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*The Tariff Reform Campaign in France,  
1831-1836*

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Much work still needs to be done on the intricate problem of the impact of tariff policy on economic growth and international exchange in nineteenth-century Europe. Noone, for example, has attempted an econometric study of the consequences of the Zollverein, though historians have long declared — on inadequate circumstantial evidence — that the German Customs Union had beneficent effects on economic growth and transit trade. Equally, some of the work that has already been done on the formation of tariff policy stands in need of revision in the light of newer interdisciplinary approaches and the need to escape from an economic historicism that viewed the lowering of tariffs as liberalisation and evidence of progress and the raising of barriers as regression.

The tariff reform campaign in Western Europe in the second third of the nineteenth century is a case in point. It is still frequently presented, and not merely in general texts, in a simplified not to say mythogenetic manner. Still influential is the liberal tradition, so powerful in 1930s historiography, which views the campaign as a crusade that pitted the forces of light against those of darkness, those who were in the van of progress and liberalism against retrograde conservatives and defenders of narrow sectional interests. The tariff reform campaign could be safely isolated, the

issues clearly and simply delineated. Easily defined interest groups, commercial, industrial and agricultural, lined up behind the battle columns of each side. And the explanation of the success, partial success or failure of reform groups depended on the way in which the campaign was managed, the strength of reform interests in the economy and political society, the nature of the government. Thus in a recent, and not particularly illuminating, essay in comparative economic history,<sup>1</sup> C. P. Kindleberger seeks to explain the advent of what he calls free trade in Europe in the nineteenth century, reviews a number of monocausal explanations and comes to the disarming conclusion that tariff reductions had many different causes. There is indeed no phlogiston that will explain tariff policy-making and there is no simple explanation of the emergence of tariff reform campaigns and their destiny. This is as true of the tariff reform campaigns in July Monarchy France as it is of those in Britain during the same period.

The French tariff reform movement has generally been portrayed as a campaign undertaken by a militant minority armed with the pseudo-scientific arguments forged by political economy in Britain and France and with the ideology enunciated by Bastiat, supported by merchants and export interests against the great bulk of the business community, against the France of the « grands notables ». If reformers could not match the political power of defenders of the status quo, protectionists had no answer to the reformers' economic theory. Furthermore, it has frequently been argued, following claims made by reformers at the time, that the unreasonably high tariff hindered France's industrial performance in the first half of the century. Research and some emancipation from all-embracing economic liberalism are beginning to show, however, that the supposedly cosmopolitan and scientific free trade theory developed in Britain by Smith, Ricardo and Mill had a

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<sup>1</sup> C.P. KINDLEBERGER, "The Rise of Free Trade in Western Europe, 1820-1875", *Journal of Economic History*, vol. XXXV, 1975, pp. 20-55. Outside those economies, like the British or the Dutch, that developed a heavy dependence on international trade, the tariff policies adopted are more accurately termed low tariffs and the period the "Low Tariff Era".

significant element of national interest,<sup>2</sup> that the tariff campaigns conducted by Cobden in Britain and Bastiat in France had a strong moralist and pacifist element that was convenient for some and convincing for fewer, that protectionist theory was not a feeble hotch-potch, a regurgitation of mercantilist arguments, but a theory tailored to a situation where one economy, the British, enjoyed an important technological lead in critical industrial sectors.

It is also becoming clear that tariff reformers at the time and scholars subsequently have exaggerated the nefarious effects of the French tariff.<sup>3</sup> Given Britain's technological lead in key sectors like metallurgy, engineering and cotton, free trade or moderate tariffs on these items were arguably not a sine qua non of successful industrialisation. It may also be that the possibility of using foreign trade as a motor of growth had been preempted or reduced because of the dominance exercised by British merchants in European and world markets. Paul Bairoch has maintained that the French protective tariff permitted forward and backward linkages to take place and thereby stimulated induced growth, while increased inter-regional competition, together with the widespread smuggling of some items, encouraged rationalisation.<sup>4</sup> The French industrialist,

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<sup>2</sup> As has been shown by BERNARD SEMMEL, *The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism: Classical Political Economy, the Empire of Free Trade and Imperialism, 1750-1850*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1970.

<sup>3</sup> Such is certainly the case with a bevy of scholars chiefly American - who have sought to enumerate the "retardative" factors in the French economy in the nineteenth century, factors that range from the historical and cultural to resource allocation and geography. See, *inter alia*, A.L. DUNHAM, *The Industrial Revolution in France, 1815-1848*, New York, 1955, pp. 388-99, and RONDO E. CAMERON, *France and the Economic Development of Europe*, Princeton, 1961, pp. 36-7.

<sup>4</sup> PAUL BAIROCH, *Révolution industrielle et sous-développement*, Paris, 1963, pp. 126 ff. and 205-6; FRANÇOIS CROUZET, « Western Europe and Great Britain: "Catching Up" in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century », in A.J. YOUNGSON, ed. *Economic Development in the Long Run*, London, 1972, pp. 98-125. A free trader might argue — and some did at the time and a historian has repeated the argument (MAURICE LÉVY-LEBOYER, « Les processus d'industrialisation: le cas de l'Angleterre et de la France », *Revue historique*, vol. CCXXXIX, 1968, pp. 281-99) — that there need not have been opposition between the industrialisations of Britain and France and that given the relative strengths of each country each might have specialised in what it was best suited for. Thus Britain would have produced capital-intensive, semi-finished goods while France and other continental countries specialised in finishing processes. Such an argument does not take into account political considerations, sacrifices already imposed by tariffs and the interests created. Bairoch has attempted a general analysis of commercial policy formulation and its economic impact in *Commerce extérieur et développement économique de l'Europe au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1976.

viewed by some scholars as a routinising conservative who was possessed of a paranoid fear of British industry,<sup>5</sup> may well therefore have had a better grasp of his own interests than he has traditionally been given credit for. Fear of British industry there was but this was frequently a recognition that French industry did not have the advantages of the British and it was frequently more: a fear of creating in France the kind of industrial economy with a burgeoning proletariat and recurrent crises that seemed to threaten the stability and very existence of British society.<sup>6</sup> Sismondi, to take only the best-known critic, attacked industry for its size, for the rift between master and men and above all for the chronic overproduction that afflicted industrial economies. He likened this to the sorcerer's apprentice who could not control the forces he had conjured up.<sup>7</sup>

The tariff issue has often been viewed as a conflict between rival blocs, an unequal one in France where the forces resisting major tariff reductions represented the great bulk of French industry in alliance with landowners and agriculturists. This, too, may be an oversimplification. It is but doubtfully true, of course, that businessmen act as a class or as a unified group; it is even more doubtful, though some historians would have us believe the opposite, that there was some peculiar breed of French industrialist in the nineteenth century who was timorous and traditionalist in contrast with his more dynamic and daemonic counterpart across the Channel. And just as the familiar class portrayal of tariff reform in Britain as a contest between merchants and manufac-

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<sup>5</sup> Such is the picture painted by PETER N. STEARNS, "British Industry through the eyes of French industrialists (1820-1848)", *Journal of Modern History*, vol. XXXVII, 1965, pp. 50-61.

<sup>6</sup> Recent studies have shown that this fear of the kind of society and morality generated by the new industrialism was to be found among both politicians and civil servants. DENNIS SHERMAN, "Governmental Policy toward Joint-Stock Business Organisation in Mid-Nineteenth Century France", *Journal of European Economic History*, vol. III, 1974, pp. 149-68.

<sup>7</sup> For this anti-industrialism in economic thought, see J.M. DUTENS, *Analyse raisonnée des principes fondamentaux de l'économie politique*, Paris, 1804, and F.L.A. FERRIER, *Du Gouvernement considéré dans ses rapports avec le commerce*, 1805. For a general discussion, LÉON EPSZTEIN, *L'Economie et la morale aux débuts du capitalisme industriel en France et en Grande-Bretagne*, Paris, 1966, pp. 102-23.

turers on the one side and the landowning interest on the other has been shown to be an oversimplification,<sup>8</sup> so, too, the French debate can be shown to be complicated, the rival blocs fissured and even splintered rather than solid and monolithic. There were evident fissures in the protectionist bloc: those industrialists who either imported or wanted to import raw materials, semi-manufactures, or machinery had an obvious interest in a moderation in the severity of the tariff system on such items. If there existed a "textile interest", wide regional variations in products, techniques, location and even factor costs meant that a cotton-printer in Alsace might have very different views on the tariff system and foreign trade in general from a merchant-manufacturer in Normandy.<sup>9</sup> If there was a "wine interest", only a minority of wine-growers were anxious for tariff reductions and reciprocity abroad, for those who stood to gain were the producers of high quality wines whose products could tolerate high transport costs and foreign competition. Not even merchants in the ports were entirely agreed about reform of the tariff: the interests and prosperity of Marseilles, for instance, differed from those of Bordeaux.

The question of reforming the tariff, in France as elsewhere, was also complicated by political and financial considerations. The task of reformers in France was made more difficult by the absence in the political system of the July Monarchy not only of anything approaching a party system but of a government party and an organised opposition.<sup>10</sup> While the major political triumph of the

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<sup>8</sup> Researches by W.O. Aydelotte, George Kitson Clark and D.C. Moore have shown that not even the landowning interest was united on the corn law issue, that some sectors of British agriculture were more advanced than others and welcomed free trade, while in industry and commerce there were sectors that had a strongly entrenched interest in the protective system, or had been untouched by mechanisation and had considerable fears about the possible effects of foreign competition.

<sup>9</sup> "Le fabricant de mousseline conseillera toujours de laisser entrer les cotons filés de l'étranger; le fabricant de cotons filés conseillera toujours de les prohiber", wrote SAY (*Cours complet d'économie politique*, Paris, 1828, vol. III, p. 338) while Chaptal had long ago pointed out that the government faced an impossible task in tariff-making because different economic interests could not be reconciled (J.A. CHAPTAL, *De l'Industrie française*, Paris, 1819, vol. II, pp. 412-3).

<sup>10</sup> There was talk at the time of the party of "movement" and the party of "resistance" but these were tendencies, reflecting shifting alliances and personal coteries, rather than parties. In any case, "resistance" increased in strength as the years went by.

Anti-Corn Law League in Britain was to convince the leader of the Whig opposition of the soundness of their arguments,<sup>11</sup> no such breakthrough could be expected in a French Chamber of Deputies where groups formed around leading personalities and where seventeen different administrations followed each other in the space of just over seventeen years. In part, tariff reform was a weapon of opponents of the régime, especially those who regarded the 1830 Revolution as stymied, the suffrage of the new systems as too limited and the country under the domination of an industrial-financial élite in whose interest the tariff had been enacted under the Restoration and was being maintained under the July Monarchy. Tariff reform was thus, especially in the first years of the régime, part of the debate on the kind of political system and the kind of economy France should have.<sup>12</sup> For many opposition newspapers tariff reform had an obvious political dimension: it was a composite part of their campaign to lower the internal tax burden, to extend the franchise, to reduce the political and economic power of those accorded monopoly privileges under the suffrage and the tariff.<sup>13</sup> For some reformers tariff reductions were only one facet of changes they advocated. The journalist Stéphane Flachet, for example, suggested a series of reforms, which included transport improve-

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The British diplomatist George Villiers lamented in 1833: "The tactique of a legislative assembly is as wanting here as it must be in Timbuctoo — there is no order, no concert and no lead, everybody acts independently (except upon 3 or 4 vital questions of a session upon which a government's existence depends) caring for his individual opinion and indifferent to the general result." (Villiers to Thomson, 21 January 1833, Clarendon Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford).

<sup>11</sup> NORMAN McCORD, *The Anti-Corn Law League, 1838-1846*, London, 1958, p. 197. It might even be argued that the League, in intent and consequences, was essentially political rather than economic but that is another question.

<sup>12</sup> By symbiosis, defenders of the status quo argued the converse. The Comte Jaubert, in a speech on the tariff bill in 1836, equated tariff reform with the republican opposition, with those who tried to rouse popular passions and claimed that every régime needed some kind of élite: "aucune société ne peut se passer absolument d'aristocratie, il en faut une à tous les gouvernements. Voulez-vous savoir quelle est celle du gouvernement de Juillet? C'est celle des grands industriels et des manufacturiers, ce sont là les fondateurs de la dynastie nouvelle." (Chambre des députés, séance du 13 avril 1836, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CI).

<sup>13</sup> This was true, for instance, of *le National* and of the *Journal du Commerce*. See, for example, "Adresse des négocians de Bordeaux aux chambres législatives", *Journal du Commerce*, 3 February 1834, and "Nouvel ajournement du projet de loi sur les douanes", *ibid.*, 19 April 1835.

ments, increasing the intake at the *Ecole polytechnique*, the establishment of industrial and commercial schools on the lines of the *Ecole des mines* and the *Ecole des ponts-et-chaussées*, the setting up of primary schools to train workers in the skills of draughtsmanship, industrial chemistry and mechanics, the creation of a new industrial section at the *Institut*, with members constantly travelling abroad collecting information on foreign industry and with annual prizes to inventors and industrialists, and all these reforms were corollaries of tariff changes.<sup>14</sup>

The tariff issue involved more than internal politics: it was also a matter of foreign policy, of political and commercial diplomacy. Preference treaties offered one solution to the closing of foreign markets, and even unilateral reductions might elicit a liberal response in other countries. Either treaties or tariff reductions might lead to closer diplomatic relations. The tariff campaign of the 1830s was prompted by three important developments outside France. One was the success of Prussian commercial diplomacy: the founding of the Zollverein and the gradual absorption into it of the Rhenish and South German states. This frightened the French departments that bordered Germany but it also alarmed other export interests, especially when there appeared a danger that Belgium would reach some kind of accord with the new customs union. The second was the establishment of an independent Belgium: fitful commercial negotiations between the two countries were undertaken in the 1830s and, in fact, the first official proposal for a tariff union between Belgium and France dates from November 1836, while Léon Faucher's plan for a tariff union dates from 1837. The third, and most important stimulus to reform agitation, was the Anglo-French political rapprochement that followed the Convention of London in 1831. Partly as a consequence of this and partly as a result of the diplomatic onslaught on European governments which the British Board of Trade had begun in the 1820s, commercial negotiations between the two countries were begun in November 1831 and continued, falteringly, until the end

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<sup>14</sup> STÉPHANE FLACHAT, "De la réforme commerciale", *Revue des deux mondes*, 11 November 1834.

of 1834. Some French politicians were convinced that some commercial agreement or at least some tariff concessions would help cement good relations and this is certainly what the British negotiators, John Bowring and George Villiers, constantly reiterated.

The tariff question also impinged on another problem of importance: government finance. For nineteenth-century governments customs duties furnished a substantial proportion of their revenue. It was important, therefore, that either government finances be in a healthy state or at least that reformers could convince legislators that to lower duties would be to increase revenue. This was what the Althorp reforms in the 1830s seemed to demonstrate, this was what the 1840 Select Committee on Import Duties showed so convincingly and this was what advocates of tariff reductions sought to argue in France.

Historians have often seen the tariff reform campaign of the July Monarchy as the child of the upspring of the trade cycle of the early 1840s, and of Britain's liberalisation of her tariff, particularly by the Peel administration of 1841-6. Previous agitation had been but the gestation of the brilliant butterfly campaign that emerged with Bastiat's arrival in Paris and the foundation of the *Association pour la liberté des échanges*. In fact, the July Monarchy witnessed not one but two campaigns to reform the tariff and it is at least arguable that the importance of that of the 1840s has been exaggerated while that of the 1830s has been unduly overlooked. The movement of the 1840s began with the debate over the proposed Franco-Belgian customs union and reached its peak with the formation of the *Association pour la liberté des échanges* and the launching of its journal, *le Libre Echange*, in 1846. That of the 1830s was prompted in part by the series of tariff bills prepared by different ministers and ministries in the last years of the Restoration and early years of the July Monarchy, coincided with and was fostered by the Anglo-French commercial negotiations and the activities of the British negotiators, grew with the Duchâtel Inquiry of 1834-5 and reached its peak with the major debates of April-May 1836 and the passing of the two tariff laws of that year.

The two campaigns shared a number of traits in common. Both coincided with upturns in the trade cycle. In each, similar economic interests pressed for a moderation of the tariff and economists and the press played a prominent rôle. Both owed some of their inspiration to British example, in the shape of tariff reforms and the promptings of British representatives. Both evoked a powerful response from protectionist interests: in the 1830s the response was demonstrated in evidence given before the Duchâtel Inquiry and in debates in the Chambers; in the 1840s the response came in the form of the *Comité pour la défense du travail national* and *le Moniteur industriel*.<sup>15</sup>

There were also dissimilarities. At first blush the 1840s campaign appears more extensive, more significant, more successful. It had the *Journal des économistes* and Bastiat's vitriolic *Sophismes économiques*, as well as a free trade organisation with its propaganda consciously modelled on that first modern pressure group, the Anti-Corn Law League. This, however, is the semblance rather than the reality for the campaign achieved scant success and it is quite evident that already in 1847 the free trade movement was in a state of collapse, and it did not need a depression or a political revolution to end it. *Le Libre Echange* had but a small circulation among the converted, its meetings were staid gatherings of the faithful and its propaganda was a poor imitation of the Anti-Corn Law League's ceaseless outpourings from Newall's Buildings in Manchester. No organisers of the calibre of Wilson and no orators like Cobden emerged to give élan to the campaign. Bastiat's letters to Cobden, even when allowance is made for his pessimistic nature, are replete with lamentations at the rampant anglophobia, the sad state of the movement, the poor organisation,<sup>16</sup> and by October 1847 he was noting that " nous sommes bien faibles.

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<sup>15</sup> H.-T. DESCHAMPS, *La Belgique devant la France de juillet*, Brussels, 1956, *passim*. and A.-J. TUDESQ, *Les Grands Notables en France, 1840-1849. Etude historique d'une psychologie sociale*, Paris, 1964, pp. 417-22 and 618-27.

<sup>16</sup> Bastiat to Cobden, 21 July 1846 and 20 March 1847, Cobden Papers, *West Sussex Record Office*, Chichester.

Notre personnel militant se réduit à quatre ou cinq athlètes presque tous fort occupés d'autre chose".<sup>17</sup>

The 1830s campaign certainly turned up no Bastiat, but this may have been an advantage in that he was more a moralist than an economist and his brilliant satire proved a two-edged weapon that roused the fury of protectionists and caused dismay among some moderate reformers. The debate of the 1830s was less doctrinaire, for British tariff policy was far from being free trading and was not even unambiguously moderate, while protectionist interests were powerful in the *Conseils-généraux*, in the Chambers and in the government.<sup>18</sup> The extensive debates in the Chambers and the tariff laws of 1836 were, in large part, the result of the 1830s campaign. The changes that were introduced, modest though they were, constituted the only significant reforms effected during the July Monarchy period. It may be, therefore, that the earlier campaign was, for a variety of reasons, more successful than the better-known campaign led by Bastiat and Chevalier.<sup>19</sup>

Too much, perhaps, should not be made of the differences between the two movements, as there was a degree of continuity between them. Indeed, the debate on the tariff continued in muted form during the commercial depression from 1837 onwards. The main areas of debate, the lines of attack and defence, had already been laid down. The most important questions to be answered, then, are: how did the 1830s movement arise and how did it achieve the success that it did? There are a number of explanations for the genesis of the campaign. It is clear, firstly, that the campaign had indigenous roots: the emergence of political economy as a discipline and the growing dissatisfaction with the existing tariff, and particularly with its excesses and inconsequences. It is also clear that this dissatisfaction was only partly the product of

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<sup>17</sup> Bastiat to Cobden, 15 October 1847, *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> "Libre-échange" and "libre-échangiste" were two new terms that resulted from the 1846-7 campaign. It ought to be pointed out, however, that not too much should be made of the doctrinaire stance of the free trade association: the *Programme de réforme douanière proposé par l'association pour la liberté des échanges*, signed by Bastiat and the Duc d'Harcourt in April 1847, advocated moderate and gradual tariff reform.

<sup>19</sup> The reforming tariff bill of 31 March 1847 may be attributed, in part, to the 1840s campaign. However, the bill was never discussed.

a growing confidence stimulated by returning prosperity and the success of some export sectors<sup>20</sup> and more perhaps the result of doubts and uncertainties among various sectors of the business community. There were also exogenous stimuli, the principal of which was that given to the campaign and to the French government itself by the Anglo-French rapprochement and the presence in France of British commercial negotiators. Thirdly, as was generally recognised at the time, the campaign owed much to the press, not merely to the daily press but to periodicals and not merely to the Parisian press but to the provincial.<sup>21</sup>

## II

Historians tend to exaggerate the rôle played by theory in tariff policy-making. There has thus been a tendency to overstate the importance of one of the earliest contributions of modern economics, free trade theory, to Britain's tariff reforms in the first half of the nineteenth century. Not only was economic theory scarcely mentioned in parliamentary debates at the time but economists themselves were restrained in their advocacy of free trade, recognising the need for some restrictions and to proceed with caution. Indeed, those who advocated the immediate jettisoning of all tariffs were, like Cobden, less economists than moralists, propagandists and interested parties. In France, however, academic economists and writers on economics played a more prominent rôle in tariff reform agitations. This rôle was particularly evident in the 1840s when they founded a club, the *Société d'économie politique*, a periodical, the *Journal des économistes*, dominated the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*, the *Société de statistique* and its *Journal*, and were prominent in the *Association pour la liberté des échanges*.

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<sup>20</sup> The annual rate of growth of French exports by value was marginally higher than that for British exports in the period 1820-50. Despite this performance, many French exporters, like their British counterparts, felt trepidation about closing foreign markets and burgeoning foreign competition.

<sup>21</sup> This paper discusses the 1830s tariff campaign as it affected commerce and industry; it does not pretend to discuss the complicated and rather different issues of colonial and indigenous sugar or agricultural protection.

