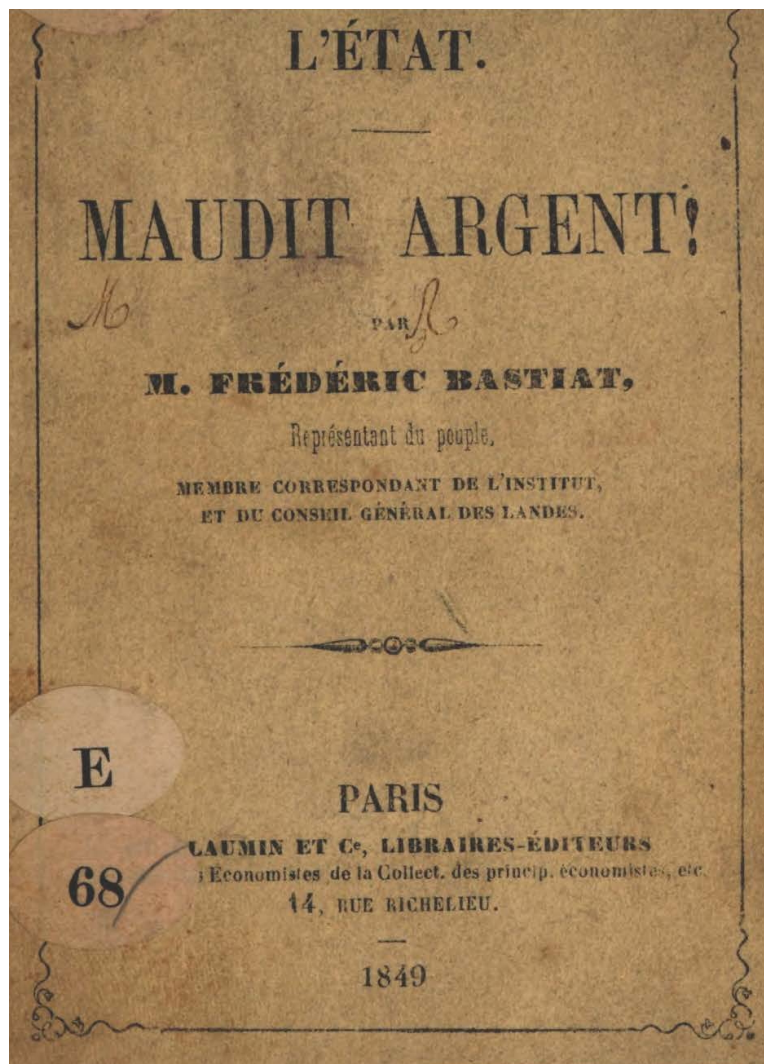


Frédéric Bastiat, “The State” (1849 Pamphlet Edition)

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Created: 4 May, 2018. Revised: 20 June, 2018.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Editor's Introduction | 3 |
| <i>Comparative Table Listing the Things the People are asking the State to do</i> | 6 |
| <i>The JB version (June 1848)</i> | 8 |
| <i>The JDD version (25 Sept. 1848)</i> | 15 |
| <i>The 1849 pamphlet version (c. April 1849)</i> | 23 |
| <i>Bastiat's anti-socialist "Petits Pamphlets"</i> | 31 |
| Publishing and translation History of "The State" | 34 |
| <i>Publishing History</i> | 34 |
| <i>Translation History</i> | 34 |
| "The State" (1849 Pamphlet version)..... | 36 |
| Glossary on "The Montagnards" and their Election Manifesto (Dec. 1848)..... | 57 |
| <i>The Montagnards</i> | 57 |
| <i>"The Election Manifesto of the Montagnards" (Manifeste des représentants de la Montagne) (en français)</i> | 59 |
| Source..... | 59 |
| The Text..... | 60 |

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This famous essay by Bastiat on “The State” went through three extensive revisions and expansions between its first appearance as a very short article of about 400 words in a street magazine in June 1848 shortly before the June Days uprising, a second enlarged version of 2,000 words published in the up-market and prestigious *Journal des débats* in September 1848,¹ and its final version as a longer essay of 3,900 words in a pamphlet published sometime in April 1849 during the campaigns for the 13-14 May elections for the new National Assembly.² This third version is the one which is best known today.

The two most most significant changes was a discussion of the new Constitution for the Second Republic which was being drawn up over the summer of 1848 and which Bastiat added to the JDD version; and then the inclusion in the 1849 pamphlet version of a new 900 word section in which Bastiat directly attacked the electoral program of the radical republican and socialist “Mountain” faction (“Les Montagnards”, and also referred to as the “Démocs-socs” (democratic socialists)) named after the radical Jacobin and Robespierre-ist group of the 1790s.³

¹ *Le Journal des débats* (1789–1944) was founded in 1789 by the Bertin family and managed for almost forty years by Louis-François Bertin. The journal went through several title changes and after 1814 became *Le Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*. The journal likewise underwent several changes of political positions: it was against Napoléon during the First Empire; under the second restoration it became conservative rather than reactionary; and under Charles X it supported the liberal stance espoused by the Doctrinaires. Bastiat wrote 5 articles which appeared in the Journal: 2 letters to the editor in May 1846, a series of letters to Considerant which were later published as a separate pamphlet *Property and Plunder* (July 1848), a longer version of his essay on “The State” (25 Sept. 1848), and an essay on cutting the tax on salt in Jan. 1849. Gustave de Molinari was an editor of the journal in the 1870s. It ceased publication in 1944.

² Throughout this Introduction we will refer to these versions as the “*JB* version,” the “*JDD* version,” and the “1849 pamphlet version.”

³ The Montagnards in 1848 were radical socialists and republicans who modelled themselves on “the Mountain” faction during the first French Revolution, the leader of which had been the lawyer Maximilien de Robespierre (1758-94). They were called “the Mountain” because they sat as a group in the highest seats at the side or the back of the Chamber. During 1848-49 the Montagnard group were also known as the “démoc-socs” (democratic socialists) and were led by Alexandre Ledru-Rollin. See also the glossary entry “Montagnards.”

In the 1848 and 1849 elections the Montagnards were led by Alexandre Ledru-Rollin⁴ who had been Minister of the Interior and a member of the Executive Commission in the Provisional Government until he was ousted by General Cavaignac during the period of martial law which was imposed after the June Days riots of 1848. Ledru-Rollin stood in the Presidential election on 10 December 1848 for the Montagnard socialist party, coming third with 5% of the vote behind General Cavaignac with 20% (the candidate Bastiat supported), and Louis Napoléon with 74%. In the elections for the Constituent Assembly (April 1848) and the Legislative Assembly (May 1849) the radical republicans and socialists went from 6% to 26% of the vote respectively.⁵ It was in order to counter this expected increase in votes for the Montagnards in the May 1849 election that Ledru-Rollin had Bastiat to rewrite his pamphlet in the form we know today. Thus, this third version should be seen as part of Bastiat's and the Guillaumin publishing firm's anti-socialist campaign for which Bastiat would eventually write 12 pamphlets between June 1848 and July 1850. (See below for details.)

Although Bastiat was talking to three different audiences with each of his versions of the essay, they all were written in his very distinctive conversational and witty style which he had perfected in his series of "economic sophisms." He talks directly to the reader in a very familiar style (using "tu" when he is talking to workers in the street using the voice of "Jacques Bonhomme")⁶ and half jokingly

⁴ Alexandre Ledru-Rollin (1790-1874) was a lawyer, deputy (1841-49), owner of the newspaper *La Réforme*, Minister of the Interior of the Provisional Government of February 1848, and then member of the Executive Commission of the Provisional Government. He he was removed from office by General Cavaignac during the period of martial law which was imposed after the June Days riots. On 12 June 1849 he organized a demonstration against President Louis-Napoléon's decision to send French troops to Rome to assist the Pope Pius IX in his struggle against the Italian republicans led by Mazzini. Following the military crackdown after the demonstration in order to escape arrest he fled to London where he spent the next 20 years in exile. He was able to return to France only in 1870.

⁵ See "The Chamber of Deputies and Elections," in Appendix 2: The French State and Politics, CW3, pp. 486-88.

⁶ "Jacques Bonhomme" (literally Jack Goodfellow) is the name used by the French to refer to "everyman," sometimes with the connotation that he is the archetype of the wise French peasant. Bastiat uses the character of Jacques Bonhomme frequently in his constructed dialogues in the *Economic Sophisms* as a foil to criticise protectionists and advocates of government regulation.

offers the reader a prize for the best definition of the state, the value of which ranged from 500,000 fr. to the working class readers of *Jacques Bonhomme* to 1,000,000 fr. to the more upmarket readers of the *JDD* (an amount which he continued to offer to the more mixed group of voters in April 1849) along with assorted “bells and whistles” to make it even more attractive. Frustratingly for his working class readers in June he does not provide his own definition of the state and leaves the matter hanging. However, in both the *JDD* and the 1849 pamphlet versions he offers his own definition in the meantime, until all the entries are in and a winner declared. This is his famous definition of the state and what it should NOT do:

L'ÉTAT, c'est la grande fiction à travers laquelle TOUT LE MONDE s'efforce de vivre aux dépens de TOUT LE MONDE.

The state is the great fiction by which *everyone* endeavors to live at the expense of *everyone else*.

[FEE translated this as: “The state is the great fictitious entity by which everyone seeks to live at the expense of everyone else.” (*Selected Essays*, p. 144.)]

[David Wells: “Government is the great fiction through which everybody endeavors to live at the expence of everybody else.” p. 160.]

He would also conclude both the *JDD* and the 1849 pamphlet versions with a brief statement of what he thought the State SHOULD do, which he modified only slightly between the two versions. In the 1849 version he adds the phrases “spoliation réciproque” (reciprocal plunder) and “garantir à chacun le sien” (guaranteeing each person what is theirs). The *JDD* version is on the left; the 1849 version on the right:

“l’*Etat* (est) la *force commune* instituée, non pour être entre les citoyens un instrument d’oppression réciproque, mais au contraire pour faire régner entre eux la justice et la sécurité.”

“l’État (est) la force commune instituée, non pour être entre tous les citoyens un instrument d’oppression et de **spoliation réciproque**, mais, au contraire, pour **garantir à chacun le sien**, et faire régner la justice et la sécurité.”

“the *state* (is) the *coercive power of the community*, (which is) instituted not to be an instrument of reciprocal oppression of all of its citizens, but on the contrary to ensure the reign of justice and security among them.”

“the *state* (is) the *coercive power of the community*, (which is) instituted not to be an instrument of reciprocal oppression and plunder between all of its citizens, but on the contrary to guarantee to each person what is his and ensure the reign of justice and security.”

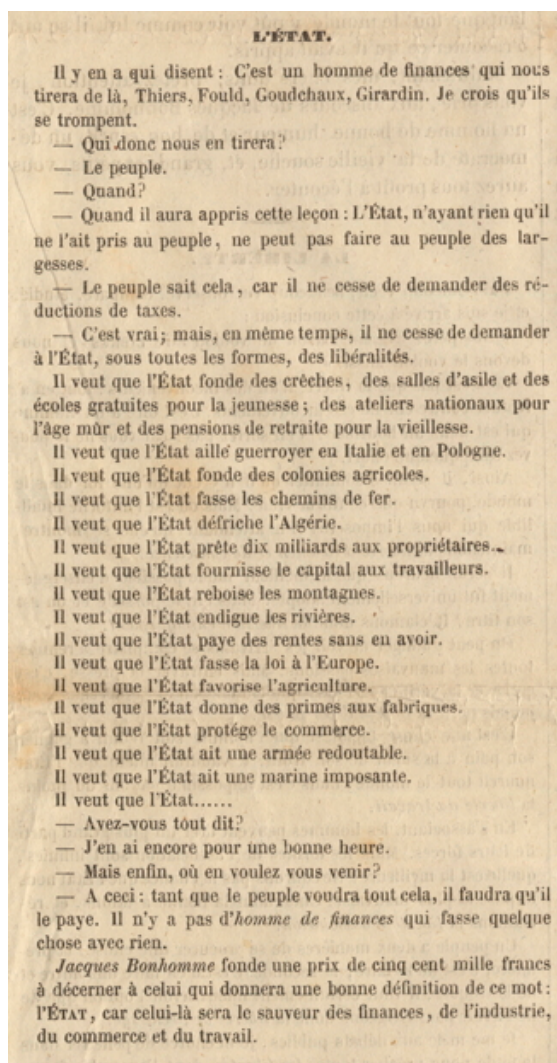
In all three versions he draws up a list of the things the voters are demanding the state should do. These differ slightly as one can see from the comparative table below.

Comparative Table Listing the Things the People are asking the State to do

| JB version | JDD version | 1849 Pamphlet version |
|---|--|--|
| They want the state to found crèches, homes for abandoned children, and free schools for our youth, national workshops for those that are older, and retirement pensions for the elderly. | Set up harmonious workshops. Provide children with milk. Educate the young. Assist the elderly. | Set up harmonious workshops. Provide children with milk. Educate the young. Assist the elderly. |
| | Organize work and the workers. | Organize work and the workers. |
| They want the state to go to war in Italy and Poland. They want the state to lay down the law in Europe. | Liberate Italy | Liberate Italy |
| They want the state to have a formidable army. They want the state to have an impressive navy. | | |

| JB version | JDD version | 1849 Pamphlet version |
|--|--|---|
| They want the state to support agriculture. They want the state to found farming colonies. | Carry out research into fertiliser and egg production. Set up model farms. Send the inhabitants of towns to the country. | Carry out research into fertiliser and egg production. Set up model farms. Send the inhabitants of towns to the country. |
| | Repress the arrogance and tyranny of capital. | Repress the arrogance and tyranny of capital. |
| | | |
| They want the state to build railways. | | Criss-cross the country with railways. |
| They want the state to establish farming in Algeria. | Colonize Algeria. | Colonize Algeria. |
| They want the state to build embankments along the rivers. | | Irrigate the plains. |
| They want the state to replant the forests on mountains. | | Re-forest the mountains. |
| | Regulate the profits of all industries. | Regulate the profits of all industries. |
| They want the state to lend ten billion to land owners. They want the state to supply capital to workers. They want the state to pay interest on loans with money it doesn't have. | Lend money | Lend money |
| They want the state to give subsidies to industry. | | |
| | Encourage art and train musicians and dancers (for our entertainment). | Encourage art and train musicians and dancers (for our entertainment). |
| | Breed and improve riding horses. | Breed and improve riding horses. |
| They want the state to protect trade. | Prohibit trade and at the same time create a merchant navy. | Prohibit trade and at the same time create a merchant navy. |
| | Root out selfishness. | Root out selfishness. |
| | | Discover truth and knock a bit of sense into our heads. The state has set itself the mission of enlightening, developing, enlarging, fortifying, spiritualizing, and sanctifying the souls of the people. |

The *JB* version (June 1848)



During 1848 Bastiat and some of his more radical friends started two newspapers which they handed out on the streets of Paris in March and June.⁷ They were written in the hope they could appeal to ordinary working people not to

⁷ See, "Bastiat's Revolutionary Magazines," in Appendix 6, in CW3, pp. 520-22, and the glossary entries on "La République française" and "Jacques Bonhomme (the journal)."

be seduced by the promises the socialists like Louis Blanc,⁸ Victor Considerant,⁹ Ledru-Rollin, and Proudhon¹⁰ were making. The first was a daily, *La République française*, which first appeared the day after the February revolution began, and was edited by F. Bastiat, Hippolyte Castille, and Gustave de Molinari. It appeared from 26 February to 28 March in 30 issues. The second was a weekly called *Jacques Bonhomme*, which was founded by Bastiat, Gustave de Molinari, Charles Coquelin, Alcide Fonteyraud, and Joseph Garnier. It appeared approximately weekly with 4 issues between 11 June to 13 July; with a break between 24 June and 9 July because of the rioting during the June Days uprising.

