

Notes on “How Business Goes in France, and Why We Will Have War..”

Alfred Darimon

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The five under the Empire

Today I received the visit of G.¹, who has come on the part of Proudhon to make me a rather original proposition.

Proudhon is in the course of composing a booklet that bears this title: *Comment les affaires vont en France et pourquoi nous aurons la guerre*.

Several sheets of that booklet are already composed; it will be put on sale in a few days. It is a question of getting it into France and here is the means that Proudhon has invented:

The deputies of the opposition would address to the publisher in Brussels a request for 267 copies, destined to be distributed to the 267 members of the legislative body.

It is unlikely, according to Proudhon, that the interior minister would dare stop at the border and prevent from arriving at the address of the deputies a booklet with the character of a historical document. If he took such a measure, one of the deputies would appeal to the government and demand the reason for that arbitrary act. From that, uproar, scandal, etc.

I responded to G. that, for my part, I was ready to do what Proudhon asked; that if I could judge by the dispositions of the majority, his booklet would be well received; but that very certainly the 267 copies would be confiscated at the border and that they would not even do me the honor of informing me of the sending and the seizure.

That if I was notified in good time, there was not any opening in the rules of the legislative body for a public complaint. The right of interpellation does not exist, and to have a complaint heard, we would be obliged to await a late occasion, the discussion of the budget of the Ministry of the Interior, for example.

The deputies, in fact, enjoy no privilege. Booklets addressed to them are subject to all the police regulations. They would not hesitate to apply them to us in all their rigor.

I have spoke of the proposition to our colleagues on the left. They are inclined to accept it; but they fear, like me, that the parcel would not reach them.

Alfred Darimon

Letter to Gouvernet, January 22, 1859

In eight days, the Belgian press will announce, by way of a reply to the imperial court, the following booklet:

Comment les affaires vont en France, et pourquoi nous aurons la guerre.

What do you think of that title? It seems to me of a nature to pique the curiosity. Say nothing of it yet. I have not spoken of it to my friend Chaudey, or to anyone. If the English and Austrians only acknowledge me as a utopia, the democracy also wants nothing to do with me; it has written that I would be a prophetess Cassandra.

Nevertheless, my booklet will appear in Germany almost as soon as in France, and I will write to London for a translator. I give you my hand,

P.-J. Proudhon.

¹ Perhaps Georges Dûchene, who was involved in the composition of the work in question.

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