Economists and economic journalists were similarly prominent in the tariff reform movement of the 1830s. They had the tribune offered by the chairs of political economy at the *Conservatoire des arts et métiers* and at the *Collège de France*. They had a prominent position in the reconstituted *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*, whose members included Blanqui, Charles Comte, de Laborde, Passy and Rossi. In 1834, for instance, the *Académie* proposed a prize of 3,000 francs for the best essay on how governments could reform tariffs or introduce free trade.<sup>22</sup> Since none of the essays submitted were deemed worthy of the prize it was offered again for the 1838 competition. It was for this competition that Friedrich List entered his essay, *Système naturel d'économie politique*, the first draft of what was to be his major work published in 1841.<sup>23</sup> Two years later the *Académie* proposed that the prize competition again concern tariffs: the consequences of the establishment of the Zollverein for neighbouring countries and what similar organisation they might establish to redress the balance.

Although critics liked to depict economics as intellectual gymnastics, a theoretical abstraction with no practical application, economists themselves assumed a moderate practical stance on tariff reform. This was even true of J. B. Say, the first holder of a chair of political economy in France. Say added the final touches to classical free-trade theory, already greatly strengthened by Ricardo's theory of comparative costs, by adding his law of markets which declared the new industrialism to be a harmonious, virtually automatic economic order. This and the inductive logic of his method gave a certain inflexibility to his writings and Say an unjustified reputation as an eighteenth-century idéologue and a vulgariser of

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<sup>22</sup> The subject was suggested by the newly elected secretary, Charles Comte. He was probably prompted by John Bowring. ((Bowring to Villiers, 4 June 1833, Clarendon Papers, Bodleian Library).

<sup>23</sup> EUGÈNE D'EICHTHAL, "L'économiste Frédéric List, candidat à un concours de l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques en 1837", lecture faite à la séance du 15 mars 1913, *Séances et travaux de l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques, compte rendu*, vol. LXXIX, 1913, pp. 540-56; "Rapport sur le prix d'économie politique relatif aux moyens d'établir la liberté commerciale, par le baron Charles Dupin, 28 December 1836", *Friedrich List Schriften, Reden, Briefe*, edited by Edgar Salin and Artur Sommer, Berlin 1927, vol. IV, p. 38-44.

Smith. In reality, Say was very much aware of the practical problems of tariff reform and this realism was increasingly evident in successive editions of his *Traité d'économie politique*, where theory was constantly modified by practical issues.<sup>24</sup> Adolphe Blanqui, Say's successor at the *Conservatoire*, continued to advocate free trade in lectures, books and newspaper articles, gave well-attended lectures and played a prominent part in tariff reform agitation.<sup>25</sup> Say's successor at the *Collège de France* was the more staid Italian economist, Pellegrino Rossi, who was appointed by Guizot in 1833 and became thereafter a stout defender of the established order of the July Monarchy. Yet he, too, advocated tariff reform and, like Say, stressed that it could only be effected slowly and carefully.<sup>26</sup> In 1835 he wrote a lengthy article on the Duchâtel Inquiry, where he attacked protectionist arguments and advocated reforms.<sup>27</sup>

These luminaries apart, a number of lesser lights also worked in favour of reforming the tariff.<sup>28</sup> One of these was Théodore Fix

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<sup>24</sup> Say devoted a whole chapter of his *Cours complet* to the precautions to be taken before prohibitions were abandoned. (*Cours complet d'économie politique*, Paris, 1828, vol. III, pp. 365-73). One passage in particular was frequently quoted in the 1830s debates as evidence of Say's moderation and realism: "Celui qui possède un jardin bien rempli de grands arbres mal plantés, s'il les coupe tous à la fois, demeure privé d'ombrage; mais si petit à petit il remplace une plantation ancienne par une autre mieux entendue, il finit par avoir une superbe habitation sans avoir commencé par se mettre au milieu du désert". (*ibid.*, pp. 366-7).

<sup>25</sup> Blanqui criticised the coal and iron tariffs (*Cours d'économie industrielle*, 1836-37, Paris 1837, pp. 250, 276-84, 522-37) and in 1838 devoted three lectures to the tariff question. (*Cours d'économie industrielle*, 1838-39, Paris, n.d. (1839), pp. 145-94). It has been argued that his lectures no longer attracted the industrialists who attended Say's lectures (LÁSZLÓ LEDERMANN, *Pellegrino Rossi, l'homme et l'économiste*, Paris, 1929, p. 111).

<sup>26</sup> *Cours d'économie politique, année 1836-1837*, Paris, 1840, vol. II, pp. 270-334.

<sup>27</sup> "Sur l'enquête commerciale relative à diverses prohibitions établies à l'entrée des produits étrangers", *Revue mensuelle d'économie politique*, vol. IV, March and April 1835, pp. 97-134. This was reproduced in part in the *Journal du Commerce* on 22 June 1835. See also Rossi's letter to Jean-Jaques Rigaud, 27 June 1835, in GUSTAVE DOLT, *Lettres politiques de Pellegrino Rossi au Syndic Jean-Jaques Rigaud*, Geneva, 1932, pp. 135-8.

<sup>28</sup> A notable absentee from the list of economists and economic writers who joined the tariff reform movement is Michel Chevalier. Part of the explanation for this is that Chevalier spent much of the period in North and Central America and Britain. It may be, too, that his interest in tariff reform only became pressing in the 1840s. This has been argued in J.-B. DUROSELLE, "Michel Chevalier et le libre-échange avant 1860",

who, after working the *Bulletin universel des sciences*, set up his own periodical, the *Revue mensuelle d'économie politique*, in 1833. Though this Journal had a relatively short life, it early supported tariff reform and during the tariff controversy of the 1830s the *Revue* published numerous articles, by Fix, Emile Berès and Jules Burat, all in favour of lowering the tariff. Léon Faucher was, like Fix, young, a journalist and an advocate of reform. His most original contribution to the debate was his delightfully phantasmagorical plan for a *Union du Midi*, which he first put forward in an article in the *Revue des deux mondes* in 1837.<sup>29</sup> His suggestion was for a tariff union between France, Belgium, Spain and Switzerland, his inspiration was the Zollverein, his purpose was to reform the French tariff without having to make a frontal attack on it and to establish a rival to the customs union in Germany.

Not all economists, however, were convinced tariff reformers. A substantial minority espoused protection and defended the existing French tariff.<sup>30</sup> If Bastiat's *Sophismes économiques* summed up the 1830s debate from the free traders' point of view, even though it was not published until 1844, then Friedrich List's *Système naturel d'économie politique*, which he wrote in 1837, drew together the weightiest of the protectionist arguments. Though the essay he submitted to the Académie owed much to what he had read and seen in the United States, as is generally recognised, it was also greatly influenced by protectionism in France, and perhaps this is less generally acknowledged. Arguably the most important of the writers who influenced List was Chaptal, who defended not merely protective tariffs but prohibitions (which, he claimed, had alone enabled French industry to prosper) and

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*Bulletin de la Société d'histoire moderne*, second series, 1956, pp. 2-5 and MARLIS STEINERT, *Michel Chevalier: l'évolution de sa pensée économique, sociale et politique, 1830-1852*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Saarbrück, 1956, pp. 131-42.

<sup>29</sup> LÉON FAUCHER, "L'Union du Midi, association commerciale de la France avec la Belgique, l'Espagne et la Suisse", *Revue des deux mondes*, March 1837, also published as a pamphlet.

<sup>30</sup> For protectionist writers in France at this time, see *faute de mieux*, R. MAURIER, "Les économistes protectionnistes en France de 1815 à 1848", *Revue internationale de sociologie*, 1911, and the introduction by Edgar Salin and Artur Sommer to *List Werke*, vol. IV, pp. 30-145.

even duties on imported raw materials.<sup>31</sup> And there were other protectionists whose writings, and even whose names, have been forgotten. One of these was the customs official F.-L.-A. Ferrier whose *Du Gouvernement considéré dans ses rapports avec le commerce* was first published in 1805 and went through two further editions in the early 1820s. Say considered Ferrier's arguments influential enough to merit a specific rebuttal.<sup>32</sup>

Protectionists argued that free trade theory and even arguments for tariff reform were an elaborate theoretical structure, completely divorced from reality. "Au lieu de nous perdre dans le labyrinthe des abstractions métaphysiques", wrote Chaptal, "conservons ce qui est établi, et tâchons de le perfectionner".<sup>33</sup> If they lacked the seemingly scientific rigour of Say, protectionists were nevertheless able to marshal powerful arguments of national interest, based partly on refurbished mercantilist theories, partly on historical experience, particularly of wars and blockades of recent memory, and partly on considerations of *realpolitik*. In many ways, indeed, the case that was made foreshadowed that made by neo-Marxists and writers in Afro-Asia to combat and condemn what is termed Neo-Colonialism or the economic imperialism of the West in the so-called Third World: less developed Europe, faced with the industrial and commercial might of Britain, whose technological lead in the vital sectors of textiles and metallurgy had increased during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, was in danger of being reduced to the neo-colonial status of "a drawer of water and hewer of wood". To lower French tariffs would be to invite the destruction of industries slowly and expensively built up behind the protection offered by the Revolution, the Empire and the Restoration. Some protectionists explicitly rejected the notion that

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<sup>31</sup> *De l'Industrie française*, Paris, 1819, 2 vols., vol. I, p. 442 and pp. 445-59. List, who praised the work of Dupin and Chaptal ("Système naturel d'économie politique", *List Werke*, vol. IV, p. 456), was never as extreme as this for he believed that raw materials and agricultural products should never have duties imposed on them. ("Système naturel...", *loc. cit.*, chapter XVII).

<sup>32</sup> "La Théorie de M. Ferrier", *Oeuvres diverses*, edited by Charles Comte, Paris, 1848, pp. 355 ff. Ferrier has the distinction of being the only economist to have been mentioned by name in the 1836 tariff debates in the Chamber of Deputies (by Hennequin (Nord), May 2, 1836, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CIII).

<sup>33</sup> *De l'Industrie française*, vol. II, p. 417.

Europe exchange primary products for British manufactures. Alexander Hamilton had already pointed out that manufacturing countries benefit more from international trade than agricultural countries because of the fluctuating demand for the latter's products. They took up the cry of "productive forces" to bolster arguments in favour of infant industries or industries disadvantaged by factor endowments.<sup>34</sup> It was pointed out that Britain still adhered to a restrictive commercial policy and that whilst she continued to do so other countries would be foolhardy to lower their tariffs. Protectionist writers cited the 1786 Eden-Vergennes Treaty as an instance of a policy introduced in the name of an abstract cosmopolitan theory which had had adverse effects on the less developed economy.<sup>35</sup> Some ascribed foreign trade problems to causes other than the tariff: to the losses of the recent wars, to the hegemony exercised by British trade and traders. Saint-Ferréol, who worked in the customs service in Marseilles, claimed that part of the blame lay with the government, which provided inadequate commercial intelligence. It had not sent out enough consular agents, or sent them out too late, as had happened in Latin America, while some consular agents were remiss in providing commercial information because the government had failed to lay down the procedures to be followed.<sup>36</sup>

Despite this substantial minority, economists unquestionably constituted one element in the reform movement of the 1830s.

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<sup>34</sup> Charles Dupin took up the notion of productive forces in *Les Forces productives et commerciales de la France*, 2 vols., Paris, 1827. Friedrich List gave the notion further refinement in his "Système naturel...", *List Werke*, vol. IV, pp. 190-5.

<sup>35</sup> Thus Chaptal not only decried the supposedly nefarious effects of the 1786 Commercial Treaty (*De l'Industrie française*, vol. II, pp. 94-7) but used older mercantilist theories about labour input in manufactured goods to argue that an agricultural nation is always disadvantaged when trading with a manufacturing country and this was why the latter were constantly seeking commercial agreements. (*ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 241-2). List, too, warned France against signing a trade treaty with Britain. "Idées sur les réformes économiques, commerciales et financières applicables à la France", *Revue encyclopédique*, March, April and November 1831.

<sup>36</sup> *Exposition du Système des douanes en France, depuis 1791 jusqu'à 1834, précédée de quelques réflexions sur les causes qui ont amené l'enquête commerciale actuelle, et suivie d'autres réflexions sur les modifications à apporter au tarif actuel des douanes*, Marseilles, 1835, pp. 10-11. Reformers also regretted the poor commercial intelligence provided by the consular service: Blanqui to Thiers, 12 July 1840, Papiers Thiers, N.a.f. 20608, *Bibliothèque Nationale*.

A more important element was made up by economic interest groups, who, for differing reasons and with varying devotion and zeal, pressed for tariff changes.

Support for tariff reform among the business community came from diverse sources and for diverse reasons. The protectionist front was not monolithic: a number of industrialists wanted to be able to import raw materials, semi-manufactured goods or machinery, and their support for some moderation of the tariff on such items was demonstrated at the Iron Inquiry of 1828 and the Coal Inquiry of 1833. It would also be proper to ascribe some of the impetus to reform to a growing confidence, fuelled by the gradual recovery from the depression, among those merchants and industrialists who had little to fear from foreign competition and much to gain from increasing international exchange, like silk manufacturers of Lyons or wine interests in the Gironde. It is important to note, however, that the spur was more likely to be doubt and uncertainty; the spur could be fear of foreign competition or retaliation; the spur could be recession. This was certainly true in Britain where reform was advocated and instituted not in a mood of gay abandon as outmoded clothes were cast aside but rather in a mood of sobriety and in the face of the evident failure of previous commercial policies.

A good instance of the way in which some sectors within an industry were in favour of some tariff reform is the cotton industry of the Mulhouse area. The Alsace industry had the advantage of developing late and "down-stream", of having a reservoir of skills, dynamic entrepreneurship and a good capital supply through plough-back and funding by Swiss capitalists. In consequence Alsace was the most modern of France's textile areas, in parts of the market it could compete on favourable terms with British products and it developed an export trade in cotton goods and textile machinery. Given this orientation, and given the area's peripheral location, it is not surprising that the Mulhouse Chamber of Commerce passed a number of resolutions and sent memoranda in favour of some lowering of tariff barriers which it claimed led to retaliations by neighbouring countries and thus threatened Alsatian exports. In the 1820s, for example, there was considerable opposition to

the duties on livestock which led to reprisals by South German states, while the commercial crisis from the late 1820s onwards led to demands for the replacement of prohibitions by protective duties and for the signing of reciprocity treaties.<sup>37</sup>

The silk manufacturers appear, *prima facie*, to be a clear instance of a group whose support for tariff reform was a function of their ability to sell abroad.<sup>38</sup> The quality of the silk goods produced, the ability to adapt to fashion as well as to lead it<sup>39</sup> meant that Lyons exported a large proportion of its production. In 1832 83% of total production was exported. Two things, however, should be noted. Once again, the industry did not constitute a solid bloc: the Avignon silk industry, less sophisticated and less adaptable than the Lyonnais, was against the import of plain and printed silk cloths from India, while other French silk centres were in favour.<sup>40</sup> More important, Lyonnais concern over the tariff system was to some extent a result of fears, which were certainly exaggerated, that competitors in Crefeld, Zurich, Elberfeld and Spitalfields were taking an even larger share of foreign and domestic markets. Such fears grew during the commercial crisis

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<sup>37</sup> PAUL LEULLIOT, *L'Alsace au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, doctoral thesis, Paris, 1957, 3 vols., vol. II, pp. 239-86 and 446-60. The written submission to the Duchâtel Inquiry was in favour of the tariff system because of a protectionist campaign in the local press. (*Journal du Commerce*, 11, 12 and 14 January, 1835; evidence of Nicolas Koechlin to the Inquiry, *Enquête relative à diverses prohibitions...*, vol. III, p. 601 ff; NICOLAS KOECHLIN, *Réplique aux observations des soi-disant délibérations de la Chambre de Commerce de Mulhouse sur sa déposition d'enquête devant le Conseil supérieur du commerce*, Paris, 1835). Typical of the dynamism and liberalism of the most successful cotton manufacturers was Nicolas Koechlin whose evidence before the 1834-5 Inquiry showed the emancipation of Alsace manufacturers from dependence on British innovations. He played an important part in the tariff reform campaigns of both the 1830s and the 1840s. For a general discussion of the textile industry at this time, see 'Le groupe de recherches sur l'histoire des entreprises', 'Les Problèmes de l'industrie du textile en France en 1834', *Histoire des Entreprises*, n. 2, 1958, pp. 33-42.

<sup>38</sup> Tariff reductions and reciprocity were, indeed, just one facet of a century-long Lyonnais preoccupation with raw material supplies and export markets: as early as 1838 the Lyons Chamber of Commerce had recognised the value of colonies and thereafter followed a consistently imperialist line. JOHN F. LAFPEY, 'Roots of French Imperialism in the nineteenth century: the case of Lyon', *French Historical Studies*, vol. VI, 1969, pp. 78-92.

<sup>39</sup> JOHN BOWRING's, *Second Report on the Commercial Relations between France and Great Britain*, (London, 1835), contains a detailed analysis of the strengths of the Lyonnais industry and the problems it faced, or believed it faced, at this time.

<sup>40</sup> Speeches of the comte de Cambis and Meynard (Vaucluse), *Chambre des députés*, séance du 18 avril, 1836, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CII.

of the late 1820s and intensified in the early years of the July Monarchy, marked as they were by continuing crisis, two *canut* insurrections and further emigration of skilled workers.<sup>41</sup> Lyonnais merchants complained that their labour force was more highly paid than that of their competitors in Germany or Switzerland and that they were unfairly burdened with complicated trade regulations and a high level of local taxation. The tariff disadvantaged them both by taxing or prohibiting some of the imported raw materials used in manufacture and by causing retaliations abroad. They therefore complained about the reimposition of duties on imported raw and thrown silks in 1820 and about the prohibitions and high imposts on cotton yarns and raw wool. According to John Bowring, the origins of the Swiss silk industry were widely attributed to the French prohibition of Swiss muslins and the readaptation of the Swiss textile industry that resulted.<sup>42</sup> The Lyonnais were also concerned that some foreign markets were being lost. Thus, although the British market was of increasing importance, this was only a compensation for the decline of the German market. There were worries, too, about the British market, that the British duty was still too high, that the silk inquiry set up by the House of Commons would raise this duty even higher as a result of complaints by British silk manufacturers and of France's failure to reciprocate previous British tariff reductions. There were even worries that in some lines British silks were taking an ever larger part of the French market.<sup>43</sup> Needless to say, there was considerable hyperbole in Chamber of Commerce resolutions and submissions to the government but the exaggerated fears they expressed are indicative of some of the reasoning behind Lyonnais support of tariff reform. Doubts and fears also underlay the reform campaign of Bordeaux. In Bordeaux's case, however, the fears were better founded.

Bordeaux was the most vital element in the reform movement, both from its long-standing devotion to change in the tariff and from the very tenor of its campaign. Other ports supported reform

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<sup>41</sup> MAURICE LÉVY-LEBOYER, *Les Banques européennes et l'industrialisation internationale dans la première moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1964, pp. 137-45.

<sup>42</sup> JOHN BOWRING, *Second Report...*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, appendices XXIII and XXVI.

and List claimed that free trade ought to be regarded as the real mercantilism, since it served the best interests of the merchant community.<sup>44</sup> But the greatest support came not from le Havre or Marseilles, whose trade during the Restoration was recovering well from the trauma of Revolution and Empire and was now recovering from the commercial crisis, but from Bordeaux, whose economic problems were partly structural<sup>45</sup> and partly the result of the late 1820s depression whose effects lingered on throughout the following decade. In the 1820s, indeed, Bordeaux had lost out to other ports: by 1823 Marseilles had become a busier port, by 1826 le Havre was more important for the colonial trade. The first three years of the July Monarchy were particularly harsh, for the crisis the port faced was deeper than any other in the entire century.<sup>46</sup> Bordelais and visitors alike noted the growing disparity between the industrial development of the North and East and the marking time in the South-West.<sup>47</sup>

It was only to be expected, therefore, that the Bordelais looked back nostalgically to the halcyon days of the Atlantic economy. Their petitions and memorials to the government recalled the trade patterns of the eighteenth century when the British sent them coal and iron, the Dutch tobacco, linen and sail-cloth, the Russians and Swedes flax, timber and high-quality iron and the Prussians wool and leather. They blamed their predicament on the *octroi* and other high indirect taxes but above all on the tariff. They claimed that the interests of Bordeaux and its region were different from those of the North since the Gironde needed to import raw materials like coal and since it had developed an important export

<sup>44</sup> "Système naturel . . .", *List Werke*, vol. IV, p. 354.

<sup>45</sup> FRANÇOIS CROUZET, "Les origines du sous-développement du Sud-Ouest", *Annales du Midi*, vol. LXXI, 1959, pp. 71-9.

<sup>46</sup> A.-J. TUDESQ, "Les débuts de la Monarchie de Juillet", *Histoire de Bordeaux*, vol. IV, edited by Louis Desgraves and Georges Dupeux, Bordeaux, 1969, pp. 61-83.

<sup>47</sup> The *Journal du Commerce* noted: « La marine bordelaise était de 98,900 tonneaux en 1829, et seulement de 78,900 en 1833. Les expéditions de long cours se font aujourd'hui avec des navires de 150 à 200 tonneaux . . . en quatre années [de 1829 à 1833] le mouvement du port de Bordeaux avait déchu d'un huitième environ; pendant que celui du Havre demeurait stationnaire, que Dunkerque était en progrès, Marseille élevait le produit de ses douanes de 20 millions à 27 millions et que le commerce général allait au-delà des meilleures années de la restauration ». "Bordeaux", *Journal du Commerce*, 5 October, 1835.

trade. They also argued that tariff barriers were rising in Europe and that behind tariffs domestic wines were supplanting their exports, as was happening in Southern Germany and the Crimea.<sup>48</sup> The remedy was the reduction of tariffs and the signing of commercial treaties. Even a unilateral reduction, a merchants' petition argued, would persuade France's trading partners to lower their duties, since exporting also entailed importing.<sup>49</sup>

Prompted by the spluttering negotiations with Britain, by the visits of the peripatetic British representative, John Bowring, and by the long tradition of trade relations between the two countries, Bordelais activists believed that the greatest benefit would accrue from a reciprocity treaty with Britain. While in France, Bowring set out to demonstrate that a considerable increase in Bordeaux trade would result from a lowering of French tariffs and a reduction in British duties on French wines. He claimed that British merchants and manufacturers sending goods to France would have an interest in encouraging imports of French products. But he emphasised most of all that wine, Bordeaux's principal export, would be the chief beneficiary of any increase in Anglo-French trade. British wine consumption was artificially low<sup>50</sup> and there thus existed a great potential market for French wines. Discriminatory duties rather than consumption patterns were the chief cause of this low consumption. The 1831 reductions had been too timorous and the potential market among the British middle classes would only be realised if some major reduction in French tariffs were introduced.<sup>51</sup> Given the power wielded by the mercantile houses,

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<sup>48</sup> The wine growers' petition to the Duchâtel Inquiry also argued that new producers — like those at the Cape — were entering world markets. *Enquête relative à diverses prohibitions* . . . , vol. I, pp. 45-57.