The authorial voice in the journal *JB* was Jacques Bonhomme himself, the French everyman to whom Bastiat and the other economists were appealing.¹¹ The first issue (in which the first version of “L’État” appeared) begins with a brief history of Jacques and his role in French history. It then turns to commentary on current events by Jacques who sometimes speaks in the first person and at other times it is merely reported what he is thinking as he goes about Paris observing

⁸ Louis Blanc (1811-1882) was a journalist and historian who was active in the socialist movement. Blanc founded the journal *Revue du progrès* and published therein articles that later became the influential pamphlet *L’Organisation du travail* (1839). During the 1848 revolution he became a member of the provisional government, headed the National Workshops, and debated Adolphe Thiers on the merits of the right to work in *Le socialisme; droit au travail, réponse à M. Thiers* (1848). When his supporters invaded the Chamber of Deputies in May 1848 to begin a coup d’état in order to save the National Workshops from closing, they carried him around the room on their shoulders. He was arrested, lost his parliamentary immunity, and was forced into exile in England. Bastiat was one of the few Deputies to oppose the Chamber’s treatment of Blanc.

⁹ Victor Prosper Considerant (1808-93) was a follower of the socialist Charles Fourier and edited the most successful Fourierist magazine *La Démocratie pacifiste* (1843-1851). He was elected Deputy to represent Loiret in April 1848 and Paris in May 1849. The Fourierists advocated a utopian, communistic system for the reorganization of society. He was also an advocate of the “right to work” (the right to a job), an idea which Bastiat opposed.

¹⁰ Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–65) was a political theorist whom many people consider to be the father of anarchism. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1848 representing La Seine and tried to set up a “Peoples Bank” which would provide workers with low or zero interest loans. He is best known for his book *Qu’est-ce que la propriété?* (What is Property?) (1841), the answer to which he thought was “property is theft.” Proudhon and Bastiat engaged in a several month long debate on the morality of property, interest, and rent in late 1849.

¹¹ See the glossary entries on “Jacques Bonhomme (the person)” and “Jacques Bonhomme (the journal)”.

what is going on. In the first article on “Liberty”¹² Jacques begins by saying that “I have lived a long time, seen a great deal, observed much, compared and examined many things, and I have reached the following conclusion ...”. He then proceeds to list the different kinds of liberty he believes in - freedom of belief and conscience, freedom of education, freedom of the press, the freedom of working (*la liberté du travail*),¹³ freedom of association, and free trade. In the second article Jacques defends the idea of “laissez-faire.”¹⁴ In the third article he talks about the many problems facing the National Assembly, especially the great financial difficulties France faced following the February Revolution when an economic recession occurred, unemployment rose. and tax receipts fell.¹⁵

The fourth article on “L’État” has to be seen as a response to the widespread popular belief that, if only a “financial expert” (*un homme de finances*) like ex-Prime Minister Adolphe Thiers, the banker Achille Fould, the new Minister of Finance in the Second Republic Michel Goudchaux, or the successful press baron Émile de Girardin were put in charge, they could solve France’s economic

¹² "Freedom" (JB, 11-15 June 1848), in CW1, pp. 433-34.

¹³ Economists like Bastiat believed in “*la liberté du travail*” (the liberty of working) in contrast to the socialists like Louis Blanc who advocated “*le droit au travail*” (the right to a job). See the glossary entry on “The Right to Work.”

¹⁴ "Laissez-faire" (JB, 11-15 June 1848), in CW1, pp. 434-35.

¹⁵ "National Assembly" (JB, 11-15 June 1848), in CW1, p. 451.

problems.¹⁶ Jacques believes that those who argue this are deceiving themselves. In his view, only the people themselves can solve France's problems but only on the condition that they stop asking the state to do more things for them. They have to understand that the state cannot create wealth but only take from those who have created it. He then lists 16 things the people are currently demanding the state should do and concludes by saying that even financial experts cannot create something from nothing. Thus, in order to get people to truly understand what the State is, and what it can and cannot do, the magazine *Jacques Bonhomme* promises to offer a prize of 500,000 francs to the person who comes up with the best definition of "the State." Jacques concludes that only with a correct understanding of this organisation can France's financial and economic problems be solved, and thus the

¹⁶ **Adolphe Thiers (1797-1877)** was a conservative liberal lawyer, historian, politician, and journalist. During the July Monarchy he was briefly Minister for Public Works (1832-34), Minister of the Interior (1832, 1834-36), and Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs (1840). In 1840 he was instrumental in planning the construction of "Thiers' Wall" around Paris between 1841-44. During the Revolution he wrote a book on property, *De la propriété* (1848) which Molinari critically reviewed in the JDE in January 1849. See the glossary entries on "Thiers" and "The Fortifications of Paris."

Achille Fould (1800-1867) was a banker and a deputy who represented the département of Les Hautes-Pyrénées in 1842 and La Seine in 1849. He was close to Louis-Napoléon, lending him money before he became emperor, and then served as Minister of Finance, first during the Second Republic and then under the Second Empire (1849-67). Fould was an important part of the imperial household, serving as an adviser to the emperor, especially on economic matters. He was an ardent free trader but was close to the Saint-Simonians on matters of banking.

Michel Goudchaux (1797-1862) was the Minister of Finance 28 June to 25 October 1848. He supported a progressive tax on inheritance, a tax on capital invested in land, and the unpopular 45% increase in direct taxes in order to balance the budget. On the other hand he supported one of Bastiat's favourite reforms, the uniform stamp for sending letters. He lost his position in a ministerial reshuffle on the eve of the Presidential election in November 1848 (which was won by Louis Napoléon).

Émile de Girardin (1806-1881) was the first successful press baron of the mid-19th century in France. He began in 1836 with the popular mass circulation *La Presse* which had sales of over 20,000 by 1845. One reason for his success was the introduction of serial novels which proved very popular with readers. Girardin gradually turned against the July Monarchy on the grounds it was corrupt. In the 1848 Revolution he played a significant role in advising Louis Philippe to abdicate in February and then opposing General Cavaignac's repressive actions during the June Days riots. For the latter Girardin was imprisoned and his journal shut down. During the election campaign for the presidency he supported Louis Napoleon but ran afoul of him soon afterwards, selling his shares in *La Presse* in 1856. In his book, *Le socialisme et l'impôt* (1849) he argued that the state should be regarded as one big insurance company which insured the security and the property of the taxpayers and charged them a "premium" based on their wealth.

person who can do this will be “the savior of finance, industry, trade, and work.” This offer of a prize of course was not meant to be taken seriously as it was a huge amount of money at the time.¹⁷ It was just part of Bastiat’s amusing rhetorical style. Unlike the two later versions of this essay Jacques does not offer his own definition of the state but leaves the issue hanging.

It should be noted that in the third issue of the magazine dated 20-23 June Bastiat published a direct appeal¹⁸ to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alphonse de Lamartine,¹⁹ ²⁰ and the Minister of the Interior and Montagnard socialist, Ledru-Rollin, to dissolve the National Workshops²¹ which were being run out of the Luxembourg Palace by the socialist Louis Blanc, before they bankrupted the French nation. When they were finally closed down thousands of people took to the streets of Paris to protest the decision, thus starting the bloody June Days uprising of 23-26 June which was put down by the Army under General Cavaignac and lead to the imposition of martial law for the next four months. In his own election

¹⁷ This prize money was a huge amount as the average wage of a worker in Paris at the time 3 fr. 80 c. per day (or about 1,200 francs per annum). By contrast a professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Paris earned between 2,000 and 10,000 francs per annum. See, [Horace Say], *Statistique de l'Industrie a Paris résultant de l'enquête. Faite par la Chambre de commerce pour les années 1847-1848* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1851). “Chap. XXII. 13e Groupe - Imprimerie, Gravure, Papeterie” pp. 187-94, and *Galighani's New Paris Guide* (Paris: A. and W. Galighani and Co., 1848), p. 76.

¹⁸ "To Citizens Lamartine and Ledru-Rollin" (JB, 20-23 June 1848), in CW1, pp. 444-45.

¹⁹ Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869) was a poet and statesman and as an immensely popular romantic poet, he used his talent to promote liberal ideas. Lamartine was elected Deputy representing Nord (1833-37), Saône et Loire (1837-Feb. 1848), Bouches-du-Rhône (April 1848-May 1849), and Saône et Loire (July 1849- Dec. 1851). During the campaign for free trade organised by the French Free Trade Association between 1846 and 1847 Lamartine often spoke at their large public meetings and was a big draw card. He was a member of the Provisional Government in February 1848 (offering Bastiat a position in the government, which he declined) and Minister of Foreign Affairs in June 1848. After he lost the presidential elections of December 1848 against Louis-Napoléon, he gradually retired from political life and went back to writing.

²⁰ Bastiat had earlier criticised Lamartine for being soft on socialism, especially the idea that people had “a right to a job.” See his “Letter from an Economist to M. de Lamartine. On the occasion of his article entitled: The Right to a Job” (Feb. 1845, JDE) and “Second Letter to M. de Lamartine (on price controls on food)” (Oct. 1846, JDE), both in CW4 (forthcoming).

²¹ See the glossary entry on the “National Workshops.”

manifesto which he produced during the campaign for the May 1849 election Bastiat tells us that he took the dangerous step of plastering this article defending the closing of the National Workshops all over the walls of Paris and then was an eyewitness to the events that followed. In a letter to Julie Marsan dated 29 June 1848 (so just a few later) he states that:²²

(We do not have French version - JCPD)

My only role was to enter the Faubourg Saint-Antoine after the fall of the first barricade, in order to disarm the fighters. As we went on, we managed to save several insurgents whom the militia wanted to kill. One of my colleagues displayed a truly admirable energy in this situation, which he did not boast about from the rostrum.

Ten months later, in his “Profession de foi électorale d’avril 1849” (Statement of Electoral Principles) which he distributed in his electorate in Les Landes in April 1849 he explains in more detail that:²³

Convaincu qu’il ne suffisait pas de voter, mais qu’il fallait éclairer les masses, je fondai un autre journal qui aspirait à parler le simple langage du bon sens, et que, par ce motif, j’intitulai *Jacques Bonhomme*, Il ne cessait de réclamer la dissolution, à tout prix, des forces insurrectionnelles. La veille même des Journées de Juin, il contenait un article de moi sur les ateliers nationaux. Cet article, placardé sur tous les murs de Paris, fit quelque sensation. Pour répondre à certaines imputations, je le fis reproduire dans les journaux du Département.

Convinced that voting was not enough—the masses needed to be enlightened—I founded another newspaper which aimed to speak the simple language of good sense and which, for this reason, I entitled *Jacques Bonhomme*. It never stopped calling for the disbanding of the forces of insurrection, whatever the cost. On the eve of the June Days, it contained an article by me on the national workshops. This article, plastered over all the walls of Paris, was something of a sensation. To reply to certain charges, I had it reproduced in the newspapers in the *département*.

²² “Letter 104. Paris, 29 June 1848. To Julie Marsan,” CW1, pp. 156-57. See also, “Bastiat the Revolutionary Journalist and Politician,” in the *Introduction* to CW3, pp. lxxviii-lxxiii.

²³ “Political Manifestos of April 1849,” CW1, p. 392.

La tempête éclata le 24 juin. Entré des premiers dans le faubourg Saint-Antoine, après l'enlèvement des formidables barricades qui en défendaient l'accès, j'y accomplis une double et pénible tâche : Sauver des malheureux qu'on allait fusiller sur des indices incertains ; pénétrer dans les quartiers les plus écartés pour y concourir au désarmement. Cette dernière partie de ma mission volontaire, accomplie au bruit de la fusillade, n'était pas sans danger. Chaque chambre pouvait cacher un piège ; chaque fenêtre, chaque soupirail pouvait masquer un fusil.

The storm broke on 24 June. One of the first to enter the Faubourg Saint Antoine following the removal of the formidable barricades which protected access to it, I accomplished a twin and difficult task, to save those unfortunate people who were going to be shot on unreliable evidence and to penetrate into the most far-flung districts to help in the disarmament. This latter part of my voluntary mission, accomplished under gunfire, was not without danger. Each room might have hidden a trap, each window or basement window a rifle.

One of the men addressed in his appeal of June 1848, Ledru-Rollin, will surface again in both the second and third versions of Bastiat's essay as will be discussed below.

The *JDD* version (25 Sept. 1848)



Three months after the first version of “L’État” appeared in print Bastiat’s expanded second version appeared in the prestigious *JDD* which was read by the intellectual and political elites. Here, Bastiat stops using the voice of Jacques Bonhomme but still uses his conversational style of writing, this time addressing his readers as “You, Sir” and “You, Madame.” He begins the essay with his offer of a prize instead of concluding with this as he did in the *JB* version, and the prize money has been doubled from 500,000 to the quite exorbitant figure of one million francs. Bastiat inserts some literary references, as was his wont in the *Economic*

Sophisms,²⁴ with quotes from Figaro, from Rossini's opera "The Barber of Seville," (one of which would be cut from the 3rd version of the essay). He then provides a slightly larger list of demands (now 18) the people are making of the State, and about half way through the essay he offers his own definition of the State for the first time.

This is followed by a comparison of the new constitution of the Second Republic which had been under discussion throughout the summer of 1848, and the American Constitution. The sticking point was the attempt by some socialist Deputies to have a clause in the constitution guaranteeing every French citizen the "right to work" (*le droit au travail*, which one might translate in English as the "right to a job" using "travail" as a noun). This had been a catch phrase of the socialists throughout the 1840s. What they meant by this term was that the state had the duty to provide work for all men who demanded it. In contrast, the classical liberal economists called for the "right of working," or the "freedom to work" (*la liberté du travail*, or *le droit de travailler* using "travail" as a verb), by which they meant the right of any individual to pursue an occupation or activity without any restraints imposed upon him by the state. The latter point of view was articulated by Charles Dunoyer in his *De la liberté du travail* (1845) and by Bastiat in many of his writings. The socialist perspective was provided by Louis Blanc in *L'Organisation du travail* (1839) and *Le Socialisme, droit au travail* (1848) and by Victor Considérant in *La Théorie du droit de propriété et du droit au travail* (1848).

The socialists claimed that it was the duty of the government to provide every able-bodied Frenchman with a job and the job creation program initiated by the Constituent Assembly in the first days of the revolution, called the National Workshops, was designed to carry this out. Bastiat and the other Economists fiercely opposed this scheme and Bastiat used his position in the Finance Committee to argue strenuously against it. Matters came to a head in May 1848, when a committee of the Constituent Assembly was formed to discuss the issue of "the right to work" just prior to the closing of the state-run National Workshops, which prompted widespread rioting in Paris. In a veritable "who's who" of the

²⁴ See, "Bastiat's Rhetoric of Liberty: Satire and the 'Sting of Ridicule,'" in the *Introduction to CW3*, pp. lviii-lxiv.

socialist and liberal movements of the day, a debate took place in the Assembly and was duly published by the classical liberal publishing firm of Guillaumin later in the year along with suitable commentary by such leading liberal economists as Léon Faucher, Louis Wolowski, Joseph Garnier, and, of course, Bastiat.²⁵ Here is the beginning of the “opinion” Bastiat wrote for the volume, in which he distinguished between the right to work (*droit au travail*, where “work” is used as a noun and thus might be rendered as the “right to a job”) and the “right to work” (*droit de travailler*, where “work” is used as a verb):²⁶

Si l'on entendait par *droit au travail* le *droit de travailler* (qui implique le droit de jouir du fruit de son travail), il ne saurait y avoir de doute. Quant à moi, je ne crois pas avoir jamais écrit deux lignes qui n'ait eu pour but de le défendre.

Mais par droit au travail on entend le droit qu'aurait l'individu d'exiger de l'État, et par force, au besoin, de l'ouvrage et un salaire. Sous aucun rapport cette thèse bizarre ne me semble pouvoir supporter l'examen.

If one understands by the phrase “right to a job” (*droit au travail*) the right to work (*droit de travailler*) (which implies the right to enjoy the fruit of one’s labor), then one can have no doubt on the matter. As far as I’m concerned, I have never written two lines that did not have as their purpose the defense of this notion.

But if one means by the “right to a job” that an individual has the right to demand of the state that it take care of him, provide him with a job and a wage by force, then under no circumstances does this bizarre thesis bear close inspection.

In spite of his and the Economists’ opposition Chapter 2, Article 13, of the Constitution of November 4, 1848 explicitly stated that:²⁷

25 See *Le Droit au travail à l'Assemblée Nationale*. See also Faucher, “Droit au travail” in Coquelin, *Dictionnaire de l'économie politique*, vol. 1. pp. 605–19.

26 *Le Droit au travail à l'Assemblée Nationale*, pp. 373–74.

27 See “Constitution de 1848. Assemblée nationale constituante (4 novembre 1848)” <https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_du_4_novembre_1848>.

