled, brows..... high forehead, brown eyes, large nose, average mouth, round chin, over face, ruddy complexion. Identifying marks (none).

(2nd column). This day, May 19 eighteen hundred and seventy-one, was presented to the registry of Sainte-Pélagie Mr. Chaudey, pursuant to an order issued by the substitute prosecutor of the Commune, on the date... by virtue of which the name Chaudey has been imprisoned by me, the direction, as is noted on the certificate that has been shown to me and the transcription of which is found opposite (a). The aforementioned Chaudey having been left in my charged, I have drawn up the present act of imprisonment that the gentleman has signed with me after discharge. (Signed) Ranvier.

(3rd column, written across). Mazas. Order of citizen substitute prosecutor of the Commune Dacosta, Detention.

(4th column). By order of the citizen substitute prosecutor of the Commune, on the date of May 19... the named Chaudey, age 53 years, born at Vesoul (Haute-Saône), dwelling in Paris, rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, 56, profession of journalist and lawyer... declared guilty of murder...

(Last column). Shot at the outer walls, during the night of May 23, by order and under the command of Raoul Rigault, prosecutor of the Commune (b).

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(a) It is useful to note that the register of prisoners bore some printed forms that were filled out for Chaudey as for any other inmate.

(b) M. de Lasalle, director before the Commune, was reinstated upon the reentry of the troops. This annotation is in his handwriting.

RIGAULT. — I am not joking any more than you were, when, on January 22, you fired on us, from the windows of the Hôtel-de-Ville.<sup>16</sup>

CHAUDEY. — But, Raoul Rigault... citizen Raoul Rigault, what you say this is not serious, for you know very well that I had no military power, and consequently could have commanded nothing of the troops, having only civil authority.

RIGAULT.. — You will be shot.

SLOM (*speaking at the same time as Rigault*). — It was you who gave the order to sweep the square.

CHAUDEY. — Citizen Raoul Rigault, have you thought well about what you are about to do? You will have me shot! What good will that do you? Have you considered that you will compromised the sanctity de la cause that we all defend? For, in the end, you cannot question my republican opinions. You know very well that I only want one thing: the Federal Republic, my writings aim for that end, all...

RIGAULT (*interrupting*). — Do you want to confess?

CHAUDEY. — Don't kid about this matter; you know what I think.

RIGAULT. — Enough! Not so many remarks! You will be shot! You have been identified as guilty of having fired on the people, and it has been decided, yesterday and the day before yesterday, in the Council of the Commune, that you will be executed.

CHAUDEY. — Do you want to suspect my execution, I will provide you news of Blanqui ?

RIGAULT. — You know well that Blanqui is dead, that he has been murdered. So, you will be shot!

CHAUDEY. — Well! You will see how a republican can die!

Rigault asked if the firing squad had arrived, and, at the affirmative response given to him by brigadier Gentil, he rose and said:

— "Go on! March!"

And, turning to me, he order me to lead the squad under the outer walls. But, as I did not wish to miss any of what was said, I transmitted the order to the guard Berthier, who took a lantern and left.

We followed in the following order: the police commissaire, Slom, Raoul Rigault, Chaudey, Clément (who had taken a chassepot), Gentil, Benn and myself.

No word was spoken until the arrival in the *chemin de ronde* [probably the drive just inside the outer walls]. There, Chaudey said to Rigault :

— "Raoul Rigault, I have a wife, a child."

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<sup>16</sup> Extract from an article published by Chaudey, in the newspaper *le Siècle*, March 24, 1871 :

"No one could find us blameworthy for having done on January 22 what we judged to be our duty. Let each accept responsibility for their acts; we accept our own. If some recriminatory bullet is reserved for us, we have only to fall, making wishes for the Republic."

RIGAULT. — What is that to me?

CHAUDEY. — I will show you how a republican can die.

Chaudey went to stand under the lantern hung on the opposite wall, facing the firing squad.

The officer commanding the squad having placed himself behind his men and making no gesture of command, Rigault drew his saber and commanded:

— “Present, arms!”

CHAUDEY. — Long live the Republic!

RIGAULT. — Aim!

CHAUDEY. — Long live the Republic!

RIGAULT. — Fire!

