
CONTENTION AND
PEASANT REBELLION
IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

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CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Burden of Government	10
The Prevalence of War	13
War and the Means of Warmaking	15
Figure 1. France's Gross Tax Revenues, 1597-1699: Raw Figures and Equivalents	16
Routines of Seventeenth-Century Contention	22
1. Civilians in Combat	24
2. Armies vs. Civilians	26
3. Resistance to Military Exactions	26
4. Resistance to Official Efforts	28
5. Resistance to the Diversion of Resources	30
6. By-Products of the Military Presence	32
7. Resistance to Officeholders' Exactions	34
8. Vengeance Against Violators of Everyday Morality	36
9. Religious Conflicts	37
War and the Rhythm and Geography of Contention	41
Appendix: Contentious Gatherings in Anjou, Burgundy, Flanders, Ile de France and Languedoc, 1630-1649	45
References	52

Introduction

Despite appearances, seventeenth-century France was not a land of peasant rebellions. To be sure, most years of the century brought at least one substantial attack on authorities and powerholders somewhere in the country. To be sure, from the 1630s to the 1650s it was rare for fewer than two or three of France's twenty-odd provinces to be up in arms against the crown. To be sure, the French fought a tumultuous civil war, the Fronde, from 1648 to 1652. To be sure, the bulk of the seventeenth-century French population consisted of peasants, however we use that elusive term. To be sure, when Roland Mousnier writes a comparative study of peasant revolts, he does not hesitate to begin with seventeenth-century France, and to include the rebellion of Montmorency (1632) or the rebellion of Bordeaux (1635) along with the big rural uprisings of the Croquants (1636 onward), the Nu-Pieds (1639) and the Torrében (1675). To be sure, peasants often took part in these insurrections, and in the frequent smaller-scale struggles which complemented them. Yet it would be misleading to call any of France's seventeenth-century conflicts a peasant rebellion. Or, to put the matter more cautiously: the conflicts and rebellions which involved seventeenth-century French peasants do not conform to the models which twentieth-century analysts have fashioned for peasant revolts.

To clarify what is at issue, let us look at Jeffery Paige's characterization of peasant revolts. Paige considers peasant revolt to be the characteristic collective action of cultivators where the landed upper class "depends directly or indirectly on land-starved laborers or small

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farmers for its labor, expands its income through extralegal land seizures, and discourages improvements in agricultural technology which would increase agricultural income" (Paige 1975: 44-45). "Thus when peasants do act," continues Paige,

the only way in which they can improve their economic position is through the seizure of the lord's lands. The intransigence of the landed upper class and its inability to make economic concessions limits conflict to disputes over property. Thus the actions of landed estate cultivators are invariably focused on the redistribution of property . . . The political consequences of the landed estate . . . suggest that an agrarian revolt is likely whenever the upper class is weak or the lower class can obtain organizational support. It is agrarian because the presence of a landed upper class focuses conflict on the distribution of landed property, and a revolt because moderate action will be repressed and revolutionary action is restrained by the political weakness of the peasants (Paige 1975: 45).

Paige's characterization of peasant revolts corresponds to the usual opinion in two important regards. First, the word "peasant" stretches to include all sorts of rural cultivators. Second, the interests around which they are likely to organize and act -- if they organize and act at all -- concern control of land.

Gerrit Huizer's Peasant Rebellion in Latin America differs from Paige's Agrarian Revolution in emphasizing frustration, resentment, desires for vengeance and other states of mind. When it comes to the definition of peasant rebellion, nevertheless, the two books converge. Like Paige, Huizer adopts a broad definition of the peasantry and centers his analysis on control of the land. After a review of many concrete cases

of agrarian conflict in Latin America, Huizer concludes:

On the whole it seems that the means used by the peasants were usually such that, with a minimum of extralegality, a maximum of concrete benefits of security could be achieved, mainly the possession of the land which they tilled. As soon as the peasants' demands were satisfied, and the land they worked was in their possession, in most cases they lost interest in the political movement as a whole . . . It seems, however, that the landlords have so much fear of change that they take a stand which provokes the peasantry to use increasingly radical means. Thus the peasant movement became in some cases a revolutionary factor in the society as a whole, in spite of originally limited demands and the moderate attitude of the peasants. In those areas where the peasants took to radical forms of action, their civil violence occurred generally as a direct response to landlord intransigence and violence, and because no other ways were open to them (Huizer 1973: 140-141).

Thus land and the behavior of landlords become the pivots of peasant rebellion. Even Henry Landsberger (1974), in his cautious, comprehensive, classificatory approach to "peasant movements", takes essentially the same line. Most writers on peasant rebellion have something like this in mind: land-poor cultivators band together and carry out sustained, large-scale violent attacks on people who control local land, or who are making visible efforts to gain control of the land.

If that is peasant rebellion, then seventeenth-century France had no significant peasant rebellions. Attacks on landlords were rare, and the theme of access to land was virtually absent from the major movements which did involve cultivators. The closest approach to a full-fledged peasant rebellion

was the series of conflicts in Brittany called the Bonnets Rouges [Red Caps]. From April and, especially, from June to July 1675, the rural movement coupled with a series of urban struggles which came to be known as the Révolte du Papier Timbré [Stamped-Paper Revolt]. Seeking to raise the funds for armed forces sufficient to battle Spain, Lorraine and the German Empire while intimidating Holland and England, Colbert had recently tried a whole array of fiscal expedients, including the imposition of stamped paper for official transactions, the establishment of a profitable tobacco monopoly, and an inspection tax on pewterware. In Brittany, quite plausibly, word spread that a salt-tax was next. Unlike the innumerable other rebellions which reacted somehow to fiscal pressure, however, the revolt of the Bonnets Rouges involved rural attacks on landlords and tithe-collectors. As two historians of the revolt sum things up:

Under the influence of a collective feeling, and in holiday excitement, people went off to attack a variety of objects -- castles, offices or monasteries -- which gave immediate, concrete satisfaction to their anger, and sometimes ended in orgy. It was only later, when the movement had spread contagiously in the void left by the weakness of repressive forces, that some parishes tried to coordinate their efforts better, and even started conceiving a measure of strategy under the leadership of improvised chiefs (Garlan and Nières 1975: 206).

At a certain point, some local rebels were able to impose treaties involving such matters as abolition of corvees and feudal rents, limitations on legal and ecclesiastical fees, freedom to hunt on noble land, and abolition of the tithe; abbots, lords and bourgeois signed in fear of their lives. The rebel victories were brief, the repression terrible. Although the Bonnets Rouges did not seize the land, they did sound some of the standard themes

of peasant rebellion, and did anticipate some of the issues which emerged as salient rural grievances during the Revolution, twelve decades later.