La Constitution garantit aux citoyens la liberté du travail et de l'industrie. La société favorise et encourage le développement du travail par l'enseignement primaire gratuit, l'éducation professionnelle, l'égalité de rapports, entre le patron et l'ouvrier, les institutions de prévoyance et de crédit, les institutions agricoles, les associations volontaires, et l'établissement, par l'État, les départements et les communes, de travaux publics propres à employer les bras inoccupés ; elle fournit l'assistance aux enfants abandonnés, aux infirmes et aux vieillards sans ressources, et que leurs familles ne peuvent secourir.

“The Constitution guarantees citizens the liberty of work and industry. Society favours and encourages the development of work by means of free primary education, professional education, equality of relations between employers and workers, institutions of insurance and credit, agricultural institutions, voluntary associations, and the establishment by the state, the departments and the communes of public works suitable for employing idle hands; it provides assistance to abandoned children, to the sick and the old without means, which their families cannot help.”

This article raised the problem which concerned Bastiat deeply of the difference between the free market idea of “the liberty of work and industry” (la liberté du travail et de l'industrie) and the socialist idea of the “right to a job” (la liberté au travail) which increasingly became an issue during the Revolution. The Constitution of November 1848 specifically refers to the former but also seems to advocate the latter with the phrase “public works suitable for reemploying the unemployed”. Other articles in the new Constitution which the economists opposed and tried to water down in the final version were Article VIII of the Preamble which asserted the duty of the French state to “to provide the means of existence to necessitous citizens” and Article 13 which promised “freedom of labor and of industry,” which was dear to the economists, but also promises of considerable financial assistance to the poor and the old, which was very dear to the socialists:

VIII. - La République doit protéger le citoyen dans sa personne, sa famille, sa religion, sa propriété, son travail, et mettre à la portée de chacun l'instruction indispensable à tous les hommes ; elle doit, par une assistance fraternelle, assurer l'existence des citoyens nécessiteux, soit en leur procurant du travail dans les limites de ses ressources, soit en donnant, à défaut de la famille, des secours à ceux qui sont hors d'état de travailler.

Article 13. - La Constitution garantit aux citoyens la liberté du travail et de l'industrie. La société favorise et encourage le développement du travail par l'enseignement primaire gratuit, l'éducation professionnelle, l'égalité de rapports, entre le patron et l'ouvrier, les institutions de prévoyance et de crédit, les institutions agricoles, les associations volontaires, et l'établissement, par l'Etat, les départements et les communes, de travaux publics propres à employer les bras inoccupés ; elle fournit l'assistance aux enfants abandonnés, aux infirmes et aux vieillards sans ressources, et que leurs familles ne peuvent secourir.

Article VIII of the Preamble: "It is the duty of the republic to protect the citizen in his person, his family, his religion, his prosperity, and his labor, and to bring within the reach of all that education which is necessary to every man; it is also its duty, by fraternal assistance, to provide the means of existence to necessitous citizens, either by procuring employment for them, within the limits of its resources, or by giving relief to those who are unable to work and who have no relatives to help them."

Chapter 1, Article 13: "The Constitution guarantees to citizens the freedom of labor and of industry. Society favors and encourages the development of labor by gratuitous primary instruction, by professional education, by the equality of rights between the employer and the workman, by institutions for the deposit of savings and those of credit, by agricultural institutions; by voluntary associations, and the establishment by the State, the departments and the communes, of public works proper for the employment of unoccupied laborers. Society also will give aid to deserted children, to the sick, and to the destitute aged who are without relatives to support them."

Bastiat refers to this debate in the JDD version of the essay by quoting the opening paragraph of the new French constitution which stated that:²⁸

²⁸ From <<http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/la-constitution/les-constitutions-de-la-france/constitution-de-1848-ii-republique.5106.html>>.

“La France s'est constituée en République. En adoptant cette forme définitive de gouvernement, elle s'est proposée pour but de marcher plus librement dans la voie du progrès et de la civilisation, d'assurer une répartition de plus en plus équitable des charges et des avantages de la société, d'augmenter l'aisance de chacun par la réduction graduée des dépenses publiques et des impôts, et de **faire parvenir** tous les citoyens, sans nouvelle commotion, par l'action successive et constante des institutions et des lois, à un degré toujours plus élevé de moralité, de lumières et de bien-être.”

“France has been constituted as a Republic. By adopting this final form of government it has put forward the goal of advancing more freely down the path of progress and civilisation, to ensure a more and more just distribution of the burdens and advantages of society, to increase the comfort of each person by the gradual reduction of public expenditure and taxes, and **to enable** (faire parvenir) all citizens to achieve, without any new shocks, and by the steady and gradual action of (our) institutions and law, an ever increasing level of morality, enlightenment, and well-being.”

Bastiat's version of this which he quotes in the essay is:

“La France s'est constituée en République pour... appeler tous les citoyens à un degré toujours plus élevé de moralité, de lumière et de bien-être.”

“France has been constituted as a Republic in order to call (upon) all the citizens to (achieve) an increasingly higher level of morality, enlightenment, and well-being.”

What is interesting in Bastiat's version is what he cut out (the clause dealing with cutting government expenditure and taxation - which he would have agreed with) and the verb he substituted for “faire parvenir” (to make or enable someone to reach or obtain something), namely “appeler” (to call or summon someone to do something). To use “faire parvenir” would have strengthened his argument against the socialists. Since the JDD version (Sept. 1848) was published before the promulgation of the new constitution on 4 November 1848 it is possible he was using a formulation used in an earlier draft.

In Bastiat's view the French made the mistake of “personifying” the abstract notion of the state and believing that it could and should solve the people's problems for them. By contrast, the Americans were under no such “illusion” as

they stated in the opening lines of their constitution that “the people” established a state so they could have the liberty to go about solving their own problems as they saw fit.

Bastiat concludes by pointing out the contradiction this inevitably leads to:

Il faut donc que le peuple de France apprenne cette grande leçon : Personnifier l'Etat, et attendre de lui qu'il prodigue les bienfaits en réduisant les taxes, c'est une véritable puérité, mais une puérité d'où sont sorties et d'où peuvent sortir encore bien des tempêtes. Le gouffre des révolutions ne se refermera pas tant que nous ne prendrons pas l'*Etat* pour ce qu'il est, la *force commune* instituée, non pour être entre les citoyens un instrument d'oppression réciproque, mais au contraire pour faire régner entre eux la justice et la sécurité.

Thus the people of France must learn this important lesson: to personify the State and to expect that it will dispense benefits while (at the same time) reducing taxes, is pure childishness, but it is a childishness from which have come and could well still come great turmoil. The abyss of revolutions will never be closed as long as we do not accept the *state* for what it is: the *coercive power of the community*, (which is) instituted not to be an instrument of reciprocal oppression of all of its citizens, but on the contrary to ensure the reign of justice and security among them.

Perhaps unknown to Bastiat at the time he wrote the essay, his article would appear on the front page of the 25 September issue below a long article which reproduced the speech which the ex-Minister of the Interior and leader of the radical socialist Montagnard party, Alexandre Ledru-Rollin, had given the day before to commemorate the events of 22 September, 1792 when the Convention had proclaimed the First Republic. In it Ledru-Rollin talks about the historical connection between socialism and French republicanism and his hopes that socialism would again become an integral part of the policies of the Second Republic. In what might appear to be a direct response to Bastiat's warnings about the limited funds of the French government and the growing demands being placed on it by the public, Ledru-Rollin argued there was a “river of money” available to the French state if only it would tap into it:

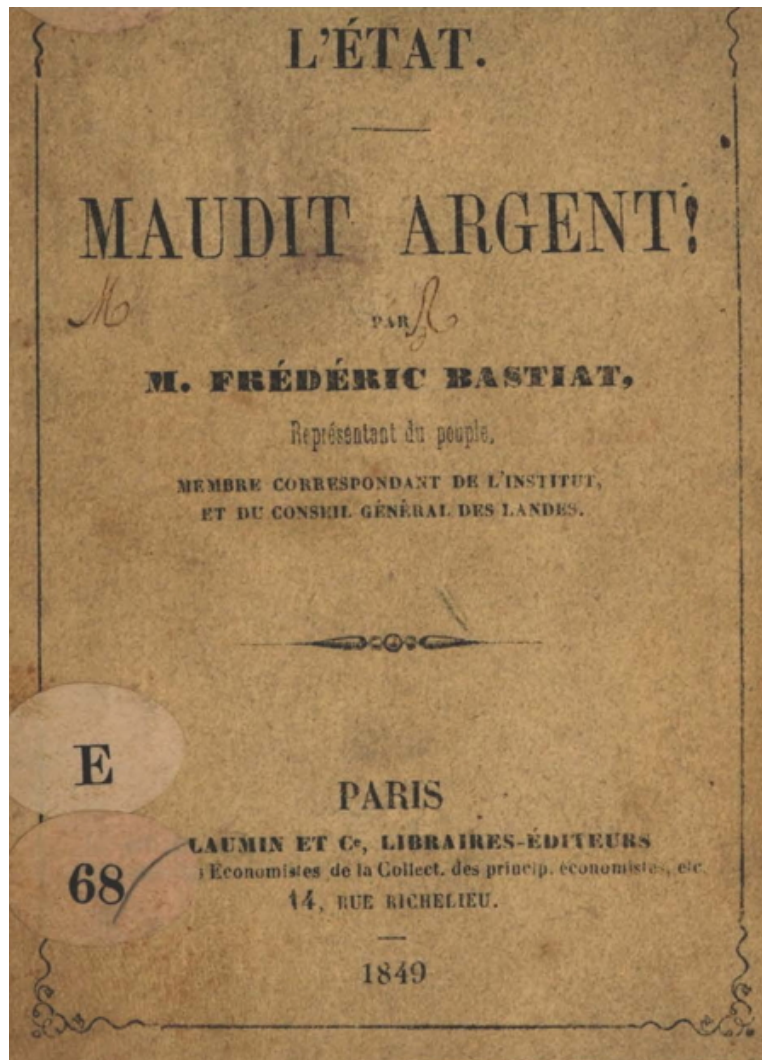
Citoyens, que répond-on? “L’État est pauvre; la République ne saurait faire de telles fondations, car l’argent manque!” J’avoue que je n’ai jamais compris cette objection dans un pays aussi fertile, aussi puissant que la France! Je dis, moi, que les sources sont innombrables, et qu’il ne faut que savoir leur tracer des canaux pour les conduire vers le Trésor, et de là les faire refluer jusqu’au pauvre.”

Citizens! what do they say in response (to our demands)? “The State is poor; the Republic could not be built on such foundations because we lack the money.” I confess I have never understood this objection in a country as fertile, as powerful as France! As for me, I say that the sources (of wealth, or sources of this river of money) are uncountable, and that we only have to know how to lay out the canals which will lead (these waters) to the Treasury, and from there to make them flow to the poor.

Although Bastiat also uses in his essay the metaphor of the State opening up “une source” (spring) in order to flood the country with benefits he does not seem to be aware of these remarks by Ledru-Rollin at this time. Ledru-Rollin was probably already campaigning for the Presidential election which would be held in 10 December 1848. He was the head of the socialist Montagnard party and would come third (5%) behind General Cavaignac (20%) and the winner Louis Napoléon Bonaparte (74%). Bastiat would have a chance to reply directly to Ledru-Rollin in April 1849 with his third expanded version of his essay when he too was campaigning for re-election as representative of his home district of Les Landes.²⁹

²⁹ Bastiat was elected to the Legislative Assembly in the election of 13 May 1849 to represent the département of Les Landes. He received 25,726 votes out of 49,762.

The 1849 pamphlet version (c. April 1849)



In this third version of the essay Bastiat added another 1,500 words (bringing the total up to 3,900 words) in which he directly addressed the Montagnard party's policies.³⁰ We do not know exactly when he wrote this but it was included in a pamphlet published by the Guillaumin firm with another article on money, "Maudit argent!" (Damn Money!), which had been published in the 15 April 1849

³⁰ This can be found in *Candidature du citoyen Ledru-Rollin. Le Comité électoral démocratique du Jura. Aux Républicains démocrates de ce département.* (Arbois, Imprimerie d'Aug. Javel, (no date)). 8 pp. "Manifeste des représentants de la Montagne," pp. 3-8.

issue of the *JDE* so must have been rewritten around then. Bastiat's first reference to the "Manifesto of the Montagnards" was in a pamphlet he wrote in February 1849 on "Peace and Freedom or the Republican Budget."³¹ In his election manifesto which he distributed in his electorate in Les Landes in April 1849 he explicitly refers to the revised version of his essay "The State" in the following terms:³²

L'École purement révolutionnaire veut faire intervenir l'État en toutes choses et ramener ainsi l'accroissement indéfini des impôts ; je fais la brochure intitulée : *l'État*, spécialement dirigée contre le manifeste montagnard.

The purely revolutionary school wanted the state to intervene in every matter and thus bring back a continuous increase in taxes. (So) I wrote the pamphlet entitled *The State*, which was particularly directed against the manifesto of the Montagnards.

The reason why his focus shifted to countering the Montagnard party at this time was because of the strong possibility that they would build upon the 5% of the vote Ledru-Rollin got in the December 1849 presidential election. This would turn out to be an accurate assessment as they got a healthy 180 seats or 26% of the 705 total seats in the new Legislative Assembly. Bastiat was also campaigning for re-election and would be successful in his home district of Les Landes.

The changes he made to the first part of the essay were numerous but relatively minor:

1. He added four more items to his list of things the people wanted the State to do (criss-cross the country with railways, irrigate the plains, re-forest the mountains - here he was actually reinstating things he had cut from his first list in *JB*) and

³¹ He had hoped to give this as a speech in the Chamber but could not because of his failing voice. Instead he wrote it out as a pamphlet and had it circulated around the Chamber. See, "Peace and Freedom or the Republican Budget" (Feb. 1849), in CW2, pp. 282-327. The reference to the Montagnard Manifesto is on p. 291.

³² See "Political Manifestos of April 1849," CW1, p. 393.

a new item on “The state has set itself the mission of enlightening, developing, enlarging, fortifying, spiritualizing, and sanctifying the souls of the people.”³³

2. He changed the word “L’égotisme” to “l’égoïsme.”
3. He cut the one of the quotes from Rossini’s Barber of Seville.
4. He expanded slightly the paragraph dealing with slavery.
5. He inserted two new paragraphs on the nature of oppressors and their use of legal plunder to achieve their purposes
6. He expanded a paragraph to include a discussion of some important “public choice” insights into the behaviour of bureaucrats and politicians
7. He cut out two paragraphs which dealt with the way the abstractions of “France” and “The State” were used as substitutes for ancient slavery
8. He expanded his discussion of the personification of the state and introduces the idea that the state has two hands, “la main rude et la main douce” (the gentle hand and the rough hand)
9. He added several more actions the government would take, including that “it stifles public opinion, it exercises arbitrary power, it mocks its own former slogans.”
10. He concluded with a revised statement about what the State should do.

A good example of the kind of changes he made to the *JDD* version is the paragraph dealing with the self-interested motives of politicians and bureaucrats to expand their powers, which immediately follows his definition of the State. A comparison of the two versions reveals the following differences. Here Bastiat expands into two paragraphs his discussion of the self-interested behaviour of public officials, the dangers of “reciprocal pillage,” and the “expensive intermediary” the State has now become. (*JDD* version on the left; 1849 pamphlet version on the right; with significant differences or additions in bold).

³³ This is actually a dig at Lamartine rather than the Montagnards and is a quote from his “Declaration of Principles” of October 1847.

