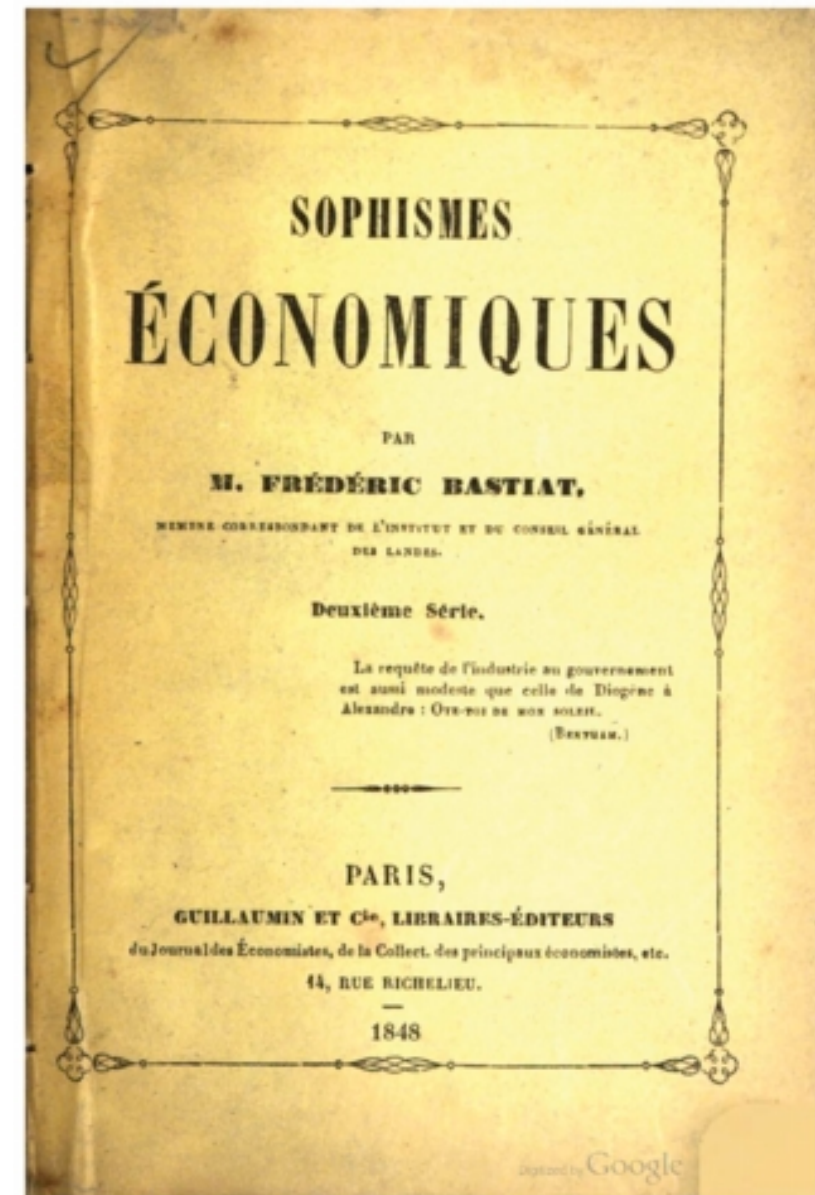


**“FRÉDÉRIC BASTIAT’S RHETORIC OF LIBERTY IN  
THE *ECONOMIC SOPHISMS* (1846-1850)”**

**Dr. David M. Hart**



**WORKSHOP IN POLITICAL THEORY AND POLICY ANALYSIS  
Indiana University, Bloomington IN  
September 26, 2011**

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Quotations about Liberty and Power



Pollock on "our lady" the common law and her devoted servants (1911)

The great historian of English law Sir Frederick Pollock (1845-1937) concluded his popular lectures on "the genius of the common law" with the following statement about the need for impartial interpreters of the common law regardless of the outward form which government may take. He calls the common law "Our Lady" and believes that she and her servants will be able to keep the enemy of liberty from coming "within the gate":

There seems to be no ground for affirming that the Common Law is especially attached to any one form of government, or is incompatible with any that makes substantial provision for civic liberty and the representation of the governed. Those fundamental conditions may be satisfied in many ways, perhaps in ways not yet found out. It might be hard to say how much of our lady's house has been rebuilt, but it is sure that the fashion of the furniture has been changed many times. ... Our lady does not, in truth, care much by what name the chief magistrate is called, whether his office is elective or hereditary, whether he has as much active discretion of his own as the President of the United States or as little as a modern King of Great Britain. What she does care for is that government, whatever its forms, shall be lawful and not arbitrary; that it shall have the essential attribute for which Chief Justice Fortescue's word was 'political' as far back as the fifteenth century. She looks for trusty servants who will stand by her in the day of need. She demands fearless and independent judges drawn from a fearless and independent Bar, men who will not swerve from the straight path to the right hand for any pleasure of rulers, be they aristocratic or democratic, nor be drawn aside to the left by the more insidious temptation of finding popular favour in opposition. If our lady's servants are not of that spirit, all the learning of all their books will not save them from disgrace or her realm from ruin. If they are, we shall never see the enemy whom she and they will be afraid to speak with in the gate.

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- Bastiat ↓
- PLL DVD ↓
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Liberty Review

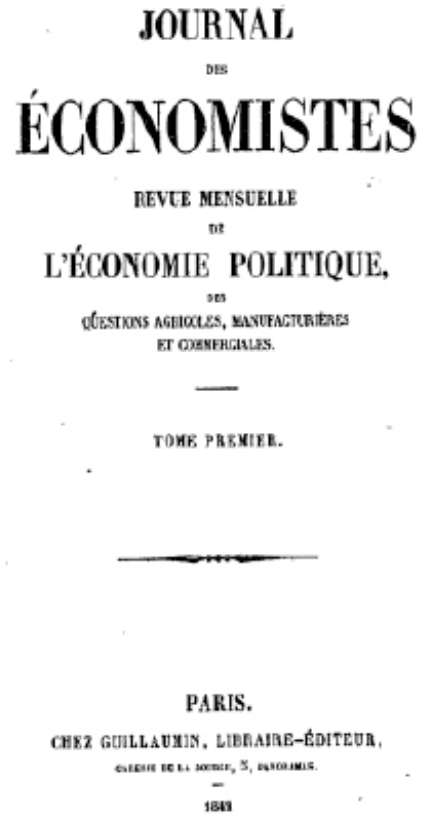
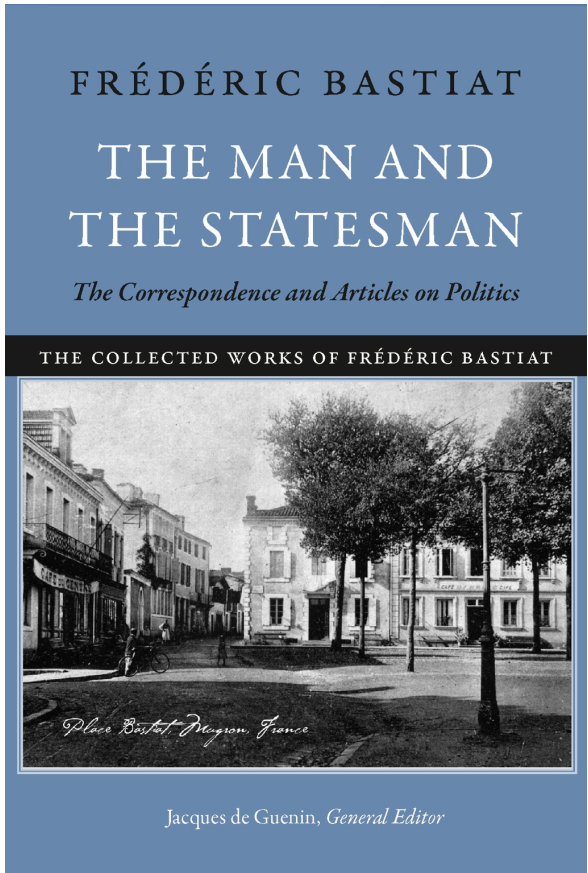
**Liberty Review**  
Liberty Review es una publicación de Liberty Fund, cuya misión es contribuir a la preservación y promoción de la libertad individual a través de la investigación y otras actividades educativas.