Yet the revolt of the Bonnets Rouges is marginal to the category of peasant rebellion as described by most twentieth-century analysts. And it stands out as an exception in seventeenth-century France. Why? If we take the structural approach adopted by Paige, Huizer and many others, we will stress how rarely seventeenth-century French landlords ran their estates as large farms, and how little cultivation involved the labor of land-poor cultivators on other people's large estates. To find the conditions for peasant rebellion in seventeenth-century Europe, following this line of thought, we would have to move out of France and into Spain, England, southern Italy or, preeminently, Russia and Eastern Europe. If we take the expansion-of-capitalism adopted by Eric Wolf, Eric Hobsbawm, and many others, we will stress the tardiness of French landlords in adopting capitalist strategies for the use of their land. We will then call attention to the proliferation of land invasions, struggles over common use rights and attacks on landlords during the eighteenth century as the landed classes did, indeed, take up the capitalist game. Either way, we arrive at a rationale for treating seventeenth-century France as a negative case.

Why waste time on a negative case? Partly because it is useful to think through why and how seventeenth-century France, despite its rebelliousness and its large peasant base, failed to produce peasant rebellions -- at least in the narrow twentieth-century sense of the word. Partly because the processes of conflict and rebellion which did occur in seventeenth-century France

illustrate major ways in which the development of capitalism and the expansion of the national state affect the interests of agrarian populations and bring ordinary people into collective action. Partly because the frequency with which French peasants mobilized in response to fiscal pressure suggests that conceptions of peasant rebellion which concentrate on control of land are too narrow. And partly, I admit, because I was well into my analysis before I saw clearly that, by conventional definitions of "peasant rebellion", I was examining a negative case.

The analysis to follow concentrates on the effects of war. It sketches the impact of warmaking, and preparations for warmaking, on the dominant forms of contention in seventeenth-century France. The analysis not only neglects peasant rebellion, but also treats the peasantry as but one of several classes affected by the French state's monumental effort to build a war machine. In compensation, it draws attention to a phenomenon which students of peasant movements have neglected unduly: the strong impact of the effort to gather the resources for warmaking on the interests of ordinary people, including peasants.

Once brought out into the open, the strong impact of war on peasants is not hard to understand. It is not just that seventeenth-century armies ravaged the countryside on their way to besiege the cities. Far more important, in the long run, is the fact that the bulk of the resources required for the waging of war were somehow embedded in the land. Directly or indirectly, the men, animals, food, clothing, shelter and money committed to armies came largely from the countryside. The great majority of the seventeenth-century French population lived in villages. Although a substantial number of industrial workers, landless agricultural laborers, rentiers, priests, notaries and other non-peasants plied their trades in the countryside, a comfortable majority of the villagers were probably

peasants in a narrow sense of the word: members of households which drew their main subsistence from working land over which they exercised substantial control, and for which they supplied the bulk of the essential labor. When authorities stepped up the demand for men, animals, food, clothing, shelter and money in order to build armies, somehow the wherewithal had to come mainly from peasant stocks. Some peasants yielded some of the warmaking requisites willingly, just so long as they fetched a good price. But on the whole the following things were true of those requisites:

1. they were not so fully commercialized and readily supplied as to allow the everyday operation of prices within the market to make them available to warmaking authorities;
2. those that were under the control of peasant households were entirely committed either to the maintenance of the household or to the household's outside obligations;
3. both households and communities invested those commitments and obligations with moral and legal value;
4. the conditions under which landlords, priests, local officials and other authorities could claim resources which were under the control of peasant households were matters of incessant bargaining and bickering, but were also stringently limited by contracts, codes and local customs;
5. authorities who sought to increase their claims on those resources were competing with others who had claims on the same resources, and threatening the ability of the households involved to meet their obligations;
6. at the extreme, demands for resources threatened the survival of the households involved;
7. ordinarily, demands for cash required households to forego crucial purchases, to sell more or different resources than they were accustomed to doing, to borrow money, and/or to default on their cash obligations.

The impressment of a peasant's son for military service deprived a household of essential labor, and perhaps of a needed marriage exchange. The commandeering of an ox reduced the household's ability to plow. The

collection of heavy taxes in money drove households into the market, and sometimes into the liquidation of their land, cattle or equipment. Existing claims on all these resources were matters of right and obligation. We begin to understand that expanded warmaking could tear at the vital interests of peasant households and communities. We begin to understand that conflicts of interest could easily align peasants against national authorities as well as against landlords. We begin to understand why local powerholders, with their own claims on peasant resources threatened, sometimes sided with rebellious peasants. And we begin to understand why seventeenth-century rebellions could begin with disputes over something so amoral as taxation, and yet proceed with the passionate advancement of legal and moral claims.

All these are justifications for taking a circuitous path to the analysis of conflicts involving the seventeenth-century French peasantry. In this paper, I propose to trace out the connections between the French crown's strenuous and growing involvement in war and a series of standard forms of conflict. Peasants will appear and reappear in the analysis, if only because they comprised such an important share of the total French population. But the analysis itself centers on the confrontation between French statemakers and the whole population from which they were striving to wrest the means of warmaking. That analysis will, I think, clear the way to a consideration of forms of rebellion which do not fit twentieth-century conceptions of peasant revolts, but nevertheless involve peasants vitally.

The scattered evidence presented through the rest of the paper comes from a general study of the impact of statemaking and the development

of capitalism on the character of contention in France from 1600 to the present. By "contention", I mean the making of claims which bear on other people's interests. In order to keep the analysis manageable, I concentrate on an invented unit called a "contentious gathering": an occasion on which a number of people gather in the same place and visibly make claims which would, if realized, affect the interests of some other set of people. As a rule of thumb, a contentious gathering which enters my catalog must occur in a publicly-accessible place and must have involved at least ten people.

I have focused my attention on five regions: Anjou, Burgundy, Flanders, the Ile de France, and Languedoc. For those five regions (and for the period from 1600 to 1975), I have gone through major relevant collections of documents in national, departmental and -- less frequently -- municipal archives, as well as attempting to enumerate contentious gatherings reported in some national periodicals and in the historical literature concerning the five regions. Even in the five regions, however, the enumeration is both very incomplete and strongly biased. The incompleteness and bias, furthermore, are greater for the seventeenth century than for later periods. The most I can hope for is a general picture of differences among the regions, and of changes over the long run in all the regions. For present purposes, however, that general picture should serve well enough.

In order to give a sense of the evidence, the appendix includes a provisional listing of major contentious gatherings in the five regions from 1630 to 1649. Those two decades brought repeated rebellions to France. They led to the Fronde. They witnessed the government's extraordinary effort to build and rebuild its armies. Thus they provide an opportunity to consider the relationship between warmaking and rebellion -- whether peasant or not.

The Burden of Government

In his Traité de l'économie politique, published in 1615, Antoine Montchrestien had reflected on the cost of war. "It is impossible," he mused, "to make war without arms, to support men without pay, to pay them without tribute, to collect tribute without trade. Thus the exercise of trade, which makes up a large part of political action, has always been pursued by those people who flourished on glory and power, and these days more diligently than ever by those who seek strength and growth" (Montchrestien 1889: 142). That money was the sinew of war was by then an old saw. But making the full line of connections -- from war to troops to wages to taxes to cash and thence back to trade -- was a special concern of seventeenth-century statemakers. Montchrestien and his contemporaries did not draw the obvious conclusion: that cutting off trade would be desirable, since it would prevent war. The French conventional wisdom, instead, settled into something like these propositions:

1. in order to make war, the government had to raise taxes;
2. to make raising taxes easier, the government should promote taxable commerce.