“Car, aujourd'hui comme autrefois, chacun un peu plus, un peu moins voudrait bien vivre du travail d'autrui. Ce sentiment, on n'ose l'afficher, on se le dissimule à soi-même; et alors que fait-on ? On imagine un intermédiaire, et chaque classe tour à tour vient dire à l'Etat : « Vous qui pouvez prendre légalement, honnêtement, prenez au public et nous partagerons. » L'Etat n'a que trop de pente à suivre ce diabolique conseil. C'est ainsi qu'il multiplie le nombre de ses agens, élargit le cercle de ses attributions et finit par acquérir des proportions écrasantes. **Quand donc le public s'avisera-t-il enfin de comparer ce qu'on lui prend avec ce qu'on lui rend? Quand reconnaîtra-t-il que le pillage réciproque n'en est pas moins onéreux, parce qu'il s'exécute avec ordre par un intermédiaire dispendieux?**”

“Car, aujourd'hui comme autrefois, chacun, un peu plus, un peu moins, voudrait bien profiter du travail d'autrui. Ce sentiment, on n'ose l'afficher, on se le dissimule à soi-même ; et alors que fait-on ? On imagine un intermédiaire, **on s'adresse à l'État**, et chaque classe tour à tour vient lui dire : « Vous qui pouvez prendre **loyalement**, honnêtement, prenez au public, et nous partagerons. » **Hélas !** l'État n'a que trop de pente à suivre le diabolique conseil ; **car il est composé de ministres, de fonctionnaires, d'hommes enfin, qui, comme tous les hommes, portent au cœur le désir et saisissent toujours avec empressement l'occasion de voir grandir leurs richesses et leur influence. L'État comprend donc bien vite le parti qu'il peut tirer du rôle que le public lui confie. Il sera l'arbitre, le maître de toutes les destinées : il prendra beaucoup, donc il lui restera beaucoup à lui-même ;** il multipliera le nombre de ses agens, il élargira le cercle de ses attributions ; il finira par acquérir des proportions écrasantes.”

Mais ce qu'il faut bien remarquer, c'est l'étonnant aveuglement du public en tout ceci. Quand des soldats heureux réduisaient les vaincus en esclavage, ils étaient barbares, mais ils n'étaient pas absurdes. Leur but, comme le nôtre, était de vivre aux dépens d'autrui ; mais, comme nous, ils ne le manquaient pas. Que devons-nous penser d'un peuple où l'on ne paraît pas se douter que **le pillage réciproque** n'en est pas moins pillage parce qu'il est réciproque ; qu'il n'en est pas moins criminel parce qu'il s'exécute légalement et avec ordre ; qu'il n'ajoute rien au bien-être public ; qu'il le diminue au contraire de tout ce que coûte cet **intermédiaire dispendieux que nous nommons l'État** ?

For today, as in the past, each person more or less wants to live well from the work of others. We do not dare display this sentiment (openly); we even hide it from ourselves, and then what do we do? We design an intermediary, and each class in turn comes forward to say to it “You who can take things legally and honestly, take something from the general public and we will share it.” The state has a very ready tendency to follow this diabolical advice. It is in this way that it can increase the number of its officials, widen the circle (scope) of its functions, and end up acquiring an overwhelming size. So when will the public finally dare to compare what is taken from it with what is given back to it? When will it learn that reciprocal pillage is no less burdensome because it is carried out in an orderly fashion by an expensive intermediary?

For today, as in the past, each person more or less wants to profit from the work of others. We do not dare display this sentiment (openly); we even hide it from ourselves, and then what do we do? We design an intermediary, we address ourselves to the state, and each class in turn comes forward to say to it “You who can take things straightforwardly and honestly, take something from the general public and we will share it.” Alas! The state has a very ready tendency to follow this diabolical advice as it is made up of ministers and civil servants, in short, men, who like all men are filled with the desire and are always quick to seize the opportunity to see their wealth and influence increase. The state is therefore quick to understand the profit it can make from the role that the general public has entrusted to it. It will be the arbiter and master of every destiny. It will take a great deal; (and) therefore a great deal will be left (over) for itself. It will increase the number of its officials and widen the circle (scope) of its functions. It will end up acquiring an overwhelming size.

But what we should clearly note is the astonishing blindness of the general public in all this. When victorious soldiers reduced the conquered to slavery they were barbaric, but they were not absurd. Their aim, like ours, was to live at someone else’s expense, but unlike us, they (were able to) achieve this. What should we think of a people who do not appear to have any idea that *reciprocal pillage* is no less pillage because it is reciprocal, that it is no less criminal because it is executed legally and in an orderly fashion, that it adds nothing to public well-being and that, on the contrary, it reduces well-being by everything that this expensive intermediary that we call the state costs us?

However, the biggest difference between the *JDD* and the 1849 pamphlet versions is the addition of an entirely new 900 word long section on the Montagnards' political and economic policies. He discusses in some detail the "Manifesto of the Montagnards" which had been issued during Ledru-Rollin's campaign in the December presidential election of 1848.³⁴ He summarised the aims of the Montagnard party as "The state must give a great deal to its citizens and take very little from them." He then lists the things they wanted the government to do: provide free general education for all, free vocational education, ongoing enlightenment for all citizens, state compensation for accidents and natural disasters, regulate labor relations, provide credit, subsidise farming, nationalise the railways, canals, and mines, encourage and subsidise large economic undertakings, and (quite ominously in Bastiat's view) use the French army to spread Montagnard ideas and policies to the rest of Europe.

Bastiat also lists the taxes the Montagnards wanted to cut. This is quite extensive and seems very similar to Bastiat's own views on tax cuts³⁵ and also may explain why the Montagnards did so well in the elections, by appealing to the anti-tax sentiments of the people. They also wanted to cut taxes on essential items like food, salt, and drink; reform taxes on land, city tolls, occupational licenses, legal transactions, and stamps, but this was something Bastiat did not acknowledge in his essay. What he did point out was the contradiction that you can't have both increased government benefits as well as tax cuts. If you want the "soft hand that gives and spreads benefits widely" you also have to have "the rough hand that goes rummaging and rifling in our pockets" to get the taxes to pay for them. In his mind there were only three different kinds of political systems: one where the State

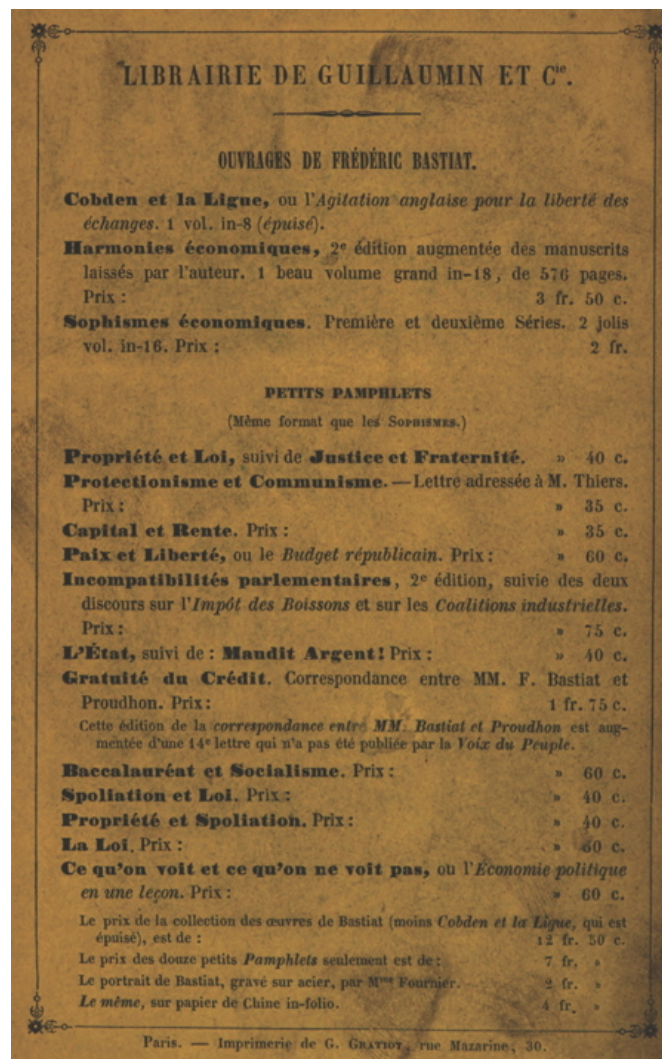
³⁴ *Candidature du citoyen Ledru-Rollin. Le Comité électoral démocratique du Jura. Aux Républicains démocrates de ce département.* (Arbois, Imprimerie d'Aug. Javel, (no date)). 8 pp. "Manifeste des représentants de la Montagne," pp. 3-8.

³⁵ Bastiat gave several speeches in the Chamber on cutting or abolishing taxes such as those on salt tax, alcohol, postage, sugar, and coffee, not to mention cutting tariffs on imported goods. See, "Speech in the Assembly on Postal Reform" (24 August 1848), in CW4 (forthcoming); "Speaks in a Discussion in the Assembly on a Proposal to change the Tariff on imported Salt" (11 Jan. 1849), CW4 (forthcoming); "Speech on the Tax on Wines and Spirits" (12 Dec. 1849), in CW2, pp. 328-47; and the lengthy pamphlet on "Peace and Freedom or the Republican Budget" (Feb. 1849), in CW2, pp. 282-327, where he sums up his views on taxation and expenditure.

undertakes a lot of activity and also takes a lot from the taxpayers; one where it does very little and taxes are “peu sentir” (barely felt) (Bastiat’s preference); and a third hybrid system where the people expect a lot from the state and refuse to pay anything to support it. The latter was the dream of the Montagnards, one that he called “illusionary, absurd, puerile, contradictory, and dangerous.”

It should also be noted that he revised slightly his concluding statement about what the state ought to do. In the 1849 version he adds the phrases “spoliation réciproque” (reciprocal plunder) and “garantir à chacun le sien” (guaranteeing each person what is theirs). (See above for details.)

Bastiat's anti-socialist "Petits Pamphlets"



The Guillaumin publishing firm would eventually publish Bastiat's essay on "The State"³⁶ (c. April, 1849) along with a dozen or so similar anti-socialist pamphlets he wrote between the summer of 1848 and the summer of 1850. They marketed them as a collection they called "Petits pamphlets de M. Bastiat" (Mister

³⁶ As a pamphlet with another of his on money: *L'État. Maudit Argent* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1849).

Bastiat's Little Pamphlets).³⁷ The titles, date of publication, and person or group being criticized in these essays is as follows:

1. "Propriété et loi" (Property and Law), *JDE*, 15 May 1848, in CW2, pp. 43-59. Directed at Louis Blanc and critiques of property in general.
2. "Justice et fraternité" (Justice and Fraternity) *JDE*, 15 June 1848, in CW2, pp. 60-81. Directed against Pierre Leroux.
3. "Individualisme et fraternité" (Individualism and Fraternity) (c. June 1848), in CW2, pp. 82-92. Directed against Louis Blanc.
4. "Propriété et spoliation" (Property and Plunder), (*Journal des débats*, 24 July 1848), in CW2, pp. 147-184. Directed against Victor Considérant and against critics of ownership of land and the charging of rent.
5. "Le capital" (Capital), *Almanach Républicain pour 1849* (1849), in CW4 (forthcoming). Written to appeal to ordinary people who were influenced by the ideas of Proudhon and Blanc concerning capital and the charging of interest on loans.
6. *Protectionisme et Communisme. Lettre à M. Thiers* (Protectionism and Communism. A Letter to M. Thiers) (Jan. 1849), in CW2, pp. 235-65. Directed against the conservative and protectionist Mimerel committee whom Bastiat accused of adopting communist ideas.
7. *Capital et Rente* (Capital and Rent) (Feb. 1849), in CW4 (forthcoming). Directed at Proudhon.
8. "Maudit argent!" (Damn Money!), *JDE*, 15 April 1849, in CW4 (forthcoming). Directed at general misperceptions about the nature of money.
9. "L'État" (The State), (c. April, 1849), in CW2, pp. 93-104. Directed against the Ledru-Rollin and the radical "Montagnard" socialist faction in the Assembly.

³⁷ See "Bastiat's Anti-Socialist Pamphlets" in *Further Aspects of Bastiat's Thought*, CW4 (forthcoming).

10. *Gratuité du Crédit. Correspondence entre MM. F. Bastiat et Proudhon* (Free Credit. Correspondence between Bastiat and Proudhon) (Oct. 1849 - Feb. 1850), in CW4 (forthcoming). Directed against Proudhon.

11. *Baccalauréat et Socialisme* (“Baccalaureate and Socialism”) (early 1850), in CW2, pp. 185-234. Written to oppose a bill before the Chamber in early 1850 on education reform which was supported by the conservative Adolphe Thiers.

12. “Spoliation et loi” (Plunder and Law), *JDE*, 15 May 1850, in CW2, pp. 266-76. Directed against Louis Blanc and the Luxembourg Commission.

13. *La Loi* (The Law) (Mugron, July 1850), in CW2, pp. 107-46. Against Louis Blanc and his 18th century predecessors including most notably Rousseau.

14. *Ce qu'on voit et ce qu'on ne voit pas, ou l'Économie politique en une leçon* (What is Seen and What is Not Seen, or Political Economy in One Lesson) (July 1850), in CW3, pp. 401-52. Directed against all those who misunderstood the operation of the free market.

Bastiat wrote the last two pamphlets on “The Law” and “What is Seen and What is Not Seen” over the summer of 1850 when he probably knew he did not have long to live (he would die on Christmas Eve, 1850. Those two essays and his one on “The State” have become the essays for which Bastiat is perhaps fittingly best remembered.

PUBLISHING AND TRANSLATION HISTORY OF “THE STATE”

Publishing History

T.212 “L’État” (The State), *Jacques Bonhomme*, no. 1, 11-15 June 1848, p. 2. [OC, vol. 7, 59. pp. 238-40.] [CW, vol. 2, pp. 105-6]. First version 376 words. The Institut Coppet has reprinted this essay in *Jacques Bonhomme: L’éphémère journal de Frédéric Bastiat et Gustave de Molinari (11 juin – 13 juillet 1848). Recueil de tous les articles, augmenté d’une introduction. Ed. Benoît Malbranque* (Paris: Institut Coppet, 2014), pp. 23-25.

T.222 “L’État,” *Le Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* (25 September 1848), pp. 1-2. Second revised and enlarged version 2,400 words. [CW4 (forthcoming)]

T.320 A third revised and enlarged version with a new section on the Montagnards’ economic policies was published twice in 1849: as an article in *Annuaire de l’économie politique et de la statistique pour 1849, par MM. Joseph Garnier et Guillaumin et al. Sixième année* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1849), pp. 356-68; and in a pamphlet *L’État. Maudit Argent* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1849), pp. 5-23. The third version is 3,900 words. [OC4, pp. 327-41.] [CW2, pp. 93-104.]

Translation History

The first English translation (of the third version) appeared under the title “Government” in an anonymous translation published in 1853: *Essays on Political Economy. By the Late M. Frederic Bastiat, Member of the Institute of France* (London: W. & F.G. Cash, 1853). It contained “Capital and Interest,” “That Which is Seen, and That Which is Not Seen,” “Government” (Part III, pp. 3-19), “What is Money?,” and “The Law. This was republished as a special “People’s Edition” (“expressly for the use of our British workmen”) by Provost & Co. in 1872.

An American edition by David Wells appeared in 1877: *Essays on political economy. English translation Revised, with Notes by David A. Wells* (G.P. Putnam Sons,

1880). First ed. 1877. It contains “Capital and Interest,” pp. 1-69; “That Which is Seen, and That Which is Not Seen,” pp. 70-153; “Government” (The State), pp. 154-73; “What is Money?” (Damned Money), pp. 174-220; “The Law,” pp. 221-91. Wells states that he revised the earlier anonymous English translation which he described as “exceedingly imperfect, and in some cases absolutely without meaning” (p. x).

The Foundation for Economic Education made a new translation by Seymour Cain in 1965: “The State,” in *Selected Essays on Political Economy, translated from the French by Seymour Cain. Edited by George B. de Huszar* (Irvington-on-Hudson, New York: The Foundation for Economic Education, 1968) (1st edition D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc. 1964. Copyright William Volker Fund), pp. 140-51.

The first and third versions of “The State” appeared in Liberty Fund’s 2012 translation: Frédéric Bastiat, *CW2*. “The State (draft)” (JB, 11 June 1848), in *CW2*, pp.105-6; and “The State”, in *CW2*, pp. 93-104 (this incorrectly cited the JDD as the source, which was in fact the 3rd Guillaumin pamphlet edition). These have been revised and updated by David M. Hart in May 2018. The second JDD edition will appear in *CW4* (forthcoming).

“THE STATE” (1849 PAMPHLET VERSION)

I would like someone to sponsor a prize, not of five hundred francs but of a million,³⁸ with crowns, crosses, and ribbons for whoever can provide a good, simple, and understandable definition of the words “the state.”

What a huge service he would be doing to society!

The state! What is this? Where is it? What does it do? What ought it to be doing?

All that we know about it is that it is a mysterious entity, and definitely the one that is most solicited, most bothered, the busiest, the one to whom the most advice is given, the most held responsible, the most called upon, and the most pushed to take action that there is in the world.