<sup>49</sup> Merchants' Petition to the Chamber of Deputies, 1834, in JOHN BOWRING, *Second Report* . . . , appendix XXII, pp. 159-75. A winegrowers' petition of the same period also advocated France sign reciprocity treaties with Britain and other North European states. *Enquête relative à diverses prohibitions* . . . , vol. I, pp. 57 ff.

<sup>50</sup> Bowring calculated that annual per capita wine consumption in Britain was only one-seventieth of the French and that France only supplied 5% of British wine imports. *Second Report* . . . , p. 96 and appendix XV.

<sup>51</sup> Another British Board of Trade official, J. R. Porter, was later to argue that though the British middle classes drank port and sherry, French wine was the drink of the aristocracy. Since the middle classes aped their social superiors a considerable increase in wine-drinking would follow a reduction in duties. LUCY M. BROWN, *The Board of Trade and the Free Trade Movement, 1830-1842*, Oxford 1958, p. 123.

which had long-standing English connections, the prospect of refurbishing Anglo-Bordelais trade became a major element in Bordelais mythology. Protectionists responded that these prospects were largely chimerical because any reduction in British duties would be more advantageous to other wine producers who already had an established market there,<sup>52</sup> and because, unless the tariff reduction was a massive one, only high quality wines could benefit.<sup>53</sup>

There was also a political element in the Bordeaux campaign. They developed the concept of a privileged North dominating an unheeded and impoverished South, a conspiracy theory where a coalition of Northern iron-masters, landowners and manufacturers directed national economic policy. "Elle peuple la capitale, envahit l'administration qu'elle domine de son influence; tandis que nous, éloignés du centre gouvernemental, nous pouvons à peine faire entendre notre voix lointaine, privée d'appuis..."<sup>54</sup> In 1834 the winegrowers threatened that should their moderate tariff reform proposals not be put into effect the only hope for Bordeaux lay in some form of devolution and the establishment of internal customs frontiers. Such a system would ensure that the North could continue to pursue a commercial policy it felt to be in its own interest while the South could introduce a more liberal policy. They added that such a proposal was not new<sup>55</sup> and that recent history had demonstrated the importance of such differences which had helped stir up Belgium against Holland and South Carolina against the Union.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See, for instance, the submission of the Rouen Chamber of Commerce, *Enquête relative à diverses prohibitions...*, vol. I, pp. 84-94.

<sup>53</sup> SAINT-FERRÉOL, *op. cit.*, p. 39. In the tariff debates of 1836 Thiers claimed that as Minister of Commerce he had tried unsuccessfully to persuade other countries, and the British especially, to make major reductions in duties on French wines. (Speech on the Second Tariff Bill, 3 May 1836, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CIII.)

<sup>54</sup> Memorial to the Duchâtel Inquiry, *Enquête relative à diverses prohibitions...*, vol. I, p. 55. In 1829 Girondin wine-growers complained that they represented some 6 million people and 700 million francs' worth of capital, all of which were being sacrificed to iron-masters who produced goods to the value of only 73 million francs a year. JOHN BOWRING, *Second Report...*, p. 103.

<sup>55</sup> Eugène Bastarrèche, Deputy for Dax, had made a similar proposal in 1823.

<sup>56</sup> *Enquête relative à diverses prohibitions...*, vol. I, pp. 56-7. The sympathetic *Journal du Commerce* (10 March 1834) called the proposal impracticable and destructive. Neither merchants nor the Chamber of Commerce itself took up this suggestion. It may be noted that Bordeaux was a centre of legitimist opposition to the regime and that the local press had a long tradition of opposition to Parisian centralisation. It was no

Such sentiments were a symptom of the gravity of the problems many influential Bordelais felt they faced.

The tariff campaign in which these interest groups and the press participated was inevitably marked by moderation and realism. Reformers recognised the intricacy of the problems involved, the need to safeguard interests created behind prohibitions and protection and the political strength of protectionists. This is true of reformers' writings and speeches,<sup>77</sup> memorials and petitions and reports of the commissions of the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>78</sup> The way to bring about reforms was thus to change the tariff gradually. Some argued that France could undertake a reform programme that other countries would emulate, others that France should seek reciprocity. All argued that the prohibitions and high duties on raw materials and semi-manufactured goods should be removed as a matter of urgency. Only a minority argued that the British and French economies were complementary rather than competitive and that France could therefore safely move towards free trade.<sup>79</sup>

Reformers sought to push the government into a more active commercial diplomacy with Belgium, Britain and the German states, but they laid greatest stress on the unilateral reforms the

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coincidence that Henri Fonfrède, the most influential of Bordelais journalists, was the son of that eloquent Girondin, Boyer Fonfrède. Fonfrède took up the question of internal tariff barriers in the *Mémorial bordelais* in March 1834. After his death in 1840 his attacks on the tariff were collected together and published by his collaborator, C.-A. Campan, as *Questions d'économie publique par Henri Fonfrède, recueillies et mises en ordre par Ch.-Al. Campan*, Bordeaux and Paris 1846. They were also published as *Du système prohibitif* by the *Association pour la liberté des échanges* in 1846.

<sup>77</sup> See, for example, A.-J.-L. ANISSON-DUPERRON, *De l'affranchissement du commerce et de l'industrie*, Paris 1829, pp. 32-4.

<sup>78</sup> The most important commission, that on the first 1836 tariff bill, for example. *Rapport de la Commission qui a été chargée d'examiner le projet de loi sur les douanes, chambre des députés, séance du 4 avril 1836*, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CI.

<sup>79</sup> Stéphane Flachat argued that the 1834 Industrial Exhibition had demonstrated that France was prospering and making technical advances as rapidly as Britain. He further argued that the two economies were complementary since France compensated inferiority in some areas by advantages in industrial chemistry and taste. *L'Industrie. Exposition de 1834*, Paris, n.d., p. 18. D.L. Rodet also published a lengthy article on the need for tariff reform as demonstrated by the Exhibition. ("De l'industrie manufacturière en France", *Revue des deux mondes*, 1834, pp. 625-70). Protectionists argued that, on the contrary, the Exhibition had demonstrated the success of the existing tariff and the need to continue it. (CHARLES DUPIN *avant propos* to his *Rapport du jury central sur les produits de l'industrie française exposés en 1834*, Paris, 1836, vol. I, pp. vii-ix and xxv-xxx).

government might make in the French tariff. Particular emphasis was laid on the need to abolish prohibitions and reduce duties on raw materials and semi-manufactured goods. This was understandable in that one of the weaknesses of the tariff was that imposts were levied on all imports, it was here that the greatest support could be expected from business groups, it was here that Britain had already begun to make reforms and that the Maassen tariff, introduced in Prussia in 1818 and extended to the Zollverein in 1834, was most liberal. Reformers therefore sought not some distant and beatific goal of absolute free trade but a cosmetic surgery that would remove the inconsequences and excesses in the customs list. Even such changes — like reductions on high-count cotton yarns — threatened vocal interests and occasioned acrimonious debates. Nowhere was this more true, or more important perhaps, than in the case of coal and iron, the vital sinews of the new industrialism of the paleotechnic age, to use Lewis Mumford's happy phrase.

In the 1820s the tariff on coal had already given rise to a series of brochures attacking and defending the existing system.<sup>60</sup> Criticism, and particularly important was that of Northern manufacturers, was such that in 1832 the Minister of Commerce was persuaded to hold an inquiry as to whether coal duties should be maintained, reduced or abolished. Discussion was bedevilled by the complicated nature of the tariff, which differentiated between sea-coal and coal that was land-borne, by the different supply problems in various parts of the country, by the differing types and qualities of coal that industry and a growing number of domestic consumers needed. Manufacturers in the department of the Nord believed themselves disadvantaged in relation to those in the Ardennes, Meuse and Moselle departments. Normandy manufacturers complained that the tariff imposed on sea-borne British coal deprived them of the qualities of coal not available in France. The Bordelais thought themselves doubly disadvantaged because a very high duty was levied on British coal and because transport diffi-

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<sup>60</sup> Ministère du Commerce, *Enquête pour la recherche et la constatation des faits qui doivent servir à résoudre la question de savoir s'il y a lieu de supprimer ou de réduire le droit perçu sur les houilles étrangères, à leur importation en France, tant par mer que par terre, commencée le 13 novembre 1832, Paris, 1833.*

culties cut Bordeaux off from domestic sources of supply. Some industrialists argued that French collieries could neither supply the right kind of coal for specific uses nor adequate quantities, since steam-engines, new processes and growing domestic consumption meant that demand was outstripping domestic supply. The high imposts on Belgian and the even higher duties on British coals meant that some manufacturers were being unfairly penalised.

A number of reformers complained about local monopolies which in the absence of effective interregional competition charged high prices and earned excessive profits. One company above all others was singled out: the Anzin Company<sup>61</sup> which with its 5,000 workers was probably the largest centralised industrialised establishment in France and which with a quarter of output dominated the French coal industry. Its principal administrator of the 1820s, Casimir Perier, became President of the Council in 1831 and its list of owners included other powerful names. Reformers, like Blanqui for instance, complained that the company, whose finances remained a closely guarded secret, made excessive profits.<sup>62</sup> Before the coal Inquiry the delegate from the Lille Chamber of Commerce claimed that Anzin would need to employ an extra 1,000-1,500 miners to be able to meet rising demand and he complained that the Company's general agent, Mark Jennings, had come to Paris to concert action with the colliery-owners of the Midi in order to prevent any changes in coal duties.<sup>63</sup> Others, too,

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<sup>61</sup> For the Anzin Company, see REED G. GEIGER, *The Anzin Coal Company, 1800-1833. Big Business in the Early Stages of the French Industrial Revolution*, Philadelphia, 1974, and RICHARD J. BAKER, "French Entrepreneurship during the Restoration: the Record of a Single Firm, the Anzin Mining Company", *Journal of Economic History*, vol. XXI, 1961.

<sup>62</sup> Blanqui claimed that Anzin profits, which already stood at 3 million francs a year, rose to 3.6 millions in 1835. (*Cours d'économie industrielle*, 1836-37, p.229). Geiger (*op. cit.*, p. 262) concludes that Anzin achieved a rate of profit close to 40% throughout the entire period from 1800 to 1833. It is not true, however, that Anzin enjoyed a monopoly position for Belgian coal was being imported in increasing quantities (MARCEL GILLET, *Les Charbonnages du Nord de la France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1973, p. 129; F. LENTACKER, "Les charbons belges sur le marché français au cours du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Bulletin de séances de l'Académie royale des sciences d'outre-mer*, Brussels, 1964, pp. 1392-1431).

<sup>63</sup> Ministère du Commerce, *Enquête pour la recherche et la constatation des faits...*, p. 403 ff.

complained about the disproportionate influence of the Anzin Company in the corridors of power.<sup>64</sup>

Defenders of the existing tariff claimed that the tariff was necessary and beneficial, that coal production had increased three times between 1812 and 1832 and that the high cost of coal was not the fault of either the tariff or the inefficiency of colliery-workings but of poor transport. Mine-owners, especially those in the Centre and Midi, argued that given the inaccessibility of a number of mines, given poor transport facilities, given the high tolls on rivers, the tariff did not offer them sufficient protection. In any case, improved transport should come before lower tariffs.<sup>65</sup>

With iron duties reformers faced an equally fraught and complicated problem. The forge-masters and their allies constituted an articulate and well-organised pressure group. Cobden was later to tell Bright that they were "the landed interest of France. They constitute the praetorian guards of monopoly. Almost everybody of rank and wealth is directly or indirectly interested in iron-works of some kind".<sup>66</sup> Their effectiveness as a pressure group was enhanced by the growth of large-scale undertakings: by the end of the Restoration the ten largest iron foundries accounted for roughly two fifths of total capital and for a fifth of total output.<sup>67</sup> Although in November 1828 Saint-Cricq opened an inquiry into the progress made in French metallurgy since the institution of high protection, the inquiry was dominated — both in terms of its composition and in terms of the witnesses called before it — by landowners,

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<sup>64</sup> Attacks by the Abbeville Chamber of Commerce, *ibid.*, pp. 418-20; *Journal du Commerce*, 15 January, 1834.

<sup>65</sup> Ministère du Commerce, *Enquête pour la recherche et la constatation des faits...*, pp. 431-4; AUGUSTE LAMOTHE, propriétaire des mines de Grosménil en Auvergne, *De l'Abolition des droits de douane sur les bouilles étrangères en faveur des dix départements du Nord*, Clermont-Ferrand, 1834.

<sup>66</sup> Cited JOHN MORLEY, *Life of Richard Cobden*, London, 1903 (edition), p. 758. The remarkable power exercised by forgemasters has been analysed by JEAN-PAUL COURTHÉOUX, "Les pouvoirs économiques et sociaux dans un secteur industriel: la sidérurgie", *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale*, vol. XXXVIII, 1960, pp. 339-77.

<sup>67</sup> See the six articles by BERTRAND GILLE in the *Revue d'histoire de la sidérurgie*, 1962, 1963 and 1965.

forgeowners and others with an interest in the iron industry.<sup>68</sup> Apologists for the existing tariff, and some Midi forge-owners who wanted the tariff raised, argued that protection would enable France to catch up with Britain and was a compensation for some of the disadvantages suffered by French iron producers, and particularly the poor transport facilities.<sup>69</sup>

Reformers based their campaign on the urgency of obtaining adequate quantities and qualities of iron from abroad since it was the very sinew of the new industrialism.<sup>70</sup> They based it on the ransom being paid to domestic iron producers. Say declared that if the ironmasters' claim of 1814 that the tariff would add only fifty francs to the price of a plough were correct then by 1828 France had already paid out 46 millions for ploughs alone.<sup>71</sup> Duchâtel, in the Bordeaux petition he helped draw up in 1829, calculated that the annual cost to French consumers was 37 millions and that this rose by 2.5 million francs for every 100,000 quintal increase in iron consumption.<sup>72</sup> In 1833 Hallette, the Arras machine-builder, estimated the annual subsidy to be over 41 millions.<sup>73</sup> Hallette complained of the difficulty he had obtaining the iron for his works, while Blanqui argued that the increasing imports of British iron goods demonstrated the inability of home producers to meet rising demand. A number of critics of the iron tariff

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<sup>68</sup> Thus of the 27 witnesses who appeared before the Inquiry, 14 were either forgeowners or iron- or coal-mine owners. Ministère du Commerce et des Manufactures, Commission formée avec l'approbation du roi, sous la présidence du ministre du commerce et des manufactures pour l'examen de certaines questions de législation commerciale, *Enquête sur les fers*, Paris, 1828, "compte rendu de l'enquête et des délibérations de la commission d'enquête par M. le baron Pasquier, rapporteur", pp. 257-309.

<sup>69</sup> The written case for maintaining the existing tariff was best made by François Cabrol who, though he resigned in 1833 and only resumed his duties again in 1839, spent most of his professional career building up the Decazeville iron works. *Du tarif, à l'entrée en France, des fontes et des fers*, Paris, 1834.

<sup>70</sup> Blanqui waxed eloquent on the manifold uses — artistic as well as practical — to which iron could be put. He also compared iron consumption in Britain and France and found British consumption fourteen and a half times higher. *Cours* . . . 1836-37, pp. 301-3.

<sup>71</sup> *Cours complet d'économie politique pratique*, Paris, 1828, vol. III, pp. 351-2.

<sup>72</sup> "Opinion de M. Duchâtel sur la question des fers", *Journal du Commerce*, 5 January 1835.

<sup>73</sup> *Mémoire tendant à prouver la nécessité de diminuer le droit sur les fers*, Arras, n.d., p. 9.

indicated what they regarded as the contradictory arguments of forge-masters: to prove that the tariff had not been in vain they exaggerated the progress they had made, but to show it was still necessary they exaggerated their problems. Hallette argued in favour of sharpening the spur of competition by lowering iron duties, since France was no longer cut off from the latest developments in British metallurgy whereas she had been in 1814.<sup>74</sup>

Indicative of the importance and complexity of the issues and interests involved in the iron tariff is the debate on the duty on imported rails that took place in 1835-36. The case for lowering or even abolishing the duty was made in the Chamber by Lherbette, Desjobert and Anisson-Duperron, deputies who were prominent in both tariff campaigns of the July Monarchy; it was made in the *Conseil-général* and in the press. The choice was between encouraging railway construction by reducing the duty on rails or protecting domestic iron producers who argued that they were capable of meeting railway demand. The debate was to be a continuing one.<sup>75</sup> Reformers, railway projectors and managers argued that French producers could not produce iron rails of the quality, the quantity or at the price of British rails, particularly once railway construction was fully under weigh. The United States, where the domestic iron industry was equally incapable of providing large amounts of railway equipment, had already given the example: in 1832 the Federal government had abolished import duties on rails. As a result, American railway companies were

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<sup>74</sup> See also EUGÈNE FLACHAT, "De l'Industrie du fer en France", *Journal de l'Industriel et du Capitaliste*, vol. I, 1833, pp. 27-49. Flachats beliefs in 1833 are in striking contrast to his activities in the 1840s.

<sup>75</sup> The issue had already been raised in 1825 when Navier's Paris-Le Havre project was being discussed and the Paris Chamber of Commerce proposed the duty on iron rails be lowered. (J.-A. Durbecq, "Contribution à l'histoire du chemin de fer de Paris à la mer: Paris - Rouen - le Havre (1825-1843)", *81<sup>e</sup> Congrès des sociétés savantes*, Rouen-Caen, 1957, pp. 37-78). It was to be raised again in debates on railway problems (as in Ministère des Travaux publics, de l'Agriculture et du Commerce, *Procès-verbaux des séances de la commission chargée d'examiner les questions que peuvent soulever les projets d'établissement de chemins de fer*, Paris, 1837, pp. 146-51). Reformers continued to propose tariff reductions in the 1840s. ("La Question des fers" in the first number of the *Journal des chemins de fer*, 25 January, 1842; LOUIS REYBAUD, "De l'Industrie métallurgique en France, considérée dans ses rapports avec la construction des chemins de fer", *Journal des économistes*, vol. V, 1843, pp. 390-400).

able to buy British rails and the massive and precocious railway building of the 1830s was thus facilitated.

The issue came up first in the discussion of the bill to grant the Paris-Saint-Germain railway concession to the Pereire Company when Lherbette introduced an amendment seconded by Desjobert that the Saint-Germain Company be permitted to import the rails it needed free of duty on the grounds that even the iron needed for such a short line would cause a significant and harmful increase in iron prices.<sup>76</sup> The amendment, like a similarly liberal amendment proposed by Anisson-Duperron, was rejected, as Lherbette knew it would, but he had succeeded in airing the issue. It came up, secondly, in the discussion of the first tariff bill of 1836. In 1835 Duchâtel, then Minister of Commerce, had expressed a desire to encourage railway building. To do so he issued a decree in October of that year which listed rails as iron bars and allowed them to be imported under the terms laid down in the 1822 iron tariff, and in his report to the King he added that he would have liked to have gone further, suggesting that duties could be reduced for half the rails to be used in railway construction, thus reserving the other half for French iron producers, but that he was unable to do this by decree.<sup>77</sup> In January 1836 Duchâtel submitted the question of a special tariff for foreign rails to the first meeting of the 1836 session of the *Conseils-généraux du commerce, des manufactures et de l'agriculture*. The three *Conseils* considered the question separately but only one, the *Conseil-général du commerce*, voted in favour of allowing the free import of rails.<sup>78</sup> Following the lines laid down in the previous royal decree, the 1836 tariff bill proposed that rails be admitted at the rate of iron bars as under the 1822 law. However, the more liberal commission set up by the Chamber of Deputies proposed to tax them at the very low rate of 5 francs per 100 kg. Again the

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<sup>76</sup> Chambre des députés, séance du 6 juin, *Moniteur universel*, 7 June 1835.

<sup>77</sup> He was unable to do so because, according to the 1814 law, decrees could only be issued for items that were to be used by French manufacturers: rails were to be put into immediate use. "Rapport du Ministre du Commerce au Roi", *Journal de la Société d'encouragement pour le commerce national*, vol. I, December 1835, pp. 31-4.

<sup>78</sup> *Journal du Commerce*, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 17 January 1836.

discussion of the bill in the Chamber provided an arena for debate between reformers and defenders of the protective system.