A large part of what we call "mercantilism" flowed from these simple premises. Both the raising of taxes and the promotion of commerce, however, attacked some people's established rights and interests; they therefore produced determined resistance. Thus began a century of army-building, tax, gathering, war-making, rebellion and repression.

Much of the royal domestic program consisted, in effect, of undoing the Edict of Nantes. The 1598 edict had pacified the chief internal rivals of the crown -- the Catholic and Protestant lords who had established nearly independent fiefdoms during the turmoil of the religious

wars -- while Henry IV was bargaining for peace with a still-strong Spain. The edict had granted the Huguenots the right to gather, to practice their faith, and even to arm and to govern in a number of cities of France's south and west. It also absolved those officials who had raised troops, arms, taxes and supplies in the name of one or another of the rebel authorities (Wolfe 1972: 225-230). The Edict of Nantes had frozen in place the structure of forces which prevailed in the France of 1598, while restoring the ultimate powers -- including the powers to raise troops, arms, taxes and supplies -- to the crown. For a century, subsequent kings and ministers sought to unfreeze the structure, to dissolve the autonomous centers of organized power which remained within the kingdom.

Protestants were by no means the only threat. Great Catholic lords also caused trouble. As seen from the top down, seventeenth-century France was a complex of patron-client chains. Every petty lord had his gens, the retainers and dependents who owed their livelihood to his "good will", to his "protection" against their "enemies" (to use three of the time's key words). Some of the gens were always armed men who could swagger in public on the lord's behalf, avenge the injuries he received, and protect him from his own enemies. The country's great magnates played the same games on a larger scale. They maintained huge clienteles, including their own private armies. They held France's regional military governorships, and kept order with a combination of royal troops and their own. Indeed, at the century's start France did not really have a national army, in the later sense of the word. In time of war or rebellion the king fielded his own personal troops. He also recruited the armies of the great lords whom he could both trust and persuade to take the field on his behalf.

Great Catholic lords, including such members of the royal family as the

successive princes of Condé, tried repeatedly to strengthen their holds on different pieces of the kingdom. In the summer of 1605, according to a contemporary account:

The King, being in Paris, was warned by a certain captain Belin that in Limousin, Perigord, Quercy and other surrounding provinces many gentlemen were getting together to rebuild the foundations of rebellion that the late Marshal Biron had laid down. Their pretext was the usual one: to reduce the people's burdens and to improve the administration of justice. In any case, their plan was simply to fish in troubled waters and, while appearing to serve the public good, to fatten themselves on the ruin of the poor people (Mercure, I: 12).

The king gave Belin a 1,200-livre reward, then saddled up for Limoges. There he convoked the nobles and hunted down the rebels. Five were decapitated in person, six more in effigy. That stilled the threat of noble rebellion in the Southwest for a few years.

Limousin's abortive rebellion never reached the stage of popular insurrection. Only half of the potent seventeenth-century combination -- noble conspiracy plus popular response to royal exactions -- came into play. But in those insurrectionary years the gentlemen-conspirators had a reasonable hope that if they kept fishing in their region's troubled waters, people's grievances against royal taxes, troops, laws and officials would sooner or later coalesce into disciplined resistance. More than anything else, the popular contention of the seventeenth century swirled around the efforts of ordinary people to preserve or advance their interests in the face of a determined royal drive to build up the power of the state.

The France of 1598 was, then, a weakened country -- weakened by internal strife, but also weakened by threats from outside. Three remarkable kings spent the next century reshaping the French state into an incomparable force

within its own borders and a powerful presence in the world as a whole. Henry IV, Louis XIII and Louis XIV made the transition from a leaky, creaking, wind-rocked vessel which alternated among mutiny, piracy and open war, which had either too many hands on the wheel or practically no steering at all. They ended their work with a formidable, tight man of war.

The Prevalence of War

Remember how much war the seventeenth century brought. To take only the major foreign conflicts in which French kings engaged, there were:

1635-1659: war with Spain, ending with the Treaty of the Pyrenees

1636-1648: war with the Empire, ending with the Treaty of Westphalia

1664: expedition against the Turks at St. Gothard

1667-1668: War of Devolution, ending with the Treaty of Aachen

1672-1679: Dutch War, ending with the Treaty of Nimwegen

1688-1697: War of the League of Augsburg, ending with the Peace of Ryswick

1702-1714: War of the Spanish Succession, ending with the Peace of Utrecht

If we included the minor flurries, the list would grow much longer. In 1627 and 1628, for example, the British temporarily occupied the Ile de Ré, on France's Atlantic coast, and sent a fleet to support besieged La Rochelle. In 1629 and 1630, while still battling domestic rebels, Louis XIII was sending expeditionary forces into Italy. In 1634, the king occupied and annexed Lorraine. War had long been one of the normal affairs of the state. Now it was becoming the normal state of affairs.

One of the century's ironies is that the two great guides in the early decades of French militarization were men of the Church. Richelieu and Mazarin fashioned a policy of conquest. That policy required in its turn the recruiting, organizing, supplying and paying of unprecedented armies. The effort brought to prominence such financiers as Fouquet, adept at the creation of combinazioni or the quick mobilization of credit.

It called forth such administrative virtuosos as Le Tellier, indefatigable in the creation of armies and the large support structures essential to keep them going. The consequence was the reshaping of the state into an administrative apparatus oriented increasingly toward the production and use of armed force.

If the dominant process in seventeenth-century France was the militarization of the state, its paradoxical effect was a civilianization of royal administration. Increasingly the representatives of the crown with whom local people had to deal were full-time civilian administrators. The administrators owed their livelihood not to the "protection" of a great regional lord but to the support of a minister in Paris and the sustenance of the royal apparatus as a whole.