For, sir, I do not have the honor of knowing you, but I will bet ten to one that for the last six months you have been constructing utopias,³⁹ and if you have been doing so, I will bet ten to one that you will make the state responsible for making them happen.

³⁸ The original prize offered in the JB version was 500,000 francs which was doubled in both the JDD and this version.

³⁹ Bastiat did not change this figure of six months in this revised version written around April 1849. It should have been updated to twelve months. When he wrote the second version in September 1848 the “six months” would have referred to the period since the outbreak of Revolution in February 1848 during which time socialists like Louis Blanc had been running the National Workshops program, Victor Considerant had been lobbying the government to fund an experimental socialist community north of Paris, and Ledru-Rollin was Minister of the Interior and a member of the Executive Commission in the Provisional Government until he was ousted by General Cavaignac during the period of martial law which was imposed after the June Days riots. Ledru-Rollin would stand in the Presidential election on 10 December 1848 for the Montagnard socialist party (also known as the “Démocs-socs” (democratic socialists)), coming third with 5% of the vote behind Louis Napoléon with 74% and General Cavaignac with 20%. In the elections for the Constituent Assembly (April 1848) and the Legislative Assembly (January and May 1849) the radical republicans and socialists went from 6%, to 26% and 28% of the vote respectively. See “The Chamber of Deputies and Elections,” in Appendix 2: The French State and Politics, CW3, pp. 486-88.

And you, madam, I am certain that in your heart of hearts you would like to cure all the ills of suffering humanity and that you would not be in the slightest put out if the state just wanted to help in this.

But alas! The unfortunate being, like Figaro, does not know whom to listen to nor which way to turn.⁴⁰ The hundred thousand voices of the press and the political clubs⁴¹ are all calling out to it at once:

“Organize work and the workers.”⁴²

Root out selfishness.⁴³

Repress the arrogance and tyranny of capital.

Carry out research into fertiliser and egg production.

⁴⁰ A reference to Figaro, the barber of Seville, in Pierre Beaumarchais’s play *Le Barbier de Séville ou la Précaution inutile* (The Barber of Seville or the Useless Precaution) (1773) which was turned into an opera of the same name by Gioachino Rossini in 1816. Bastiat referred to the same scene in ES2 12 “Salt, the Mail, and the Customs Service” (JDE, May 1846), in CW3, pp. 198-214.

⁴¹ When the Provisional Government was proclaimed on 25 February 1848 following the collapse of the July Monarchy censorship also collapsed and hundreds of small newspapers and political clubs sprang up in Paris as a result. The main socialist clubs were Auguste Blanqui’s “Le club de la société républicaine centrale” (Club of the Central Republican Society, also know as Club Blanqui), Étienne Cabet’s “La société fraternelle centrale” (the Central Fraternal Society), “Le club des travailleurs libres” (the Club of Free Workers), Alphonse Esquiros’s “Le club de la montagne” (the Club of the Mountain), and Armand Barbès’s “Le club de la révolution” (the Revolution Club). The classical liberal economists also had a newspaper (edited by Bastiat) which they handed out on the streets of Paris, *La République française* (26 Feb.-28 March), and a political club, “le club de la liberté du travail” (the Club for the Freedom of Working) which began on 31 March. See the glossary entries on “Political Clubs” and “La République française.”

⁴² Under the influence of socialist writers like Charles Fourier, Louis Blanc, and Proudhon during the 1840s the words “organization” and “association” became slogans used by the socialists to oppose the advocates of free trade and free markets. For these socialists, “L’Organisation” meant the organisation of labor and industry by the state for the benefit of the workers; and “l’Association” meant cooperative living and working arrangements as opposed to private property, exchange on the free market, and the family. Louis Blanc was appointed by the Provisional Government to be the president of the “Commission du gouvernement pour les travailleurs” (Government Commission for the Workers) (also known as the Luxembourg Commission) which oversaw the National Workshops program and met in the Luxembourg Palace, the old meeting place for the Chamber of Peers (see “Luxembourg Palace”). The National Workshops were created on February 27, 1848, in one of the very first legislative acts of the Provisional government, to create government funded jobs for unemployed workers.

⁴³ “L’égotisme” was used in the JDD versions and changed to “l’égoïsme” in the 1849 version.

Criss-cross the country with railways.⁴⁴
Irrigate the plains.
Re-forest the mountains.
Set up model farms.
Set up harmonious workshops.⁴⁵
Colonize Algeria.⁴⁶
Provide children with milk.
Educate the young.
Assist the elderly.
Send the inhabitants of towns to the country.
Regulate the profits of all industries.
Lend money, interest free, to those who want it.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ This and the next two items on the plains and the mountains were added to the 1849 version. In 1842 the government decided to encourage the building of a national network. Under the Railway Law of 11 June 1842 the government ruled that 5 main railways would be built radiating out of Paris which would be built in cooperation with private industry. The government would build and own the right of way, bridges, tunnels and railway stations, while private industry would lay the tracks, and build and maintain the rolling stock and the lines. The government would also set rates and regulate safety. The first railway concessions were issued by the government in 1844-45 triggering a wave of speculation and attempts to secure concessions.

⁴⁵ Bastiat is mocking Louis Blanc's socialist national workshops which were state run and hardly "harmonious" as their members often took to the streets to protest and attempt to intimidate the government. On 15 May, 1848 armed supporters of Blanc marched to the Chamber and forcibly entered in an attempt to seize control of the government. When the Chamber decided to close down the National Workshops its supporters took to the streets and began the bloody riots known as the June Days (23-26 June) which were suppressed by General Cavaignac with the loss of thousands of lives. Martial law was declared on 24 which lasted until 19 October.

⁴⁶ Algeria was invaded and conquered by France in 1830 and the occupied parts were annexed to France in 1834. According to the new constitution of the Second Republic (Nov. 1848) it was declared that Algeria was no longer a colony but an integral part of France (with three Départements) and that the emigration of French settlers would be officially encouraged and subsidized by the government.

⁴⁷ It was a pet scheme of Proudhon's to set up a "Peoples Bank" which would issue zero or low interest rate loans to workers. Bastiat had a lengthy debate with Proudhon over "free credit" between October 1849 and March 1850: *Free Credit* (Oct. 1849 - March 1850, *Voix de peuple*), in CW4 (forthcoming).

Liberate Italy, Poland, and Hungary.⁴⁸

Breed and improve riding horses.

Encourage art and train musicians and dancers (for our entertainment).

Prohibit trade and at the same time create a merchant navy.

Discover truth and knock a bit of sense into our heads. The state has set itself the mission of enlightening, developing, enlarging, fortifying, spiritualizing, and sanctifying the souls of the people.”⁴⁹

“Oh, sirs, have a little patience,” the state replies, pitifully.⁵⁰

“I will try to satisfy you, but I need some resources to do this. I have prepared some projects relating to five or six brand new taxes that are the most benign the world has ever seen. You will see how pleased you will be to pay them.”

At that, a great cry arises: “Just a minute! Where is the merit in doing something with resources (you already have)? It would not be worth calling yourself

⁴⁸ Uprisings took place in March 1848 in the Italian states, the German states, and the Austrian Empire. They were eventually suppressed by the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian armies by the summer and fall of 1849.

⁴⁹ The sentence “The state has set itself the mission of enlightening, developing, enlarging, fortifying, spiritualizing and sanctifying the souls of the people” comes from Lamartine’s “Declaration of Principles” which he published in October 1847. In spite of his many liberal sympathies and support for Bastiat’s free trade association, Lamartine had socialist views on things such as “the right to a job” and government welfare programs. Bastiat criticised him for this in two early essays he wrote for the JDE: “Letter from an Economist to M. de Lamartine. On the occasion of his article entitled: The Right to a Job” (Feb. 1845, JDE) and “Second Letter to M. de Lamartine (on price controls on food)” (Oct. 1846, JDE), in CW4 (forthcoming). Bastiat would quote this passage again in *The Law* (June 1850), in CW2, pp. 107-46. See Lamartine’s “Déclaration des principes” (21 octobre 1847), (which originally appeared in *le Bien public*), republished in Alphonse de Lamartine, *La politique de Lamartine, choix de discours et écrits politiques: précédé d'une étude sur la vie politique de Lamartine* (Paris: Hachette & Cie., 1878), vol. 2, pp. 273-82 . Quote on p. 280.

⁵⁰ In the JDD version Bastiat quotes a line from Figaro’s “Largo al facotum” from Rossini’s opera *The Barber of Seville*: “uno alla volta, per carità” (one at a time, please, for heaven sake!) This was cut from the 1849 pamphlet.

the state. Far from imposing new taxes on us, we demand that you remove the old ones. You must abolish:⁵¹

The tax on salt;⁵²

The tax on alcohol;⁵³

Postage tax;⁵⁴

City tolls;⁵⁵

⁵¹ A description of the different kinds of taxes imposed by the French government is provided in "Taxation" in Appendix 2: The French State and Politics, CW4, pp. 000. A full list of the amounts raised in 1848-49 can be found in the "French Government's Budgets for Fiscal Years 1848 and 1849," in Appendix 4, in CW3, pp. 509-16. In summary, in 1848 out of total revenue collected of fr. 1.391 billion, fr. 420 million came from direct taxes (mainly a land tax) (30%), fr. 308 million from indirect taxes (mainly from the tax on alcohol, tobacco, and sugar) (19%), fr. 263 million from stamp duty and registration taxes (14.5%), fr. 202 million from customs and the salt monopoly (14.5%), and fr. 51 million from the post tax (4%).

⁵² Before the Revolution of 1789 the salt tax was known as the "gabelle." Because of its symbolic association with the ancien régime, it was much hated and was one of the first things abolished after the Revolution. However, it soon returned as a more straight forward "salt tax." Bastiat expressed his opposition to this tax in "The Salt Tax" (20 June 1847, LE), in CW4 (forthcoming), as well as in the Chamber in "Speaks in a Discussion in the Assembly on a Proposal to change the Tariff on imported Salt" (11 Jan. 1849), CW4 (forthcoming). See Coquelin, "Gabelle," in *Le Dictionnaire de l'Économie Politique*, vol. 1, pp. 814-15. See also, "Gabelle" in "Taxation" in Appendix 2: The French State and Politics, CW4, pp. 000.

⁵³ As a wine producer himself, Bastiat was very interested in the tax on alcohol and some of his earliest writings were on this topic. See for example, "Proposals for an Association of Wine Producers" (15 Jan. 1841), CW4 (forthcoming) and "The Tax Authorities and Wine" (Jan. 1843), in CW2, pp. 10-23. He also gave a lengthy speech in the Chamber on cutting the tax on alcohol, "Speech on the Tax on Wines and Spirits" (12 Dec. 1849), in CW2, pp. 328-47.

⁵⁴ Eliminating the tax levied on sending letters and ending the government's monopoly was another interest Bastiat had from early in his career. See for example, "Two Articles on Postal Reform I" (3-6 Aug. 1844, *Sentinelle des Pyrénées*) and "Two Articles on Postal Reform II" (April 1846, *Mem. bord.*), and his "Speech in the Assembly on Postal Reform" (24 August 1848), in CW4 (forthcoming).

⁵⁵ The "octrois" were another form of hated taxes during the pre-Revolutionary period. An octroi was a consumption tax levied by a town or city in order to pay for the activities of the communal administration. It was much abused during the ancien régime, because it was "farmed out" to private contractors. Although the octroi was abolished in the early years of the Revolution, it was reintroduced by Paris in 1798. See "Octroi," in Appendix 3: Economic Policy and Taxation, CW3, p. 500.; and Coquelin, "Esquiro de Parieu, Octrois," in *Le Dictionnaire de l'Économie Politique*, vol. 2, pp. 284-91.

Occupational licenses;⁵⁶
Compulsory labour obligations.⁵⁷”

In the middle of this tumult, and after the country has changed the (form of) the state two or three times because it has failed to satisfy all these demands, I wanted to point out that they were contradictory. Good heavens, what was I thinking of? Could I not keep this unfortunate remark to myself?

⁵⁶ "Patentes" were direct taxes imposed on any individual who carried out a trade, occupation, or profession. The patentes were first imposed in 1791 by the Constituent Assembly and were completely reformulated in 1844.

⁵⁷ The French word used here is "prestations," which is an abbreviation of "prestations en nature" (or "obligatory services in kind"), according to which all able-bodied men were expected to spend two days a year maintaining roads in and around their towns. The prestations were a reform of the much-hated and burdensome compulsory labor obligations known as the "corvée," dating from the ancien régime. The corvée was abolished by Turgot in 1776; however, it returned, as did the "gabelle" (salt tax), in a less onerous form during the Consulate period under Napoléon, only to be abolished again in 1818. Under the law of 1824 the modern form of the prestations was introduced whereby the compulsory labor was used only for local roads. A further modification took place in 1836, when the labor service could be commuted to the payment of a money equivalent. See "The Prestation and Corvée," in Appendix 3: Economic Policy and Taxation, CW3, pp. 501-2.; and also Courcelle Seneuil, "Prestations," in *Dictionnaire de l'Économie Politique*, vol. 2, pp. 428-30.

Here I am, discredited forever, and it is now generally accepted that I am a man without any heart or compassion,⁵⁸ a dry philosopher,⁵⁹ an individualist, a bourgeois⁶⁰ and, to sum it up in a single word, an economist of the English or American school.

Oh, excuse me, you sublime writers whom nothing stops, not even contradictions.⁶¹ I am doubtless mistaken, and I most willingly retract my statements. I do not ask for more, you may be sure, than that you have genuinely discovered, independently from us, a bountiful and inexhaustible being that calls itself THE STATE, which has bread for every mouth, work for every arm, capital for all businesses, credit for all projects, ointment for all wounds, balm for all suffering, advice for all problems, solutions for all doubts, truths for all intelligent minds, distractions for all forms of boredom, milk for children, wine for the elderly, a being that meets all our needs, anticipates all our desires, satisfies all our curiosity, corrects all our errors, all our faults, and relieves us all henceforth of the need for foresight, prudence, judgment, wisdom, experience, order, economy, temperance, and action.

⁵⁸ The socialists often accused the political economists of being “sans entrailles” (heartless - literally “without guts”) because of their support for the ideas of Thomas Malthus on population growth. Malthus had argued in *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) that unless the workers were able to use “moral restraint” to limit the size of their families they were doomed to poverty and even death. Since all of the economists were ardent Malthusians except for Bastiat, this comment is rather ironic. See “On Malthus and Malthusian Limits to the Growth of the State” in *Further Aspects of Bastiat’s Thought*, in CW3, pp. 461-64; and the editor’s introduction and notes to Bastiat’s article “On Population” (JDE, 15 Oct. 1846), CW4 (forthcoming) for a discussion of this.

⁵⁹ This is another ironic comment on himself since one of the reasons he had become one of the greatest economic journalists who has ever lived is his clever and innovative use of humour to make economic ideas understandable to the general reader. He did not want to be accused of being “dry and dull” (de sécheresse et de prosaïsme) in his writing and so he deliberately used ridicule (as in his many uses of the *reductio ad absurdum* argument), jokes (la plaisanterie), and plays on words. See the discussion of his “rhetoric of liberty” in “Bastiat’s Rhetoric of Liberty: Satire and the ‘Sting of Ridicule,’” in the Introduction to CW3, pp. lviii-lxiv.

⁶⁰ The word “un bourgeois” was not in the JDD version.

⁶¹ This is a reference to his exasperation with Proudhon who revelled in the use of contradictions and antinomies in his criticism of the legitimacy of profit, interest, and rent. See, *Free Credit* (Oct. 1849 - March 1850, *Voix de peuple*), CW4 (forthcoming).

And why would I not desire this? May God forgive me, but the more I reflect on this, the more the convenience of the thing appeals to me, and I too am anxious to have access to this inexhaustible source of wealth and enlightenment, this universal doctor, this bottomless treasury, and (this) infallible counsel, or what you are calling THE STATE.

