



Message from the President

Ideas have consequences: such is the conviction that inspires us to create this new review. Ideas shape and drive elites in academia, media and politics, and consequently determine our future. And yet all contemporary economic theories are marked by pessimism. Fear permeates the modern world: fear of risks, fear of innovation, fear of strangers, fear of the future. In these conditions, it is not surprising that we are witnessing the decline of “laissez-faire” and the persistence of interventionist mentalities despite the plethora of governments in crisis and the facts that they must deny.

However, France has not always been so blind as it is now. France is home to a rich tradition of political economy established by some of the most brilliant minds of the 18th and 19th century. At this time, political economy concerned itself with the task of scientifically describing the consequences, both positive and negative, of human action and decisions made by social actors. The field did not blame: it described, it illuminated. This is the same approach -humanist yet scientific, humble yet brilliant - that we wish to pursue and to honor.

The current crisis is a favorable time for reflection. This is the moment to reclaim our future, drawing on the past for these valuable tools which have not lost their relevance, and which will go to waste should we not use them.

Damien Theillier
President of [Institut Coppet](#)

Presentation

Appearing in this format, on the 18th of each month, a review on French economists and the lessons we can learn from their works will be published. Although primarily historical and essentially theoretical, this review will gladly join the fray of debating current events and advocate the practical necessities of the contemporary French economy.

It is obvious that the knowledge passed down to us over the centuries doesn't deserve to gather dust in obscure library shelves ; that the reputed French economists of the past must not be distant references, but must act as daily advisers ; that they don't deserve to remain outside of modern discussions of political economy, but rather lead the march forward of an era that they in great part helped give birth to ; that the light of their science can finally illuminate the issues of our day should we make the effort to better understand them. This publication aims to be immensely useful, serving as a beacon of light in a dark world.

In choosing *Laissons Faire* as the title of our review, and rallying around this credo which will take its place as our principle editorial line, we wanted to show our commitment to this grand principle of French economic science. When Colbert, the minister under Louis XIV, met a merchant and, with the natural pretention of ministers, demanded what the State could do to help his enterprise, the merchant responded with these three words: “Nous laisser faire,” (or “Let us do it,”). Today, we as well, bolstered by the theoretical work of French economists, we want to support this “reform” eminently necessary.

Benoît Malbranque
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