In these various debates, as well as in the press, one particular issue attracted disproportionate attention: the supposed difficulties encountered by the Pereires' Saint-Germain Company in securing the kinds and quantities of rails it needed. The quarrel was enacted in part in newspaper columns, in a public exchange of letters between Emile Pereire, manager of the Saint-Germain Company, and Louis Boigues, the forgemaster. The rights and wrongs of the case do not concern us here<sup>79</sup> but the quarrel was important because Pereire, when a writer for *le National*, had been an active campaigner for tariff reform, while Boigues, for his part, was not only a successful ironmaster — he had enlarged the Imphy works and set up the Fourchambault concern in collaboration with Georges Dufaud — but also a leading spokesman for metallurgical interests.<sup>80</sup> For reformers the Pereires' experience proved that the iron industry was incapable not only of meeting the needs of large-scale railways but even of a short-haul railway. For defenders of the iron tariff the Saint-Germain Company had exaggerated its difficulties, which were partly of its own doing, since in its letter inviting tenders from twelve leading metallurgical concerns the company had stipulated unnecessarily early delivery dates, expressed a desire to watch over the quality of ores and cast iron and had asked for a design of rails which had not previously been used. Reformers pointed out that the Séguin brothers had also been faced with what they regarded as unreasonably high estimates for rails until Villèle, then Minister of Finance, had promised to allow them to import rails, whereupon Decazeville agreed to supply

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<sup>79</sup> For a brief discussion see BARRIE M. RATCLIFFE, "The Building of the Paris - Saint-Germain Railway: some entrepreneurial and financial problems in the launching of railways in France in the 1830s and 1840s", *Journal of Transport History*, n.s., vol. II, 1973, pp. 20-41. It may be noted that the Pereires were again to be involved in the debate on the duty on iron rails when their Midi Company led other railway companies in a successful campaign to lower duties in 1853-6. *Archives Nationales*, F12.6408 and F14.9234.

<sup>80</sup> He had appeared before both the iron and the coal inquiries to defend existing tariffs. Ministère du Commerce, *Enquête sur les fers*, pp. 55-6 and 84-90 and *Enquête pour la recherche et la constatation des faits...*, pp. 425-31. Boigues was also president of the *Conseil-général des manufactures* and deputy for Nevers.

rails at a much lower price. Protectionists responded that French companies had nevertheless provided the rails for those lines built before the Saint-Germain.<sup>81</sup>

Reformers argued that one of the chief complaints of industrialists before the Duchâtel Inquiry had been poor communications<sup>82</sup> and that railways would be important carriers not only of passengers but also heavy goods.<sup>83</sup> They showed that increased demand had led to an increase in British rail prices of the order of 25% when British iron production was triple or quadruple the French and when most of its iron companies were capable of producing rails. What they asked could therefore be expected to happen in France?<sup>84</sup> Some protectionists saw the proposed free importation or low duty as the thin end of the wedge, to be followed by demands for the free import of railway locomotives and steamships.<sup>85</sup> Others claimed that to permit the free import of rails would be to allow unscrupulous speculators to bring in cheap rails which they could then turn into other items.<sup>86</sup> Still others made the even more eccentric claim that to grant such a concession to railway companies would unfairly disadvantage competitors like Seine boatmen or coach operators.<sup>87</sup> More important, protectionists argued that French industry was quite capable of meeting demand for rails that might come from railway building. And they did this by using

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<sup>81</sup> Speeches by the Duc d'Harcourt and the Comte Joubert, séances des 19 et 21 avril, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CI.

<sup>82</sup> See, inter alia, J. BURAT, "De l'Introduction des rails étrangers en France", *Journal de l'Industriel et du Capitaliste*, vol. I, 1836, pp. 49-59.

<sup>83</sup> PAULIN TALABOT tried to prove that road haulage would be more expensive than goods transport by rail. ("Conseils-généraux réunis du commerce, de l'agriculture et des manufactures, séance du 8 janvier", *Journal du Commerce*, 9 January, 1836). Others pointed out that most lines in France as in Britain were coalcarriers. ("Opinions de quelques hommes d'état sur les chemins de fer, MM. THIERS et PASSY-M. PEEL", *Journal de l'Industriel et du Capitaliste*, vol. I, 1836, pp. 227-37).

<sup>84</sup> "De l'affranchissement des rails", *Journal du Commerce*, 17 January 1836.

<sup>85</sup> Mimerel's speech before the Conseils-généraux, *Journal du Commerce*, 9 January 1836.

<sup>86</sup> "Question des droits sur les fers et rails, présentée au Comité du Commerce dans sa séance du 8 avril 1836", *Journal de la Société d'encouragement pour le commerce national*, no. IX, 1836, pp. 345-8.

<sup>87</sup> Speech by Charles Dupin, Chambre des députés, séance du 21 avril 1836, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CI. Anisson-Duperron replied that for coach-operators or boatmen to complain would be like copyists complaining at the invention of printing or ferryboatmen at the building of bridges.

two related arguments. They argued, first, that the French iron industry was increasing its output, adopting coal in all processes, and that, in any case, the mixed process using both charcoal and coal could produce iron rails at the right price and of the required quality.<sup>88</sup> They argued, secondly, that railway promoters exaggerated the railway's future.<sup>89</sup> In the Chamber of Deputies, Thiers, President of the Council, who had been Minister of Public Works two years previously, announced he would be happy to see twenty kilometres of railway line a year built because railways in France would never be built as speedily or as extensively as those in the United States, where there was the only large-scale network in existence, because of the high cost of land and raw materials and tighter government regulations to protect the traveller. Dupin said he would be satisfied if 100 or 120 kilometres were built because railways were risky ventures and in any case would meet stronger competition from roads in France than they would in Britain, where road-users had to pay tolls on the turnpikes. Passy, Minister of Commerce and Public Works, declared he would be content if 120 kilometres were built every year, for railways could not carry goods of low value in relation to bulk. All three had no hesitation in claiming that the home iron industry would have no difficulty meeting the demand generated by such an order of railway construction.<sup>90</sup> It was Thiers' well-received speech at the end of the debate which may well have decided this issue, for although the commission's amendment was rejected, the voting was so close that for a moment there was some doubt as to the result.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> This was argued, for instance, by Boigues in the 10 January session of the *Conseil-général des manufactures*.

<sup>89</sup> Jaubert denounced the charlatanism of railway prospectuses and added that "on en est presque venu à proclamer qu'on ferait arriver des voyageurs aux points les plus éloignés la veille de leur départ". *Chambre des députés, séance du 21 avril 1836, Archives parlementaires*, vol. CI.

<sup>90</sup> Speeches in the Chamber, 21 April 1836. Given the doubts and uncertainties surrounding the future of railways in France at this time the attitude of Dupin, Passy and Thiers is not as absurd as has sometimes been claimed. Some protectionists, it should be added, also tried to show that the reduction or abolition of the duty on iron rails would make little difference to total construction costs: Mimerel claimed the difference would be 3.75% and Dupin claimed any cost increase would be offset by the lower land and labour costs in France.

<sup>91</sup> In consequence only negligible quantities of foreign rails were imported before 1843. Government statistics in *Archives Nationales*, F12.6220.

The tariff reform movement of the 1830s thus had important indigenous roots: the teachings of economists, the writings of journalists, the excesses of the tariff itself and the existence of interest groups that were dissatisfied with all or parts of the system. The campaign to lower duties on coal and iron attracted disparate support and shows the complicated nature of the reform movement. The long debates generated by the proposal to reduce the duty on imported rails, like those on coal and iron tariffs in general, are an indication of the strength of protectionist feeling and interests and the involved nature of the tariff problem.

### III

The tariff reform campaign and the government's willingness to contemplate changes in the tariff were undoubtedly stimulated by outside influences. Fears generated by the formation and the success of the Zollverein played some part. The desire to foster good relations with Belgium played a larger part. However, the single most important stimulus came from the British example, and the diplomacy and propaganda activities of her representatives.

Reformers sought to push the government into a more active commercial diplomacy with both the Zollverein and the German States that had remained outside. Despite ample warnings from consular representatives of the danger posed to French commerce by the customs union being formed across the Rhine, the French government seemed to take little action to counter the formation of the Zollverein. In the months following its creation, moreover, when Prussia was engaged in the difficult task of persuading the mainly agricultural South-West German states of Baden and Nassau to join the customs union, the French did little to try to influence their decision. France's only significant action was the signing of a secret commercial treaty with Nassau, but even here the initiative had come from Nassau and in any case the treaty was never brought before the Chamber for ratification.<sup>92</sup> Reform interests

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<sup>92</sup> After long negotiations Nassau entered the Zollverein in December 1834. Baden only reached a final agreement in May 1835 and even then the Baden Chamber ratified it with misgivings. W. O. HENDERSON, *The Zollverein*, second edition, 1959, pp. 103-27.

were not slow to point out the dangers to French commerce posed by the Zollverein<sup>93</sup> and they suggested a number of possible ripostes. The best remembered of these is Léon Faucher's *Union du Midi*, but both journalists and deputies — and particularly, of course, deputies from Alsace — pointed out that the British were already following an active policy of encouraging part of Northern Germany to remain outside the Zollverein, and suggested that France take advantage of the difficulties the Prussian government was encountering in persuading South German states to join the customs union. By general consent, the Duchy of Baden, which prior to the imposition of the heavy duty on livestock in 1822 had had a flourishing commerce with France, offered the best opportunity.<sup>94</sup> The *Journal du Commerce* first advocated France enter into commercial negotiations with Baden<sup>95</sup> and when Baden concluded a treaty to join the Zollverein in 1835 it proposed France reach a commercial agreement with the Zollverein itself.<sup>96</sup> In the Chamber pro-reform deputies expressed regret that the French government had missed one chance with Baden but hoped that France might still enter into negotiations with other states outside the German customs union, like Brunswick, Hanover, Holstein, the Hanseatic ports or Mecklenberg.<sup>97</sup>

Belgium's accession to independence gave rise to discussions, on both sides of the frontier, as to ways of effecting closer economic ties, either through mutual tariff concessions or an outright

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<sup>93</sup> Mulhousiens, Lyonnais and Bordelais complained that the Zollverein constituted a threat to exports. See, for instance, the 1834 Winegrowers' Petition (*Enquête relative à diverses prohibitions...*, vol. I, pp. 45-57). The *Journal du Commerce* claimed that the Zollverein tariff was not as liberal as its apologists said it was and that it imposed its heaviest levies on French silks, wines and spirits. ("Du Système de douanes prussien", 31 May 1835).

<sup>94</sup> PAUL LEUILLIOT, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-6 and 280-4.

<sup>95</sup> *Journal du Commerce*, 21 March and 31 May 1835.

<sup>96</sup> "Des rapports commerciaux avec l'Allemagne", *ibid.*, 27 July 1835.

<sup>97</sup> Speeches by Lejoindre and Golbéry (Haut-Rhin), Chambre des députés, séance du 14 mai 1835, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. XC; speeches by de Schauembourg and Golbéry (Haut-Rhin), Chambre des députés, séance du 13 avril 1836, *ibid.*, vol. CI. In the debates on the second 1836 tariff bill the Comte Roger (Nord) and Anisson-Duperron both talked of the necessity of offering tariff reductions to the Zollverein in the hope of some reciprocity. In the ensuing discussion Passy and Thiers explained government policy towards the German customs union. Chambre des députés, séance du 2 mai 1836, *ibid.*, vol. CIII.

tariff union. Nothing came of these early suggestions but from 1832 onwards various informal negotiations took place between representatives of the two governments. As the goods that Belgium exported threatened powerful interests in France the negotiations proved difficult. However, the French government's willingness to contemplate changes in the tariff was prompted by two factors: complaints from silk and wine exporters at high Belgian imposts on their goods<sup>98</sup> and the promptings of the Belgian government.<sup>99</sup> Its geographical location and the nature of its rapidly developing industrial base meant that the Belgian economy was increasingly dependent on export markets, while political independence had entailed some loss of Dutch and Dutch-colonial markets. One tactic adopted by the government to solve this problem was to seek reductions in French tariffs on Belgian textiles, coal and metallurgical products.<sup>100</sup> In the face of the slow progress of the fitful negotiations that took place, the Belgian government tried to force the issue by pointing out the development of protectionist sentiment among some Belgian business groups and the increasing pressure being put on the government to reach some commercial agreement with the Zollverein. Soon Belgian officials were hinting that the state of their country's foreign trade would force them to sign such an agreement: in August 1835 de Theux of the Belgian Ministry of Commerce warned his French counterpart that "il faut . . . que nous Belges, nous devenions 28 si nous ne devenons 36",<sup>101</sup> referring thus to the need to unite the four million Belgians either with France or the Zollverein. Though the Belgians

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<sup>98</sup> The French government protested against duties being levied on wines and brandies in letters of 4 July and 25 August, 1832. Belgian reply of 28 January, 1833, *Archives Nationales*, F12.2660.

<sup>99</sup> Le Han to de Broglie, April, de Broglie to Thiers, 24 April, and Thiers to de Broglie, 23 May 1833, *ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Belgium annually exported 50 million francs' worth of goods to France in the quinquennium 1831-5, but took only 28,406,000 francs' worth from France. Averages computed from official statistics published by the French government. These figures do not take into account the considerable smuggling across the land frontier. Ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie, *Annales du Commerce extérieur. Less Commerce entre la France et la Belgique, 1831-1909*, Paris 1910.

<sup>101</sup> Cited in copy of a memorandum from Duchâtel to de Broglie, President of the Council, 30 September 1835, *Archives Nationales*, F12.2660.

failed to persuade the French to abolish prohibitions on cotton and woollen manufactures, or to make significant changes in iron duties, the desire to conciliate her neighbour was the principal purpose behind France's tariff law of 5 July 1836.<sup>102</sup>

The idea of a full customs union, as opposed to piecemeal amendments in tariffs, was also mooted in the 1830s, though it only became an issue of serious public debate in the early 1840s.<sup>103</sup> The idea had strong supporters in Belgium and at different times it was proposed by Alexander Rodenbach, the Liège Chamber of Commerce and Antwerp merchants. The idea aroused less enthusiasm in France but Léon Faucher proposed a tariff union in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1837 and, more significantly, Duchâtel, when Minister of Commerce, recommended a tariff union to the Council of Ministers in September 1835.<sup>104</sup> Although the suggestion was not taken up at the time, the French made a formal proposal to this effect in a note to the Belgian government in November 1836.<sup>105</sup>

Of far greater import was the influence exercised by Great Britain.<sup>106</sup> Britain helped the cause of tariff reform in two ways: British policy seemed to most reformers to be the model France should follow and British policy-makers made a determined effort to persuade the French government to institute reform and tariff reformers to step up their campaign.

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<sup>102</sup> Correspondence between the Minister of Commerce and the Comte de Latour Maubourg and interministerial correspondence, January-July 1836, *Archives Nationales*, F12.6241.

<sup>103</sup> H.-T. DESCHAMPS, *op. cit.*

<sup>104</sup> DUCHÂTEL wrote, "J'ai toujours pensé, Monsieur le Duc, qu'après les événements de 1830, et eu égard des associations commerciales qui se forment sur d'autres points, c'était pour le gouvernement français un devoir impérieux que d'examiner une bonne fois ce que sont et ce que doivent devenir les relations commerciales entre la France et la Belgique, et de décider s'il n'y aurait pas lieu d'accueillir la demande d'une simple association commerciale, qui placerait les deux pays sous un même système de douanes". He then proposed a tariff union. Duchâtel's memorandum to de Broglie, 30 September 1835, *loc. cit.*

<sup>105</sup> ALFRED DE RIDDER, *Les Projets d'union douanière franco-belge et les puissances européennes (1836-1843)*, Brussels, 1933, appendix I.

<sup>106</sup> The rôle played by British representatives in the 1830s tariff campaign and its outcome is discussed at greater length in BARRIE M. RATCLIFFE, "Great Britain and Tariff Reform in France 1831-1836", in W.H. CHALONER and BARRIE M. RATCLIFFE, (eds.), *Essays in Trade and Transport*, Manchester University Press, 1977, pp. 98-135.

Reformers on both sides of the Channel argued that Anglo-French trade was unnecessarily restricted, that it was low compared with the level of exchanges reached in the 1780s, and that it had not grown at the same pace as the total foreign trade of either country. Horace Say pointed out in 1835 that France's trade with Britain had remained at the same level for the previous ten years and this despite the fact that Britain was the richest and one of the closest of her neighbours.<sup>107</sup> In their parliamentary report on commercial relations between the two countries Bowring and Villiers produced statistics to show that British imports from France had increased five-fold between the 1780s and 1830 while British exports to France had not grown at all and that, as a result, France was Britain's most important supplier after Russia but ranked only ninth in Europe as an export market.<sup>108</sup> French reformers also held British reforms as worthy of emulation. The Report of the 1828 Select Committee and Sir Henry Parnell's *On Financial Reform*, published in 1830 and in French translation in 1832, the tariff reforms begun by Huskisson and continued, if falteringly, by the Whig administrations of the 1830s were all cited as examples France might follow.

Reformers were obliged to recognise, however, that there were limitations to the British example. Defenders of the status quo constantly cited the supposedly nefarious effects of the 1786 Eden-Vergennes Commercial Treaty as a dire warning of what could be expected from liberalisation of the tariff, and Stéphane Flachet lamented in 1834 that when the treaty was mentioned it appeared "on réveille le souvenir d'une *Saint-Barthélemy industrielle*, et que la France tout entière se soit alors révoltée contre un acte arbitraire et insensé d'une administration ignorante".<sup>109</sup> Besides, Huskisson's

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<sup>107</sup> "Des Relations commerciales entre la France et l'Angleterre", (a report to the Paris Chamber of Commerce), *Moniteur universel*, 10 March 1835.

<sup>108</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, 1834, XIX, First Report of Bowring and Villiers on the Commercial Relations between France and Great Britain, appendix I, pp. 80-94 and appendix XV, p. 149. These figures do not take account of the considerable smuggling between the two countries.

<sup>109</sup> *L'Industriel. Exposition de 1834*, n.d., pp. 10-11. The best exposition of the arguments and (suspect) statistics is "Du Traité de Commerce de 1786", *Journal du Commerce*, 4 November 1834.

tariff reforms had been moderate, the British government still drew over 40% of its revenues from customs and excise,<sup>110</sup> the soi-disant Whig reforming ministries of the 1830s were Whiggish before they were reforming and it was by no means clear to contemporaries in Britain or elsewhere as to whether and if so by what means Britain would move towards an even more liberal policy.

The British example, thus, was flawed and could be — and was — dismissed by protectionists as a policy of economic nationalism: just as previously high protection had been in the interests of the British economy so now some reforms were necessary to serve the ends of British industrialists and merchants. A more significant part in the tariff reform campaign was played by British commercial diplomacy: the tariff negotiations that took place between 1831 and 1834 were the first, the most extended and the most influential of four different attempts by the two governments during the period of the July Monarchy to reach a commercial agreement.<sup>111</sup>

There was a vital political dimension to these commercial negotiations which goes a long way to explain why they were begun and why, despite the poor progress made, they were persevered with. The political rapprochement from 1831 onwards inaugurated a closer collaboration and a better understanding between the two powers than at any time before the Crimean War. The new régime in France was anxious to escape its diplomatic isolation, to overthrow the system set up by the Congress of Vienna and, in its early years, regarded Britain as its most likely supporter. Talleyrand in London and de Broglie in France were fervent advocates

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<sup>110</sup> ALBERT H. IMLAH, *Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1958, p. 147.

<sup>111</sup> The other three occasions were 1837, 1838-9 and 1839-41. "Résumé analytique des négociations commerciales survenues entre la France et l'Angleterre de 1826 à 1859", dated 15 December 1859, *Papiers Baroche*, 1184, *Bibliothèque Thiers*; "notes échangées entre les commissaires anglais et français", *Archives Nationales*, F12.6219 and "rapport au ministre sur le projet de traité de commerce avec l'Angleterre", March 1841, and "rapport à l'Empereur sur le traité de commerce franco-anglais", 24 January 1860, *ibid.*, F12.6220. The negotiations are also discussed in the correspondance consulaire at commerciale (Londres), CC28 (1838-40), *Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères*.

of Anglo-French understanding and both believed that increased commercial intercourse would be a sure guarantor of British goodwill. It was the diplomatic rapprochement, together with the British Board of Trade's cherished policy of seeking reciprocity, a policy Board of Trade officials had already pursued and were to continue to pursue with determination and striking lack of success,<sup>112</sup> which ushered in the commercial negotiations that continued spasmodically from November 1831 until December 1834. Throughout, the British negotiators, Bowring and Villiers, the British ambassador, Lord Granville, and Palmerston, the British Foreign Secretary, continued to use diplomatic advantage as a lever, stressing that a commercial agreement would ensure closer political relations.

In December 1831 a mixed commission, consisting of two representatives from each side, was set up. In view of the opposition to tariff reform not only in the French Chambers but in the Cabinet itself, it was deemed inadvisable either to attempt to negotiate a commercial agreement directly or to attempt to introduce immediate major reforms in the French tariff. Instead, a commission was set up whose purpose was to inquire into the state of trade between the two countries, the extent and effects of smuggling and to indicate what reductions could be made in the French tariff which would improve Anglo-French commerce and reduce smuggling.<sup>113</sup> It was decided to examine the French rather than the British tariff because not only had Britain already undertaken some tariff reforms but she had also made reductions that

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<sup>112</sup> For a general discussion of this diplomatic onslaught see LUCY BROWN, *op. cit.*, and JUDITH B. WILLIAMS, *British Commercial Policy and Trade Expansion, 1750-1850*, Oxford, 1973. For a specific example see KARL F. HELLEINER, *Free Trade and Frustration. Anglo-Austrian Negotiations, 1860-70*, Toronto, 1973. For the frustrations felt by British commercial diplomats see FRANCIS E. HYDE, *Mr. Gladstone at the Board of Trade*, London, 1934, pp. 125-6 and BERNARD MALLET, *Sir Louis Mallet: a Record of Public Service and Political Ideals*, London, 1905, pp. 58-9.