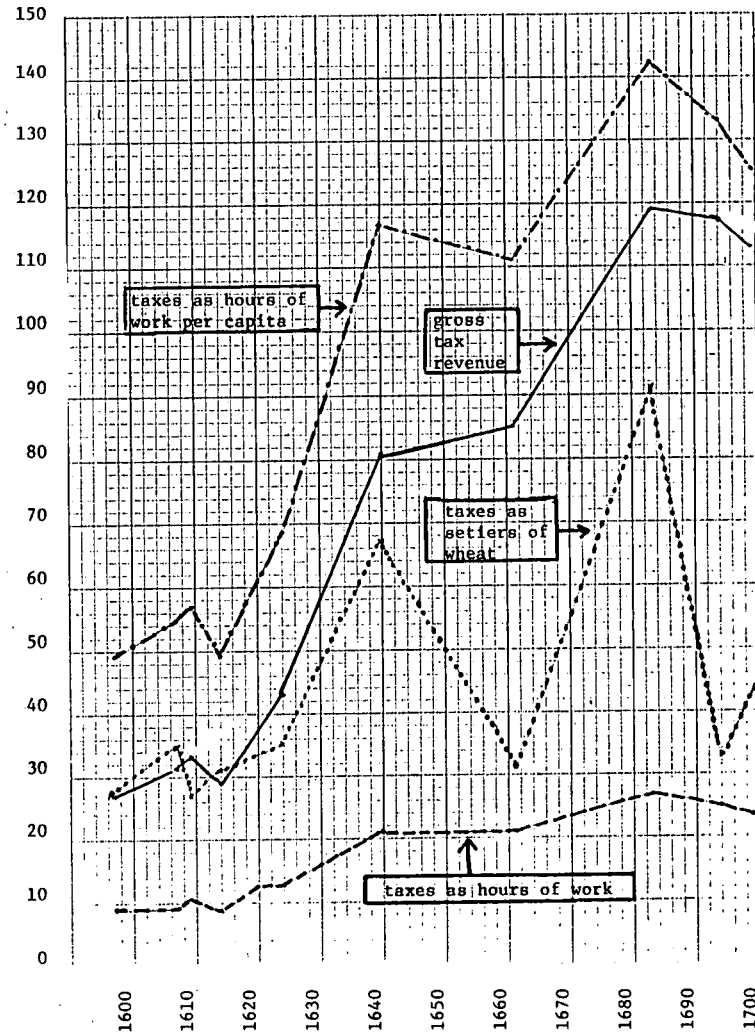
That happened in two ways. The first was the long drive to disarm every place, person and group that was not under reliable royal control; the drive took the forms of bans on duelling, dismantling of fortresses, and dissolutions of civic militias as well as the incorporation of private forces into the royal army. The second was the expansion of the numbers and powers of royal officials -- most obviously, the intendants and their staffs -- who were charged with raising the revenues, controlling the supplies and securing the day-to-day compliance necessary to build and maintain a big military establishment. Over the century as a whole, the crown was successful in both regards: it greatly reduced the possibility of armed resistance within the kingdom, and it enormously increased the resources available for royal warmaking. Yet success came at the price of bloody rebellion, of brutal repression and of expedients and compromises which committed the crown to an immense, exigent clientele of creditors and officials. These statemaking processes stimulated the large-scale contention of the seventeenth century.

War and the Means of Warmaking

Seventeenth-century statemakers who wished to expand their ability to make war had to do more than organize armies. They had to find the essential resources: men, food, horses, wagons, weapons and the money to buy them. Although military commanders seized the matériel of war directly when they could, French armies acquired the bulk of their resources through purchase -- not always from willing sellers, as we shall see, but purchase nonetheless. The government raised money for its military purchases in a variety of ways: through forced loans, through the sale of offices and privileges, through fines and confiscations, and a number of other devices to which officials applied their ingenuity increasingly as the seventeenth century wore on. But in the long run one form of taxation or another provided the great majority of the essential funds. The seventeenth century brought spectacular increases in the French fiscal burden, and the prime reason for those increases was the rising cost of waging war.

Figure 1 combines some information concerning France's seventeenth-century tax burden with some speculative computations concerning the impact of the tax burden. The curve for "gross tax revenue" traces Clamageran's estimates of total receipts from regular taxes in selected years. Since the latter half of the seventeenth century became the great age of raising money by irregular expedients -- borrowing, selling privileges, forcing contribution and so on -- the curve probably underestimates the increase for later years. For lack of a figure near the Fronde (1648-1652), it also disguises the fact that taxes kept rising into the 1640s. Nevertheless, the graph displays the fierce increase in total taxation after the 1620s, the lull of the 1650s, and

Figure 1. France's Gross Tax Revenues, 1597-1699: Raw Figures and Equivalents



KEY TO FIGURE 1

GROSS TAX REVENUE: "impôts: revenu brut," in millions of livres, as reported by Clamageran 1867-1876.

TAXES AS SETIERS OF WHEAT: gross tax revenue expressed as the number of units of 100,000 setiers of first-quality wheat it would buy at Paris prices, as reported by Baulant 1968; divide by ten to get millions of setiers of wheat.

TAXES AS HOURS OF WORK: gross tax revenue expressed as a multiple of the hourly wage of a semi-skilled provincial worker (manoeuvre de province), as reported by Fourastié 1969: 44-49. The wage figure is an interpolation of a very general estimate, and therefore tells us nothing about year-to-year fluctuations. Shown in hundreds of millions of work-hours.

TAXES AS HOURS OF WORK PER CAPITA: taxes as hours of work, divided by an interpolated figure for total population, as estimated by Reinhard, Armengaud and Dupâquier 1968. The figure shown estimates hours of work per year per capita.

the new acceleration after Louis XIV's accession to full personal power in 1661.

The other curves suggest two different ways of thinking about the impact of rising taxes. Expressing taxes as the equivalent of a volume of wheat has the clearest meaning for those who actually had wheat to sell: large farmers, landlords, tithe-collectors and some rentiers. For them, the general trend of taxes ran upward, the year-to-year fluctuations in the impact of taxes were dramatic, yet years of high prices could actually be advantageous -- just so long as their supplies did not decline as rapidly as the price rose. When it came to people who had to buy wheat or bread to survive, however, the years of high prices were never advantageous; in those years, their tax obligations rarely declined, but much higher proportions of their incomes went into the purchase of food. Unless the government remitted taxes, those became terrible years of squeeze for consumers. Our curves for hours of work disguise that year-to-year variation, since they depend on conventional wage figures for an idealized semi-skilled worker. Nevertheless, they indicate that a) on the average and over the long run, the rising national tax burden could easily have tripled the amount of work time that the taxpaying French household devoted to the government and b) the reign of Louis XIII (effectively 1615-1643) brought a spectacular rise in the per-capita tax burden.

The surges in taxation corresponded closely to quickening preparations for war. In the later 1620s and 1630s they register the effects of Richelieu's shift from the quelling of domestic enemies to the challenging of Spain and the Empire. In the 1640s, Mazarin continued to drive for more taxes and bigger armies. In the later 1660s and the 1670s rising taxes signal the start of Louis XIV's great wars. Taxes were, indeed, the sinews of war.

Given the formidable growth of state power and the decreasing support of popular movements by great lords, the persistence of rebellion and resistance through the seventeenth century offers a measure of the interests at stake. The fact that ordinary people should have the urge to resist is itself perfectly understandable. Warmaking and statemaking proceeded at their expense. Warmaking and statemaking placed demands on land, labor, capital and commodities which were already committed: grain earmarked for the local poor or next year's seed, manpower required for a farm's operation, savings promised for a dowry. The commitments were not merely fond hopes or pious intentions, but matters of right and obligation; not to meet those commitments, or to impede their fulfillment, was to violate established rights of real people.

In addition to local and customary rights, raising new resources often meant abridging or rescinding privileges the state itself had ratified. Exemptions from taxation, rights to name local officers, established means of consent and bargaining over financial support to the crown -- all gave way as statemakers made the claims of the government supplant the rights of individuals and communities. Popular indignation was the greater because of a standard seventeenth-century tactic: offering privileges and profits to the tax farmer, venal officeholder or other entrepreneur who was prepared to give the crown ready cash in exchange for the opportunity to draw future revenues from the local population. It was bad enough that a rich man should profit from other people's sacrifices. But when his privilege actually increased the local burden (as regularly happened when a newly-exempted official stopped paying his share of the local tax quota, or when the office in question involved new or expanded fees), the rich man's neighbors were commonly outraged.