Liberty Matters



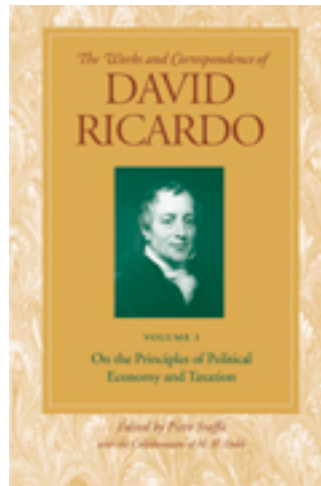
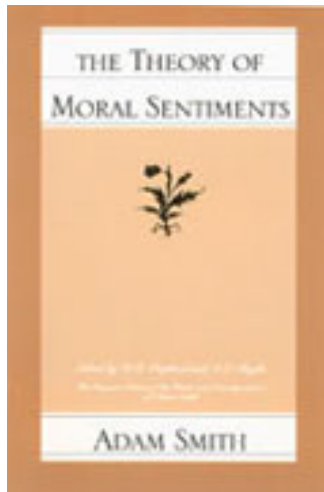
## My Current Research Interests

- Director of Liberty Fund's Online Library of Liberty Project  
<oll.libertyfund.org>
- Academic Editor of Liberty Fund's 6 volume translation project of the *Collected Works of Frédéric Bastiat*
- compiling a complete online collection of the *Journal des Économistes* (1842-)





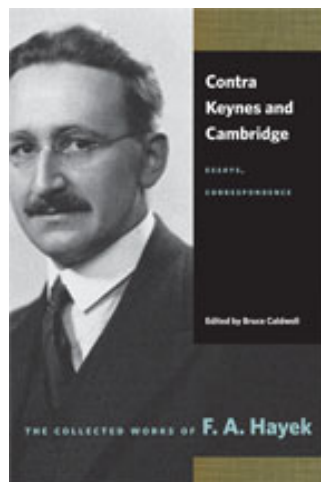
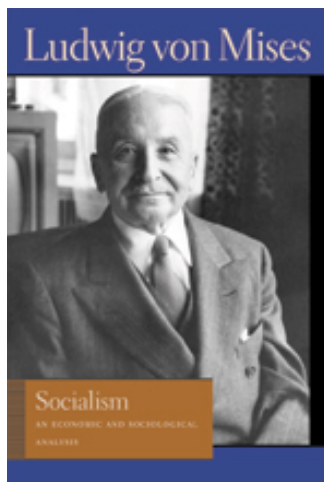
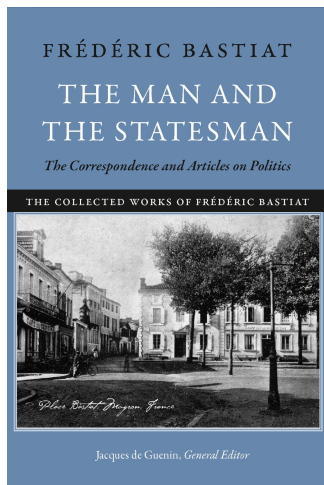
# The Online Library of Liberty (OLL) - <<http://oll.libertyfund.org>>



Economics Collection (380 volumes)  
<<http://oll.libertyfund.org/collection/42>>

## Major Scholarly Collections:

- OUP Glasgow ed. of the Works of Adam **Smith**
- CUP Sraffa ed. of Works of David **Ricardo**
- U. Toronto P. of Works of J.S. **Mill**
- U. Chicago P. Works of Friedrich **Hayek** [not online]
- LF's ed. of the works of Ludwig von **Mises**
- LF's edition of the works of James **Buchanan** [partially online]
- (forthcoming) LF's edition of the Collected Works of F. **Bastiat** [will all be online]



## *The Collected Works of Frédéric Bastiat, 6 vols. (Liberty Fund, 2011-)*

### FRÉDÉRIC BASTIAT THE MAN AND THE STATESMAN

*The Correspondence and Articles on Politics*

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF FRÉDÉRIC BASTIAT



Jacques de Guenin, *General Editor*

- Vol. 1: *The Man and the Statesman. The Correspondence and Articles on Politics*
- Vol. 2: *"The Law," "The State," and Other Political Writings, 1843-1850*
- Vol. 3: *Economic Sophisms and "What is Seen and What is Not Seen"*
- Vol. 4: *Miscellaneous Works on Economics: From "Jacques-Bonhomme" to Le Journal des Économistes*
- Vol. 5: *Economic Harmonies*
- Vol. 6: *The Struggle Against Protectionism: The English and French Free-Trade Movements*

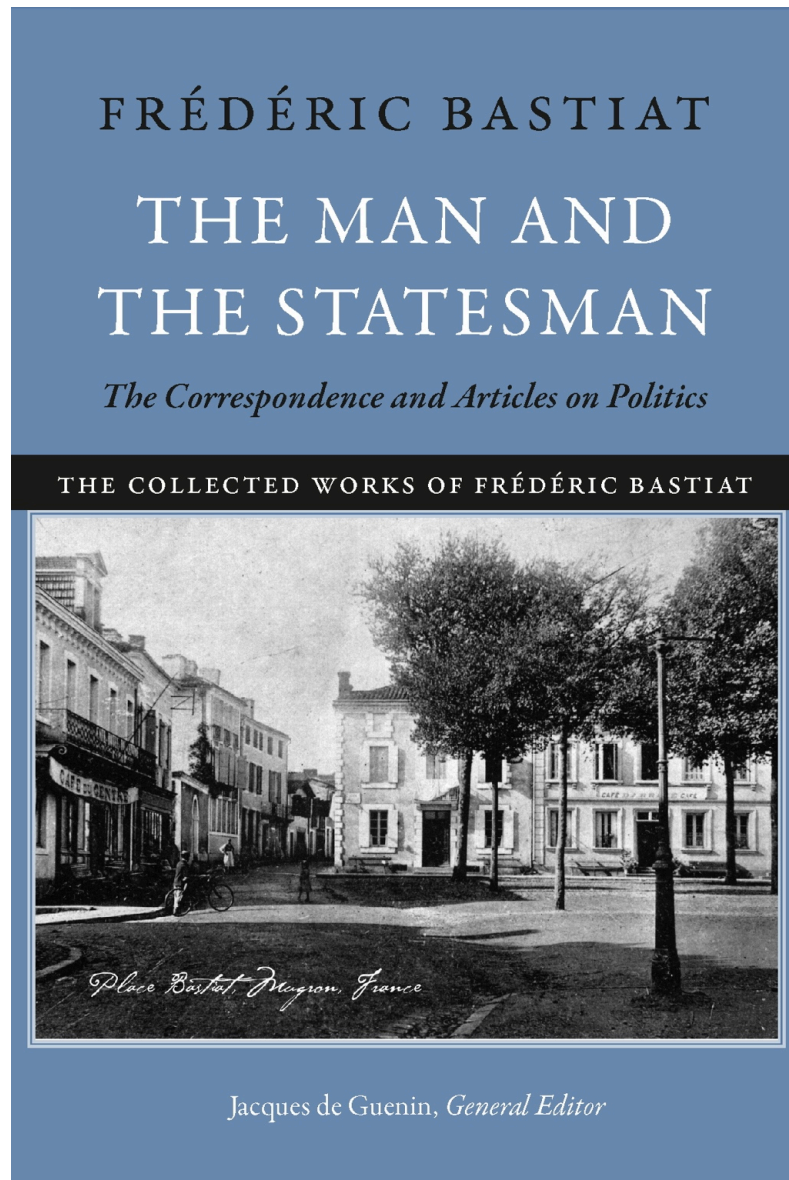
General Editor - Jacques de Guenin

Academic Editor - Dr. David M. Hart



## *The Collected Works of Frédéric Bastiat, Vol. I*

### **The Man and the Statesman. The Correspondence and Articles on Politics (2011)**



- 595 pp. of 209 letters & 42 essays on political matters
- correspondence reveals details about: his activities in the **1830 & 1848 Revolutions**
- his relationship with **Richard Cobden** and the English Anti-Corn Law League
- his relationship with the economists in Paris who were part of the **Société d'économie politique** (1842) and the *Journal des Économistes*
- his activities in the peace movement & **Peace Congresses** 1847-50
- the **intellectual debates** between liberals, conservatives, & socialists on key issues such as tariffs, subsidies to industry, French colonial policy in Algeria, the rise of socialism, electoral policy, & republicanism
- reveal **dilemmas faced by CL/libertarians in politics** as they are neither of the “Right” nor the “Left”

The editors of the JDE were as follows:

- founding editor & publisher Gilbert-Urbain Guillaumin (1801-64) - Dec. 1841
- Ad. Blanqui (1842-43)
- M. Hip. Dussard (1843-45)
- **[FB offered position]**
- M. Joseph Garner (1845-55)
- M. Henri Baudrillart (1855-65)
- M. Joseph Garnier (1866-81)
- Gustave de Molinari (October 1881-1909)
- Yves Guyot (1910-?)

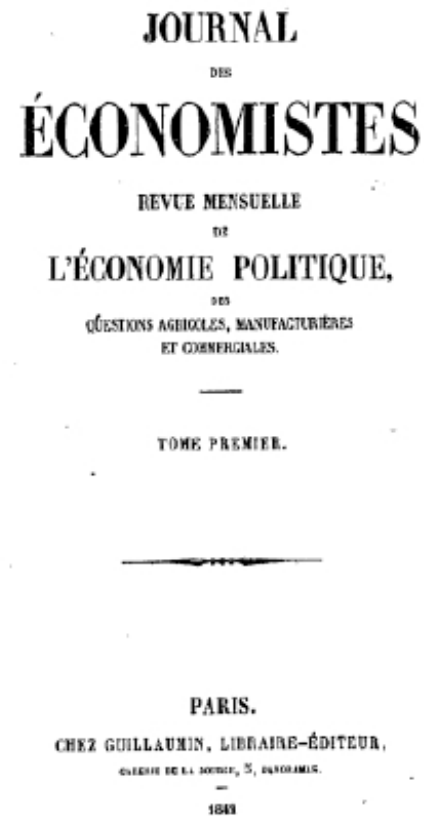
Monthly issues, bound quarterly, 2,000 pp. p.a.

