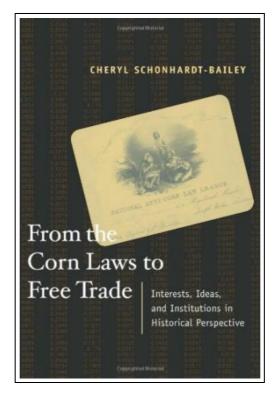
# From the Corn Laws to Free Trade: Interests, Ideas, and Institutions in Historical Perspective (Hardback)



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#### Reviews

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(Forest Little)

## FROM THE CORN LAWS TO FREE TRADE: INTERESTS, IDEAS, AND INSTITUTIONS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (HARDBACK)



MIT Press Ltd, United States, 2006. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. The overlapping and interacting forces that caused a Conservative government to repeal the protectionist Corn Laws against its own political principles and economic interests: extensive qualitative and quantitative analysis. The repeal of Britain s Corn Laws in 1846--one of the most important economic policy decisions of the nineteenth century--has long intrigued and puzzled political scientists, historians, and economists. Why would a Conservative prime minister act against his own party s interests? The Conservatives entered government in 1841 with a strong commitment to protecting agriculture; five years later, the Conservative Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel presided over repeal of the protectionist Corn Laws, violating party principles and undercutting the economic interests of the land-owning aristocracy. Only a third of Conservative members of Parliament supported the repeal legislation and within a month of repeal, Peel s government fell. The Conservatives remained out of power for decades. In this definitive book, Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey examines the interacting forces that brought about the abrupt beginning of Britain s free-trade empire. Using a wide variety of methodological tools to measure both qualitative and quantitative data (including computer-assisted content analysis of thousands of pages of parliamentary debates), Schonhardt-Bailey concludes that economic interests provided the momentum behind repeal, a momentum that overshadowed almost all else. Indeed, as part of a broader momentum of democratic reform, these same interests, left unsatisfied, may easily have snowballed into revolution—as Sir Robert Peel and others feared. But interests alone did not explain why reform rather than revolution emerged in mid-nineteenth century Britain. In order to resolve more fully the long-standing puzzle of repeal, Schonhardt-Bailey traces the overlapping and intertwined forces of interest, ideas, and institu

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