Not that the middlemen were the only objects of popular resistance. Ordinary people often felt the military effort quite directly. Soldiers and

officials wrested from them the wherewithal of war: food, lodging, draft animals, unwilling recruits. People hid those resources when they could, and defended them against seizure when they dared. On the whole, however, the military got what they wanted.

The direct seizure of the means of war from the people lagged a distant second behind the extraction of money. In a relatively uncommercialized economy, demands for cash contributions were often more painful than demands for goods. They required people either to dig into the small stores of coin they had saved for great occasions or to market goods and labor they would ordinarily have used at home. The less commercialized the local economy, the more difficult the marketing. Taxes, forced loans, the sale of offices and other means of raising money for the state and its armies all multiplied during the seventeenth century. Directly or indirectly, all of them forced poor people to convert short resources into cash, and then to surrender that cash to the state.

When rights were at issue and the force available to the state was not overwhelming, ordinary people resisted the new exactions as best they could. Tax rebellions, attacks on new officeholders and similar forms of resistance filled the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, French statemakers managed to override rights and resistance alike; they succeeded in increasing enormously the financial burden borne by the population as a whole.

How did the statemakers succeed? By dividing their opposition, by using force, by routinizing the collection of revenues, by multiplying the specialists devoted to the extraction of those revenues, and by expanding the number of people and groups having a financial interest in the state's survival. The definitive settling of the intendants in the provinces, accomplished after the Fronde had forced the temporary withdrawal of the intendants from the

land, was no doubt the single most important stratagem. The intendants of Richelieu and Mazarin were still serving, by and large, as temporary troubleshooters; after the Fronde, however, Mazarin, and then Colbert, expanded and regularized their service. The intendants supervised the collection of revenues, applied coercion when necessary and feasible, kept watch over the local expenditure of state funds, and stayed alert for new opportunities to tax, to sell offices, to preempt local revenues and to borrow, borrow, and then borrow again.

Although the borrowing eventually increased the share of state revenues which went to service debts, it also expanded the number of people who had financial interests in the state's survival. It created a large class of officials who served their own advantage by helping to pay the expenses of the state. The tax farmer advanced cash to the crown in return for the right to collect taxes at a profit. The purchaser of a new office made a substantial payment to the crown in return for an annuity, for the right to collect the office's revenues and, frequently, for some form of exemption from taxation. A gild paid over a sum of money -- usually borrowed from its members and from local financiers -- and received a royal guarantee of its monopolies and privileges. That became the standard royal expedient: in order to raise current revenue, the king's agents found someone with capital, then induced or coerced him to advance money now in return for a claim on future income, and the assurance of governmental support in collecting that income. Such a routine deflected the indignation of ordinary people from the statemakers to the tax farmers, officeholders and other profiteers who fattened themselves at the people's expense.

In order to reduce the political risks of this fiscal strategy, however, the crown had to tame and supplant its internal rivals. Otherwise, each new

round of popular resistance would provide an opportunity for some set of magnates to offer themselves as champions of the people's rights. In parallel with its external warmaking and its internal fund-raising, the crown undertook a massive effort of cooptation, neutralization and suppression. After the failure of the Fronde, the great princes and their clientele fell into line. With some important exceptions, the major blocks of Protestant autonomy gave way under the continuous grinding and blasting of Louis XIII and Louis XIV. The Parlements, the other "sovereign courts", the provincial estates, the guilds, and municipalities all finally lost significant shares of their ability to resist royal demands and to ally themselves with ordinary people against the crown, as the intendants used a combination of force, fragmentation and fiscal advantage to bring them into acquiescence. Thus the intendants and other royal officials became freer to use their growing repressive power when ordinary people dared to resist governmental demands directly. These changes had predictable effects on the character of popular contention: a decline in the involvement of major powerholders in big rebellions, an increasing focus of popular resistance on the exactions of tax farmers and officeholders, a decreasing readiness of royal officials to negotiate with groups protesting the violations of their rights.

Routines of Seventeenth-Century Contention

Anyone who digs into the materials of seventeenth-century contention notices some recurrent traits. There is the importance of the exactions of troops, the demand for taxes and (toward the end of the century) the failure of local officials to apply proper controls over the food supply in times of shortage, all as objects of contention. There are the standard sequences in which existing communities respond to violations of their rights and privileges by assembling, electing leaders and spokesmen, issuing protests and demands, then (if not satisfied) retaliating against their enemies. There

is the frequent collective appeal to an influential patron, a power judicial authority or, preferably, both at once. There is the use of established festivals and ceremonies as occasions for communicating approbation or reprobation of public officials. There is the mutual modeling of crowds and officials; with the crowd sometimes borrowing the execution in effigy from the official treatment of absentee felons, and with officials sometimes borrowing the selection of a single spokesperson to state the crowd's grievances. There are the elementary forms of collective action: the sacking of private houses and tollgates; the expulsion of miscreants, including tax collectors, from the community; the deliberate blocking of the gates or the streets; the seizure of a disputed commodity, especially grain or salt; the staging of ritual mockery; much more rarely, the mustering of armed men for an attack. There are the sustained rebellions which resulted from coalitions between aggrieved groups of ordinary people and disaffected or ambitious clusters of the privileged. There is the visible rupture of this pattern of coalition with the royal victory over the Fronde and the Frondeurs. All these features appear clearly in the seventeenth-century contention of Anjou, Flanders, Burgundy, Languedoc, and the Ile de France.

Some patterns of contention were common to many regions because the same sweeping processes were affecting the interests of ordinary people throughout France. Warfare, statemaking and the development of capitalism dominated the seventeenth-century patterns. Through the century as a whole, war and preparation for war set the master rhythms.

War is a form of contention which creates new forms of contention. We might array the different ways in which ordinary seventeenth-century people acted together by increasing distance of the various sorts of action from the fact of war itself. Thinking only of those occasions on which people

actually gathered together and made claims of one kind or another, we might prepare this rough scale:

1. direct participation of civilians in combats among armies
2. battles between regular armies and armed civilians
3. resistance to direct exactions by the military: impressment and the commandeering of meat, wine, bread, sex and lodging
4. resistance to official efforts to raise the means of support for armies: especially taxation, but also the commandeering of corvee labor, wagons, horses, food and housing
5. resistance to efforts, official or unofficial, to divert resources -- especially food -- to armies
6. conflicts emerging as by-products of the presence of troops: soldier-civilian brawls, clashes over military smuggling and poaching
7. resistance to attempts of officeholders to exact new or larger returns from their privileges and official duties
8. local and private vengeance against violators of everyday morality, including established rules for the marketing of commodities
9. conflicts between followers of different religious creeds

These were the major occasions for contention on anything larger than an entirely local scale. Most items on the list had a substantial, recurrent connection to warmaking. Resistance to officeholders' exactions, for instance, linked to war: the offices in question were commonly created, or preempted by the crown, as part of the drive to raise military revenues. Indeed, of the larger recurrent forms of contention in seventeenth-century France, only the struggles between Protestants and Catholics, and some of the conflicts over food, were not obviously related to the creation, maintenance and maneuvering of armed forces. Even food riots and religious conflicts, as we shall see later, had their links to war.