- **Première Série** (Dec. 1841 - Dec. 1853)
- **Deuxième Série** (Jan. 1854 - Dec. 1865)
- **Troisième Série** (Jan. 1866 - Dec. 1877)
- **Quatrième Série** (Jan. 1878 - Dec. 1889)
- Cinquième Série (1890-1903)
- Sixième Série (1904-?)

<[davidmhart.com/FrenchPolEc/JDE/](http://davidmhart.com/FrenchPolEc/JDE/)>







## Frédéric Bastiat (1801-1850) I

- FB one of the leading figures in **French political economy** circles in 1840s & had a profound influence on its development
  - Guillaumin publishing firm
  - Société d'économie politique (1842)
  - *Journal des Économistes* (1842-1940)
  - FB offered editorship of JDE in 1845?
  - wrote or inspired key articles in *Dictionnaire de l'économie politique* (1852)
  - Guillaumin published FB's *Oeuvres complètes* in 1854 - kept in print throughout 19thC



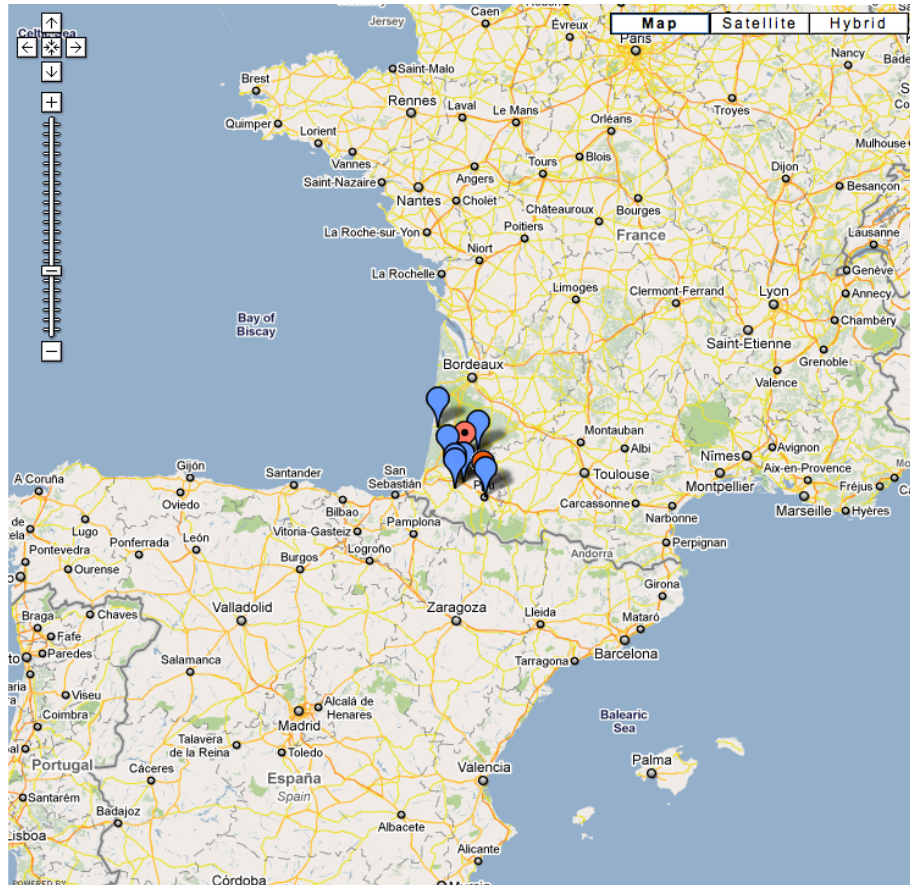
## Frédéric Bastiat (1801-1850) II



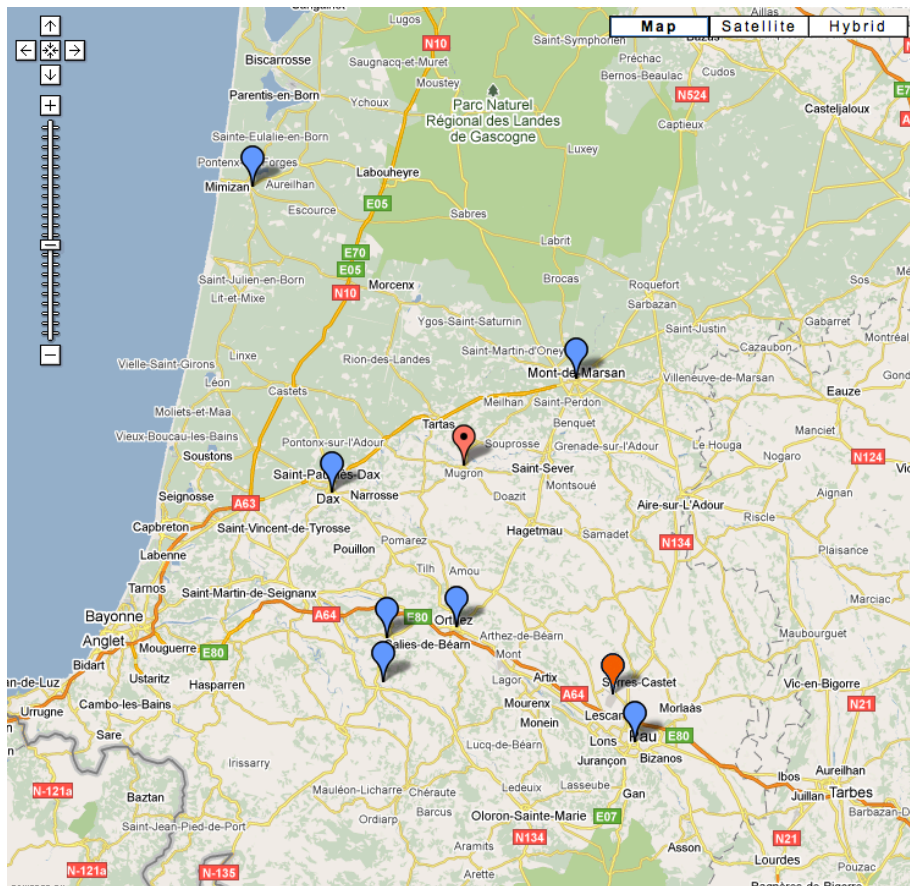
- FB life & work shows how **intertwined life, politics, & development of economic ideas** is
  - Karl Marx, JS Mill, JM Keynes
- FB shows the **richness & multi-layered nature of HET**. Behind the leading theorists are a large cast of interesting characters who also made contributions. Part of the “**social & political history**” of economic thought.
- **one of the great popularizers** of economic ideas - Hayek “publicist of genius”
- some modern Austrians regard him as a “**proto-Austrian**”