Chaudey fell face down on the ground.

Several of those who were there shouted:

— “The *coup de grâce*! The *coup de grâce*!”

Deputy clerk Clement advanced four or five steps and fired.

Chaudey, rising, as if by a violent aspiration, let out another weak cry of “Long live the Republic!”

From all sides they cried:

— “Finish him! Finish him!”

PRÉAU. — So finish him then, the poor wretch! You don't have the right to make him suffer!

Clément, who had reloaded his weapon, then approached closer and fired, but Gentil had already discharged his revolver in Chaudey's ear.

Rigault and the others withdrew. I remained beside the corpse of the victim. The men of the firing squad were dumbfounded, trembling.

They said:

— “So what have we done? — What work have we done? — Let's go.”

PRÉAU. — Ah! My poor friends, you still have three to kill.

I returned to the Registry, where I found all the men I have spoken about. They awaited the police that Rigault had sent for.

I warned Rigault of the mood of the men of the firing squad.

Slom went out immediately and gave them a speech to encourage them to continue their task. I was not able to grasp all his words from inside; I do recall, however, this phrase:

“We are making just reprisals for the murder of Versailles.”

The gendarmes entered, preceded by Berthier.

Rigault asked their names and told them:

— “You will be shot.”

The gendarmes cried:

— “Why? — What do you mean? — What have we done? — We just want to go home.”

RIGAULT. — Yes, in order to fuck us with rifle shots! Well! Before that we're going to fuck you. Let's go, forward, march!

We returned to the covered walk.

The three gendarmes were placed against the wall; again, Rigault gave the command to fire.

One of the gendarmes fell dead; another, who had hidden his head with his hands, was only wounded; the third escaped in the *chemin de ronde*.

Clément and a *fédéré* approached those who had fallen and gave them the *coup de grâce*.

The one who had fled was pursued. Slom to the revolver of the *commissaire* de police and walked in front of Rigault. Gentil followed them.

The gendarme was found in a sentry box, at the end of the *chemin de ronde*.

Rigault shouted to Slom not to kill him there and to “bring him back to die with the others.”

The gendarme was brought back. For the third time, Rigault gave the command to fire, and the last victim fell on the others. One *fédéré*, who had still not fired, approached quickly than and gave him the *coup de grâce*, although, alone of the four who had been shot, this gendarme appeared to have been struck down as if by lightning.

Everyone returned to the registry.

Before crossing the threshold, Berthier shouted:

— “Citizen Raoul Rigault, now that all was done, let us cry all together: Vive la Commune!”

Only a few voices responded.

Returning, Rigault ordered Benn to go take the stretchers and the men necessary to carry the bodies to the Hôpital de la Pitié, and to come the next day to the Hôtel-de-Ville, to affix the seals to the report.

He left, followed by Slom and the *commissaire*.

We went to the Hôpital de la Pitié to seek a stretcher. We placed on the stretcher the body of Chaudey, and, on the body of Chaudey, that of one of the gendarmes. The stretcher buckled. We took off the gendarme, and Chaudey was transported alone, on that trip.

We came back with the stretcher and, in order not to make a new trip, we took the trash cart. We put one gendarme on the stretcher, and we put two in the cart.

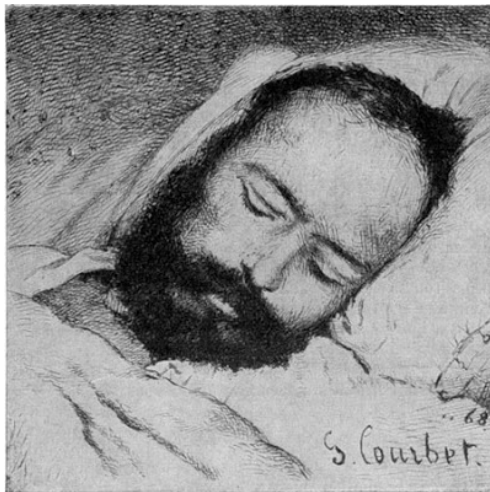
All the corpses were deposited at the Pitié.

It was May 24, in the morning.

Returning, as the trash the cart contained was bloody, we dumped it at the first pile.



G.M. LECE, PHOT



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