<sup>113</sup> BOWRING to THOMSON, 8 and 12 December, 1831, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*. The private papers of the Earl of Clarendon at the Bodleian give a very full, if biased, account of the Anglo-French commercial negotiations. The French side of the negotiations is to be found in the *Archives Nationales*, F12.6216-20 and 2647 and in the *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale (Londres)*, *Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*, CC.24-7.

were of particular benefit to France: the lowering of import duties on silk goods and the tariff equalisation on French wines introduced by Lord Althorp earlier in the year.<sup>114</sup>

The negotiations benefitted from having enthusiastic and able British representatives. C. E. Poulett Thomson, Vice-President of the Board of Trade from 1830 and President from 1834, was a firm believer in the desirability of tariff reform in both countries and enjoyed good relations with a number of leading French politicians, including Baron Louis and de Broglie. The first of the British representatives, George Villiers, a professional diplomat who was destined to be a distinguished Foreign Secretary, brought industriousness, tact and charm to the Paris discussions. The second, John Bowring, already had close ties with French liberals and with Louis-Philippe himself. Both Villiers and Bowring brought enthusiasm, energy and a good deal of expertise. But they also had weaknesses. They — and particularly Bowring, whose utilitarian zeal aroused considerable antipathy and not just among defenders of the existing tariff<sup>115</sup> — moved in a world where their plans were constantly being endangered by the machinations of anglo-phobic, prohibitionist or similarly prejudiced enemies. They developed a conspiracy theory wherein three redoubtable enemies of Britain and of tariff reform toiled incessantly to thwart British hopes: Charles Dupin, Saint-Cricq and Adolphe Thiers.<sup>116</sup> Thiers

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<sup>114</sup> French consul-general in London to Sebastiani, 14 July, 13, 17 and 25 August, 10 and 19 September and 3 October, 1831, Correspondance consulaire et commerciale (Londres) CC.24 and Talleyrand to Sebastiani, 1 October 1831, Correspondance diplomatique, CP.635, *Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères*. The second note of the British commissioners to their French counterparts in 1840 indicates that French wine exports increased by 70% between 1831 and 1838. *Archives Nationales*, F12.6219.

<sup>115</sup> Even Adolphe d'Eichthal, banker and tariff reform advocate in the 1830s and 1840s, thought Bowring's overbearing tone did more harm than good. Adolphe d'Eichthal to Gustave d'Eichthal, 28 February, 1834, Fonds d'Eichthal, 13748, fo. 47, *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*.

<sup>116</sup> Bowring described Dupin as "vain, shallow and spiteful" while Villiers called him "that prince of jackasses" and even stooped to doggerel: "To the meanest trickeries stooping/ Ever lying-lurching Dupin". (Bowring to Thomson, 4 January 1833; Villiers to Thomson, 6 and 25 January 1833, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*). Villiers described Saint-Cricq's activities on the 1833 tariff bill commission thus: "But the knave St.-Cricq/Is concocting a plan/To play us a trick/If his knaveship can." (Villiers to Thomson, 25 January 1833, *ibid.*). Though Bowring described Thiers as "that little knave" he recognized Thiers' adroitness, saying: "I never saw a creature so slippery,

was the most powerful of these for he was Minister of Commerce from December 1832 until April 1834 and President of the Council during the passing of the 1836 tariff bills. If he respected the diplomatic importance of some tariff changes, Thiers was a reluctant reformer and a defender of protection. Worse, he disliked Bowring's hectoring and schoolmasterish manner and the two never had amicable relations. He out-manoeuvred Bowring by refusing to see him, keeping him waiting and alternately promising him reforms and berating his and British intentions in general.

There was, however, a more fundamental problem: the political power and powerful arguments of protectionists in France. They were powerful in the Cabinet and in parliament, a power demonstrated when the Chamber mauled d'Argout's corn law amendment in April 1832. Worse, the British, like the Belgians, were anxious to secure the ending of prohibitions and to secure reductions in duties on cotton twist and piece-goods, on iron and coal — in other words in the sectors where they enjoyed a competitive advantage. These were just the sectors where the French were least willing to effect important changes. It seemed to the French that neither the tariff concessions that the British could offer as a *quid pro quo*<sup>117</sup> nor the promise of closer political collaboration was a weighty enough compensation. This explains not merely why the British failed to secure all the changes they would have liked but also why French ministries prevaricated and placated, why they were reluctant to put through changes but never actually refused to do so. George Villiers, lamenting Casimir Perier's failure to bring a tariff bill before the Chamber early in 1832,

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vain, witty, ignorant, sportive, presumptuous, passionate, foolish and clever. Land your hand as you will there is no catching the eel". (Bowring to Thomson, 31 January 1834, *ibid.*).

<sup>117</sup> Since the British had already removed prohibitions on silk imports, since the prospects for increased sales of French wines and spirits seemed limited and since the Whigs did not have the budget surpluses or the reforming zeal to put through far-reaching tariff reductions, the concessions the British could offer appeared to be of minor import. This explains why the British representatives resorted to the threat of discriminatory duties.

reported that the President of the Council had promised Granville "qu'il s'en est occupé, qu'il s'en occupe, qu'il s'en occupera — in short declines the verb but doesn't do the thing".<sup>118</sup>

Bowring and Villiers adopted two tactics to coax tariff reforms from the French government: they themselves put pressure on the King and ministers and they sought to encourage reform agitation in the press, among deputies, and in the provinces. Thus Bowring arrived in France armed with copies of Perronet Thompson's incisive *Catechism on the Corn Laws* which had had enormous success in Britain.<sup>119</sup> Within weeks of arriving in France Villiers was in contact with Johnston, the Bordeaux merchant, providing him with advice on how to conduct a tariff reform campaign and providing him with a copy of the 1820 Merchants' Petition to the House of Commons as a model of clarity and economy of words.<sup>120</sup> Early in 1832 Sir Henry Parnell published a pamphlet in French which advocated mutual tariff reductions in preference to a commercial treaty.<sup>121</sup> Bowring and Villiers early requested that the Treasury provide a special fund to enable them to translate and circulate some of Thomson's and Althorp's speeches on the broad principles of tariff reform.<sup>122</sup>

Their attempt to stimulate a reform campaign took three forms. Bowring addressed himself to the press and formed close ties with Rodet of *le Temps*, Stéphane Flachet of *le Courier français* and *le Constitutionnel* and Emile Pereire of *le National*. Early in 1833 he could write that "no day now passes in which some article in a liberal sense fails to appear".<sup>123</sup> By June of the same year he could claim with some exaggeration: "I have got with us the *Constitutionnel*, *National*, *Courier*, *Messenger*, *Tribune*, *Bon Sens*,

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<sup>118</sup> Villiers to Thomson, 2 April 1832, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*.

<sup>119</sup> Perronet Thompson to Bowring, 5 December 1831, Perronet Thompson Papers, *University of Hull*.

<sup>120</sup> Villiers to Thomson, 23 December 1831, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*.

<sup>121</sup> *Observations sur le commerce entre la France et la Grande-Bretagne*; *The Times*, 21 January 1832; *Journal du Commerce*, 29 January 1832; Parnell to the Baron Louis, Parnell to d'Agout, 26 January 1832, *Archives Nationales*, F12.6216.

<sup>122</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 23 December 1831, *loc. cit.*

<sup>123</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 15 February 1833; Bowring to Villiers, 11 February 1832, *ibid.*

Moniteur du Commerce, Journal du Commerce, Temps, Revue encyclopédique, and many allies, with *the whole* of the departmental press of Southern and Western France".<sup>124</sup>

Bowring addressed himself, secondly, to deputies. Until the lengthy debates on the 1836 tariff bills the Chamber resolutely failed to discuss the tariff bills presented to it from December 1831 onwards. It therefore constituted a less useful platform for the reform campaign. It was still important, however, for Bowring to gain allies among the deputies for they could lobby ministers, ask questions in reply to the speech from the throne, intercalate questions on the tariff in discussions on the Budget and on other bills. More, even if Parliament itself did not debate tariff bills, they were discussed in the commissions, whose reports were subsequently published.<sup>125</sup> He therefore worked to extend the group of deputies who supported tariff reform — in the event a motley group that embraced a wide spectrum of political colourings — and to get them to act in concert.<sup>126</sup> He also worked to persuade electors and chambers of commerce to ensure their deputies were aware of their views on the tariff and acted accordingly. Three deputies in particular — Amédée Desjobert (Seine-Inférieure), A.-J. Lherbette (Aisnee) and A.-J.-L. Anisson-Duperron (Seine-Inférieure) — collaborated with Bowring and raised the issue of tariff reform on every possible occasion.<sup>127</sup> In August 1834 he told

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<sup>124</sup> Bowring to Villiers, 9 June 1833, *ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Parliament also discussed petitions for, as in Britain at this time, the right to petition and parliament's duty to discuss the petitions that were addressed to it occupied a more important place in political procedures than they did later in the century.

<sup>126</sup> As, for instance, he was already doing for the d'Argout tariff bill early in 1833. Bowring to Thomson, 10 January 1833, *ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Desjobert became a leading opponent of the French presence in North Africa and of the tariff system. (Obituary notice in *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire de France*, 1853, p. 101). Lherbette published *De la liberté commerciale et de la réforme de nos lois de douanes*, in 1835 and joined Bastiat's campaign in the 1840s. Anisson-Duperron had already published *De l'affranchissement du commerce et de l'industrie* (Paris 1829) which advocated France follow the example of Huskisson's reforms and *De l'Enquête sur les fers, ou application des principes généraux à la question de la taxe sur les fers étrangers* (Paris 1829) which sought to refute the arguments put forward by Saint-Cricq and the Baron Pasquier. He was to join the *Association pour la liberté des échanges*, become its vice-president and greatest benefactor in its first year. (*Le Libre-Echange*, vol. I, 13 June 1847).

Thomson that his "own personal relations extend to about *sixty deputies* of all colours parties".<sup>128</sup>

More important, perhaps, were the three provincial tours Bowring undertook in 1832, 1833 and 1834. There can be no question that these journeys, if they were not the instigator of the reform agitation, were at least a stimulus to it. Bowring's first journey took him to Lyons, Grenoble and Saint-Etienne. As a result, the Grenoble Chamber of Commerce, which hitherto had not made representations on tariff reform, sent a memorandum recommending tariff reductions as a way of stimulating Anglo-French commerce and the Lyons Chamber of Commerce, already a seasoned campaigner for tariff revision, agreed to send a similar letter to the Minister.<sup>129</sup> After his visit Bowring kept in touch with the Lyons Chamber and the Chamber instructed local deputies to support raw silk export.<sup>130</sup> He later claimed that "we should have carried nothing without Lyons at our back".<sup>131</sup> Bowring's second provincial trip was longer and more wide-ranging than the first: it took him to Bordeaux and to other ports in Western and Northern France. He was warmly received in Bordeaux and stayed a month but even where he found little interest in tariff reform he still met with some success — as at Brest where the editors of the two local newspapers promised their support and as at Rouen where the principal paper published articles advocating some moderation of the tariff.<sup>132</sup> He regarded his second propaganda tour as an enormous success and, even when allowance is made for his hyperbole and Panglossian optimism, there can be little doubt that his trip helped fan the flames of agitation.<sup>133</sup> The third provincial tour took Bowring to Burgundy, Marseilles and

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<sup>128</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 18 August 1834, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*.

<sup>129</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 28 and 29 April, 2 and 5 May 1832, *ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> Bowring to Villiers, 15 October and Bowring to Thomson, 23 November 1832, *ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 15 February 1833, *ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 25 May 1833, *ibid.* In a letter to Villiers, written on 23 May, he claimed: "There are 16 newspapers on the ground over which I have gone. There is *not one* of them that has not published *several* hearty articles in condemnation of the protecting system".

<sup>133</sup> See, for example, "Mission du Docteur Bowring en France", *Revue mensuelle d'économie politique*, vol. I, 1833.

Bordeaux.<sup>134</sup> Once more, he sought not just to canvass merchants but to have electors exert pressure on their representatives, to lobby deputies, to meet newspaper editors and to put tariff reformers in touch with one another — a measure of the way in which his propaganda tours had become more sophisticated.

For Bowring, raising the standard of reform in the provinces, gaining allies in the press and in parliament were secondary to the primary task of ensuring advantageous recommendations from the the Anglo-French Commission and exerting pressure on the French government to reform the tariff. The British representatives used both promises and threats to persuade King and ministers. They promised further tariff reductions on French exports and they used the most powerful weapon at their command: tariff reforms were the best way to ensure a lasting diplomatic rapprochement between the two countries. They threatened that France's failure to reciprocate British tariff reductions was and would continue to be a source of hostile popular feelings in Britain.<sup>135</sup> They threatened that the Select Committee on silk might recommend raising duties on French silks.<sup>136</sup> They threatened an across-the-board increase in duties on French goods.<sup>137</sup> They also sought to persuade David and Grétérin, the senior civil servants most involved in the discussions, that government revenue — the Budget was in deficit until 1835 — would benefit from a removal of prohibitions and a reduction of duties.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> The trip was undertaken to encourage representation against differential duties (Bowring to Thomson, 8 August 1834, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*). Bowring also hoped to rouse Marseilles which had failed to respond to the calls for support issued by Bordeaux (Thomas to Thiers, 10 April 1834, Papiers Thiers, N.a.f. 20601, *Bibliothèque Nationale*) and had been the only major port to have expressed satisfaction at Thiers' tariff bill. (Bowring to Thomson, 30 September 1834, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*).

<sup>135</sup> Copy of a letter from Bowring and Villiers to d'Argout, 21 March 1832, *ibid*.

<sup>136</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 3 March 1832, *ibid*.

<sup>137</sup> There was polite talk of retaliation early in 1832. (Villiers to Thomson, 24 February and Bowring and Villiers to d'Argout, 21 March 1832, *ibid*). But in July 1834 Thomson was using the threat of a 20% increase in all duties on French goods. (Thomson to Bowring, 28 July 1834, *ibid*). Such a threat lost some of its weight when, as in silk manufactures, smuggling remained as important as it did.

<sup>138</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 24 April 1834, *ibid*. This argument was to be a central feature of the First Report on the Commercial Relations between France and Great Britain. (*First Report...* pp. 46-8, 54, 57). It was also taken up by reformers in the

Largely as a consequence of their labours, the Anglo-French Commission made a series of recommendations, the most important of which the government submitted to the *Conseil supérieur du commerce* for its consideration. They persuaded their French counterparts to recommend the ending of the prohibition on the export of raw silk, arguing that the British had allowed the import of silk manufactures and recently permitted the free exportation of long wool, of which France was the largest importer. They further persuaded the French commissioners that in the light of extensive smuggling into France and the consequent higher cost to manufacturers of tulle and muslins and loss to the Treasury, high numbers of cotton twist should be admitted. The government accepted these proposals in February 1832 but hesitated to put them into legislative form before the arrival of the cholera effectively ended the session.<sup>139</sup> Perier was persuaded, however, to give a written understanding to the British ambassador whereby he promised to introduce the recommended changes as soon as practicable.<sup>140</sup>

When Parliament reassembled d'Argout, the Minister of Commerce, presented a tariff bill which contained the recommendations of the Anglo-French Commission<sup>141</sup> and Bowring and Villiers now directed their efforts, first, at securing a favourable report from the commission which the Chamber set up to examine the bill and, second, at ensuring the report was presented and the bill discussed and passed. The trouble was that the bill also contained a

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Chamber, (Anisson-Duperron, *Chambre des députés, séance du 19 mai, 1834, Archives parlementaires*, vol. XC) and in their writings (by A.-J. LHERBETTE, for instance, in his *De la liberté commerciale et de la réforme de nos lois de douanes*, Paris, 1835, pp. 6-7).

<sup>139</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 16 February, Villiers to Thomson, 17 and 24 February 1832, *Ibid.*; *First Report...*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>140</sup> Bowring to Thomson and Villiers to Thomson, 2 April 1832, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*; copies of letters from Sebastiani to Granville, 12 April and Granville to Sebastiani, 13 May 1832, *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale* (Londres), 25, *Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères*. Already in October of the same year Granville was reminding de Broglie of the written promise of the previous April (copies of his letter of 17 October and of de Broglie's reply of 24 October 1832, *Correspondance consulaire et commerciale, ibid.*).

<sup>141</sup> *Chambre des députés, séance du 3 décembre 1832, Archives parlementaires*, vol. LXXVIII. The bill proposed to end prohibitions on imports of cotton yarn above 180 (French) and on imports of less important items like cashmere shawls, clocks and watches and some kinds of leather and on exports of raw and thrown silk.

clause proposing a reduction in the duty levied on imported livestock<sup>142</sup> which roused concerned agriculturalists and a least one member of the Commission of the Chamber — Falguerolles (Tarn) — was appointed by his *bureau* to defend existing livestock legislation. The trouble was, too, that the proposed ending of prohibitions on imports of cotton twist of number 180 and above led spinners to send strong representations to the government and a delegation to Paris to lobby the Minister of Commerce. Worse, in contrast with later tariff bill commissions, which were rather more liberal in their recommendations than the bills they examined, this commission had Saint-Cricq as reporter and included Dupin among its members.<sup>143</sup> Worse still, d'Argout changed posts with Thiers who arrived at the Ministry of Commerce with little knowledge of commercial problems but with a willingness to learn, protectionist feelings and a desire to make his mark. The government thus found itself once again in the difficult position of being pulled one way by the diplomatic desirability of some tariff changes and the other by the danger posed by an uncooperative commission and a refractory Chamber already buzzing with commentaries on the bill.

The Commission approved the tariff bill but amended the clause allowing the import of high count yarns which it recommended only come into effect after a lapse of two years. Once its report had been presented,<sup>144</sup> Bowring and Villiers again tried to

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<sup>142</sup> The 1816 duty on livestock had been essentially a revenue duty. In 1822, because of a large influx of cattle for accidental reasons the previous year, the government proposed to increase the duty ten-fold and the Chamber of Deputies raised it even further. Retaliations abroad and representations from Alsace led d'Argout to propose a 50% reduction.

<sup>143</sup> Its members were Cunin-Gridaine, Duvergier de Hauranne, Fulchiron, Meynard, Barbet, Boigues, Falguerolles, Dupin and Saint-Cricq. Of these only Duvergier and Fulchiron could be relied upon to support the suggested reforms.

<sup>144</sup> The British had attempted to put pressure on the French government to ensure a favourable report (Villiers to Auckland, 6 January, Bowring to Thomson, 6 and 7 January, Villiers to Thiers, 21 February, Villiers to Palmerston, 11 February 1833, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*; Talleyrand to de Broglie, 20 January 1833, *Mémoires du Prince de Talleyrand*, Paris, 1891, vol. V, pp. 105-8). Bowring described the report as "a series of lies and frauds... What a volume of scoundrel perfidies" (Bowring to Villiers, 7 April 1833, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*). The introduction to the report was an argument in favour of the existing tariff and the commission opposed any reduction of duties on imported livestock.

nudge Thiers into bringing on the discussion of the bill by reminding him of its political aspects, and of the written pledge given by the French government,<sup>145</sup> and by organising a press campaign in favour of reform.<sup>146</sup> All Thiers could be persuaded to do was to offer to propose an amendment in the discussion of the Budget to allow the government to put into effect some of the measures proposed in the tariff bill by means of a royal decree. In this way Thiers believed he could placate the British and still avoid bringing the tariff bill before the Chamber.<sup>147</sup> Unfortunately, there was an outcry as soon as the amendment was printed: not only were protectionists against it but so were many of the opposition groups who objected to the powers the amendment conferred. Bowring, who attended the June 19 session when the amendment was to be moved by Saint-Cricq, began to be suspicious when he noted that as the time approached for the amendment to be proposed a number of ministers, including Thiers and de Broglie, began to drift out of the Chamber. He became alarmed when Saint-Cricq left the Chamber and dismayed when Dupin, President of the Chamber, moved the amendment from the chair, nobody spoke in its favour and it was rejected by an overwhelming majority. Saint-Cricq later claimed that he had left the Chamber only for an instant and that it was all the fault of the President who had maliciously raised the question earlier than had been agreed. The fact was, however, that the proposed amendment had raised such a furore that when it came to the crunch no-one had the courage to defend it.<sup>148</sup> Something, though, was rescued from the debris,

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<sup>145</sup> Thomson to de Broglie, 28 May 1833, *ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Bowring wrote to Villiers: "Every day you will have an article somewhere. Since I found the state of things here, I am become a boiling cauldron. I feel as if we — the honest — were pitted against the knaves — and shall we not succeed? Aye! that we will". (letter of 3 June 1833, *ibid.*).

<sup>147</sup> Any royal decrees issued would have had to be ratified by Parliament in its next session; the current session was to end on 26 June and the 1834 session to begin in December.

<sup>148</sup> Both Humann and Duchâtel were in the Chamber but "Humann sat still as a stone, while Duchâtel looked round in amazement" (Bowring to Villiers, 19 June 1833, *ibid.*; de Broglie to Talleyrand, 29 June 1833, *Mémoires du Prince de Talleyrand*, vol. V, pp. 190-1; chambre des députés, séance du 18 juin 1833, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. LXXXV).

for de Broglie was already busy persuading his Cabinet colleagues that a gesture should and could be made to placate the British. The gesture was the issuing of a royal decree ending the prohibition on the export of raw silk.<sup>149</sup>

On his return from a private trip to the Rhineland, Thomson stopped off in Paris in September 1833. He held a series of meetings with Thiers, the purpose of which was to test the ground for a commercial treaty. No progress was made because the French minister claimed that any treaty would have to be submitted to the Chambers where, given their temper, it was likely to be mutilated. Both Thiers and Thomson agreed, however, that for the benefit of Anglo-French commerce and diplomatic concord, each government should continue mutually advantageous tariff reductions.<sup>150</sup> The result was Thiers' tariff bill presented in February 1834. Despite the modest nature of the proposed reforms, and Thiers' highly protectionist preamble, Bowring hoped to be able to influence the liberal members of the new Commission<sup>151</sup> and worked to persuade the government to have the bill discussed before the end of the session.<sup>152</sup> Thiers' preamble, with its passio-

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<sup>149</sup> The government already had the power to end prohibitions under article 34 of the law of 17 December, 1814. Thiers and de Broglie refrained from touching prohibitions on cotton yarns on the grounds that the Commission of the Chamber had recommended that the ending of the prohibition on twist of 180 (French) and above come into effect two years after the passing of the tariff bill. In this way it was argued that Britain was losing nothing since the tariff bill would be presented in the following session (de Broglie to Talleyrand, 1 July 1833. *Mémoires du Prince de Talleyrand*, vol. V, pp. 191-7).