## Frédéric Bastiat (1801-1850) III

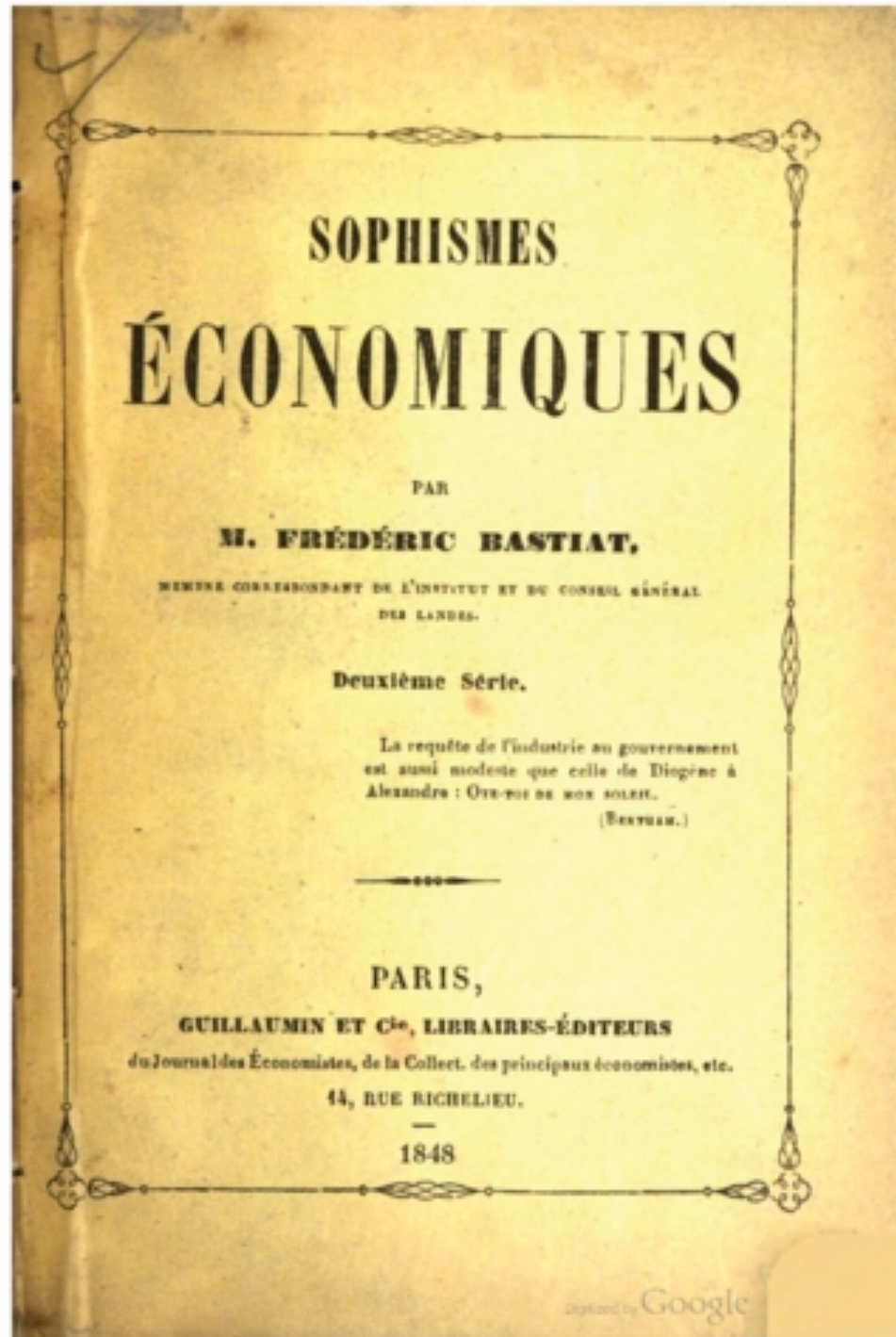


- [1820s-1840s] **“passive” reader/consumer** of economic theory (English, French, Italian, Spanish)
- [1844-1847] **activist for free trade** movement in France based upon R. Cobden’s Anti-Corn Law League
- [1846-1850] **economic journalist** - collected writings *Economic Sophisms* (1846, 1848) to expose popular economic errors
- [1848-1850] **politician** in Constituent Assembly & National Assembly - VP Finance Committee
  - **polemical engagement** with protectionists and socialists (Proudhon, Louis Blanc)
  - spurred him to write **his own theoretical work** (*Economic Harmonies*) unfinished at his death



## The Collected Works of Frédéric Bastiat, vol. 3

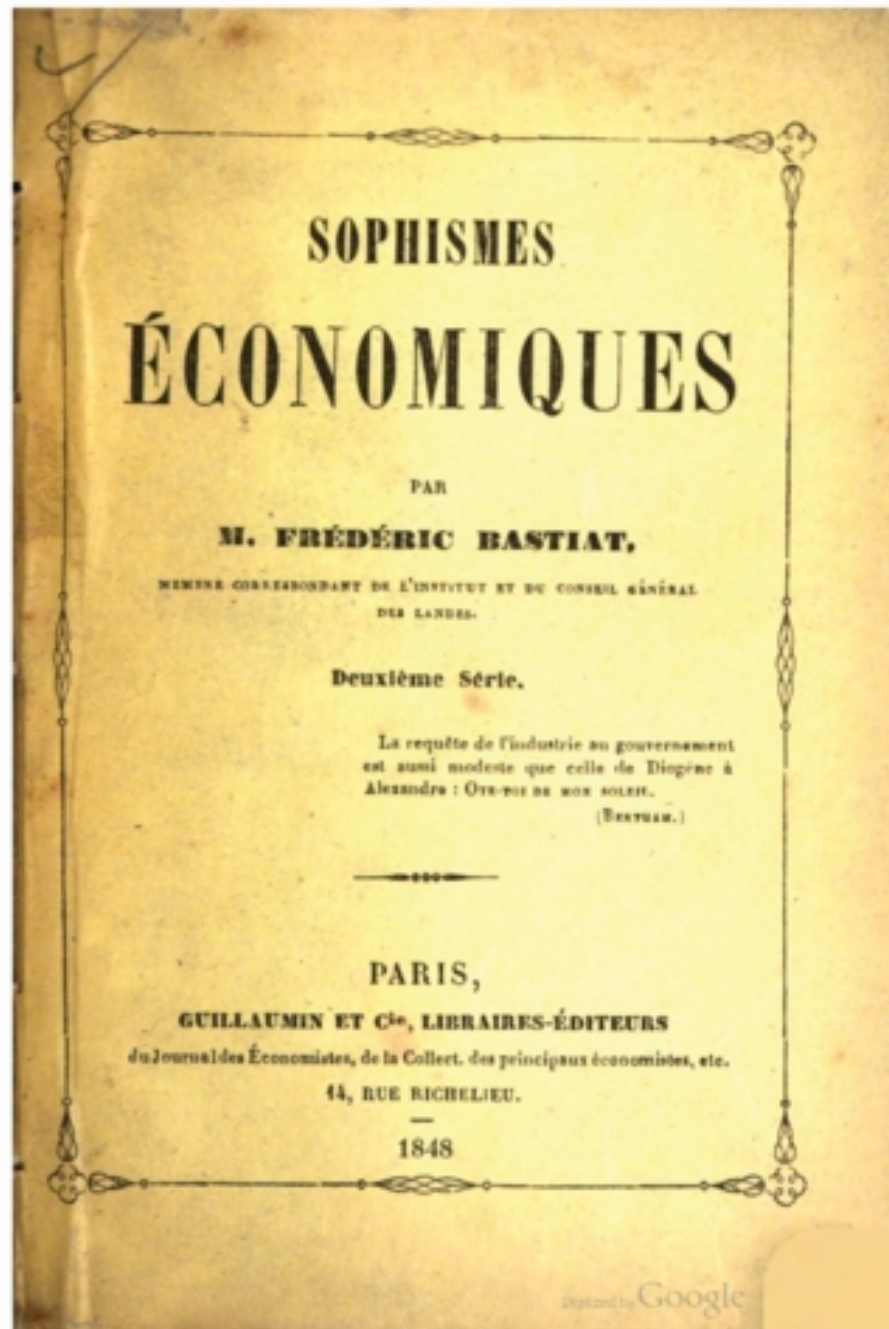
### Economic Sophisms and "What is Seen and What is Not Seen" (2013?)



- this paper grew out of writing the **introduction to vol. 3** (c. 2013) and is made up of three parts:
  - **analysis** of the collected Ec. Sophisms (1846-1850) - 80 pp.
  - **publishing & translation history** of Ec.Sophisms - 15 pp.
  - **glossary** of French & English political economy - 50 pp.
- collection consists of **72 short articles** written between 1846-50 which share a common purpose & style
- written for a range of publications *Le libre-échange*, *Jacques Bonhomme*, *Journal des Économistes*
- copy at <[davidmhart.com](http://davidmhart.com)>



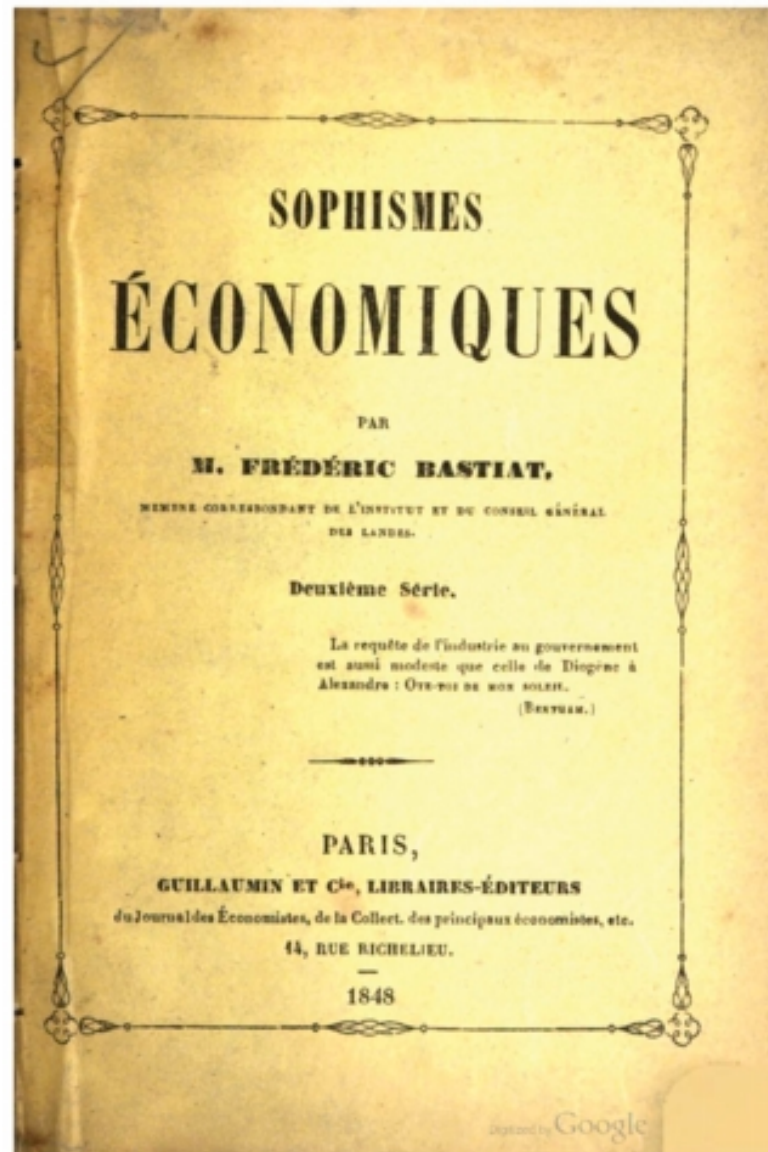
# “FRÉDÉRIC BASTIAT’S RHETORIC OF LIBERTY IN THE *ECONOMIC SOPHISMS (1846-1850)*”