This being so, I ask you to show it to me and define it for me, and this is why I am proposing the establishment of a prize for the first person who discovers this exceptional creature. For in the end, people will agree with me that this precious discovery has not yet been made since up to now, all that has come forward under the name of THE STATE has been overturned instantly by the people, precisely because it does not fulfill the somewhat contradictory conditions of the program.⁶²

Does this need to be said? I fear that we are, in this respect, the dupes⁶³ of one of the strangest illusions⁶⁴ ever to have taken hold of the human mind.⁶⁵

⁶² This phrase “the somewhat contradictory conditions of the program” appears in both the JDD version and the 1849 version. In the former, whose “program” is not specified but one would suppose it referred to the socialist plans put forward by Louis Blanc in the National Workshops program which he had run between late February and June 1848, or those of Victor Considerant in the Chamber of Deputies who was lobbying for a government-funded experimental socialist community to be set up north of Paris, or the ideas of Alexandre Ledru-Rollin who was Minister of the Interior under the Provisional Government and who would later lead the socialist Montagnard group in the Chamber in 1849. During the Second Republic deputies on the extreme left adopted the name “Montagnards” (or Mountain), which had first been used during the French Revolution by Robespierre and his supporters. In the 1849 version of this essay, Bastiat explicitly mentions the electoral program or Manifesto of the Montagnards and which he discusses at some length in a new section. See below.

⁶³ The idea of deception and trickery was central to Bastiat’s understanding of economic sophisms. According to him, individuals were deprived of their property directly by means of “la force” (coercion or force) or indirectly by means of “la ruse” (fraud or trickery) or “la duperie” (deception). The beneficiaries of this force and fraud used “les sophismes” (misleading and deceptive arguments) to deceive ordinary people whom he referred to as “les dupes” (dupes). See “Bastiat on Enlightening the ‘Dupes’ about the Nature of Plunder,” in the Introduction to CW3, pp. lv-lviii.

⁶⁴ A couple of weeks after the revolution broke out in February 1848 Bastiat wrote an article on the illusions which seemed to have taken hold in the people’s minds: “Disastrous Illusions” (JDE, March, 1848), in CW3, pp. 384-99.

⁶⁵ The following paragraph expands on what he said more briefly in the JDD version.

Man rejects pain and suffering. And yet he is condemned by nature to the suffering which privation brings if he does not embark upon the pain of work. All he has, therefore, is a choice between these two evils. How can he avoid both? Up to now, he has only found and will only ever find one means, that is, to *enjoy the work of others*, to act in such a way that pain and satisfaction do not fall to each person according to (some) natural share), but that all pain falls on some and all satisfaction (goes) to the others. From this we get slavery or even plunder, in whatever form it (might take): wars, deception, violence, (trade) restrictions, fraud, etc., all monstrous forms of abuse but in line with the thought that has given rise to them. We should hate and combat (these) oppressors but we cannot say that they are absurd.⁶⁶

Slavery is receding,⁶⁷ thank heaven, and on the other hand, our aptitude for defending our property means that direct and open plunder is not easy to do. However, one thing has remained. It is this unfortunate primitive tendency within all men to divide into two our complex human lot, shifting pain onto others and keeping satisfaction for themselves. It remains to be seen in what new form this sorry tendency will manifest itself.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ In *The Law* (June 1850) Bastiat distinguishes between three types of plunder: “partial plunder” which was plunder by the few of the many (which could be very profitable for the few as history had repeatedly shown); “universal plunder” where everybody plunders everybody else (which he thought was absurd and impossible to sustain in the long term but which he believed the socialists were trying to introduce during the 1848 Revolution); and “the absence of plunder” where nobody plunders anybody. See “Bastiat’s Theory of Class: The Plunderers vs. the Plundered” in *Further Aspects of Bastiat’s Thought*, in CW3, pp. 473-85.

⁶⁷ In the JDD version Bastiat stated that slavery already “had disappeared” but now he seems not so sure. Slavery had been abolished in 1794 during the Revolution and a number of freed blacks were elected to various French legislative bodies. Napoléon reintroduced slavery in 1802 and fought a bloody but unsuccessful war in order to prevent a free black republic from emerging in Haiti. In 1807, under pressure from such abolitionists as William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, Britain passed an act that abolished the slave trade, much of which was carried in British vessels. The United States followed suit in 1808 with a similar ban. Slavery was abolished in the British Caribbean in 1833, again in the French colonies during the 1848 revolution (27 April), and in the United States in 1865 (the Thirteenth Amendment).

⁶⁸ The following paragraph on the “Oppressors” was added to the 1849 version. In the JDD version, the reference to the state being used to find a “bouc émissaire” (scapegoat), namely modern taxpayers, on whom the burden of work could be placed, instead of slaves in previous centuries, was deleted.

Opressors no longer act directly on the oppressed using their own forces. No, our conscience has become too scrupulous for that. There are still tyrants and victims certainly, but between them has been placed the intermediary that is the state, that is to say, the law itself.⁶⁹ What is more calculated to silence our (moral) scruples and, perhaps more appealing, to overcome our resistance? For this reason, we all call upon the state on one ground or pretext or another. We tell it “I do not consider that there is a satisfactory relation between the goods I enjoy and my work. I would like to take a little from the property of others to establish the balance I desire. But this is dangerous. Can you not make my task easier? Could you not get me a good job in the government? Or else hinder the production of my competitors? Or else make me an interest free loan of the capital you have taken from its owners? Or raise my children at public expense? Or award me subsidies? Or ensure my well-being when I reach the age of fifty? By these means I will achieve my aim with a perfectly clear conscience, since the law itself will have acted on my behalf and I will achieve all the advantages of plunder without ever having incurred either its risks or opprobrium!

As it is certain, on the one hand, that we all address more or less similar requests to the State and, on the other, it is plain that the State cannot provide satisfaction for some without adding to the work of the others, while waiting for a new definition of the state, I think I am authorized to give my own here. Who knows whether it will not carry off the prize? Here it is:

*The state is the great fiction by which everyone endeavors to live at the expense of everyone else.*⁷⁰

⁶⁹ In his pamphlet *The Law* (June 1850) Bastiat makes the distinction between “la spoliation extra-légale” (extra-legal plunder) which is done without the sanction or approval of the state such as by thieves and highway robbers, and “la spoliation légale” (legal plunder) which is done by the state itself or with its sanction and approval by others. See *The Law*, in CW2, pp. 115-16.

⁷⁰ In the original French this important definition is: “L’État, c’est la grande fiction à travers laquelle tout le monde s’efforce de vivre aux dépens de tout le monde.” FEE translated this as: “The state is the great fictitious entity by which everyone seeks to live at the expense of everyone else.” David Wells translated it as “Government is the great fiction through which everybody endeavors to live at the expense of everybody else.” p. 160

For today, as in the past, each person more or less wants to profit from the work of others.⁷¹ We do not dare display this sentiment (openly); we even hide it from ourselves, and then what do we do? We design an intermediary, we address ourselves to the state, and each class in turn comes forward to say to it “You who can take things straightforwardly and honestly, take something from the general public and we will share it.” Alas! The state has a very ready tendency to follow this diabolical advice as it is made up of ministers and civil servants, in short, men, who like all men are filled with the desire and are always quick to seize the opportunity to see their wealth and influence increase.⁷² The state is therefore quick to understand the profit it can make from the role that the general public has entrusted to it. It will be the arbiter and master of every destiny. It will take a great deal; (and) therefore a great deal will be left (over) for itself. It will increase the number of its officials and widen the circle (scope) of its functions. It will end up acquiring an overwhelming size.

But what we should clearly note is the astonishing blindness of the general public in all this. When victorious soldiers reduced the conquered to slavery they were barbaric, but they were not absurd. Their aim, like ours, was to live at someone else’s expense, but unlike us, they (were able to) achieve this. What should we think of a people who do not appear to have any idea that *reciprocal pillage*⁷³ is no less pillage because it is reciprocal, that it is no less criminal because it is executed legally and in an orderly fashion, that it adds nothing to public well-being and that, on the contrary, it reduces well-being by everything that this spendthrift of an intermediary that we call the state costs us?

⁷¹ The following section has been expanded and revised from the JDD version.

⁷² This is an example of Bastiat’s “public choice” insights into the behaviour of bureaucrats and politicians. Another important one is his speech in the Chamber on the formation of committees: “Speaks in a Discussion in the Assembly on the Formation of Committees” (13 May 1848) , CW4 (forthcoming).

⁷³ Bastiat used several expressions for this concept. “La spoliation” (plunder), “le pillage” (pillage), “le vol” (theft), and “le monopole” (monopoly) could be “réciproque” (reciprocal), “mutuelle” (mutual), or “universelle” (universal). His most detailed discussion of the different types of plunder can be found in *The Law*, in CW2, pp. 117ff.

And we have placed this great illusion in the opening lines of the Constitution to edify the people. These are the opening words of the preamble:⁷⁴

“France has been constituted as a republic in order to ... call (upon) all its citizens to (achieve) an increasingly higher level of morality, enlightenment, and well-being.”⁷⁵

Thus, it is France, *an abstraction*,⁷⁶ that calls (upon) French citizens, (who are) *real (existing) things*, to (achieve greater) morality, well-being, etc. Isn't this to accept completely this strange illusion that leads us to expect everything from some power other than our own? Does it not give rise to the idea that there is, external to the French people, a being that is virtuous, enlightened, and rich that can and ought to bestow benefits on them? Is it not to presume, quite gratuitously of course, that there is between France and the French, between the simple, brief, and abstract

⁷⁴ Bastiat paraphrases the opening paragraph of the new Constitution: “La France s'est constituée en République pour... appeler tous les citoyens à un degré toujours plus élevé de moralité, de lumière et de bien-être.”

⁷⁵ For a discussion of the opening paragraph and other clauses in the new Constitution which concerned Bastiat and the other economists, see the Introduction.

⁷⁶ Bastiat here cuts an interesting passage from the JDD version on the way the abstractions of “France” and “The State” are now used as substitutes for ancient slavery: “Nous sommes trente-cinq millions d'individualités, et de même qu'on nomme *blancheur* cette qualité commune à tous les objets *blancs*, nous désignons la réunion de tous les Français par ces appellations collectives France, République, Etat. Ensuite, nous nous plaisons à supposer dans cette *abstraction* de l'intelligence, de la prévoyance, des richesses, une volonté, une vie propre et distincte de la vie individuelle. C'est cette *abstraction* que nous voulons follement substituer à l'Esclavage antique. C'est sur elle que nous rejetons la peine, la fatigue, le fardeau et la responsabilité des existences réelles et comme s'il y avait une France en dehors des Français, une cité en dehors des citoyens, nous donnons au monde cet étrange spectacle de citoyens attendant tout de la cité, de réalités vivantes attendant tout d'une vaine abstraction.”

“We are a nation of thirty five million individuals, and just as one gives the name “whiteness” to that common quality which all “white” objects have, one refers to the group of all French people with collective names such as “France,” “The Republic,” and “The State.” Then we like to imagine that in this abstraction of the mind, of foresight, and of wealth, (there is) one will, one particular and distinct life, one individual life. It is this *abstraction* that we want to rashly substitute for (put in the place of) ancient slavery. It is onto it that we want to place the pain, fatigue, burden, and responsibility of everyday life (des existences réelles); and, as if there was a France outside (beyond) of the French people and a city outside of (its) citizens, we show the world this strange spectacle of citizens expecting everything from the city, real living things expecting everything from an empty abstraction.”

term used to describe all of these individuals (as a group) as well as the individuals themselves, a relationship of father and child, tutor and pupil, teacher and schoolchild? I am fully aware that it is sometimes metaphorically said that “the fatherland is a tender mother.” However, to catch a clause in the Constitution (itself) in flagrant inanity, you need to show only that it can be inverted, not without inconvenience but even advantageously. Would accuracy have suffered if the preamble had said:

“The French people have constituted themselves as a republic in order to call upon France to (achieve) an increasingly higher level of morality, enlightenment and well-being?”

Well, what is the value of an axiom in which the subject and object can change places without causing trouble? Everyone understands that you can say: Mothers suckle their children. But it would be ridiculous to say: children suckle their mothers.

The Americans had another concept of the relationship between citizens and the state when they placed at the head of their Constitution these simple words:

“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain, etc.”

Here we have no illusions, no *abstraction* from which its citizens ask everything. They do not expect anything other than from themselves and their own energy. They place no expectations on anything other than themselves and their own energy.

If I have taken the liberty of criticizing the opening words of our Constitution, it is because it is not a question, as one might believe, of wholly metaphysical subtlety. I claim that this *personification* of the state has been in the past and will be in the future a rich source of calamities and revolutions.

Here is the public on one side and the state on the other, considered to be two distinct beings, the latter obliged to spread (goodness) over⁷⁷ the former and the

⁷⁷ Amusingly, the word “épandre” is often used in the sense of “spreading manure” over a field.

former having the right to claim from the latter a flood of human happiness. What is bound to happen?

In fact, the state is not and cannot be one-handed.⁷⁸ It has two hands, one to receive and the other to give; in other words, (it has a) rough hand and a gentle hand.⁷⁹ The action of the latter is of necessity subordinate to the action of the former. Strictly speaking, the state is able to take and (does) not give back. This has been seen and is explained by the porous and absorbent nature of its hands, which always retain part and sometimes all of what they touch. But what has never been seen,⁸⁰ will never be seen, and cannot even be conceived is that the state will give to the general public more than it has taken from them. It is therefore sublime folly for us to adopt toward it the humble attitude of beggars. It is completely impossible for it to confer a particular advantage on some of the individuals who make up the community without inflicting greater damage on the community as a whole.

It therefore finds itself, because of our demands, in an obvious vicious circle.

If it refuses the services being demanded of it, it is accused of impotence, lack of willpower, and incapacity. If it tries to provide them, it is reduced to inflicting increased taxes on the people, doing more harm than good, and attracting to itself general dislike from the other direction.

Thus there are two hopes among the general public and two promises from the government: *a host of benefits and no taxes*. Hopes and promises which, as they are contradictory, can never be achieved.

Is this not then the cause of all our revolutions? For between the state, which is hugely generous with impossible promises, and the general public, which has conceived unattainable hopes, have come two classes of men, those with ambition and those with utopian dreams. Their role is clearly laid out by the situation. It is

⁷⁸ The following paragraph on the two-handed nature of the state was not in the JDD version.

⁷⁹ This is the only occasion where Bastiat uses the terms “la main rude et la main douce” (the rough hand and the gentle or soft hand).

⁸⁰ Here is another example of Bastiat’s distinction between “the seen” and “the unseen.” See the last pamphlet he wrote before he died: *What Is Seen and What Is Not Seen* (July 1850), in CW3, pp. 401-52.

enough for these flatterers who seek popularity⁸¹ to shout into the people's ears: "The authorities are misleading you, if we were in their place, we would shower you with benefits and relieve you of taxes."

And the people believe this, and the people hope, and the people stage a revolution.

No sooner are their friends in power than they are required to fulfill these promises. "So give me work, bread, assistance, credit, education, and colonies," say the people, "and notwithstanding this, deliver me from the clutches of the tax authorities [le fisc] as you promised."

The new *state* is no less hampered than the former state since, when it comes to the impossible, promises may well be made but not kept. It tries to play for time, which it needs to bring its huge projects to fruition. First of all, it tries a few things timidly; on the one hand it expands primary education a little,⁸² secondly, it makes slight modifications to the tax on wines and spirits (1830).⁸³ But the contradiction still stands squarely before it; if it wants to be philanthropic it is obliged to maintain taxes, and if it reduces taxation it is also obliged to reduce philanthropy.

⁸¹ Bastiat uses the phrase "ces courtisans de popularité" (flatterers who seek popularity) which FEE translated as "demagogues."

⁸² Important revisions to the education system were the Guizot Law of 1833 and the Falloux Law of 1850. Battles were fought in the 1830s and 1840s over the right of Catholic schools to operate independently of the state and the right to establish additional private schools, the so-called struggle for "liberty of education". The Guizot Law required every commune to set up an elementary school for boys, created a corps of school inspectors, and set a minimum salary for teachers. It did not make attendance compulsory (this was enacted in 1882 by Jules Ferry). The Falloux Law of 1850 permitted a considerable expansion of Catholic schools and created a two tier system of state funded government schools run by the communes, departments or the central government, and private "free" schools."

⁸³ Bastiat put the date 1830 in brackets here with no explanation. What he meant to say was that the new July Monarchy (which came to power in August 1830) launched an initiative to review French tariff and tax policies after the increases enacted in the 1820s during the Bourbon Restoration. It published a report which contained its very modest suggestions for cuts: *Procès-verbal des séances de la Commission instituée pour examiner les impôts sur les boissons* (1830). Paris 23 August, 1830. Bastiat briefly discusses these reforms in "The Tax Authorities and Wine" (Jan. 1843), in CW2, p. 15.