<sup>150</sup> G. POULETT SCROPE, *Memoir of the Life of the right honourable Charles Lord Sydenham*, London, 1843, p. 69; Thiers to Thomson, 29 October, Thomson to Thiers, 20 November, and Bowring to Villiers, 12 October, 1833, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*. Thomson's letter to Thiers is also in *Archives Nationales*, F12.6216.

<sup>151</sup> The 1834 Commission was far more liberal than its predecessor. Anisson-Duperron beat one of the most energetic defenders of the status quo, Demarçay, in the first *bureau*, while Desjobert, Roul, Fulchiron and Gay-Lussac, all of whom could be expected to support a measure of reform, were also elected. Though Meynard and Cunin-Gridaine were more doubtful, only Falguerolles and Berard, a forgemaster, were overtly protectionist. Duchâtel, who had earlier expressed a desire to sit on the Commission, managed to wriggle out of it by getting elected to another commission, explaining to his friends that he did not want to compromise himself. (Bowring to Thomson, 19 February and Bowring to Villiers, 14 March 1834, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*).

<sup>152</sup> Some reformers believed this tactic to be misguided since a new Chamber was to be elected which, in view of the campaign of petitions and newspaper articles, might be more liberal in its composition. Bowring to Thomson, 17 and 24 February 1834, *ibid.*

nate defence of the existing system was not merely the consecration of time and experience but, having an internal logic superior to that of the political economists advocating reform, in fact helped the tariff campaign because it provoked a strong reaction in the press and among reform interests. Le Havre merchants sent a petition to the Chambers and so did Girondin wine-growers.<sup>153</sup> Bordeaux merchants had already sent their most famous petition wherein they talked of the possibility of two tariff areas for France, and this was widely discussed and in general sympathetically received.<sup>154</sup>

The position seemed to be further improved when in April the government fell and Thiers was replaced by Duchâtel. Duchâtel came to office with the best of credentials: he was a typical representative of the Orleanist élite and a rising star in the political firmament, occupying his first ministerial post at the age of thirty-four.<sup>155</sup> He also had long shown an interest in political economy<sup>156</sup> and had helped draw up a wine-growers' petition to the Chambers in 1829. His arrival, therefore, raised hopes among reformers and colleagues in favour of reform, like de Broglie.<sup>157</sup> Bowring, however, knew some of his failings. He knew him to be timorous and he knew that Thiers, the old incumbent and now once more Minister of the Interior, would ensure that Duchâtel would be even more afraid of taking an independent line. Bowring and his allies therefore adopted the tactics of reminding Duchâtel

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<sup>153</sup> Dusserrier, who drew up the winegrowers' petition, claimed: "Jamais réunion n'avait été aussi considérable. L'opinion est ici à 28 degrés de Réaumur. Vous pourrez en juger par la pétition qui a été votée à l'unanimité et par acclamation". (Dusserrier to Bowring, 24 February 1834, *ibid*).

<sup>154</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 7 February 1834, *ibid*. The Chamber of Peers treated the petition seriously and on the whole warmly. (Séance du 11 mars 1834, Rapport de M. Villemain, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. LXXXVII).

<sup>155</sup> There are no modern studies of Duchâtel apart from ROBERT KOEPKE, "Charles Tanneguy Duchâtel and the Revolution of 1848", *French Historical Studies*, vol. VIII, 1973, pp. 235-54. His lifelong friend, Ludovic Vitet, published a biography in 1875 (*Le Comte Duchâtel*, Paris, 1875). The Duchâtel papers at the *Archives Nationales* (2 AP, Papiers Duchâtel) are disappointing.

<sup>156</sup> His interest dated back to 1822 (VITET, *op. cit.*, p. 22). He published articles on political economy in *Le Globe* and in 1829 published a work strongly influenced by Malthusian ideas: *La Charité dans ses rapports avec l'état moral et le bien-être des classes inférieures de la société*. This book was republished under a slightly different title in 1836.

<sup>157</sup> De Broglie to Talleyrand, 6 April 1834, *Mémoires de Talleyrand*, vol. V, p. 351.

of the 1829 wine-growers' petition and trying to force a statement of intent from him in the Chamber.<sup>158</sup> Bowring also renewed the aggressive tactics the British had previously used: Thomson had empowered him to threaten that unless differential duties were removed, or at least a statement of intent issued, an Order-in-Council raising duties on French goods by 20% would result. He was also authorised to offer a significant reduction in duties on French wines in return for a minimum of a one-third reduction in the French iron tariff.<sup>159</sup>

Two developments further threatened British plans. One was mounting evidence that under pressure from Belgium the French government was ever more anxious to conciliate the Belgians at the possible expense of the British.<sup>160</sup> The other was Duchâtel's intention to hold an inquiry into prohibitions. At first, Bowring suspected that the planned inquiry was a protectionist plot to delay tariff reform for he saw that it would be a platform for protectionist manufacturers who, whatever the cogency of their arguments, would pass for practical men.<sup>161</sup> Once the Inquiry was under weigh, however, he sought to make the best of it by providing reformers with statistics and arguments to combat the protectionists. His most ambitious counter was to collaborate with his friend Perronet Thompson, owner-editor of the *Westminster*

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<sup>158</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 5 May 1834, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*; Chambre des députés, séance des 2 et 19 mai 1834, *Archives parlementaires*, vols. LXXXIX and XC. Reformers were disappointed by Duchâtel's first speech as Minister of Commerce (*Journal du Commerce*, 16 May 1834).

<sup>159</sup> Thomson's letter of instruction, dated 28 July, Bowring to Thomson 1 and 4 August 1834, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*. The question of French duties on coal and iron was not a new one: in February 1833 Granville had protested to de Broglie about duties the British felt to be differential. (Copy of a letter from Thiers to de Broglie, 12 February 1833, *Archives Nationales*, F12.6216).

<sup>160</sup> Bowring had long been concerned about a possible Franco-Belgian treaty: in February 1834 he had claimed that Louis-Philippe had made unfavourable changes in Thiers' bill because he wanted to safeguard any future treaty with Belgium (Bowring to Thomson, 12 February, 1834, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*). When, in an interview with the King in August 1834 Bowring played what he felt to be one of his best cards — the threat of British reprisals — Louis-Philippe replied that he regarded keeping Belgium out of the Prussian commercial union as a matter of greater priority (Bowring to Thomson, 15 August 1834, *ibid.*).

<sup>161</sup> « I understand nought of his strategy. He mounts all his enemies on horseback in order that he may win the battle. He asks the wolf in what particular way he would like to have his throat cut ». (Bowring to Thomson, 27 and 31 October 1834, *ibid.*).

*Review*, in the publication of a pamphlet to be written in the style of the *Catechism on the Corn Laws* as an antidote to the protectionist arguments paraded before the Inquiry. The result was the *Contre-enquête, par l'homme aux quarante écus* — a title borrowed from Voltaire — which consisted of a refutation of forty-two quotations from protectionists in written or verbal submissions. Unfortunately, Thompson and Bowring were let down by their Paris printer and the pamphlet never appeared.<sup>162</sup> For his part, Bowring did not stay long enough to see the Inquiry through for he left Paris at the end of November and did not return.

British commercial diplomacy, and in particular Bowring's promptings, peregrinations and propaganda between 1831 and 1834, did not result in any commercial agreement. Further discussions from 1839 until 1843 were to meet a similar fate. The British had, however, helped to nudge the French government into bringing forward tariff bills, and if the government had never been pushed as far as actually putting the proposed legislation to the vote, it had been persuaded to issue royal decrees abolishing some prohibitions and reducing some protective duties. Bowring and Villiers did not initiate the tariff campaign of the 1830s and one needs to be chary about accepting at their face value Bowring's claims about his success in fostering agitation. However, he undoubtedly encouraged and channelled agitation at important moments. More, he often complained that the reform movement lacked coordination, that different areas had contacts with Paris but not with each other. In part, it was Bowring himself who acted as the orchestrator of the reform campaign. A measure of his success can be ascertained from the opprobrium heaped upon him by opponents of reform,<sup>163</sup> from the reproaches of Thiers and Duchâtel for agitation that was too successful, from the weight of

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<sup>162</sup> Perronet Thomson to Bowring, 3 November 1834, 1 and 2 January and 26 March 1835, Perronet Thomson Papers, *University of Hull*. The pamphlet was published in the *Westminster Review* in January 1835 (vol. XLIII, pp. 226-59) and Thompson had the article made up into pamphlets and sent to France.

<sup>163</sup> Criticism of Bowring's activities in the written submission of the Rouen Chamber of Commerce to the Duchâtel Inquiry (*Enquête relative à diverses prohibitions...*, vol. I, pp. 84-94) and in the Chamber of Deputies (Jaubert's speeches on 13 and 14 April 1836, *Archives parlementaires*, vols. CI and CII).

petitions, memoranda and articles in the daily and periodical press. The establishment of the Zollverein, Belgian but above all British commercial diplomacy thus constituted a vital element in the reform campaign and in the government's willingness to contemplate changes.

#### IV

Louis Girard has claimed that the economic liberals of the July Monarchy were chiefly professors of political economy whose influence was limited to their teaching and writing in a few major newspapers.<sup>164</sup> However, the press played a vital rôle in the tariff reform agitations of both the 1830s and the 1840s. The tariff was debated in chambers of commerce, in *conseils-généraux* and Chambers in Paris, in missives sent to the Minister of Commerce and to Parliament, in submissions to inquiries, in rival pamphlets, but above all it was discussed in the columns of the press. The 1840s saw the establishment of rival journals to defend particular points of view: the free-traders set up *le Libre-Echange* while protectionists had their *Moniteur industriel* and metallurgical interests bought the *Courrier français* the better to combat the proposed customs union with Belgium.<sup>165</sup> In both decades the tariff debate was enacted not merely in the pages of the Parisian press but also in the provincial papers which enjoyed their golden age in this period.<sup>166</sup>

Support for tariff reform — in the press as in the chamber — cut across political affiliations. This was true in Paris, where espousal of tariff reform was in part a function of opposition to the Ministry in power or to the régime in general and in part a reflection of the strength of opposition newspapers and the relative weakness of conservative organs. It was especially true in the

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<sup>164</sup> LOUIS GIRARD, *Le Libéralisme en France de 1814 à 1848: doctrine et mouvement*, Cours de Sorbonne, Paris, n.d. part II, p. 149.

<sup>165</sup> H.-T. DESCHAMPS, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-3. A.-J. TUDESQ (*op. cit.*, p. 614) has calculated that 40% of the Parisian daily press was in favour of the proposed customs union, a far higher proportion than supported the project in the country at large.

<sup>166</sup> A.-J. TUDESQ, "La Presse provinciale de 1814 à 1848", *Histoire générale de la presse française*, Paris, 1969, vol. II, p. 173.

provinces, where the press was more a defender of local interests than the spokesman of a particular shade of political opinion.

It might also be argued that newspapers enjoyed more prestige, and perhaps power, in France at this time than they did elsewhere or were to again. Journalists basked in the prestige — and in the rising circulation figures of the first months of the July Monarchy<sup>167</sup> — that resulted from the excitement among newspaper readers generated by the remorseless opposition campaign undertaken by journalists in the last years of the Restoration. To contemporaries the press seemed a mighty political weapon and the journalist Hippolyte Castille could claim in 1853 that newspapers had made two governments, that of 1830 and that of 1848.<sup>168</sup> The French press, moreover, was much more a commentator on and a critic of current affairs than its counterparts in Britain or Germany. If the British press reported foreign news much better, the French press discussed domestic affairs in a much more lively and committed manner. British observers, too, liked to compare the status enjoyed by journalists in France with that suffered by their confrères in Britain and to lament the fact that, in contrast with most British M.P.s, French politicians wrote in the press and took great interest in it.<sup>169</sup> French observers liked to believe that while British and German newspapers reflected public opinion, the French press made it. Whatever the truth of this claim, newspaper publishing was certainly big business: by the late 1820s the *Constitutionnel* had a gross annual income of nearly 1.5 million francs, while in Paris alone some 30,000 people made their living out of writing, printing or publishing.<sup>170</sup> Journalists also addressed themselves to the literate minority — perhaps a catchment area of 2.5 millions

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<sup>167</sup> J.-P. AGUET, "Le Tirage des quotidiens de Paris sous la Monarchie de Juillet", *Revue suisse d'histoire*, vol. X, 1960, pp. 216-86.

<sup>168</sup> HIPPOLYTE CASTILLE, *Les Journaux et les journalistes sous le règne de Louis-Philippe*, 1858, p. 2. Balzac wrote in 1840 that « l'opinion se fait à Paris: elle se fabrique avec de l'encre et du papier » (cited CHARLES LEDRÉ, *La Presse à l'assaut de la monarchie, 1815-1848*, Paris, 1960, p. 11).

<sup>169</sup> *Westminster Review*, vol. XVIII, January, 1833, pp. 195-208.

<sup>170</sup> GEORGE WEILL, *Le Journal, origines, évolution et rôle de la presse périodique*, Paris, 1934, p. 175; DANIEL L. RADER, *The Journalists and the July Revolution in France: the role of the political press in the overthrow of the Bourbon Restoration, 1827-1830*, the Hague, 1970, p. 17.

— to a minority who could afford their relatively expensive newspapers, to an élite in Paris and the provinces who made the decisions in political, economic and social life.

Friends and foes alike recognised that the press played an important rôle in the 1830s tariff campaign. Bowring assiduously cultivated his contacts with the press and the Puy consultative chamber declared to the Duchâtel Inquiry:

“... La presse est pour beaucoup dans l'agitation que cette enquête a fait naître. C'est elle qui la première a attaqué ce qu'elle appelle le monopole, l'égoïsme des manufacturiers et fabricants, des maîtres de forges, des exploitants de mines et des propriétaires fonciers. Elle s'est fait, de la liberté du commerce, telle qu'elle veut l'entendre, un thème qu'elle a revêtu de couleurs mensongères, mais rendues séduisantes à force d'art et de sophismes. Chaque fois qu'elle a trouvé l'occasion de frapper sur l'industrie et sur la propriété, elle l'a fait sans réserve”.<sup>171</sup>

Much work still needs to be done on the rôle played in the campaign by newspapers in and outside the capital: on the affiliations, ownership and attitudes of different journals. A good instance of the press campaign, however, is the journalism of Emile Pereire who wrote in the moderate republican paper *le National*, which at this time was edited by Armand Carrel.<sup>172</sup> In many ways Pereire's numerous articles on tariff questions typify the moderate, untheoretical stance assumed by other reformers in the Parisian and provincial press. His discussion was practical rather than theoretical; what mattered were not theoretical problems but burning issues; what counted were less eternal verities than practical solutions. Nowhere, for example, is there a clear statement that the goal of Pereire's proposed reforms is absolute free trade.<sup>173</sup> In common with some other reformers — and particularly with other Saint-Simonian journalists like Stéphane Flachet and Michel

<sup>171</sup> *Enquête relative à diverses prohibitions...*, vol. I, pp. 148-64.

<sup>172</sup> Emile Pereire wrote for *le National* from 1831 to 1835. He also contributed articles to the *Revue encyclopédique* and to the *Journal des connaissances utiles*. For the last two years of its existence the *Revue mensuelle d'économie politique* had Emile Pereire as one of its editors.

<sup>173</sup> He only once admitted a belief in free trade: in his speech in the *Corps législatif* on 12 April 1866 (*Œuvres de Emile et Isaac Pereire*, edited by Gustave Pereire, 1900-1905, vol. IV, part IV, pp. 2180-2204).

Chevalier — tariff reform for Pereire was but one of a series of proposed reforms intended to foster industrialisation, promote social harmony, improve the lot of the working class and reduce the power and influence of the élite that he felt dominated the politics of the new régime. Indeed, tariff reform was but one aspect of Pereire's proposals for remoulding government finance, the National Debt and even the manner in which government revenue was to be raised.<sup>174</sup> Like others, Pereire was to continue to advocate a liberalisation of the tariff and if he did not participate in the 1840s campaign, he did play a major rôle in persuading Napoleon III to sign the Anglo-French Commercial Treaty of 1860.<sup>175</sup>

Emile Pereire's campaign for tariff reform brought him into contact with a number of contemporary economists and particularly Léon Faucher and Adolphe Blanqui. In the early 1830s Blanqui was holding weekly meetings of friends — both economists and businessmen — to discuss the best ways to spread their ideas and to bring about tariff reform.<sup>176</sup> Emile Pereire first attended these meetings early in 1834, joined Blanqui on the editorial board of the *Revue mensuelle d'économie politique* and by June 1835 was close enough to Blanqui for the latter to request, and to receive, shares to the value of 30,000 francs in Pereire's Saint-Germain Railway Company. During this period, too, the friendship and community of ideas between Emile Pereire and Michel Chevalier were at their closest. Chevalier was enthusiastic about their tasks as journalists — he was already contributing to the *Journal des Débats* — and he collected statistics and information, provided moral support and encouragement and suggested subjects

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<sup>174</sup> BARRIE M. RATCLIFFE, "Some Ideas on Public Finance in the 1830s: the example of Emile and Isaac Pereire", *Revue internationale d'histoire de la banque*, vol. X, 1976, pp. 170-91.

<sup>175</sup> BARRIE M. RATCLIFFE, "Napoleon III and the Anglo-French Commercial Treaty of 1860: A Reconsideration", *Journal of European Economic History*, vol. II, 1973, pp. 582-613.

<sup>176</sup> Blanqui to Pereire, 19 February 1834, *Archives de la famille Pereire*, dossier IV. Blanqui also contributed to the *Constitutionnel* and found it « prodigieux que ce journal, un peu bonnet de coton, ait accueilli ces philippiques qui ouvriront peut-être les yeux de ses lecteurs, gens arrivés et malheureusement nombreux » (Blanqui to Pereire, 31 December 1834, *ibid.*).

and lines of attack for Pereire's journalism. Indeed, in March 1834 he even proposed that he and Emile Pereire establish their own journal instead of spreading the same doctrines in papers of differing political allegiance.<sup>177</sup> Though Chevalier did not write on the tariff problem at this period, he encouraged Pereire to do so: he sent him ammunition on the Anzin Company, for example. Pereire also worked with Stéphane Flachet, another Saint-Simonian who had taken up a career in journalism. He agreed to collaborate on one of Flachet's planned journals and supported the evidence Flachet presented to the Duchâtel Inquiry. Bowring and the excellent *Revue britannique* provided him with information on the British tariff and economic and social conditions.<sup>178</sup>

Pereire's analysis of the tariff system, like that of a number of other tariff reformers at this time, was that it was the legacy of the Restoration when a privileged élite — of landed proprietors and a few monopolescent capitalists, forge-owners and industrialists — had succeeded in imposing its will on the government by dint of its domination of the Chambers and its power in the press. The duties thus imposed raised prices and

“... ce que l'on menace aujourd'hui, ce contre quoi chacun tonne, c'est la *taxe des riches*, puisqu'il faut l'appeler par son nom; ce sont ces aumônes publiques que nos tarifs accordent à nos mendiants millionnaires, tous ou grands propriétaires de forêts, de terres ou de forges, ou capitalistes intéressés dans les exploitations de mines, de manufactures, etc. . . . ”<sup>179</sup>

The duties on imported grainstuffs, livestock, iron and coal are thus the corollaries of the lowering, under the Restoration, of the *impôt foncier* and the keeping of indirect taxes as the mainstay of government revenue. They have helped to recreate “une aristo-

<sup>177</sup> Chevalier to Pereire, 9 March 1834, *ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> For one instance, see Bowring to Thomson, 23 March 1832, Clarendon Papers, Bodleian Library. The *Revue britannique* published translations of articles in British periodicals, gave a lot of space to economic affairs and had the remarkable circulation of 2,000 in the early 1830s. (KATHLEEN JONES, *La Revue britannique, son histoire et son action littéraire (1825-1840)*, Paris, 1939, pp. 171-2).

<sup>179</sup> “Consommateurs et producteurs”, *Le National*, 24 October 1834. Pereire also used Saint-Simon's famous parable to reinforce the point (“Verrerie”, *Le National*, 25 October 1834). Needless to say Pereire's analysis was heavily influenced by Saint-Simonian ideas.

cratie factice, une aristocratie d'argent, sur les débris de la féodalité que la Révolution avait détruite".<sup>180</sup> This "aristocratie de douanes"<sup>181</sup> is not an alliance of all landowners and industrialists but of the large landowners and a few privileged manufacturers who alone gain from the tariff system.<sup>182</sup>

Examples of these privileged groups were cited. Stéphane Flachet, in evidence before the Duchâtel Inquiry, had claimed that thanks to the prohibition on foreign crystal the four major French producers had set up a cartel which determined output levels and prices, operated a central warehouse in Paris and even determined that any worker sacked by one firm within the cartel would be automatically excluded from working in any other.<sup>183</sup> Pereire used the evidence on this combination to condemn both prohibitions and a government which allowed too much freedom to groupings of industrialists and none at all to combinations of workers. But above all he castigated the coalition of interests which maintained the tariffs on coal and iron. These tariffs were not in the interests of either iron producers or workers as a whole; they were in the sole interest of a few large proprietors of woodlands and the shareholders of the three largest coal-mining companies.<sup>184</sup> Pereire

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<sup>180</sup> "Poteries, faïences, porcelaines", *Le National*, 18 October 1834.

<sup>181</sup> The term is Blanqui's. (*Histoire de l'économie politique en Europe depuis les anciens jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris, 1831, vol. II, p. 291).

<sup>182</sup> Commenting in March, 1834, on the Bordeaux merchants' petition, Pereire denied the validity of their interpretation of the tariff system as the creation of the departments of northern France. He claimed, instead, that it was used only for the profit of a small number of families who had political power in the Chambers. ("Nouveau manifeste des négociants de Bordeaux" and "Explications sur le manifeste bordelais", *Le National*, 6 and 16 March 1834.