## Structure of the Paper

1. The Format of the Economic Sophisms
2. The Origins of Bastiat’s Attack on Economic “Sophisms” and “Fallacies”
- [3. Bastiat’s Distinction between Legal and Illegal Plunder]
- [4. The Evolution of Bastiat’s Theory of “The State”: From Wall Poster to Economic Orthodoxy]
5. Bastiat and the Invention of “Crusoe Economics”
6. Bastiat’s Rhetoric of Liberty: Satire, Song, and the “Sting of Ridicule”

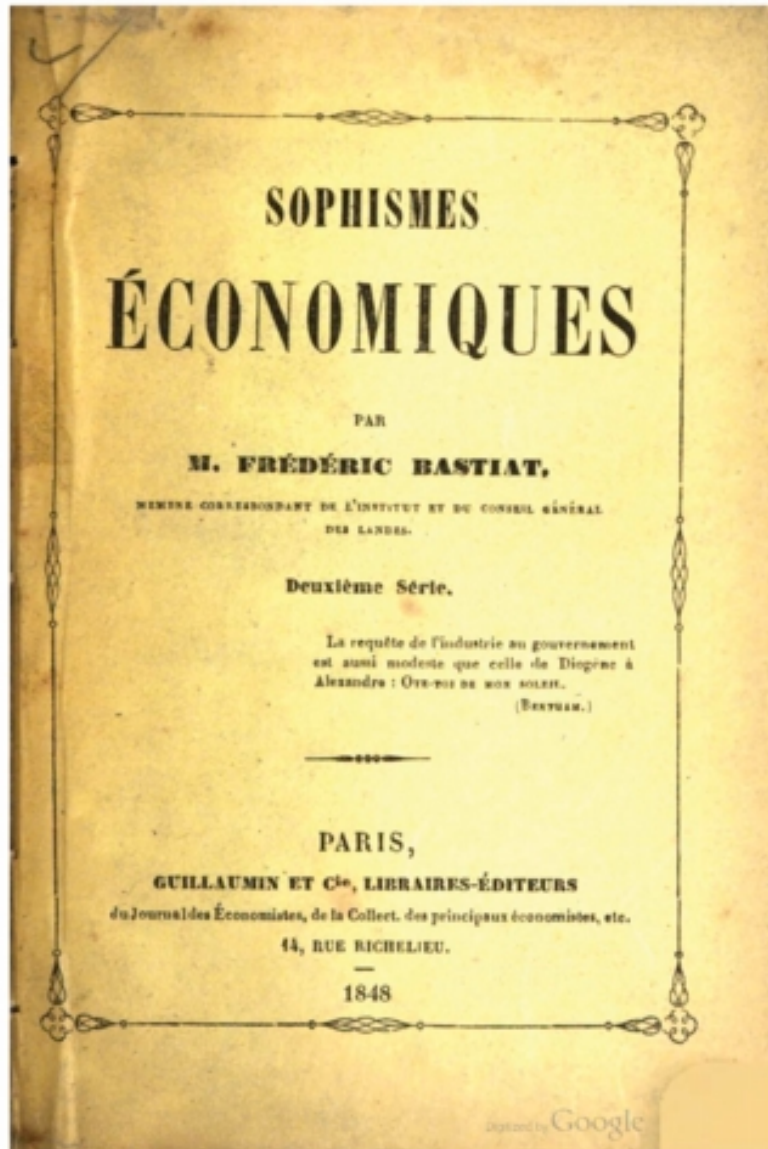
## Frédéric Bastiat and the Popularization of Economics I



- brilliant examples of popular economic writing (Hayek - “**publicist of genius**”) - wit, style, insight
- raises general question of should and/or how to take economic ideas out of the academy to a broader audience?
  - **pedagogical purpose** - to raise economic literacy
  - **political purpose** - to achieve his political goals of opposing tariffs, subsidies, socialism



## Frédéric Bastiat and the Popularization of Economics II



- modern examples of economic popularization
  - Hayek, *Road to Serfdom* (1944)
  - M. Friedman, Newsweek column; “Free to Choose” documentary
  - Paul Krugman, NYT column
  - *Freakonomics* (and its ilk)
  - Russell Roberts, Hayek/Keynes rap videos
  - Don Boudreaux - [cafehayek.com](http://cafehayek.com)
- above are examples of academic economists who turn to popularizing; FB began as popularizer who turned to writing theory
- FB did not live to complete his major theoretical work *Economic Harmonies* (1850) but the insights & style of his earlier work suggest it might have been quite impressive

## I. The Format of the 72 Economic Sophisms I

- i. Essays written in Informal or more **Conversational Prose** (50%)
- ii. Essays written in **Dialog or Constructed Conversational Form** (18%)
  - inventive & amusing in creation of characters to represent different views:
    - Mr. Blockhead (“M. LaSouche”) (the tax collector)
    - The Utopian (Govt. Minister who wanted to introduce radical liberal reforms)
    - The Law Factory (the Chamber of Deputies)
    - Jacques Bonhomme (“Joe Sixpack”)
  - use of Robinson Crusoe (protectionist) & Friday (free trader) for thought experiments
- iii. Stand alone **Economic Tales or Fables** (11%)
  - “Reciprocity” - 2 towns disrupt trade between themselves in order to increase their domestic production are called “Stulta” (Stupidville) vs. “Puera” (Childishtown)
  - “The Broken Window” - Jacques Bonhomme, the glazier, & the shoemaker



## I. The Format of the 72 Economic Sophisms II

### iv. **Fictional Letters or Petitions to Government Officials** and Other Documents (11%)

- “Petition of the Candlemakers” - reductio ad absurdum of interventionist arguments

### v. Essays written in more **Formal or Academic Prose** (6%)

- *Journal des Économistes*

### vi. **Direct Appeals to the Workers and Citizens** of France (4%)

- flyers & posters designed for the streets of Paris during the 1848 Revolution

## Economic Tales and Fables: “The Broken Window” (1850)

CE QU'ON VOIT  
ET  
CE QU'ON NE VOIT PAS  
OU  
L'ÉCONOMIE POLITIQUE EN UNE LEÇON  
PAR  
F. BASTIAT  
  
—  
CINQUIÈME ÉDITION  
—  
  
PARIS  
LIBRAIRIE GUILLAUMIN ET C<sup>ie</sup>  
RUE RICHELIEU, 14

- all economic activities produce a **complex series of effects** - some immediately obvious (“the seen”) & some others occur later & are “unintended” (“the unseen”)
- FB’s famous story of Jacques Bonhomme (“Joe Sixpack”), the Glazier, & the Shoe Maker
- what is immediately “**seen**” - JB has to fix a broken window & pays a Glazier to do so. This is a stimulus to the Glazier’s business
- what is “**unseen**” - JB is out of pocket & the money he would have spent on other things (say a pair of shoes) has gone to the Glazier; the loss of potential business of the Shoemaker is “not seen”
- Result: a gain for the Glazier (seen), but a “**double incidence of loss**” for JB and the Shoemaker (unseen)
- FB refuting some economists who thought the Great Fire of London (1666) stimulated English economy because of reconstruction

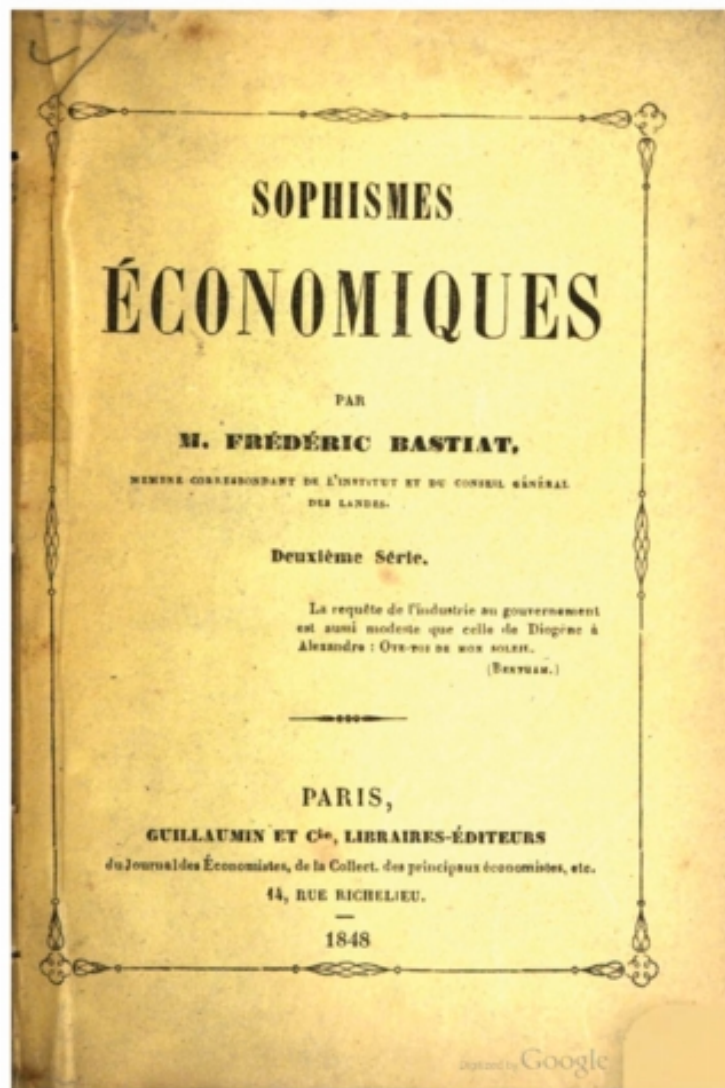


“In the sphere of economics an action, a habit, an institution or a law engenders not just one effect but a **series of effects**. Of these effects **only the first is immediate**; it is revealed simultaneously with its cause, *it is seen*. The **others** merely occur successively, **they are not seen**; we are lucky if we *foresee* them.” (p. 4)

But if, by way of deduction, as is often the case, the conclusion is reached that it is a good thing to break windows, that this causes money to circulate and therefore industry in general is stimulated, I am obliged to cry: “Stop!” Your theory has stopped at *what is seen* and takes no account of *what is not seen*. *What is not seen* is that since our bourgeois has spent six francs on one thing, he can no longer spend them on another. ***What is not seen* is that if he had not had a windowpane to replace, he might have replaced his down-at-heel shoes or added a book to his library.** In short, he would have used his six francs for a purpose that he will no longer do.”