1. Civilians in Combat. Let us go down the list. If we include the forces of princes and great lords, then all five of our regions experienced army-to-army combat at various points of the seventeenth century. In battles of French forces against French forces (I speak of their current allegiances,

not of their origins; the forces of the Prince of Condé and other grandees were often Swiss, Croation or something else), Languedoc was no doubt the champion. As early as 1621, the Duc de Rohan, using the Cevennes as his base, had Protestant armies in the field against the royal forces in Languedoc. The king's pacification of Languedoc in 1622 was only the first of many royal pacifications in that rebellious province. In Languedoc peace came unstuck easily.

When it came to clashes between French forces and those of foreign crowns, on the other hand, Burgundy and Flanders had much more experience of seventeenth-century war than did Anjou, Languedoc or the Ile de France. Especially Flanders. After all, most of the region began the century as Spanish territory, and came to the French crown only as the result of conquest, reconquest and military occupation. In 1641, we find the civic militia of Lille (still a Spanish possession) turning back the French troops who arrived to besiege the city (Liagre 1934: 113). In the village of Rumégies, near Valenciennes,

In 1660-1661, it was necessary to whitewash the church, "the walls having been blackened and damaged by the wars, since both inhabitants and soldiers fired their guns there, on account of which the whole church -- roof, glass and paint -- was run down." In 1667, toward Ascension (16 May), the curé, fearing the approach of the armies of Louis XIV, sent the church's ornaments and his parish register to Tournai. Part of the population evacuated the village. The rest stayed there and, in order to protect themselves, fortified the cemetery and dug a trench all round: a means of defense by which the inhabitants had profited "many times during previous wars" (Platelle 1964: 504).

Rumégies' people did, in fact, take a reluctant part in war after war. They dug their trench of 1667, however, on the eve of a crucial change. With the end of the War of Devolution in 1668, the province of Tournai, and thus Rumégies, became French territory. From that point on, the marauders and occupiers most to be feared were the village's former masters, the Spaniards. The nearby frontier did not become relatively secure until the Peace of Utrecht, forty-five years later.

2. Armies vs. Civilians. Some of Rumégies' wartime ravaging may have resulted from battles between regular army units and armed civilians. Most of the time, however, armies chased each other through the village; the villagers defended themselves and their property as best they could. For a clearer case of civilian involvement in combat, we may turn to Burgundy in April 1637. That was the second year of France's direct participation in what later became known as the Thirty Years War. According to the Gazette,

The peasants from around St. Jean de Lône, Auxonne and Bellegarde, to avenge themselves for the burning that the garrisons of Autrey and Grey were doing along our frontier, recruited a few soldiers to lead them and, on the 21st and 22nd of this month, threw themselves into three big enemy villages, including 400-household Joux. After they had killed everything, they reduced the villages to ashes. They are determined to deal with all the other villages in the same manner, so long as the enemy gives them the example (Gazette 1637: 263).

Even this tale, to be sure, does not show us armed civilians confronting enemy units. Except when householders defended themselves against invading troops, such encounters were rare or nonexistent.

3. Resistance to Military Exactions. The most frequent struggles between soldiers and civilians did not arise from military actions, as such, but from the attempts of military men to seize precious resources from the civilian

population. The agents of Louis XIII and Louis XIV created armies much faster than they created the means to satisfy those armies' wants. They nationalized the troops at the same time, transforming them from private retainers of great lords to public employees of the national state. But only toward the end of Louis XIV's reign did something like a national structure for supplying, paying and containing the growing armed forces begin to take shape. By that time, the armies were in almost perpetual motion -- at least for the two-thirds of the year that the roads could support the artillery the seventeenth-century military had started to drag around with them.

The consequences were predictable. Pay was usually late and sometimes never. Commanders often lagged a year or more in paying their troops. Food supplies frequently ran low. Military housing was practically nil. Few young men willingly became soldiers; impressment and emptying of jails became common devices for recruitment. Mutiny and desertion were rarely far away. Commanders who wanted to keep their regiments intact threatened and coerced when they could, but only survived by promising or arranging rewards. They regularly promised booty from a captured city . . . sometimes at the same moment as they took ransoms paid by the city fathers in order to avoid pillage. In theory, they were supposed to pay the populace for the labor, food, lodging and supplies their armies required. In practice, they tolerated or even encouraged their soldiers' commandeering of food, drink, lodging, services, goods, money and sexual experience. Many generals and supply officers had it both ways: they pocketed the royal funds and let the troops forage. Only when the rapine threatened to call forth popular rebellion, or retaliation from military superiors and royal officials, did the commanders commonly call a halt.

The soldiers involved in snatching what they could get from the population thought the commandeered sex, meat, wine, bread, labor and lodging was no more than their due. The victims, however, disagreed.

Hence an unending series of local conflicts in which demanding soldiers faced indignant householders. One of the rare successes of the householders occurred during the 1632 rebellion of the Duke of Montmorency in Languedoc:

The sieur d'Alsaux, who during the rebellion seized a place called Montreal, between Carcassonne and Toulouse, had gone out to forage; the residents chased out the soldiers he left behind; at his return, they locked the gates and fired many musket rounds at him. Peasants of the region around Carcassonne knocked a number of his foreign troops off their mounts; and the 25th of September, when some of his Croats were passing close to a little village four leagues from the same city, the villagers went out and killed twenty-six of them, took all their baggage and treated the rest of them in such a way that they are not likely to feel the urge to return to France for a long time (Gazette 3 October 1632: 410-411).

More often, however, the reports which survive from the century run like the laconic note of March 1678 concerning the intendant of Burgundy: "M. Bouchu took care of the complaints he received from many localities about violence committed on the occasion of, and under the pretext of, the recruitment of soldiers" (A.N. G⁷ 156). On the whole, "taking care" of such complaints meant hushing them up.

4. Resistance to Official Efforts. The intendants faced a sharper dilemma when it came to popular resistance stimulated by official efforts to raise the means of support for armies. When ordinary people fought back against the demands of troops, troops were there to put them down. But when ordinary people rose against civilian demands for taxes, corvees and supplies to support the army, the troops were often far away. The maréchaussée (the state police, one might say loosely) could deal with an individual or two but was usually helpless in the grip of a determined crowd. The gardes des

gabelles (salt-tax guards) and other armed forces in the service of the tax farmers acquired plenty of experience in small-scale crowd control, but likewise fell apart in the face of substantial risings; in any case, they generally confined their work to the particular purposes of the tax farmers. Municipal constables and militias, where they existed, tended to limit their efforts to their home bases, and to be unreliable allies for royal officials.

What was the intendant, faced with determined opposition, to do? He could try to face it down with moral authority, threats and the thin armed force at his disposal. Or he could call on the military governors of provinces and regional capitals to send in royal troops to back him up; in that case, he not only confessed visibly to his inability to keep order on his own, but also acquired obligations to a significant rival within his own bailiwick. Small wonder, then, that the intendants' reports to Paris often swing between utter silence about a resistance movement and detailed reports, appeals for aid, and cries of vengeance. Small wonder that the intendants often explained popular resistance as the result of plots, treason and barbarism.