<sup>183</sup> Evidence given in the sessions of 9 and 13 October 1834, *Enquête relative à diverses prohibitions...*, vol. II, pp. 37-46 and 307-12. The four firms involved were Saint-Louis, Baccarat, Choisy and la Gare. Flachet's claims were denied by Godard, a director of the Baccarat Company, who admitted only that a central sales depot had been set up in Paris. (*ibid.*, vol. II, pp 227-42). For an analysis of the crystal cartel, see FRANÇOIS RENAUD, "Le Cartel des Cristaux (1830-1857)"; *Histoire des Entreprises*, no. 5, 1960, pp. 7-20.

<sup>184</sup> He wrote in anger at Thiers' tariff bill of February, 1834: « Nous sommes livrés à une bande de monopoleurs avides, qui font les projets de lois, qui les votent, qui les sanctionnent, car ils occupent tous les degrés de notre hiérarchie politique. Il faut subir le système, avec toutes les conséquences; il faut mettre en valeur tous les patrimoines de M. Jaubert, depuis les cent cinquante lieues carrées de forêts de la liste civile et de la couronne, jusqu'aux mines de charbon de terre du maréchal Soult et de MM. Perier,

pointed out the inconsequences, like the Decazeville Company, which was forced at great expense to import British iron because it was unable to produce malleable iron of sufficiently high quality in its own furnaces.<sup>185</sup> His most impassioned attack he reserved for the Anzin company. During the miners' strike of 1833 he attacked the monopoly position the Company had created through the high duties levied on imported Belgian coal. These duties were "un sacrifice gratuit qu'on impose à toutes les autres industries au profit des actionnaires d'Anzin". Since their imposition Anzin output had more than doubled and its costs been reduced — through innovation, economies of scale and wage-cutting from 1824 onwards. Pereire therefore argued that the duty of Mons coal could be at least halved and the Anzin miners' wages raised without there being any discernible effect on the Company's very high profits.<sup>186</sup>

Given the power exercised by this élite Pereire, in common with other contemporary reformers, did not believe that sweeping tariff reforms could be immediately introduced. In an article written in 1834 he rejected as untenable the advocacy of complete freedom of trade, which he declared to be as absurd as the advocacy of the maintenance of prohibitions.<sup>187</sup> In one of his best known pieces, he agreed that prohibitions and export bounties might have been useful aids to infant industries in the past and advocated the gradual, progressive lowering of tariff barriers.<sup>188</sup> Indeed, in December 1833 he went so far as to propose indemnities for those

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Decazes, etc.; il faut par le maintien du prix de fer, faire valoir les bois de MM. d'Aligre, de Boissy, de Louvois, de Labriffe, Morel de Vindé, Roy, de Broglie, etc., pairs de France, et de tous les propriétaires et maîtres de forges qui remplissent la Chambre des députés... » ("Projet de loi sur les douanes", *Le National*, 12 February 1834).

<sup>185</sup> "La Question des fers", *Le National*, 5 March 1834.

<sup>186</sup> "Du tarif sur les charbons étrangers et du salaire des ouvriers d'Anzin" and "De la non-intervention du pouvoir en matière d'industrie, à propos des mineurs d'Anzin", *Le National*, 30 May and 6 June 1833. Pereire was encouraged to denounce the Anzin Company by Chevalier who had studied Mons and Anzin coals. Chevalier pointed out that the condition of the colliers was deteriorating while the Company's profits stood at 2 million francs a year. He advocated government intervention and an attack on "the absurd customs duty on coal". (Chevalier to Pereire, 23 and 29 May 1833, *Archives de la famille Pereire*, Dossier IV).

<sup>187</sup> "Condition de notre navigation marchande", *Le National*, 11 July 1832.

<sup>188</sup> "De l'Assiette de l'impôt", *Revue encyclopédique*, 8 April 1832.

industries formed in the shelter of prohibitions and likely to be injured by the adoption of more moderate duties in the interest of the rest of the economy.<sup>189</sup> He also advocated some compensation for landowners through changes in the mortgage law and the establishment of departmental banks.<sup>190</sup>

The arrival in power of Duchâtel and his Inquiry into prohibitions were the occasion for a series of Pereire articles on tariff reform. He condemned Duchâtel's timidity in seeking to reform the tariff without injuring anyone — the error of the miller in La Fontaine's fable.<sup>191</sup> He advocated that Duchâtel immediately adopt the kind of reform Huskisson had embarked upon in the 1820s.<sup>192</sup> When the Inquiry was held prohibitionists' evidence was criticised and the depositions in favour of moderate reforms — like the written submission of the Lyons Chamber of Commerce or the evidence given by Nicolas Koechlin — were praised.<sup>193</sup>

Throughout the tariff campaign and true to his Girondin birth Pereire supported the cause of Bordeaux. However, he criticised the Bordeaux petition advocating a separate tariff system for Northern and Southern France both for its diagnosis of the existing system as the work of Northern industrialists — for Pereire regarded it as the creature of a tiny élite — and for its proposed remedy. As an alternative, though, he advised the Bordelais to refuse to pay customs duties and to allow their goods to be confiscated but not resold.<sup>194</sup> Such advice earned Pereire, and *le National*, a summons under the press law.<sup>195</sup>

The reforms Pereire proposed consisted of changes in the corn laws and the duties on livestock and, more important, the reduction

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<sup>189</sup> "Moyen d'accélérer la réforme commerciale", *Le National*, 14 December 1833.

<sup>190</sup> "De la réforme commerciale", *Le National*, 12 June 1834.

<sup>191</sup> "Observations à la circulaire du Ministre", *Le National*, 15 October 1834.

<sup>192</sup> "Enquête commerciale: observations générales", *Le National*, 23 October 1834.

<sup>193</sup> Pereire had already published a scathing condemnation of what he regarded as the self-contradictions in prohibitionist arguments. "Du Système des prohibitions", *Le National*, 2 June 1834; "Déposition de M. Nicolas Koechlin", *ibid.*, 16 January 1835. Blanqui suggested Pereire's articles on the Inquiry be published in book form. (Blanqui to Pereire, 31 December 1834, *Archives de la famille Pereire*, Dossier IV).

<sup>194</sup> "Pétition du département de la Gironde contre le système de douanes et l'impôt des boissons", "Explications sur le manifeste bordelais", "Un mot à M. Fonfrède sur le système prohibitif", *Le National*, 3, 16 and 19 March 1834.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 March 1834.

and even abolition of duties on imported raw materials. He condemned Charles Dupin's report on the d'Argout Corn bill, attacked the sliding scale because slight changes in grain prices led to disproportionate changes in the rate of duty and thus encouraged speculation and demanded reform to improve the condition of the working classes, especially during a period of high grain prices and an outbreak of cholera. He even suggested that the different zones could be abandoned and the sliding scale replaced by a single duty that could be gradually lowered. In thus proposing the eventual establishment of free trade in grainstuffs, Pereire claimed that a grain trade with the more backward areas of Europe could act as a civilising force and a guarantor of peace. It is not clear, however, whether by this he really envisaged the availability of regular grain surpluses and a developed international exchange or whether he merely thought of commerce in grains as a counter to temporary shortages in particular areas.<sup>196</sup>

Colonial preference was attacked as unprofitable for French trade and as an imposition on French consumers.<sup>197</sup> More important, as far as the debate on the tariff was concerned, Pereire advocated the free importation of raw cotton, since the duty was merely fiscal and would only entail the loss of 7 million francs to the Treasury.<sup>198</sup> He proposed a considerable reduction in duties on coal and iron imports and combatted the argument that high duties were necessary because of poor communications in France. He argued, on the contrary, that lower tariffs were a prerequisite for the building of a railway network. Since France could not produce the qualities or quantities of iron that Britain could, since she could not provide the machines and especially the steam-engi-

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<sup>196</sup> "Des céréales", "Séance de la Chambre des députés: céréales (MM. Dupin et Saint-Cricq)", *Le National*, 23 and 31 March 1832.

<sup>197</sup> He argued that in order to sell 53 million francs' worth of goods to « ce qu'on est convenu d'appeler nos colonies » France was paying 50 and 100% higher prices for her sugar and coffee. Meanwhile America, which could provide these commodities, already imported 104 million francs' worth of French goods. ("Statistique commerciale", *Le National*, 3 November 1833).

<sup>198</sup> The Commission on the first 1836 tariff bill also proposed that this duty, much heavier in France than in Britain, be abandoned. The government opposed and the Chamber of Deputies rejected this amendment.

nes needed by various branches of industry, these, too, ought to be allowed in at considerably reduced rates of duty.<sup>199</sup>

The thorniest question was clearly that of tariffs on manufactured goods. Recognising that Britain had a considerable technological lead in certain key sectors and that this gap would take some time to close, Pereire admitted that the free import of manufactures was not an immediate possibility but a distant goal. The legislator had a duty to protect industrial workers and to avoid any sudden changes that could ruin firms.<sup>200</sup> What might be done was to remove any unjustifiable privilege accorded to manufacturers, to do everything to encourage them to modernise their plant, to improve technical education, industrial intelligence and the banking system.<sup>201</sup>

Opponents of change accused would-be tariff reformers of being doctrinaires who, possessed of abstract principles, had no practical experience, knowledge of history or awareness of the necessities of *realpolitik*. Emile Pereire's undoctinaire and un-theoretical writings on the tariff question demonstrate that in his case — and in the case of other reformers — this was more a debating point than an accurate comment. His arguments were more concerned with the practicalities of reform, the interests involved, the possible consequences of suggested changes, than with the niceties of comparative costs and the international division of labour. A number of defenders of the status quo also accused reformers of using the tariff issue to attack the political system of the July Monarchy, and there is certainly an element of truth in

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<sup>199</sup> "Voeux que doivent exprimer tous les conseils-généraux", *Le National*, 7 August 1833. Technical advice and information on steel production and French machine-building firms had been provided by Michel Chevalier.

<sup>200</sup> "De la réforme commerciale" and "Enquête commerciale: circulaire du ministre du commerce et des travaux publics", *Le National*, 12 June and 21 September 1834. However, Pereire was in favour of a reciprocity treaty with Britain since losses in one sector of the economy could be compensated by gains in another. He therefore supported British moves for a commercial treaty and, following Bowring and Villiers, put the issue in the wider context of an Anglo-French alliance. ("Du Rapport de MM. Bowring et Villiers sur les relations commerciales de la France et de l'Angleterre", *ibid.*, 24 May 1834).

<sup>201</sup> For Pereire's views on the banking system and his proposed reforms see BARRIE M. RATCLIFFE, "Some Banking Ideas in France in the 1830s: the example of the Pereires, 1830-1835", *Revue internationale d'histoire de la banque*, vol. VI, 1973, pp. 23-46.

this. The views of the general interest subjugated to that of a privileged minority that controlled the political machine underlay many criticisms of the tariff system, including that of Emile Pereire. He may well have failed to grasp the interest whole sectors of French industry had in maintaining the existing tariff, his interpretation may have been partial and lacking penetration on certain issues, but his was a reformer's and journalist's stance and it typified the rôle played by the press in the 1830s reform movement.

## V

The debates on the tariff in the Chamber of Deputies in April and May 1836 and the passing of the two tariff bills in July mark the climax of the 1830s reform campaign. The first and most important of these abolished prohibitions and made reductions in duties on 120 articles and thus gave sanction to changes which in large part had already been put into effect by royal decree. The second made tariff reductions on various items of relatively minor importance. Together they constituted the major tariff amendment effected during the July Monarchy period.

Part of the credit for the presentation and the passing of these bills must go to the reform campaign. The effectiveness of the pressure exerted is difficult to assess because of the restricted parliamentary system, the highly restricted franchise, the all-pervading "traite des députés", the absence of either a structured party organisation or clearly distinguished government and opposition in the Chambers. Besides, the state of the economy, the strength of protectionist sentiment in the Cabinet and among business groups that were vocal and influential in the country at large as well as in the narrow corridors of power meant that no major breakthrough could be expected. There are reasons for believing, however, that the campaign had had some effect. The increasing weight of representations sent to the Ministry of Commerce and the petitions which were discussed by the Chambers were two ways in which deputies and ministers were constantly reminded of the tariff issue. The column space accorded to the problem in the Parisian and provincial press ensured that the issue remained

a live one. The interventions of interested deputies, the reports of the tariff bill commissions, ensured that if the Chamber of Deputies never accorded a full-scale debate to the problem before April 1836 it was never entirely ignored. The pressure exerted, and the propaganda undertaken, by commercial diplomatists from Britain, and by Bowring especially, and the negotiations undertaken by Belgian representatives, helped to nudge a hesitating government into hazarding reforms through royal decree that eventually paved the way to the tariff bills of 1836.

Other factors worked in the reformers' favour. The bills coincided with increasing economic prosperity and business confidence. "Jamais l'industrie ne fut plus florissante; le commerce extérieur a pris un rapide accroissement. Nous avons dépassé en prospérité les plus belles années de la Restauration", announced Duchâtel in his introduction to the first tariff bill in February 1836.<sup>202</sup> They also coincided with marked improvement in the government's own financial position. In the opening years of the July Monarchy there was controversy over the Sinking Fund and the National Debt and over the level of taxation and government expenditure.<sup>203</sup> The budget, moreover, had been in deficit. The year 1834 inaugurated a new era of balanced budgets, and although the administration undertook an expensive public works programme ministers could now tamper with customs duties with more assurance.

The reforms may also be partly ascribed to Duchâtel and to Hippolyte Passy, who succeeded him at the Ministry of Commerce in February 1836,<sup>204</sup> both of whom came to office with the reputa-

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<sup>202</sup> Duchâtel painted a similarly happy picture of French prosperity in his speech at the opening of the 1836 session of the *Conseils-généraux*. (*Journal du Commerce*, 6 January 1836).

<sup>203</sup> In the Chamber of Deputies Baron Lacuée claimed that Frenchmen carried a tax burden almost double that of anyone else except the British. (*Moniteur universel*, 8 January 1834). Humann, Minister of Finance from 1832, was reluctant to lower taxes given the convalescent state of government finances. Witness, for example, his speech on the tobacco bill in November 1834.

<sup>204</sup> Passy and his friends in the Chamber had earlier promised Bowring their support for tariff reform. (Bowring to Thomson, 18 August 1834, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*). When he was Minister of Finance in the government that lasted two weeks in November 1834, a Ministry in which Teste was Commerce Minister, Passy had promised Bowring that he would declare his government's intention to proceed on a

tion of being economic liberals. What mattered was not so much that Duchâtel presented a bill in February 1836; the bill was chiefly the codification of decrees already issued and though it went further than any of the others it was the sixth time in seven years that the government had presented such a bill. What mattered, above all, was that the bill was the first to be discussed by the Chamber. It was discussed because the growing number of decrees made a discussion ever more necessary, because Duchâtel and Passy felt that the various inquiries, the tariff campaign, the very fact of the royal decrees, increased the chances of success of moderate reform proposals.

Upon coming to office Duchâtel had set up a statistical section at the Ministry to produce annual compilations along the lines already pioneered by the British Board of Trade.<sup>205</sup> He also set up a new tariff inquiry. This inquiry, which began in October 1834, was to complete the work of previous inquiries by looking at industries that sheltered behind prohibitions, particularly the manufacture of cotton and woollen cloths, but also pottery, glassware and plated goods. It was also Duchâtel's intention, as he later admitted, that the inquiry serve as a warning to these industries that prohibitions and protection were a privilege to be justified rather than to be accorded as of right.<sup>206</sup> His announcement of an inquiry was not greeted by cries of approval by tariff reformers. Bordeaux activists believed that the inquiry was a snare prepared by the enemy to prevent Duchâtel making any reforms.<sup>207</sup> Reformers lamented that the inquiry would suffer

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liberal commercial policy at the first possible opportunity. Unfortunately, as Bowring wrote to Thompson, « their words are now with the winds, and hardly worth remembering, for Teste will not be *tested* and Passy is *passé* ». (letter of November 14 1834, *ibid.*). Passy's nomination in 1836 thus raised hopes among tariff reformers. ("Nomination de M. Passy, ministre du commerce et des travaux publics", *Journal du Commerce*, 23 February 1836).

<sup>205</sup> Duchâtel's speech in the Chamber of Deputies, 6 May 1834, *Moniteur universel*, 7 May 1834. The first volume of *Documents statistiques* appeared in 1835 (*ibid.*, 19 May 1835).

<sup>206</sup> Duchâtel's speech in the debates on the tariff bill, 19 April 1836, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CII. According to Vitet (*op. cit.*, p. 106) Duchâtel had already determined to hold an inquiry before he took office.

<sup>207</sup> Bowring to Thomson, 20 October 1834, Clarendon Papers, *Bodleian Library*.

the same weaknesses as its predecessors: it would be extra-parliamentary, would have no statistical base and would present evidence rather than form conclusions.<sup>208</sup> Above all, they regretted the absence of principle, of declared purpose.<sup>209</sup>

The Duchâtel Inquiry lasted over two months and heard nearly a hundred witnesses, the majority of whom spoke in favour of retaining the existing tariff. The industrialists called before it used three principal and powerful arguments. They argued, first, that industries protected by prohibitions were making progress in terms of modernising their plant and in terms of cutting their prices and that therefore the day would come when they would be able to withstand British competition. They argued, second, that their British competitors had mechanised earlier and thus had the advantage of massive production and lower prices. They claimed, lastly, that higher French prices were partly the result of poor transport facilities.<sup>210</sup> Those reformers that appeared before the Inquiry and reformers in these press attempted to refute these arguments, to point out their inconsistencies, but they were forced to agree there was some substance in them and particularly in complaints about transport difficulties,<sup>211</sup> a problem

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<sup>208</sup> "De l'Enquête commerciale", *Revue mensuelle d'économie politique*, vol. III, 1834, pp. 234-50 and 317-27. In form and function public inquiries developed differently in Britain and France. In Britain, select committees of the House, like Parnell's Committee of 1828 and the 1840 Select Committee on Import Duties, played a significant rôle in the reform of government finance and the tariff. The Royal Commission on the Poor Law, despite its imperfections, was also a major development in administrative practice. In France, however, the pattern of inquiry that emerged was one where inquiries were outside parliament, did not possess the personnel to provide either statistical data or ask sufficiently probing questions of witnesses and presented the evidence rather than sought to present solutions to problems. Parliamentary inquiries were increasingly used under the July Monarchy. (PAUL BASTID, *Les Institutions politiques de la Monarchie parlementaire française*, Paris, 1954, p. 296). France did have a more elaborate and formalised process for consulting business interests in the *Conseils-généraux* and the *Conseil supérieur du commerce*.

<sup>209</sup> *Journal du Commerce*, 11 October 1834, and the Bordeaux memorial of 20 October 1834 (reproduced in Bowring, *Second Report...*, appendix XXV, pp. 180-3). The protectionist Saint-Ferréol (*op. cit.*, p. 29) had said of the 1828 Iron Inquiry that « on allait chercher, comme Moïse sur le mont Sinaï, une loi au milieu de la foudre et des éclairs ».

<sup>210</sup> *Journal de la Société d'encouragement pour le commerce national*, vol. I, 1836, pp. 271-89.

<sup>211</sup> Editorial, *Journal du Commerce*, 14 January 1835.

the government was also treating as urgent. What they could emphasise was that higher costs of production in France were partly the consequence of prohibitions and high duties on vital raw materials and semi-manufactures. Whatever the force of these arguments, though, the Inquiry provided another occasion for a full-scale discussion of the tariff and since the Chambers had ended their session and only reconvened in December, the Inquiry occupied disproportionate space in the press.

In the 1835 session the tariff bill that Duchâtel had presented was not discussed by the Chamber, partly because the Commission took three months to report, even though its provisions were already in force as royal decrees and even though similar proposals had already been discussed the previous year.<sup>212</sup> As a result Duchâtel decided to issue a further set of royal decrees renewing previous changes but also going further. He introduced tariff reductions on coal and iron in October 1835.<sup>213</sup> All these decrees formed the basis of the first tariff bill of the following year.

Much of the discussion when the bill came before the Chamber was on the report of the commission. This contained a statement of belief in the desirability of free trade and some amendments to the bill in a more liberal sense. This commission was the most liberal of all in its composition: no fewer than four of its nine members (de Bryas, Ducos, Guestier Junior and Wustemberg) were from the Gironde delegation and three others (Desjobert, Lherbette and Roger) were well-known tariff reformers.<sup>214</sup> Its report, which was widely praised by reformers in the press,<sup>215</sup> declared that the main purpose of tariffs was to provide revenue for the government. Clearly, prohibitions did not yield revenue

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<sup>212</sup> Report by Meynard (Vaucluse), presented 5 March 1835, *Moniteur universel*, 16 March 1835; "Nouvel ajournement du projet de loi sur les douanes", *Journal du Commerce*, 19 April 1835.

<sup>213</sup> *Moniteur universel*, 11 October 1835; "De la nouvelle ordonnance sur les douanes" and "Douanes", *Journal du Commerce*, 12 and 13 October 1835.

<sup>214</sup> Only Boigues, the iron-master, and Meynard, already a seasoned tariff-bill commission member, were not in favour of tariff reform.

<sup>215</sup> See, for instance, THÉODORE FIX, "Du projet de loi sur les douanes", *Revue mensuelle d'économie politique*, vol. V, 1836, pp. 174-98 and "Rapport de M. Ducos", *Journal du Commerce*, 7 April 1836.

and indeed encouraged fraud and smuggling of prohibited foreign manufactures.<sup>216</sup> The commission therefore attacked the tariff system of the Restoration because it was based on the erroneous principle of importing as little as possible and producing as much as possible at home. They attacked prohibitions as harmful for the whole economy: capital is attracted to protected industries but flees it in times of recession and thus aggravates crises; without the spur of competition, protected industries make slow progress; price levels and hence wage levels are artificially raised; tension is created between those sectors that are safeguarded and those that are not. The commission also tried to undermine the position of opponents of reform by denying that prohibitions explained Britain's industrial pre-eminence, which was due rather to political freedoms and natural advantages. Indeed, they argued that, on the contrary, prohibitions had been a hindrance, as proved by the prosperity of silk manufacture before and after the lifting of the ban on foreign silks. Proof of the argument was also to be found in the tariff reforms put into effect in Saxony and Switzerland while the application of the Prussian tariff to the Zollverein in 1834 was evidence of the more liberal spirit abroad in Europe. Though the amendments that the commission proposed were extremely modest, this was more a recognition of political necessity than a result of timidity or lack of conviction, and by their critique of protection they intended to emphasise that the bill should be seen as a sensible first step in a liberalisation of the French tariff.