***What is Seen & What is not Seen* (1850), Chapter I: The Broken Window.**

## Fictional Petitions to Government Officials: “The Petition of the Candlemakers” (1846)



- from *Economic Sophisms*, Series I (1846), Chap. 7
- **satirizes** typical petition by vested interests to government for protection from foreign competition
- argument in **favour**: “French” manufacturers will be able to expand production, provide employment for “French” workers, pay taxes to the “French” government, keep profits within “France”
- FB ridicules these arguments by using **reductio ad absurdum** method
- postulates case where the manufacturers of “artificial light” petition government for protection from “unfair” competition from a low cost, foreign supplier
- **“The Seen”**: benefits accrue to manufacturers in that industry and their workforce, and the government
- **“The Unseen”**: consumers lose access to cheaper alternatives, losses to other manufacturers whom those consumers would have patronized
- compare **“Crusoe economics”** of Crusoe and the plank washed ashore

“We are suffering from the ruinous competition of a foreign rival who apparently works under conditions so far superior to our own for the production of light that he is flooding the domestic market with it at an incredibly low price...

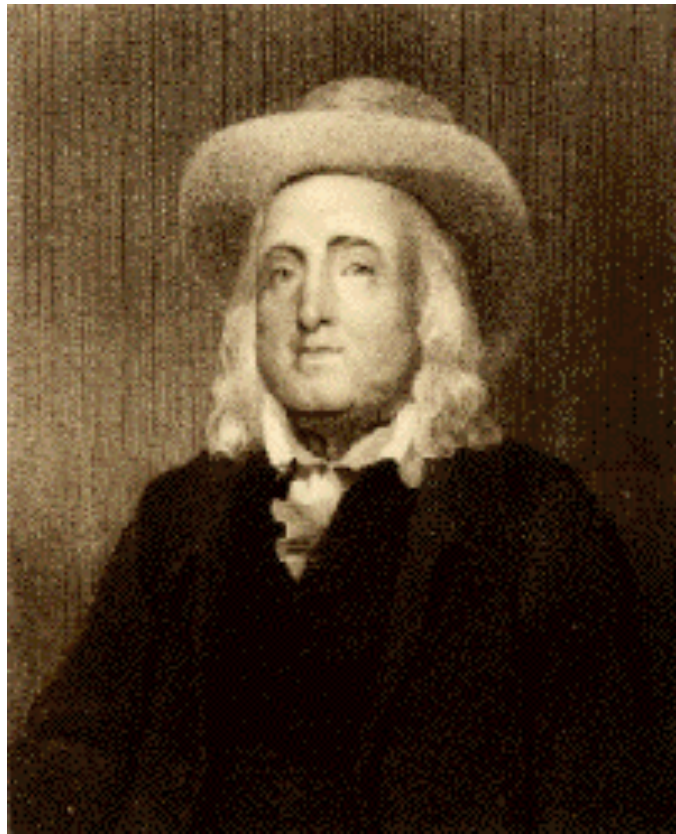
We ask you to be so good as **to pass a law requiring the closing of all windows, dormers, skylights, inside and outside shutters, curtains, casements, bull's-eyes, deadlights, and blinds—in short, all openings, holes, chinks, and fissures through which the light of the sun is wont to enter houses, to the detriment of the fair industries with which, we are proud to say, we have endowed the country, a country that cannot, without betraying ingratitude, abandon us today to so unequal a combat.”**

**“The Petition of the Candlemakers”**  
***Economic Sophisms I, Chapter 7.***



## 2. The Origins of Bastiat's Attack on Economic "Sophisms" and "Fallacies" I

### i. Debunking Fallacies: Jeremy Bentham and Col. Perronet Thompson



- **J. Bentham** (1748-1832) - quotes from JB used on title page of ES<sub>1</sub> & ES<sub>2</sub>
  - *Anarchical Fallacies* (1795-96)
  - *Traité des sophismes politiques* (1816) - an English version appearing as the *Handbook of Political Fallacies* (1824)

“By the name of *fallacy* it is common to designate any argument employed or topic suggested for the purpose, or with the probability of producing the effect of deception, or of causing some erroneous opinion to be entertained by any person to whose mind such an argument may have been presented.”

**Bentham: “deception” & “fallacies” are ideological weapons in the defence of vested political interests**

**Bastiat: “la ruse” (trickery) & “sophisms” are ideological weapons in the defence of vested economic interests**

## 2. The Origins of Bastiat's Attack on Economic "Sophisms" and "Fallacies" II



- Colonel Thomas **Perronet Thompson** (1783-1869)
  - Benthamite soldier, politician, pamphleteer
  - *Catechism on the Corn Laws; with a List of Fallacies and Answers* (1827)
  - *Contre-Enquête: par l'Homme aux Quarante Ecus* (1834) a response to a French government enquiry into tariffs

ii. “**Familiar**” **Conversations about Liberty**: Jane Haldimand Marcet (1769-1858) and Harriet Martineau (1802-1876)



- **Jane Haldimand Marcet**, *Conversations on Political Economy; in which the elements of that science are familiarly explained* (1816)
- **Harriet Martineau**, *Illustrations of Political Economy* (9 vols. 1832-43)

### {3. Bastiat's Distinction between Legal and Illegal Plunder}

- i. The Unwritten History of Plunder
- ii. Thou Shalt Not Steal
- ii. “La Ruse” and Legal Plunder
- iv. The “Malthusian” Limits to State Plunder
- v. Theological Plunder



## **{4. The Evolution of Bastiat's Theory of "The State": From Wall Poster to Economic Orthodoxy}**

- i. Bastiat's Pre-Revolutionary Notions of the State
- ii. Revolution and Jacques Bonhomme
- iii. The Essay on "The State": the Democratization of Plunder

# Spectrum of State Power

POWER

LIBERTY

Communism

Fascism

Welfare/Warfare State

Mercantilism

Minarchist State

Voluntary "State"

**COMMUNISM:**  
fully planned economy;  
state controlled  
society; rule by single  
Party (Stalinism, Pol  
Pot, China)

**FASCISM/NAZISM**  
state directed private  
industry; adulation of  
leader; war & conquest  
(Italy, Germany  
1930s-40s)

**WELFARE STATE:**  
state provision of  
health, welfare,  
education; significant  
regulation of economy  
(Western Europe)

**WELFARE/WARFARE  
STATE:**  
significant state  
intervention in health,  
education, welfare;  
significant regulation of  
economy; Military-  
Industrial Complex;  
war & empire (USA)

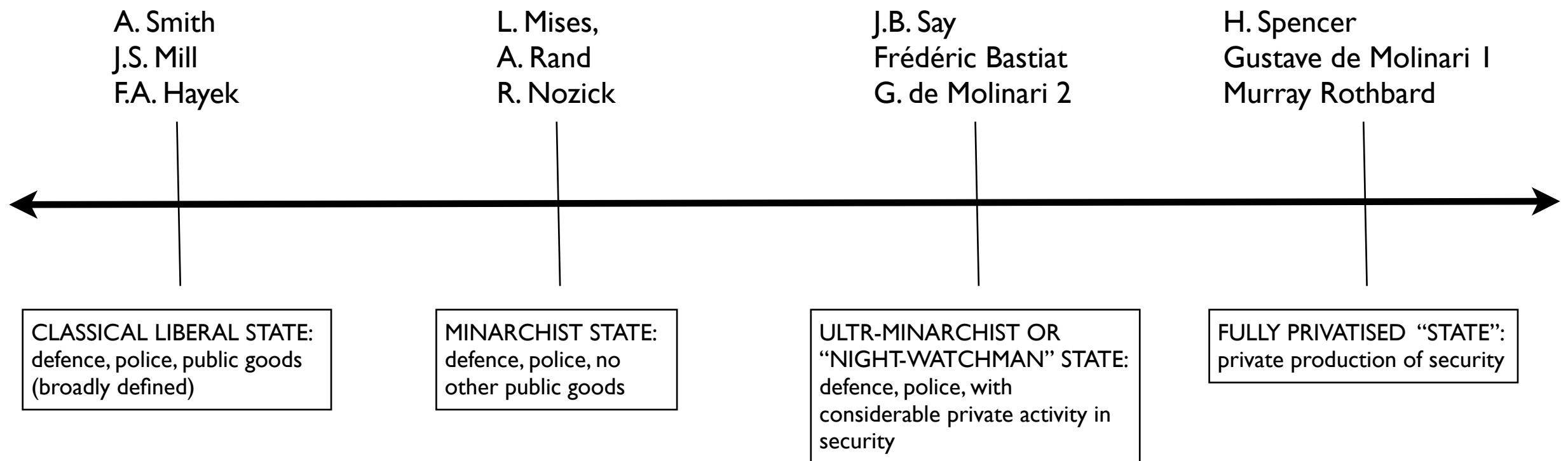
**MERCANTILISM:**  
protection & subsidies  
for domestic industry;  
controls on exports;  
colonies with  
monopoly access to  
metropole; navy &  
empire (France & UK  
18thC)