The very process of establishing French administration after conquest was full of the risk of resistance. In the part of Hainaut recently taken from the Spanish, the intendant Faultrier was busy organizing the collection of taxes in 1686. That meant negotiation and coercion, village by village. The village of Estrun, near Cambrai, had put up more than the usual resistance to the elimination of the privileges it had enjoyed under Spanish dominion. In the process of bringing the villagers into line, the intendant had exiled their curé and put one of their notables in jail. By January of 1686, however, Faultrier thought his decisive action and his threats of more jailings had sufficiently intimidated the people of Estrun (A.N. G⁷ 286, letter of 3 January 1686). The tax farmer and the villagers came to a compromise agreement. Yet on 7 July the intendant was writing that:

[29]

they have since presented a declaration to the farmer's agent which I find very insolent; when people are only insolent on paper, it isn't hard for an intendant to punish them. I therefore didn't give their action much weight, but they went much farther. For when the agent tried to collect his taxes, they sounded the tocsin on him and the men he had brought to help him. The women began with stones, and their husbands finished with clubs. All of them said that until they saw an order signed by the King they would not pay, and that my signature was not enough for a matter that important.

At that point, predictably, the intendant requested the dispatch of troops to enforce the royal prerogative (A.N. G⁷ 286). Over the seventeenth century as a whole, some version of this encounter between tax collectors and citizens was no doubt the most frequent occasion for concerted resistance to royal authority. That was true not only in Hainaut and Flanders, but also in the rest of France.

5. Resistance to the Diversion of Resources. As the century wore on, nevertheless, the locus of conflict moved increasingly to the market. The reasons for the shift are simple and strong: royal officials turned increasingly toward the promotion of taxable trade and the use of the market to supply the needs of their growing state. The army, in particular, moved away from direct commandeering of its supplies (with the exception of troops: the free labor market never supplied enough soldiers), and relied increasingly on munitionnaires to buy up its necessities. The new strategy regularized governmental demands somewhat, and thus probably made them easier to sustain. It diverted indignation from intendants to merchants and munitionnaires. But it created new grievances.

The grievances, for the most part, concerned food. The other resources (always excepting manpower) required by the armed forces were sufficiently

[30]

commercialized and abundant for the market to supply them without great stress most of the time. The simultaneous growth of cities, bureaucracies, armies and a landless proletariat, on the other hand, placed great strains on the French food supply. In times of shortages and high prices, the new strategy led intendants, merchants and local officials to challenge the established ways of assuring that local communities would have prior access to their means of survival. It challenged the inventories, exclusive marketing, price controls and other tight regulations which had long been standard responses to shortages. Ordinary people responded to the challenge by substituting themselves for the delinquent authorities. They seized, inventoried, marketed, marketed, controlled and punished on their own. The closer the authorities were to the local population, the more they hesitated either to suspend the old controls or to punish those who attempted to reinstate them. Hence many "disorders" involving the "complicity" of local authorities.

The conflicts rose to national visibility with the subsistence crises of 1693-94, 1698-99 and 1709-10. The feeding of the army was but one of several factors in these crises, but it was an important one. Probably more so than it had to be, because the army contractors had lush opportunities to speculate with the stocks they bought up by royal authority. In Buxy, Burgundy, at the beginning of September 1693, local people seized the grain which had been purchased by Burgundy's munitionnaire. The intendant accused a judge, a royal prosecutor and other officials of having encouraged the populace. Yet the root cause of the conflict, he reported, was that the munitionnaire was stockpiling old grains and buying new ones. "Allow me to tell you," he wrote to the contrôleur general,

that we've never before seen in Burgundy what we're seeing now. It isn't usual for a munitionnaire to spend the whole year here getting his supplies, and even less so to employ a thousand persons who

commit all sorts of irregularities in their purchases and in commandeering transportation, without our being quite able to speak openly about it for fear of slowing up the supply service (A.N. G⁷ 158, letter of 13 September 1693; cf. G⁷ 1630).

In short, the intendant had a strong presumption that the contractor in question was not only exceeding his authority, but also profiteering in the grain trade.

Rarely was the impact of military procurement on conflicts over food supply so unmixed and visible; it is the market's genius to mix motives and diffuse responsibilities. In a more general way, nevertheless, the recurrent patterns of conflict reveal the sore points in the system. High prices, shortages and hunger as such did not usually call up popular action; serious conflicts normally began with official inaction, with the withholding of stored food from the local market, with obvious profiteering and, especially, with the effort to remove sorely-needed grain from the locality. The latter was the case, for example, at Vernon in 1699, when the citizens roughed up the merchants who came to the local market to buy grain for Paris (Boislisle 1874-1897: I, 512). During that crisis, as well as those of 1693-94 and 1709-10, military demand was only one of several attractions drawing grain away from local consumption with the sanction of the state. In all five of our regions, the three crises brought out popular resistance to the diversion of food from local markets.

6. By-Products of the Military Presence. At one time or another, all five of our regions also produced conflicts which were essentially by-products of the presence of troops: soldier-civilian brawls, clashes over military smuggling or poaching, and the like. In the seventeenth century, whoever said "soldier" also said "trouble." In times of open war, foraging and conflicts over booty made the trouble worse than ever. An incident on the Flemish

frontier in 1693 gives the flavor. The Sieur de Beauregard, acting captain of the free company of the Governor of the city of Condé, was sent out on his own on the 24th of June; he had 70 men, and a warrant to bring back booty. His force met a loaded wagon on the road from Brussels to Mons. Etienne Gorant, the driver, showed a passport covering far fewer goods than his wagonload. Beauregard seized the wagon and the driver. He sent them off to Condé with 20 men and a sergeant. "But that sergeant," he reported, "was pursued by a military detachment from Mons which, being larger, took away the loaded wagon without listening to his objections. The violent manner of the chief of the Mons detachment made it clear that he was in league with the merchangs. Your petitioner has been to Mons, but has been unable to obtain justice" (A.N. G⁷ 287, letter of 7 July 1693).

Military commanders remained ambivalent about the struggle for booty. It could distract soldiers from conquest or defense, and stir up the civilian population inconveniently. But in an age in which piracy, privateering and regular naval warfare overlapped considerably, land forces did not make neat distinctions between legal and illegal acquisition of property either. When the pay of soldiers was meager, irregular, and a tempting source of income for greedy commanders, military chiefs often found it expedient to let the troops supplement their pay with pillage.

Another tactic was to wink at smuggling. Now the civilian population did not necessarily suffer -- if soldiers could bring salt or coffee into the region duty-free, they could easily sell it at a profit below the official price. But the tax-farmer, always sensitive to attacks on his pocketbook, felt the pinch at once. Thus on 8 January 1633, as so often before and after, the king issued an edict against military salt smuggling. Its preamble stated the remonstrance of Philippe Harnel, the general contractor for France's salt tax:

That soldiers garrisoned for his Majesty's service in the kingdom's frontier cities smuggle salt publicly every day, & go about in bands of twenty, thirty, forty or fifty soldiers armed with muskets and other offensive weapons, recruiting civilian salt-smugglers & many others whom they lead and escort to the borders of foreign lands & lead them back to their hiding-places with their wagons, carts and horses loaded with said illegal salt . . . (Archives Historiques de l'Armée, Vincennes, A¹ 14).