The 1836 tariff bills proved to be the occasion for the lengthiest and most important parliamentary debate on the tariff of the July Monarchy period.<sup>217</sup> To some extent these were emotional debates where in the best tradition of parliamentary jousts the champions of each side clashed amidst the acclamations of their

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<sup>216</sup> The commission estimated that the Treasury lost 33 million francs every year because of prohibitions. ("Rapport de la commission qui a été chargé d'examiner le projet de loi sur les douanes", Chambre des députés, séance du 4 avril 1836, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. C1).

<sup>217</sup> The Chamber of Deputies debated the first bill on April 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29. It debated the second on May 2, 3, 4 and 5. The Chamber of Peers discussed both bills together on 9 and 10 June.

supporters. Wearing the favours of the status quo were tried and trusted protectionists like Charles Dupin, who decried unbridled competition and warned colleagues against lowering tariffs and thus introducing into France the kind of cut-throat struggle in which British manufacturers were engaged and which entailed reducing workers' wages and exploiting the cheap labour of women and children. But it was Thiers who, attacking theorists and the commission's amendments, made the most spirited defence of protection, a speech that ended amidst such loud cries of support, and less noisy shouts of dissent, that proceedings were stopped for a quarter of an hour. Reformers did not possess the oratorical powers of a Thiers and their speeches were marked by great moderation. Indeed, only Lamartine gave an emotional speech where international commerce was the "hidden hand" spreading civilisation and peace and where tariff reform became a crusade: "Oui", he admitted, "nous sommes des fanatiques de vérité, des perturbateurs de monopole, des révolutionnaires de législations arriérées: oui, l'oeuvre que nos pères de 1789 ont glorieusement tentée et accomplie dans l'ordre moral, la réforme politique, nous avons la volonté, nous avons le courage, nous aurons la persévérance de l'accomplir dans l'ordre matériel".<sup>218</sup>

The arguments, too, were already tried and trusty. Protectionists denounced free trade theory as metaphysics with no practical application.<sup>219</sup> Some criticised the government for seeking to make unilateral reduction without any guarantee that other countries would also lower theirs. Britain was a redoubtable rival who had already perfected her industries behind prohibitions and protection. Agricultural countries did not gain as much from international commerce as manufacturing countries because they could not achieve the same cost-cutting and were burdened with the higher transport

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<sup>218</sup> Speeches on the general principles of the first tariff bill, *Chambre des députés*, séances des 14 et 15 avril 1836, *ibid.*, vol. CII. Lamartine made a far more moderate speech on May 3.

<sup>219</sup> « Messieurs », said Dupin, « il est une prétendue science d'économie qui s'appelle modestement *politique*, et que j'appellerai, pour être vrai, l'*économie anti-politique*, science dont les axiomes, les conséquences et les vœux sont également dangereux pour notre état social » (Speech, April 14, *loc. cit.*).

costs for bulky goods.<sup>220</sup> It was argued — by both Passy and Duchâtel for example — that it would be foolhardy for France to make greater reductions because the international political situation did not warrant it. Passy also used the British example as an argument against more extensive tariff reductions. Britain, he pointed out, still imposed high duties on foreign products feared by her manufacturers and still banned the export of machinery. It was even doubtful, and he quoted recent publications of Chalmers and Nassau Senior to support his assertion, that Britain would further reduce her tariffs because manufacturers were so much in favour of their maintenance.<sup>221</sup>

Many defenders of the existing tariff argued that French industrialists were disadvantaged vis-à-vis their rivals across the Channel. The most frequently repeated and perhaps the most telling argument was that transport deficiencies, especially for coal and iron, raised French manufacturing costs.<sup>222</sup> The Comte Jaubert, a forge-master representing the Cher department, claimed that dues on rivers and canals had to be lowered as a matter of urgency and that his area still awaited the much promised Berry canal which, once built, would make the Cher the Staffordshire of France<sup>223</sup>.

Since deputies defended their own and their electors' interest, the debates in the Chambers were also a reflection of conflicts between different areas, industries and industrialists. The merchant community, particularly that of Bordeaux with its strong representation on the Commission, made its presence felt, as did the metallurgical interest for which Bignon, Bugeaud, Gauguier and Jaubert, forge-masters all, made lively speeches. Gauguier attacked merchants and economists while Jaubert claimed that Bordeaux's ills were caused not by the tariff but by the loss of Saint Domingo.

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<sup>220</sup> Marquis de Dalmatie (son of Marshal Soult), Chambre des députés, séance du 15 avril, 1836, *ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> Speeches by Duchâtel and Passy, Chambre des députés, séances des 22 et 25 avril 1836, *ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> In a speech on the Paris-le Havre railway project on 2 April 1835, Thiers declared that the « question de douane était tout entière dans les voies de communication, et non pas dans la question des tarifs ».

<sup>223</sup> Chambre des députés, séance du 19 avril 1836, *ibid.*

In any case the remedy lay in improving the navigability of the Garonne, Tarn and Lot, recently approved by the Chambers, which would put the port in direct contact with the coal of Aubin and Carmaux. Agriculturists complained loudly over proposed reductions, like duties on horses and raw wool, that would affect them<sup>224</sup>. Deputies and peers from the Pyrenees lamented that if the proposed 60% reduction in duties on marble were put into effect Pyrenean marble would have to face strong competition from Carrara marble.<sup>225</sup> The debates also showed the differing attitudes towards the tariff within industries. The Comte de Cambis and Meynard (Vaucluse), speaking for the Avignon silk industry, which feared greater competition and the loss of domestic silk supplies, spoke against the proposed ending of prohibitions on imports of pure silk cloths and in favour of higher ad valorem duties on raw and thrown silk exports.

Despite the jousting, despite the clash of interests, a certain consensus emerged in the debates. Reformers being realistic, the minister of commerce and his immediate predecessor treading carefully, defenders of the status quo standing firm, were all agreed on the general principles of the proposed reform. Where there were differences of opinion was in the application of these principles to particular items. The chief reform deputies, Passy and Duchâtel, all concurred on the need to proceed with caution, to make moderate gradual reforms. The tariff had created interests, capital had been invested, groups of workers trained. Duchâtel claimed theorists were concerned only with the future while governments had to concern themselves with the present and therefore could not make systematic reforms.<sup>226</sup> Passy used the infant industry argument and, showing a Schumpeterian awareness of the importance of

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<sup>224</sup> The earlier proposal to make significant changes in the duty on livestock was quietly dropped. This, however, did not prevent that determined apologist for French agriculture, General Bugeaud (Dordogne), from suggesting that far from being reduced, as proposed in the second tariff bill, the duty on imported horses should be doubled. (Chambre des députés, séance du 4 mai 1836, *ibid.*.)

<sup>225</sup> Lavielle (Basses-Pyrénées), Chambre des députés, séance du 27 avril, and the Comte de Noé, Chambre de pairs, séance du 10 juin 1836, *ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> Speech of April 19. Anisson-Duperron, Desjobert, de Laborde, and Lherbette all accepted that absolute free trade was chimerical. Both Duchâtel and Passy declared that they accepted free trade *quâ* theory.

businessmen's psychology in the generation of slumps, talked of the dangers of alarming industrialists with changes that were too sudden and too great.<sup>227</sup> Such avowals of moderation were necessary before the Chambers but there was also agreement on the desirability of reforms. The political necessity of lowering duties on sea-coal to please the British and, more important, in 1836 at least, the need to offer concessions to Belgium, which was itself in the process of making tariff reductions on a range of French goods, were acknowledged by Passy and Duchâtel and tacitly accepted by deputies. Defenders of the tariff accepted that prohibitions were a privilege that those protected had to justify and most accepted that as far as practicable prohibitions should be gradually abandoned and especially on those items where there was considerable smuggling. Many agreed with reformers that raw materials should be as little taxed as possible and even Dupin said the example to follow should be Huskisson's reforms of the 1820s. In any case, given the modest character of the proposed changes, reformers could speak and vote in favour of the bill because they saw it as the first step in the right direction while protectionists, like the Marquis de Dalmatie, could support it because they saw it as a set of necessary readjustments in a tariff that had not been altered since 1826 rather than any abandonment of old principles.

A number of the clauses in the tariff bills which had previously aroused considerable controversy in the Chamber of Deputies now passed with relatively little discussion. This was the case with the proposal to permit the export of raw and thrown silk. Its export had declined in each of the three years since a royal decree had lifted the prohibition and in any case it was accepted by all, except the Avignon producers of florences, who used silk from the Luberon region, that Italian raw silk was just as good as the French for the great bulk of production. There was little discussion either of items of minor importance or of items, like cashmere shawls and pure silk cloths, where prohibitions had proved ineffective in the face of widespread smuggling. Not even the

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<sup>227</sup> Chambre des députés, séances des 15 avril et 3 mai; Chambre des pairs, séance du 9 juin 1836, *ibid.*

ending of prohibitions on high-count cotton yarns above 143 (French), which had caused such soul-searching and cries of anguish four years earlier and to which the commission devoted a lot of its time, generated a serious debate. The argument for their admission had been accepted and the decree admitting them was already two years old. Producers of various mixed fabrics in Lyons, Nîmes, Paris, Roubaix, Rouen and St.-Quentin needed imported high-count yarns. Producers of muslins and tulle had also found that French spinners were unable to provide the twists they required and most of their cotton yarns had therefore to be smuggled into the country.<sup>228</sup> The principal debates revolved, instead, around the issues of lowering duties on coal and iron.

Reformers had laid emphasis on the need to lower coal duties, and the British had regarded the higher duties levied on sea-coal as discriminatory. Not only were coal imports rising faster than domestic production at this time but, as evidenced by the differing political stature of the witnesses before the coal and iron inquiries, coal-owners were never able to constitute as effective a pressure group as were metallurgical interests.<sup>229</sup> In October 1835, therefore, Duchâtel issued a royal decree which lowered duties on coal imported into some parts of France. Even before the decree the coal tariff had been complicated for there were four different tariffs in existence for the land frontier alone. The new regulation reduced the duty on sea-coal between Bayonne and les Sables-d'Olonne by two-thirds and maintained the old tariff from les Sables to Dunkirk. Duchâtel's aim was to ensure cheaper supplies in ports along France's West coast that were cut off from domestic sources, to make tariff concessions to the British and yet ensure

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<sup>228</sup> Of the 200,000 kg. of high-count yarns used by Tarrare manufacturers, 150,000 had been smuggled into France. ("Extrait des études sur le projet de loi de douanes... présentées avec l'approbation des deux comités", par L. MILLOT, *Journal de la Société d'encouragement pour le commerce national*, vol. VI, 1836, pp. 309 ff.) Gréterin calculated that allowing in highcounts took nearly 1 million francs out of smugglers' pockets. (Speech, Chambre des députés, séance du 18 avril 1836, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CII). It was also accepted that tulle manufacture was rapidly expanding (the number of looms rose from 200 in 1827 to 1500 in 1836) and that the industry exported half of its production.

<sup>229</sup> BERTRAND GILLE, "Les plus grandes compagnies houillères françaises vers 1840, essai sur la structure du capitalisme", *Charbon et sciences humaines, actes du colloque organisé par la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Lille*, Paris, 1966, pp. 153-71.

that domestic and Belgian coal producers supplying Normandy and the Nord kept their established markets. This delicate balancing act did not please either Nantes or the Channel ports. Nantes merchants saw no reason why they should be treated any differently from Bordeaux, since they claimed to be cut off from domestic coal, and sent a petition and letter of protest to the Minister of Commerce. Rouen and Boulogne also protested.<sup>230</sup> In consequence Duchâtel submitted the issue to the *Conseil supérieur du commerce* and issued a new decree in December which established a new intermediate zone between les Sables-d'Olonne and St. Malo where duties were reduced by a third.

The Commission unanimously rejected the whole idea of zones and was only persuaded to accept them following explanations by Passy as to their political and economic necessity as a short-term measure. In the debates deputies from Normandy complained that they were being unfairly disadvantaged. Anisson-Duperron complained that Rouen drew only 5% of its coal from Anzin because the coal it supplied was unsuitable for Rouen's needs.<sup>231</sup> However, an amendment proposed by Desjobert (Seine-Inférieure) and supported by Anisson-Duperron and Barbet (Seine-Inférieure) which would have lowered the duty on all sea-coal to 50c and on coal imported across the land frontier to 20c was rejected. It had been opposed by the gouvernement and particularly by Thiers who appeared in the Chamber carrying a geological map and set out to prove that France possessed both the quantities and qualities of coal that industry would need.

The quantity, quality and cost of iron goods were to have a growing importance for the industrialising economy. The failure to make sweeping changes in 1836 or later may have meant that the tariff acted as a brake on increased iron consumption and made industrialisation a more costly process. This is the argument of

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<sup>230</sup> "De l'ordonnance des douanes par rapport au commerce des houilles", "De la pétition du commerce de Nantes au sujet du droit à l'importation des houilles", "Réclamation du commerce rouennais", *Journal du Commerce*, 22 October, 23 November, 20 and 27 December 1835.

<sup>231</sup> Rancé (Eure), de Bricqueville (Manche), Anisson-Duperron, Barbet and Desjobert (Seine-Inférieure), Chambre des députés, séances des 22 et 25 avril 1836, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CII.

Jean Vial, the historian of the iron and steel industry in this period. The argument is strongest in the case of cast iron, imports of which, in contrast with those of bar iron, increased throughout the 1830s and reached a peak in 1846.<sup>232</sup> The explanation of these growing imports lies in the suitability of imported iron for machine- and locomotive-building. It may therefore have been more important to lower duties on cast iron rather than bar iron.

In its tariff bill the government proposed to retain the duty on charcoal-produced iron at the levels laid down in 1814, to reduce the duty on cast iron to 8 francs per 100 kilograms, and to lower that on iron produced by mineral fuel by 20%. It was also proposed to allow the import of rails at the bar-iron rate. The commission made its most extensive if hardly revolutionary amendments to these clauses, suggesting that duty on bar iron produced by mineral fuel could be reduced by 25%, that on charcoal-produced iron by 20%, and that on cast iron lowered to 7 francs. It further recommended that iron rails be admitted at the low rate of 5 francs per 100 kilograms. The commission claimed that industry was paying too high a price for its iron, that not only had the commission on the 1834 tariff bill made similar proposals but that even Saint-Cricq's Iron Inquiry of 1828 had recommended reductions. It also claimed that machine-builders needed British iron because it was more malleable and less liable to contraction. Government spokesmen, and especially Thiers, who made yet another telling speech, defended the original proposals as according the necessary protection to French metallurgy. Thiers further argued that prices were falling, an assertion strongly contested by Desjobert, that well over half of French iron was produced by charcoal and that if France did not, as yet, possess Britain's advantage of having iron ore and coal in close proximity she had better quality ores and larger wood reserves and the iron thus produced was of a better quality.<sup>233</sup> Iron-masters, for their part,

<sup>232</sup> JEAN VIAL, *L'industrialisation de la sidérurgie française, 1814-1864*, Paris, 1967, vol. I, pp. 31-2 and 142 and graph II, annex, p. 3. Cast-iron imports rose from c. 10,000 tons in 1831 to c. 90,000 tons in 1846 and fell thereafter.

<sup>233</sup> Out of a total production of 177 million kilograms, 100 millions were charcoal-produced. Only 36 millions were produced by mineral fuel. Thiers' speech of 20 April 1836.

defended their record and attacked the Commission's amendments. They successfully defended the government proposal on the duties to be levied on iron rails but perhaps their most surprising success was to defeat the proposal to lower duties on charcoal-produced iron. The most vociferous opposition to this came from the Ariège iron-masters.<sup>234</sup> The July Monarchy as a whole was a period of prosperity for these traditional Pyrenean producers, a prosperity based on the quality of their iron ore, new uses for their high-grade steel blades and scythes, and the protective tariff.<sup>235</sup> This, however, was a moment of recession when the number of forges and production declined. This, plus concern about dwindling charcoal supplies and fears of foreign high-grade iron and steel, led Ariège producers to form the first pressure group in the metallurgical industry<sup>236</sup> and Ariège deputies to successfully oppose the suggested 20% tariff reduction. In consequence the only one of the commission's amendments to government proposals on the iron tariff to be accepted was the one-franc reduction in duties on cast iron.

In 1836, then, the government had braved the Chambers and the Chambers themselves had finally deigned to debate and, in the event, to pass two tariff bills. In part the government was thereby responding to diplomatic pressure from Britain and from Belgium.<sup>237</sup> It could claim that the bills it was presenting eliminated some of the anomalies, tidied up the customs list so as to reduce some of the widespread smuggling that the customs service had been unable to stamp out. The fact that the most important changes had already been tested by being issued by royal decree and the moderate nature of the changes proposed also help explain why the bills were submitted and the acts passed. If protectionists could approve the bills because they did not see them as attacks on the principles

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<sup>234</sup> Speeches by Pagès, Saintenac and Dugabé (Ariège), *Chambre des députés, séances des 13 et 20 avril 1836, Archives parlementaires*, vol. CII.

<sup>235</sup> MICHEL CHEVALIER, *La Vie humaine dans les Pyrénées ariégeoises*, Paris, 1956, pp. 592-4.

<sup>236</sup> JEAN VIAL, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 72-4 and p. 191 and graph XXIX, annex, p. 11.

<sup>237</sup> The need to reciprocate tariff reductions already being presented to the Belgian parliament was an important consideration particularly for the second 1836 tariff bill. Passy's speeches in the Chamber of Deputies on 4 May and in the Chamber of Peers on 10 June, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. CIII.

of the established tariff system but simply as amendments in the precious light of experience, then the new legislation marked no brilliant new liberal dawn. Indeed, given the state of important sectors of industry and of the transport network and the lead that British industries and merchants enjoyed, none was possible. And, unless one believes that the tariff held back industrialisation and that major tariff reductions in manufactures like textiles and metallurgical products would have stimulated rather than injured growth, it might be argued that no such liberal dawn was desirable. A counter-factual proposition and statistical analysis alone may provide a definite answer.

Those who had pressed for changes got some at least of the reforms they had sought. The British did not secure as much as the most sanguine had hoped but the export of raw silk was permitted, and cotton yarns above metric number 143 (170 English) were now legally admitted,<sup>238</sup> iron goods were allowed in at a slightly lower rate and the levy on sea-coal was considerably reduced. These changes were not without effects on Anglo-French commerce, which had stagnated between 1832 and 1836 but which more than doubled over the next quinquennium.<sup>239</sup> British coal exports, to take the most spectacular instance, increased markedly, partly because the British themselves abolished their export levy, partly because demand for particular types of coal was increasing, partly because transport difficulties meant that the lower Loire, Gironde and Seine found it easier to import sea-coal than to use supplies from the interior, but chiefly because the tariff was considerably reduced. Although reductions in duties on coal imported across the land frontier ensured that Belgian coal continued to benefit from

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<sup>238</sup> The importance of this change was reduced by the high duties levied by the French government. Over the five years from 1833 to 1838 France took less than £ 200,000 worth of the £ 36 millions of cotton twist Britain exported. (Second Note from the British to the French Commissioners, 1840, *Archives Nationales*, F12.6219).

<sup>239</sup> Since these are official values which do not take into account smuggling or indirect trading they should be regarded as indicative only of general trends. In the period 1836-1841 British exports to France more than doubled while French exports to Britain increased by over a third. Ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie, *Annales du commerce extérieur: un siècle de commerce entre la France et le Royaume-Uni*. Paris, 1908, pp. 10-11, 26 and tables II and VII.

even lower tariffs and to provide over three-quarters of imports, British imports also rose and by 1838 had reached 300,000 tons, nearly half of which was imported through Rouen, le Havre and Honfleur,<sup>240</sup> by 1845 imports had risen to 1 million and by 1913 to 12 millions.<sup>241</sup> Tariff reformers had laid greatest emphasis on removing prohibitions and lowering duties on raw materials and semi-manufactures. That changes such as allowing raw and thrown silk export and the import of high-count cotton twist, which had led to such protracted discussions and so many misgivings when first proposed, should have been passed with so little dissent may in part be attributed to the reform campaign. That the coal tariff and the iron tariff should have been amended, even though the changes were not as much as even the moderate reformers had wanted, may also be partly attributed to the reform movement.

Though reform interests and reformers hoped that the 1836 reforms would be the first steps in a liberalisation process, they were to be disappointed. The acts of 2 and 5 July were to be the only significant tariff reform before Napoleon III signed the 1860 Commercial Treaty with Britain.<sup>242</sup> Whereas the rôle of the reform movement was muted in the origins of the 1860 Treaty tariff reformers could fairly claim to have played an important part in the 1836 changes. Whereas the 1860 Treaty was only possible because the Senatus-Consulte of November 1852 accorded the Emperor the right to sign commercial treaties without having to submit them to the Legislative Body for ratification, the 1836 laws were passed by the Chambers and were thus the sole tariff reductions of any import that were passed by a French parliamentary body in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>240</sup> Out of a total import of just over 12 million kilograms in 1838, Britain provided 3 millions, as against Belgium's 8 millions and a total domestic production of 31 millions. Figures from the "Compte rendu des travaux des ingénieurs des mines pendant l'année 1839" in "Du mouvement commercial des combustibles minéraux en France pendant l'année 1838", *Journal de l'Industriel et du Capitaliste*, vol. IX, 1840, pp. 65-93.

<sup>241</sup> By 1913 Britain provided half France's coal imports. FRANÇOIS CROUZET, "Le Charbon anglais en France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Charbon et sciences humaines...*, pp. 173-206.

<sup>242</sup> The 1841 tariff law made some less important changes such as lowering the duty on cashmere shawls and allowing importation of steam-engines for shipping destined for international trade.