**MINARCHIST STATE:**  
defence, police, limited  
number of other public  
goods (aspects of  
19thC UK, France)

**ULTRA-MINARCHIST  
STATE:**  
defence, police, with  
considerable private  
activity in security  
services (?)

**FULLY VOLUNTARIST  
"STATE":**  
all state activities  
deregulated,  
privatised, or abolished  
(???)

# Functions of the Classical Liberal State







[Honoré Daumier, "Gargantua" (1831)]

## 5. Bastiat and the Invention of “Crusoe Economics” I



- “Crusoe Economics” are “**thought experiments**” to help simplify and clarify complex economic arguments
- Members of the Austrian school resort to this process as a matter of course because it helps them establish **the logic of “human action”**
- 1st use: “Midi à quatorze heures” (early 1847)

“Let us run off to the island to see the poor shipwrecked sailor. Let us see him in action. Let us examine the motives, the purpose, and the consequences of his actions. We will not learn everything there, in particular not those things that relate to the distribution of wealth in a society of many people, but we will glimpse the basic facts. We will observe general laws in their simplest form of action, and political economy is there in essence.

Let us apply this method to just a few problems.”



## 5. Bastiat and the Invention of “Crusoe Economics” II



- then introduces Friday to demonstrate how trade and division of labour increased productivity and wealth: “Something Else”, which originally appeared in *Le Libre-Échange* on March 21, 1847 - **Protectionist Crusoe vs Free Trader Friday**



**ES<sub>2</sub>, XIV. SOMETHING ELSE, [*Le Libre Échange*,  
21st March 1847], pp. 200-203. Part I.**

"Please explain the mechanism and effects of protection to me."

"That is not easy. Before moving on to complicated examples, we would have to study it in its simplest form."

"Take the simplest example you want."

"Do you remember how Robinson Crusoe set about making a plank when he had no saw?"

"Yes, he felled a tree and, chopping the trunk with his axe on its left and right sides, he reduced it to the thickness of a beam."

"And did that take him a great deal of work?"

"Two whole weeks."

"And what did he live on during this time?"

"His provisions."

"And what became of the axe?"

"It became very blunt."

**ES<sub>2</sub>, XIV. SOMETHING ELSE I**  
**[*Le Libre Échange*, 21st March 1847], pp. 200-203. Part II.**

"Very well. But perhaps you did not know this. Just when he was about to give the first stroke of his axe, Robinson Crusoe saw a plank cast up by the waves on the beach."

"Oh, what a coincidence! Did he run to pick it up?"

"This was his first reaction, but then he stopped for the following reason:

"If I pick up this plank, it will cost me only the fatigue of carrying it and the time to go down the cliff and climb it again.

But if I make a plank with my axe, firstly I will give myself enough work for two weeks, secondly I will wear out my axe, which will give me the opportunity of repairing it, and then I will eat up my provisions, a third source of work, since I will need to replace them. Now, work is wealth. It is clear that I will ruin myself by going to pick up the plank washed up. It is important for me to protect my personal production and now that I think of it, I can create further work for myself by going to push this plank back into the sea!"

**ES<sub>2</sub>, XIV. SOMETHING ELSE II**  
**[*Le Libre Échange*, 21st March 1847], pp. 200-203. Part II.**

"But this line of reasoning is absurd!"

"So it is! It is nevertheless the one followed by any nation that protects itself through prohibition. It rejects the plank offered to it for little work in order to give itself more work. There is no work up to and including the work of the Customs Officer in which it does not see advantage. This is illustrated by the trouble taken by Robinson Crusoe to return to the sea the gift it wished to make him. Think of the nation as a collective being and you will find not an atom of difference between its way of reasoning and that of Robinson Crusoe."



**ES<sub>2</sub>, XIV. SOMETHING ELSE III**  
**[*Le Libre Échange*, 21st March 1847], pp. 200-203. Part II.**

"Did Robinson not see that the time he saved he could devote to doing something else?"

"What else?"

"As long as you have needs and time in hand, you always have something to do. I cannot be expected to specify the work he might have undertaken."

"I can identify clearly the work that eluded him."

"And I maintain for my part that Robinson Crusoe, through incredible blindness, was confusing work with its result and the end with the means, and I will prove it to you."

## 5. Bastiat and the Invention of “Crusoe Economics” III



- references to “Robinson Crusoe” in works written before Bastiat in 1847 - we find that there are **no references at all** in the works of Adam Smith, in J.B. Say’s *Treatise on Political Economy*, or the works of David Ricardo [key word search on the OLL website].
- There are only single references scattered across the writings of economists who were writing in the 1810s, 1820s and 1830s, such as Jeremy Bentham, Jane Marcet, Thomas Babbington Macaulay, Richard Whately, and Thomas Hodgskin and none of them uses the Robinson Crusoe analogy to explore serious economic ideas.
- Richard **Whately**, *Introductory Lectures on Political Economy* (1831) firmly rejected the use of Crusoe in any discussion of the nature of political economy because in his view **the study of economics was the study of “exchanges”** and, since Crusoe did not engage in any exchanges, he was “in a situation of which Political-Economy takes no cognizance.”

## 6. Bastiat's Rhetoric of Liberty: Satire, Song, and the "Sting of Ridicule" I

i. **Rhetorical Devices** to avoid making economics "dull and dry"

- standard prose
- personal conversations with reader
- constructed dialogues between stock characters (even a mini play)
- satirical "official" letters to government officials
- Robinson Crusoe "thought experiments"
- **"economic tales" (modeled on La Fontaine's fables)**
- **parodies of well-known scenes from plays (Molière)**
- **quotes from satirical political songs about folly of political leaders**
- jokes and puns

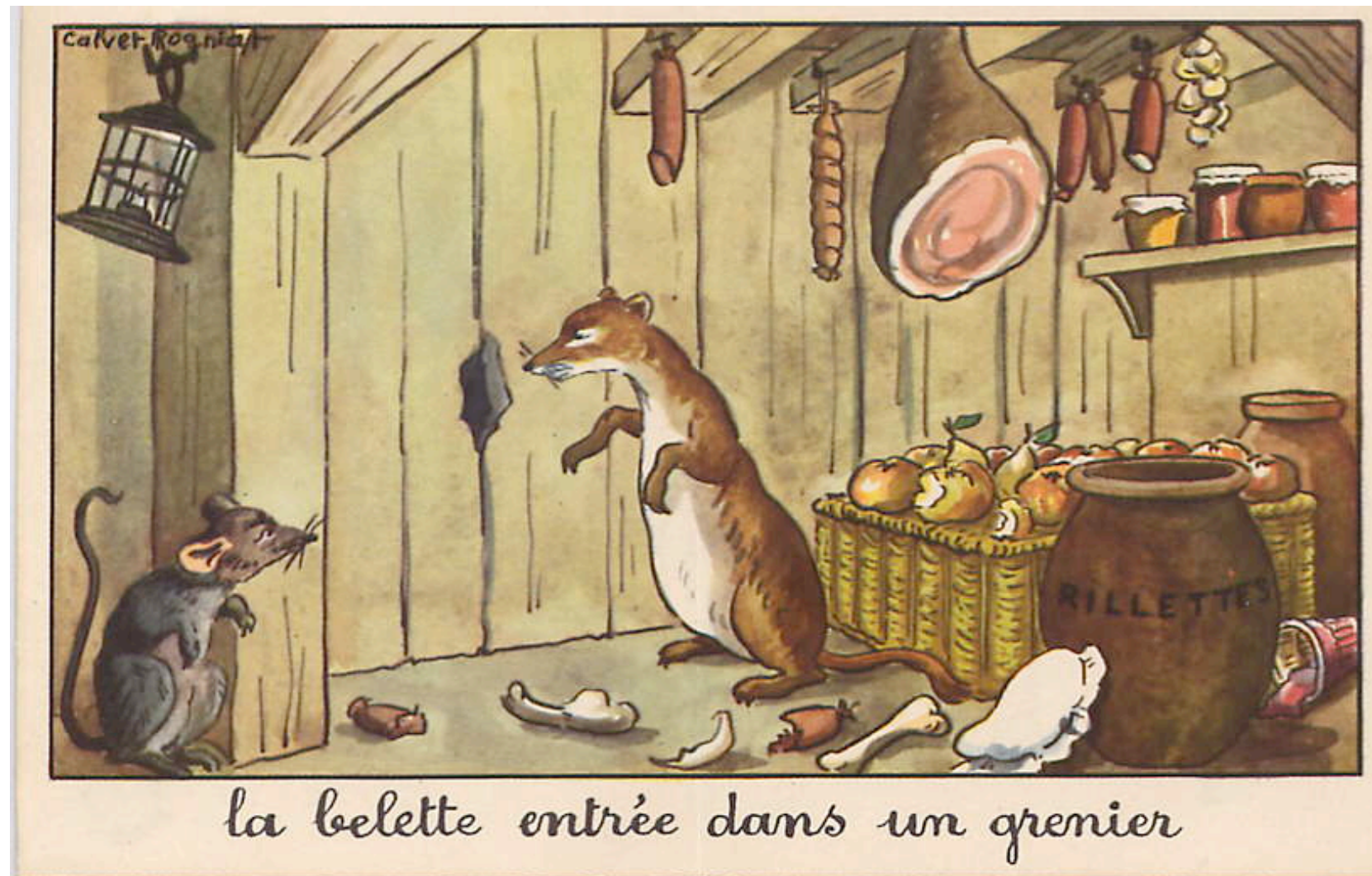
ii. Goguettiers and Singing for Liberty - **political drinking songs** of Béranger