These two promises always,⁸⁴ and of necessity, block each other. Making use of borrowing, in other words consuming the future, is really a current means of reconciling them; efforts are made to do a little good in the present at the expense of a great deal of harm in the future. However, this procedure evokes the specter of bankruptcy, which chases credit away. What is to be done then? The new state in this case takes its medicine bravely. It calls together its coercive forces to keep itself in power, it stifles public opinion, it exercises arbitrary power, it mocks its own former slogans, and it declares that administration can be carried out only at the cost of being unpopular. In short, it declares that it is *acting like a government*.

And it is at this point that other flatterers who seek popularity lie in wait. They exploit the same illusion, go down the same road, obtain the same success, and within a short time are engulfed in the same abyss.

This is the situation we reached in February.⁸⁵ At that time, the illusion that is the subject of this article had penetrated even further into the minds of the people, together with socialist doctrines. More than ever, the people expected the *state*, in its republican form, to open wide the tap of bounty and close that of taxation. “We have often been misled,” said the people, “but we ourselves will see to it that we are not misled once again.”

What could the provisional government do? Alas, only what has been always been done in a like situation: make promises and play for time. The government did not hesitate to do this, and to give their promises more solemnity they set them in decrees. “An increase in well-being, a reduction of work, assistance, credit, free education, farming colonies, land clearance, and at the same time a reduction in

⁸⁴ The first half of this paragraph is new to the 1849 version.

⁸⁵ The February Revolution of 1848 took place over three days: 22-24 February. On 25 February a new Provisional Government of the Second Republic was declared.

the tax on salt, on wine and spirits, on postage, on meat, all this will be granted ... when the National Assembly meets.”⁸⁶

The National Assembly met, and since two contradictory things cannot be achieved, its task, its sad task was to withdraw as gently as possible and one after the other all the decrees of the provisional government.

However, in order not to make the disappointment too cruel, a few compromises simply had to be undertaken. A few commitments have been maintained, and others have only barely begun to be implemented. The current government is therefore endeavoring to dream up new taxes.

At this point, I will look ahead a few months into the future and ask myself, with sadness in my heart, what will happen when the newly appointed government officials go out into the countryside to raise the new taxes on inheritance, on income, and on the profits of agricultural production. May the heavens give the lie to my presentiments, but I can still see a role in this for the flatterers who seek popularity.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Elections for the Constituent Assembly were held 23-24 April 1848 and the Assembly met on 4 May. Bastiat was elected to represent Les Landes and was selected by the Chamber to sit on its Finance Committee, of which he was Vice-President. The Provisional Government issued many important decrees before the Assembly met, some of which it later tried to reverse. Key pieces of legislation included a declaration of “the right to work,” the formation of the National Workshops, the abolition of the death penalty for political crimes, amnesty for violations of the censorship laws, the abolition of noble titles, confiscation of the property of the monarch (25 Feb.); the working day is reduced to 10 hours in Paris and 11 hours elsewhere; declaration of universal manhood suffrage in elections (2 March); laws guaranteeing freedom of the press and association (4 March); abolition of prison for debtors (9 March); abolition of corporal punishment (12 March); the central Bank suspends specie payments; the government increases direct taxes by 45% (the so-called 45 centimes tax) (15 March); abolition of the salt tax (21 April); abolition of slavery (27 April).

⁸⁷ The two pages of text which follows were not in the JDD version, which suggests that this section was written around April 1849 when the elections for the new National Assembly (the new constitution having been ratified on 4 November the previous year) were being held. The election for the first president of the Second Republic had been held on 10 December 1848.

Read the latest Manifesto of the Montagnards, the one they issued regarding the presidential elections.⁸⁸ It is a bit long, but in the end, it can be briefly summarized thus: *The state must give a great deal to its citizens and take very little from them.* This is always the same tactic, or if you prefer, the same error.

The state owes “free instruction and education to all its citizens.”⁸⁹

It owes: “General and vocational education that is as appropriate as possible to the needs, vocations, and capacities of each citizen.”

It must: “Teach him his duties toward God, men, and himself; develop his feelings, aptitudes, and faculties and in short, give him the knowledge needed for his work, the enlightenment needed for his interests, and a knowledge of his rights.”

It must: “Make available to everybody literature and the arts, the heritage of human thinking, the treasures of the mind, and all the intellectual enjoyment that elevates and strengthens the soul.”

It must: “Compensate any (harm caused by) accident, fire, flood, etc. (this *et cetera* says far more than its small size would suggest) experienced by a citizen.”

It must: “Intervene in business and labor relations and make itself the regulator of credit.”

It owes: “Significant encouragement and effective protection to farmers.”

It must: “Buy back the railways, canals, and mines,” and doubtless also run them with its legendary capacity for industry.

⁸⁸ The election for the first president of the Second Republic had been held on 10 December 1848. It was won convincingly by Louis Napoléon with 74% of the vote; General Cavaignac got 20%, and Ledru-Rollin representing the socialist Montagnard party (also known as the “Démoc-socs” (democratic socialists)), came third with a paltry 5%. Bastiat quotes from a pamphlet used by Ledru-Rollin is this campaign put out by the Democratic Electoral Committee of the Jura Department and which contains a five page “Manifesto of the Representatives of the Mountain.” See, *Candidature du citoyen Ledru-Rollin. Le Comité électoral démocratique du Jura. Aux Républicains démocrates de ce département.* (Arbois, Imprimerie d’Aug. Javel, (no date)). 8 pp. “Manifeste des représentants de la Montagne,” pp. 3-8.

⁸⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, all these quotations come from “Manifeste des représentants de la Montagne,” pp. 6-8

It must: “Stimulate and encourage large (economic) undertakings and provide them with all the resources needed to make them a triumphant success. As the regulator of credit, it will sponsor manufacturing and farming associations fully in order to ensure their success.”

The state has to do all this without prejudicing the services which it currently carries out and, for example, it will have to maintain a constantly hostile attitude toward foreigners since, as the signatories of the (Montagnard) program state, “bound by this sacred solidarity and by the (historical) precedents of republican France, we extend our hopes and promises across the barriers that despotism raises between nations: the right we wish for ourselves we also wish for all those oppressed by the yoke of tyranny. We want our glorious army to continue to be, if necessary the army of freedom.”⁹⁰

As you can see, the gentle hand of the state, that gentle hand that gives and spreads benefits widely, will be fully occupied under the Montagnard government. Might you perhaps be disposed to believe that this will be just as true of the rough hand that goes rummaging and rifling in our pockets?

Don’t you believe it! The flatterers who seek popularity would not be masters of their trade if they did not have the art of hiding an iron fist in a velvet glove.

Their reign will certainly be a cause for celebration for taxpayers.

“Taxes must be imposed on unessential luxuries,” they say, “not on essentials.”

Would it not be a fine day if, in order to shower us with benefits, the tax authorities were content to take their cut from our unessential luxuries.

That is not all. The aim of the Montagnards is that “taxes will lose their oppressive character and become just a fraternal act.”

Good heavens! I was well aware that it is fashionable to shove fraternity in everywhere,⁹¹ but I did not think it could be inserted into the tax collector’s regulations.

Coming down to detail, the signatories of the program say:

⁹⁰ “Manifeste des représentants de la Montagne,” p. 4.

⁹¹ See his pamphlets on “Justice and Fraternity” (JDE, 15 June 1848), in CW2, pp. 60-81.

“We want the taxes levied on objects of primary necessity, such as salt, wines and spirits, *et cetera*, to be abolished immediately;

The land tax, city tolls, and occupational licenses to be reformed;

Justice (to be) free of charge, that is to say, (there should be) a simplification of the forms and a reduction in the fees” (Bastiat’s aside: this is doubtless a reference to the stamp tax).

Thus, land tax, city tolls, industrial licenses, stamp duty, salt tax, tax on wine and spirits and postage would all go. These gentlemen have found the secret of giving feverish activity to the *gentle hand* of the state while paralyzing its *rough hand*.

Well then, I ask the impartial reader, is this not childishness and, what is more, dangerous childishness? What is to stop the people mounting revolution after revolution once the decision has been taken to keep doing so until the following contradiction has been achieved: “Give nothing to the state and receive a great deal from it!”?

Do people believe that if the Montagnards came to power they would not be victims of the (same) means they employed to seize it?

Fellow citizens, since time immemorial two political systems have confronted one another and both have good arguments to support them. According to one, the State has to do a great deal, but it also has to take a great deal. According to the other, its two activities should be barely felt. A choice has to be made between these two systems. But as for the third system, which takes (something) from (each of) the two others and which consists in demanding everything from the state while giving it nothing, this is illusionary, absurd, puerile, contradictory, and dangerous. Those who are pushing for this (in order) to give themselves the pleasure of (being able to accuse) all forms of government of impotence, and of thus exposing them

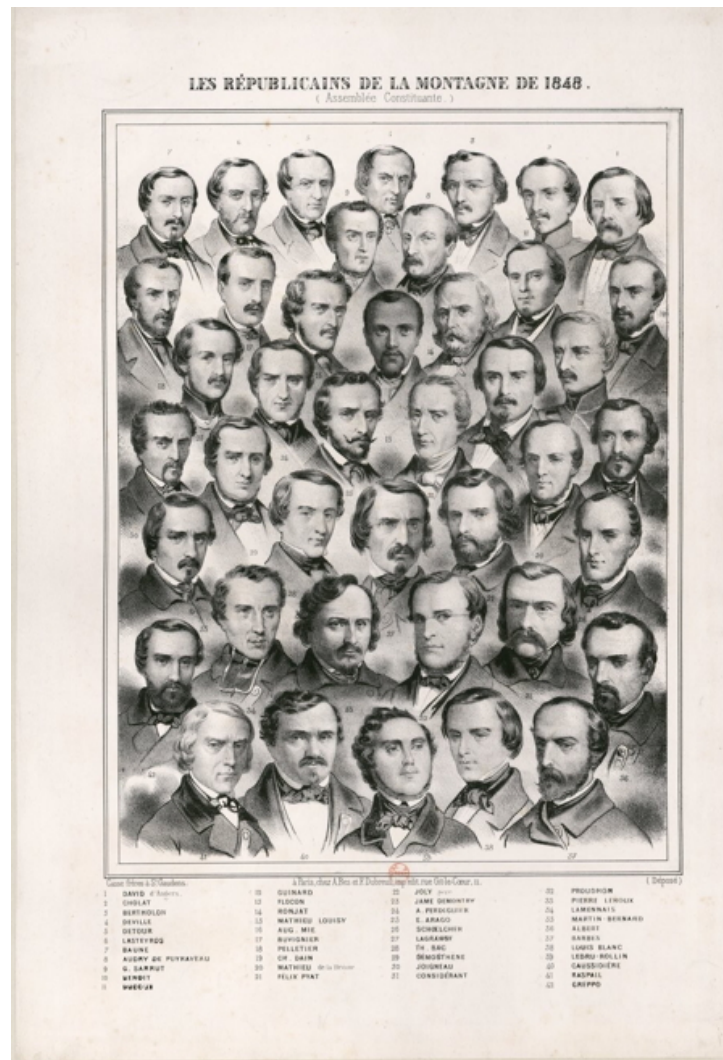
(governments) to your revolutionary attacks, those people are flattering and deceiving you, or at the very least they are deceiving themselves.⁹²

As for us, we consider that the state is not, nor should it be, anything other than the coercive power of the community, (which is) instituted not to be an instrument of reciprocal oppression and plunder between all of its citizens, but on the contrary to guarantee to each person what is his and ensure the reign of justice and security.

⁹² In this version Bastiat cuts from the concluding paragraph a second reference to the “personification of the state” (the first is above, pp. 000): “Il faut donc que le peuple de France apprenne cette grande leçon : Personnifier l'État, et attendre de lui qu'il prodigue les bienfaits en réduisant les taxes, c'est une véritable puérilité, mais une puérilité d'où sont sorties et d'où peuvent sortir encore bien des tempêtes.” (Thus the people of France must learn this important lesson: to personify the State and to expect that it will dispense benefits while (at the same time) reducing taxes, is pure childishness, but it is a childishness from which have come and could well still come great turmoil.)

GLOSSARY ON “THE MONTAGNARDS” AND THEIR ELECTION MANIFESTO (DEC. 1848)

The Montagnards



The Montagnards in 1848 were radical socialists and republicans who modelled themselves on “the Mountain” faction during the first French Revolution, the leader of which had been the lawyer Maximilien de Robespierre (1758-94).

They were called “the Mountain” because they sat as a group in the highest seats at the side or the back of the Chamber.

During 1848-49 the Montagnard group were also known as the “démoc-socs” (democratic socialists) and were led by Alexandre Ledru-Rollin. In the Second Republic the Montagnards did not do well in the first election for the Constituant Assembly held on 23-24 April 1848. In the 880 seat Chamber the moderate republicans had 600 deputies (68%), the monarchist group had 200 (23%), radical republicans and socialists had 80 (9%) of which 6% were Montagnards. In the election for President of the Republic held on 10-11 December 1848 the Montagnard candidate Ledru-Rollin came third with 5% of the vote, behind Louis Napoléon with 74% and General Cavaignac with 20%. The Montagnards’ best showing was in the election for the new Legislative Assembly held on 13-14 May 1849. In the 705 seat Chamber they quintupled their vote to win 180 (26% of the seats), behind “The Party of Order” which was a composite group of anti-republican monarchists and Bonapartists which won 450 seats (64%), while the moderate republicans were reduced to 75 seats (11%).

In the first major clash with the new government the Montagnards vigorously opposed Louis Napoléon’s decision to send French troops to Rome to assist Pope Pius IX in his struggle against the Italian republicans led by Mazzini. On 13 June 1849 they organized a demonstration in which about 6,000 people participated. It was put down by troops led by General Nicolas Changarnier. Ledru-Rollin and about 30 Montagnards Deputies then attempted to form a new provisional government which was quickly broken up with the arrest or the going into hiding of the participants. Thirty seven Montagnard deputies were stripped of their office, some were tried and imprisoned or deported, and many (like Ledru-Rollin) went into voluntary exile for 20 years in London. Louis Napoléon used the demonstration to close down Montagnard newspapers and political clubs and to impose other limits on freedom speech and association.

The manifesto of the Montagnards can be found in Ledru-Rollin’s campaign literature for the Presidential election of December 1849: *Candidature du citoyen Ledru-Rollin. Le Comité électoral démocratique du Jura. Aux Républicains démocrates de ce département.* (Arbois, Imprimerie d’Aug. Javel, (no date)). 8 pp. “Manifeste des représentants de la Montagne,” pp. 3-8.

“The Election Manifesto of the Montagnards” (Manifeste des représentants de la Montagne) (en français)

MANIFESTE

DES REPRÉSENTANTS DE LA MONTAGNE.



Elus du peuple, investis par lui du suprême honneur de le représenter, nous lui devons une sincère et solennelle exposition des principes que nous avons pris pour règle dans l’accomplissement de notre mandat. Nous connaissons la grandeur des devoirs que ce mandat nous impose; et, résolu à les remplir avec autant d’énergie que de constance, nous voulons dire au peuple comment nous les comprenons. **Fidèles à la sainte tradition de nos pères, pleins de foi dans**

Source

Candidature du citoyen Ledru-Rollin. Le Comité électoral démocratique du Jura. Aux Républicains démocrates de ce département. (Arbois, Imprimerie d’Aug. Javel, (no date)). 8 pp. “Manifeste des représentants de la Montagne,” pp. 3-8.

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Note: Passages quoted by Bastiat are in bold.

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PRINCIPES GÉNÉRAUX. — "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, voilà notre dogme, la plus haute expression des lois souveraines, destinées à régir l'humanité.

La liberté, l'Egalité, c'est le droit; la Fraternité, c'est le devoir; le droit et le devoir sont les conditions radicales, premières, les éternelles conditions de l'ordre, sans lesquelles nulle société, non seulement ne subsisterait, mais ne pourrait se concevoir. Le droit protège l'individu, le conserve, lui assure la pleine jouissance de soi; le devoir le subordonne à la société, et unit ainsi, au profit de tous, les individus entre eux. Mais qui dit union, union réelle et vraie, dit solidarité. Nous croyons donc à la solidarité nécessaire de tous les membres d'une même société, et à la solidarité de toutes les sociétés partielles, simples membres de la société générale appelée l'humanité.