iii. Humour and the Promotion of Liberty - using the **"sting of ridicule"**





## The “Sting of Ridicule”: La Fontaine’s fable, “The Weasel that got caught in the Storeroom”



FB liked the fables of La Fontaine (1621-1695) because they contained poignant moral lessons which could be turned into “**economic tales**” accessible to everybody. This is the story of a greedy **weasel** (a \_ or a military vested interest) who plans to sneak into a **farmer’s** granary (**taxpayers**) to steal his harvest. When he plans the theft the weasel is skinny enough to squeeze through a gap in the wall. After gorging himself on the product of the farmer’s hard work, the weasel has put on too much weight to escape through the same hole. A wise mouse points out his folly.

AIRS  
DES  
CHANSONS DE BÉRANGER

LE ROI D'YVETOT.

Air: *Quand un tendron vient en ces lieux.*

N° 1. *Allegretto.*

Il é--tait un roi d'Y - ve - tot Pen con - nudans l'his  
toi - re Se le-vant tard se cou-chant tôt Dor-mant fort bien sans  
gloi-re Et cou-ron - - né par Jean- ne - - ton D'un sim-ple  
bon-net de co -- ton dit-on. Oh! oh! oh! oh! ah! ah! ah!  
ah! Quel bon pe - tit roi c'é - tait là la la.

LA BACCHANTE.

Air: *Fournissez un canal au ruisseau.*

N° 2. *Allegretto.*

Cher a - mant je cède à tes dé - sirs De cham -  
pagne en - i - vre Ju - li - e In-ven-tons s'il se peut des plai-

The “Sting of Ridicule”:  
Béranger, “Le roi d’Yvetot” I

A song of a “**goguettier**” (a political song writer) Pierre-Jean Béranger (1780-1857) mocking a local political lord (Napoleon) who think they are “kings” and lord it over their subjects “The King Yvetot” (1813):

III. No costly regal tastes had he,  
Save thirstiness alone;  
But ere (before) a people blest can be,  
We must support the throne!  
So from each cask new tapp'd he got,  
(His own tax-gath'rer), on the spot,  
A pot!  
Ha! ha! ha! ha! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!  
A kingdom match with Yvetot!  
Ho! Ho!



AIRS  
DES  
CHANSONS DE BÉRANGER

LE ROI D'YVETOT.

Air: *Quand un tendron vient en ces lieux.*

N° 1. *Allegretto.*

Il é--tait un roi d'Y - ve - tot Pen con - nu dans l'his  
toi - re Se le - vant tard se cou - chant tôt Dor - mant fort bien sans  
gloi - re Et cou - ron - - né par Jean - ne - - ton D'un sim - ple  
bon - net de co - - ton dit - on. Oh! oh! oh! oh! ah! ah! ah!  
ah! Quel bon pe - tit roi c'é - tait là la la.

LA BACCHANTE.

Air: *Fournissez un canal au ruisseau.*

N° 2. *Allegretto.*

Cher a - mant je cède à tes dé - sirs De cham -  
pagne en - i - vre Ju - li - e In - ven - tons s'il se peut des plai -

The “Sting of Ridicule”:  
Béranger, “Le roi d’Yvetot” II

IV. So well he pleased the damsels all,  
The folks could understand  
A hundred reasons him to call  
The Father of his Land.  
His troops levied in his park  
But twice a year - to hit a mark,  
And lark!  
Ha! ha! ha! ha! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!  
A kingdom match with Yvetot!  
Ho! Ho!”

FB probably sang songs like this with the officers of the Bayonne garrison in 1830 when he persuaded them to side with the revolutionaries of 1830.



## Singing and Drinking for Liberty: “I was expecting blood but it was only wine that was spilt” (5 August 1830)

In a letter to his friend Felix Coudroy (Bayonne 5 August 1830) Bastiat relates his activities in the 1830 Revolution (27-29 July) when the garrison in Bayonne was split over whether or not to side with the revolution or the sitting monarch Charles X. Bastiat visited the garrison in order to speak to some of the officers in order to swing them over the revolutionary cause. In a midnight addition to his letter Bastiat relates how some good wine and the songs of Béranger helped him persuade the officers that night:

The 5th at midnight

**I was expecting blood but it was only wine that was spilt.** The citadel has displayed the tricolor flag. The military containment of the Midi and Toulouse has decided that of Bayonne; the regiments down there have displayed the flag. The traitor J..... thus saw that the plan had failed, especially as the troops were defecting on all sides; he then decided to hand over the orders he had had in his pocket for three days. Thus, it is all over. I plan to leave immediately. I will embrace you tomorrow. This evening we fraternized with the garrison officers. **Punch, wine, liqueurs and above all, Béranger contributed largely to the festivities.** Perfect cordiality reigned in this truly patriotic gathering. The officers were warmer than we were, in the same way as horses which have escaped are more joyful than those that are free. [Vol. 1, p. 30]

## The “Sting of Ridicule”: Molière. “The Imaginary Invalid” (1673)



Bastiat parodies Molière’s parody of the granting of a degree of doctor of medicine in *Le malade imaginaire* (The Imaginary Invalid, or the Hypochondriac) (1673).

Molière is suggesting that doctors in the 17thC were quacks who did more harm to their patients than good.

FB in his parody of a “**swearing in**” of a new government tax collector, is suggesting that government officials were thieves who did more harm to the economy than good.

## The “Sting of Ridicule”: Molière. “The Imaginary Invalid” (1673)



Ego, cum isto boneto Venerabili et doctor,  
Don tibi et concedo Virtutem et puissanciam  
Medicandi,  
Purgandi,  
Seignandi,  
Perçandi,  
Taillandi,  
Coupandi,  
Et occidendi  
Impune per total terram.

I give and grant you  
**Power and authority** to Practice  
Medicine,  
Purge,  
Bleed,  
Stab,  
Hack,  
Slash,  
and Kill  
**With impunity** throughout the whole world.



# The “Sting of Ridicule”: Bastiat’s Parody of Molière where a Government Official gives a Tax Collector Permission to violate Traders’ Rights



Dono tibi et concedo  
Virtutem et puissantiam  
Volandi  
Pillandi  
Derobandi  
Filoutandi  
Et escroquandi  
Impune per totam istam  
Viam

I give to you and I grant  
**virtue and power**  
to steal  
to plunder  
to filch  
to swindle  
to defraud  
**At will**, along this whole  
road

## 6. Bastiat's Rhetoric of Liberty: Satire, Song, and the "Sting of Ridicule" II

FB torn between the **right balance of serious to humorous essays** in the ES

- **ES 1 (January 1846)** - 22 essays 68% formal prose; **27% amusing dialogs**, tales, petitions; 5% other
- **ES 2 (January 1848)** - 17 essays 24% formal prose; **41% amusing dialogs**, tales, petitions; 35% other

FB stung by review of **ES1** that it was "**too theoretical, scientific, & metaphysical**" so he increased proportion of satirical & humorous essays - deliberate strategy of making economics less "dry and dull".

In essay in JDE in early 1848 (after Revolution broke out in February) FB worried that **ES2** was **too satirical & humorous** at a time when much more serious debate was required. Partly as a result of this change of mood FB left unpublished 21 other essays which might have been published as ES3.

## 6. Bastiat's Rhetoric of Liberty: Satire, Song, and the "Sting of Ridicule" III

Yet FB was conflicted over this change of strategy. His last published work (July 1850) was the collection of essays *What is Seen and What is Not Seen*, which he wrote three times: lost first draft in a move, rewrote it and threw it into the fire for being too "serious," 3rd version more like ES2.

FB returned to his strategy of using "the sting of ridicule" and satire at a time when his death from **throat cancer** was approaching making work in the Chamber of Deputies and on his magnum opus *Economic Harmonies* nearly impossible.





## Frédéric Bastiat (1801-1850)

### Death

- died Christmas eve 1850 in Rome
- throat cancer (once thought from TB)

### Memorial

- Friends raised money to build monument in Mugron 1878 (desecrated by Nazis in 1942)





**A Monument erected to the memory of Bastiat in Mugron, 23 April, 1878  
[how it appeared in 1878]**