De cette intime solidarité qui constitue la vie, car la vie est une, dérivent, comme ses conséquences immédiates, la concorde, la paix, l'obligation pour les peuples de se prêter un secours mutuel toutes les fois que leur liberté, leur indépendance, leur droit souverain sont attaqués. **Liés par cette solidarité sainte et par les précédents de la France républicaine, nous portons nos vœux et nos espérances au-delà des barrières que le despotisme élève entre les nations. Le droit que nous voulons pour tous, nous le voulons pour tous ceux qu'opprime le joug des tyrannies; nous voulons que notre glorieuse armée soit encore, s'il le faut, l'armée de la liberté.**

Tout peuple a pour principe la famille, base éternelle des sociétés, qu'elle engendre par son développement naturel. La famille est le type de toute organisation et la condition de toute existence. Ebranler la famille, toucher aux liens naturels qui unissent le père, la mère et l'enfant, qui font d'eux comme un seul être, l'homme complet, c'est attenter à la vie même du genre humain.

La propriété est à nos yeux sacrée comme le travail, dont elle est le mobile et le prix. En ce qui fait son essence, elle est de droit absolu ; en ce qui touche sa garantie et sa distribution, elle est de droit relatif et soumise aux lois positives.

Loin de vouloir détruire la propriété, nous voulons l'étendre, la généraliser, la rendre accessible à tous, afin que, dans un temps donné, par l'essor même des institutions sociales et les effets du travail personnel, chaque citoyen arrive à ce suprême complément de son individualité : la famille et la propriété. Telle est l'aspiration de ce peuple intelligent et probe qui, dans les journées de juillet 1850 et de février 1848, fusillait les voleurs et proclamait le droit au travail, associant ainsi, dans une sublime unité, les deux grands principes d'ordre et de progrès : le travail et la propriété.

Le travail, c'est la puissance de l'homme; c'est la force intelligente, active, qui s'empare de la nature extérieure et la soumet. Ce n'est pas un devoir imposé par une loi fatale ; c'est un besoin, c'est-à-dire un droit, le plus inviolable de tous. Le droit au travail c'est le droit à la vie. Il est parallèle et même antérieur au droit de propriété, qui n'en est que le résultat. Entre la propriété et le travail, il n'y a pas antagonisme, il y a identité. La propriété, c'est le travail réalisé. Entre le travail à faire et le capital qui est le travail fait, il faut une répartition conforme à la loi d'équité. Il faut enfin que l'Etat intervienne, non pour fournir le travail, mais les moyens, les instruments de travail ; non pour être chef d'industrie, mais régulateur du crédit ; le droit au travail est le droit au crédit.

Les institutions démocratiques ont pour but la réalisation des principes éternels que nous venons de reconnaître, et, par suite, l'amélioration progressive de l'état physique, intellectuel et moral de tous les citoyens. Ce but est le nôtre.

Héritiers du nom de la Montagne, nous nous glorifions de ce nom, auquel nous n'osions pas prétendre, et que nos adversaires nous ont jeté comme une injure. Nous acceptons, sous bénéfice des moyens nouveaux que le temps et la science

nous ont acquis , nous acceptons la pensée politique et sociale de nos devanciers, leur profond amour pour le droit et le peuple, leur haine vertueuse contre les privilèges des aristocrates , le courage de leur dévouement et leur foi dans l'avenir. Nos principes , nos votes et nos actes diront qui, de nous ou de nos ennemis , a le plus avant dans le coeur les sentiments de justice et d'humanité; qui d'eux ou de nous a recueilli la part des traditions sanglantes; nous qui, dans l'ardeur de noire démocratie, avons voulu abattre l'échafaud; eux qui, dans le calme de leur modération, ont voulu le maintenir et l'on maintenu.

Le progrès est l'éternelle loi de l'humanité. L'humanité ne s'arrête jamais sur la route que lui trace la Providence. Tout progrès a été , dans le passé, le prix d'une lutte violente entre l'erreur et la vérité ; mais, grâce à la forme nouvelle d'un gouvernement où tout émane de la volonté de tous , la lutte , c'est notre espoir, sera désormais pacifique. Pour être solide et durable, toute amélioration doit sortir de la libre discussion , du consentement de la raison publique , être enfin le développement normal des institutions dont le germe est semé dans le sein fécond de la démocratie.

Les principes du gouvernement républicain sont :

L'unité du pouvoir;

La liberté pour chacun ;

L'égalité pour tous;

La fraternité de chacun pour tous et de tous pour chacun.

De l'UNITÉ résultent :

La souveraineté réelle, morale et matérielle du peuple, sans fédéralisme, sans despotisme ;

La république une et indivisible dans le pouvoir comme dans le sol;

Le pouvoir unique et les fonctions distinctes;

Une assemblée législative suprême directement élue par tous les citoyens;

Les fonctions executives et judiciaires temporaires, dépendantes et révocables;

La vie donnée aux départements et aux communes par un double mouvement du centre aux extrémités, et des extrémités au centre, qui anime ainsi les parties comme le tout; la centralisation, mais non l'absorption.

De là Liberté découle :

Le droit de réunion ;

Le droit d'association ;

Le droit d'exercer son culte;

Le droit de manifester, de propager et d'enseigner sa pensée par la parole, par la presse et par tout autre mode d'exprimer l'idée humaine;

L'abolition de toutes les lois préventives et fiscales, cautionnements de journaux, privilèges d'imprimerie, censure et autres entraves attentatoires au droit inaltérable dépenser, de se réunir et de s'associer;

En un mot, l'exercice et le développement de toutes nos facultés.

De l'Egalité découle :

Le suffrage universel, fondement nécessaire de toutes les institutions, qu'il peut, seul, légitimer et assurer;

L'application la plus large possible de l'élection et du concours pour les fonctions publiques, civiles et militaires, politiques et religieuses ;

La répartition équitable de l'impôt et du service militaire ;

L'affranchissement des prolétaires ;

La reconnaissance de tous les droits méconnus et de tous les droits acquis ; la représentation de tous les intérêts anciens et nouveaux ; la satisfaction de tous les besoins légitimes.

De la Fraternité découlent :

La solidarité de tous les citoyens;

Les institutions de crédit, de prévoyance, d'assurance , d'assistance et de mutualité;

L'association libre du travail pour la production, l'équité dans la distribution;

L'harmonie et la paix par l'abondance et la justice.

La révolution de Février a un caractère éminemment fraternel et social; elle doit, un jour, mettre fin à l'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme. Sans nous enfermer dans aucun système, nous voulons réaliser les idées pratiques et applicables qui peuvent assurer l'émancipation du travail. Nous voulons, nous devons combattre et abattre les deux derniers tyrans du peuple : l'IGNORANCE et la MISÈRE ; l'ignorance, par un mode d'enseignement qui donne gratuitement, à chacun, l'instruction générale et professionnelle; la misère, par la réforme complète de l'impôt, par le crédit et l'association.

DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT. — L'Etat doit gratuitement l'instruction et l'éducation à tous les citoyens.

L'enseignement général et professionnel approprié, autant que possible, aux besoins , aux vocations et aux capacités de chaque citoyen, lui apprendra ses devoirs envers Dieu , envers les hommes, envers lui-même ; développera ses sentiments , ses aptitudes et ses facultés ; lui donnera, enfin , la science de son travail, l'intelligence de ses intérêts et la connaissance de ses droits.

Il faut, pour cela, rehausser la fonction des instituteurs, de ces hommes modestes et dévoués , qui font les citoyens.

Il faut **mettre, enfin, à la portée de tous, les lettres et les arts, le patrimoine de la pensée, les trésors de l'esprit, toutes ces jouissances intellectuelles qui élèvent et fortifient l'âme**, et dont le peuple, si bien fait pour les comprendre, a été jusqu'ici déshérité.

DE L'IMPÔT. — La société a des besoins, les citoyens doivent y pourvoir : c'est l'objet de l'impôt.

Tous les citoyens étant égaux, la répartition de l'impôt a pour règle l'égalité; la fortune et les ressources de chacun doivent déterminer sa part de contribution dans les charges communes.

L'impôt actuel pèse plus sur le pauvre que sur le riche ; il aggrave le fardeau de la misère, loin de la soulager.

L'impôt n'est pas même proportionnel.

Il n'est pas proportionnel, car la piquette du pauvre paie comme le vin du riche; la lucarne de la chaumière comme la fenêtre du château; car le sel se paie tant par livre, et la cote personnelle tant par tête; l'enregistrement tant pour cent, et le timbre un droit fixe; car la prestation en nature prend au laboureur des journées, et au bourgeois des écus ; car la patente, si lourde au marchand, est légère au banquier ; car six milliards de créances sur l'Etat et onze milliards de créances privées échappent à la taxe ; car on peut jouir en France de vingt, trente, cinquante, cent mille francs de revenu, sans contribuer aux frais de l'Etat.

Il n'est pas proportionnel, car, sur les seuls droits indirects , l'ouvrier paie à Paris quatre fois plus que le riche; dans les départements, deux fois plus.

Et cependant la répartition, même proportionnelle, ne satisfait pas encore l'égalité. **C'est le superflu, non le nécessaire, que l'impôt doit atteindre;** et puisque le superflu suit la progression de la fortune, comme le superflu, l'impôt doit être progressif suivant le revenu. Il est plus facile de payer 2,000 fr. d'impôts sur 10,000 fr. de rente, que d'en payer 100 sur 1,000. Dans le premier cas, on donne une partie du superflu ; dans le second, une partie du nécessaire.

Les chiffres établissent que, par l'impôt simplement proportionnel, le travailleur, le petit marchand et le petit propriétaire seraient dégrevés annuellement de plus de 400 millions. Le pauvre paie donc aujourd'hui la dette du riche, et c'est là ce que nos adversaires appellent la République *honnête*.

Mais l'impôt ne doit pas être seulement une charge pour le citoyen , c'est le prix de la garantie que lui donnera l'Etat. Ainsi l'assurance, tentée déjà par l'industrie

privée, deviendra une institution sociale. **Tout sinistre (incendie, inondation, etc.), éprouvé par un citoyen**, sera réparé par la contribution de tous. L'impôt, étant ainsi le gage de la sécurité de chacun, perdra son caractère oppressif et ne sera plus qu'un acte de fraternité.

DU CRÉDIT. — C'est par de bonnes institutions de crédit que l'Etat peut assurer le droit au travail et réaliser les promesses de la révolution de février.

Ici tout est à faire. Sans discuter maintenant aucun des projets proposés, nous disons que **l'Etat doit intervenir dans les rapports du capital avec le travail et se faire régulateur du crédit.**

Le crédit privé, qui cause, quand il est seul, des désastres périodiques et d'incessantes iniquités, doit être modéré et complété par un vaste crédit social, établi, non dans l'intérêt de quelques-uns, mais au profit de tous.

Des banques cantonales, liées à des banques départementales, et par elles à une banque centrale, fonctionnant toutes sous la surveillance et le contrôle de l'Etat, distribueraient partout le crédit aux travailleurs. Le travail serait ainsi délivré des exigences et des timidités du capital, ces deux grands obstacles de l'industrie. Les escomptes et les transactions entreraient dans les attributions de ces banques, qui mettraient alors en mouvement toutes les activités, vivifieraient tous les travaux, et, par l'accroissement de la production dûment répartie, développeraient vite le bien-être général, permettraient enfin la réduction de l'impôt.

L'agriculture, cette cause première de toute richesse nationale, profiterait, comme l'industrie, de l'organisation du crédit. Elle serait sauvée de l'exploitation de l'usure qui la ruine. Négligée par la monarchie, **l'agriculture** doit trouver, sous la République, **des encouragements sérieux et une protection efficace**, qu'elle lui rendra en prospérité et en sécurité.

En ajoutant, d'ailleurs, le rachat des chemins de fer, des canaux, les mines, de toutes les propriétés qui sont évidemment sociales, et qui ne sont livrées à l'industrie particulière qu'au mépris des principes, l'Etat relèvera la fortune publique, source de toute fortune privée, et accomplira la Révolution.

DE L'ASSOCIATION. — L'association fait la-puissance du capital ; c'est elle qui a créé les plus grandes entreprises de notre temps ; pourquoi ne ferait-elle pas aussi la puissance du travail ?

Par l'association, l'homme multiplie ses forces. Le travail collectif permet cette division des fonctions, qui économise les moyens et augmente les produits. Par l'association seule, le travailleur arrivera à la réalisation de l'égalité.

L'association doit être l'oeuvre de la liberté. L'Etat ne peut contraindre les individus à travailler dans le même atelier, à habiter sous le même toit, à s'asseoir à la même table. Il ne peut forcer les citoyens au régime du travail ou de la vie en commun; ce serait attenter à leur liberté. La violence même légale ne pourrait que nuire à l'association : c'est aux hommes qui ont foi dans le principe, à le propager par la parole, par la presse et par l'exemple, à le faire pénétrer dans le coeur et dans l'esprit, dans la conscience de tous. Le rôle de l'Etat doit être de **provoquer tentatives généreuses , de les encourager et de les aider par toutes les ressources capables de les faire triompher. Régulateur du crédit, il commanditera largement les associations industrielles et agricoles, afin d'en assurer le succès**, qui les imposera mieux que la force.

En résumé, nous voulons ce que veut le peuple :

L'unité du pouvoir;

La distinction des fonctions ;

La liberté de la pensée ;

La liberté de réunion et d'association ;

L'éducation gratuite ;

La révision des lois sur le service militaire;

L'abolition immédiate des impôts qui frappent les objets de première nécessité , comme le sel, les boissons , etc. ;

La réforme de l'impôt foncier, des octrois et des patentes ;

L'établissement de l'impôt proportionnel et progressif sur le revenu net;

Le rachat par l'Etat des chemins de fer, des canaux, des mines, etc. ;

La réforme administrative, judiciaire et pénale; **la justice gratuite, c'est-à-dire la simplification des formes et la réduction des frais ;**

Le droit au travail ;

Le crédit ;

L'association.

Enfin, nous voulons pacifiquement et progressivement toutes les conséquences de ces trois grands principes de la révolution française : Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, c'est-à-dire le gouvernement de tous, par tous et pour tous.

LA RÉPUBLIQUE UNE' ET INDIVISIBLE, DÉMOCRATIQUE ET SOCIALE.

LES REPRÉSENTANTS DU PEUPLE :

Astax (Puy-de-Dôme).--- Bac (Théodore) (Haute-Vienne).-- Baune (Loire).

-- Bertholon (Isère). -- Benoit (Rhône). -- Bravard-Toussaint (Puy-de-Dôme).-- Breymand (Haute-Loire).--Brives (Hérault).--Bruys (Amédée) (Saône-et-Loire).-- Buvignier (Isidore) (Meuse).--Gales (Haute-Garonne). -- Cholat (Isère).---Clément-Auguste (Isère). --David (d'Angers) (Maine-et-Loire).--Dain (Charles) (Guadeloupe).--James Demontry (Côte-d'Or). -- Détours (Tarn-et-Garonne). -- Deville (Hautes-Pyrénées). -- Doutré (Rhône). -- Dubarry (Hautes-Pyrénées). -- Fargin-Fayoüe (Allier). -- Gambon (Nièvre).-- Germain-Sarrut (Loir-et-Cher). -- Guinard (Seine). --Greppo (Rhône).--Jandeau (Saône-et-Loire).--Joigneaux (Côte-d'Or). --Joly (Haute-Garonne).--Joly (Edmond) (Aude). -- Lagrange (Charles) (Seine).---Lasteyras (Puy-de-Dôme).--Laurent (Ardèche).-- Ledru-Rollin (Seine). -- Lefranc (Pierre) (Pyrénées-Orientales). -- Madet (Allier). -- Maichain (Deux-

Sèvres).-- Martin-Bernard (Loire).--Mathé (Félix) (Allier). -- Mathieu (Drame). -- Ménand (Saône-et-Loire). -- Michot (Loiret). -- Mulé (Haute-Garonne).--Ollivier (Démosthènes) (Bouches-du-Rhône).-- Durieu (Paulin) (Cantal). -- Pégot-Ogier (Haute-Garonne). -- Pelletier (Rhône).--Perdiguier (Agricole) (Seine).-- Pyat (Félix) (Cher). -- Raspail (Eugène) (Vaucluse). -- Robert (Yonne). --Ronjat (Isère).-- Schoelcher (Martinique). -- Signard (Haute-Saône). -- Terrier (Allier). -- Vignerte (Hautes-Pyrénées.)