Since those same soldiers were the chief force the crown had at its disposal for the tracking down of smugglers, royal edicts tended to be ignored, and salt-farmers developed a strong interest in organizing their own paramilitary forces.

In the frontier areas of Burgundy, for example, both civilians and soldiers made money by bringing in contraband salt. An interesting cycle developed. Civilians who were agile enough to speed salt across the border were also attractive prospects for military service. If the salt-tax guards caught civilian smugglers with the goods, the tax farmer sought to have the smugglers convicted with fanfare and shipped off for long terms in the galleys, far from Burgundy. While they were being held in jail pending the royal ratification of their sentences, however, Burgundy's military commanders, as short of recruits as ever, frequently pled for the convicts to be given the choice between enlistment and the galleys. The military commanders often prevailed over the remonstrances of the tax farmers. The local army units then gained recruits who were of dubious reliability as men of war, but who certainly knew how to smuggle salt.

7. Resistance to Officeholders' Exactions. Our next step out from war concerns resistance to attempts of officeholders to exact new or larger returns from their privileges and official duties. Its connection with war is indirect but real; most of the new offices and privileges in question

came into being as part of the crown's effort to raise more money for warmaking. In May 1691, the intendant of Languedoc announced a schedule of fees for the newly-established administrators of public sales. (They were the jurés-crieurs publics, parallel to the registrars of burials whose establishment in Dijon about the same time caused a great deal of trouble.) Instead of merely collecting fees at public sales, the agent of the officeholders tried to set up a tollgate at the Entrance to Nîmes, and collect the fees on all goods entering the city. The intendant stopped him but neglected to forbid him to do the same thing elsewhere. The agent tried the same game in Toulouse. The clerks, "who come from the dregs of the common people," reported the intendant, "asked 10 sous at the city gate for each wagonload of wood that came in, and a certain sum for each basket of peas, salads and fruits." Several women beat up a clerk. The intendant decided to punish both the women and the agent. In the case of the women, he said, "it seems important to me to get people out of the habit of making justice for themselves in such cases." As for the agent, his offense was a "genuine swindle" which could not be tolerated in such difficult times (A.N. G⁷ 300, letter of 2 June 1691). Yet the intendant faced a dilemma: people bought the new offices for their financial return, and expected the government to guarantee the perquisites of office. If the offices were not attractive, they would not sell -- and the government would lack the ready cash it needed for its incessant wars.

As a result, the intendants usually took the side of the officeholders. When the "young people" of Toulouse attacked the city's "clerk for marriage banns" in January 1698, and gave sword wounds to the clerk and his would-be rescuer, the same intendant of Languedoc despaired of getting action through the local courts. He proposed a royal prosecution "so that the people of Toulouse will understand that it is a major crime to attack and insult without reason those who are responsible for royal business" (A.N. G⁷ 303,

letter of 5 January 1698). The business of venal officeholders readily became "royal business."

8. Vengeance Against Violators of Everyday Morality. The title is portentous, the contents are heterogeneous. Let us include here all those conflicts in which the rights and obligations at issue had a shadowy basis in law, but a strong grounding in popular belief. Some of the forms of contention examined under previous headings qualify here as well. The food riot is a notable example; one of the chief reasons for its rise at the end of the seventeenth century was, precisely, the declining legal support for the old system of local controls over food, in a time when popular beliefs in the priority of local needs continued strong. But there were others we have not yet encountered in descending the scale of proximity to war: the rix, or local brawl, pitting two groups of artisans or the young men of neighboring communities against each other in a struggle over honor and precedence; popular retribution against an actor, an executioner or another public performer who failed to meet the public's standards; the charivari/serenade; the rescue of prisoners from their captors.

In the Dijon of 1625, for example, the executioner set up to decapitate Mlle. Gillet, who had been convicted of infanticide. When the nervous hangman failed to kill the young woman with two sword-blows, his wife took her turn and likewise botched the job. At that, the spectators stoned the executioner and his wife (A.M. Dijon I 116). In the Nîmes of 1645, the friends of imprisoned paper-cutter Cabiac snatched him out of jail. One of the two rival intendants of Languedoc, Baltazar, treated the jailbreak as a Sedition. The other intendant, Bousquet, pooh-poohed his colleague's alarm:

1. This was, you remember, before the administrative regularization of the later seventeenth century. For information on the rivalry of Baltazar and Bousquet, although not on this particular conflict, see Beik 1974.

At bottom, whether the son of Cabiac is guilty or innocent, we know that what's at issue is the revenge of a certain Cassague, collector of the paper-cutters' fees, on said Cabiac's family. In this case, justice is really serving to hide the guilty parties, and as a pretext for revenge of one side's private wrongs (Liublinskaya 1966: 133; letter of 1 May 1645).

If it had not been for the irritating presence of rival Baltazar, intendant Bosquet would probably have handled the affair on his own, without divulging the details to the controleur-general in Paris. Except when they grew too big for the local forces of order, these jailbreaks, brawls, feuds, charivaris, and similar events were contained and settled by the officials on the spot.

9. Religious Conflicts. That was not true, however, of most religious conflicts. The balance of power between Protestants and Catholics remained an affair of state throughout the seventeenth century. Whether the initiative for a conflict came from local religious groups or from actions of the government, royal officials had to pay close attention to its outcome.

Often, members of one religious group attacked individuals belonging to the other. In 1611, in Paris:

the Protestants went to bury a small child in their Trinity Cemetery, near the rue Saint-Denis; they went in the evening, but before sunset. Two members of the watch officially led the procession. A vinegar-maker's helper began to throw stones at them, and was imited by his master and by several others. One of the watchmen was wounded. The lieutenant criminel of the Châtelet had them arrested and, on the first of July, the helper was whipped outside of Trinity Cemetery. But on Sunday the 21st of August, Protestants coming back from Charenton were insulted (Mousnier 1978: 75; Charenton was the location of the one church the Protestants of Paris were then allowed).

In Paris, the Sunday trips of the Protestants to Charenton were frequent occasions for abuse from Catholics, and sometime occasions for violence. When the news of the death of the [Catholic] Duc de la Mayenne at the 1621 siege of [Protestant] Montauban arrived in the city, crowds attacked the carriages of the Protestants, battled with the watchmen stationed at the St. Antoine Gate to protect them, and rushed out to burn down the church. Later:

the other clerics and common people who had busied themselves with setting the fire and burning the Temple and drinking 8 or 10 kegs of wine that were in the concierge's cellar, and eating the provisions, after making a flag of a white sheet, came back to Paris through the St. Antoine Gate, 400 strong, shouting Vive le Roy (Mercure françois 1621: 854).

That "Vive le Roy" should remind us of the connection between popular hostility and official policy. In this instance the sanctioning of armed guards to prevent an attack on the Protestants makes it dubious that royal officials directly instigated the violence. Yet from early in his reign Louis XIII sought to cow the Protestants, to demilitarize them and to circumscribe their activities.

Local groups of Protestants and Catholics also fought intermittently. Where the Protestants were relatively strong, as in Nîmes, Montpellier and much of urban Languedoc, we find a series of struggles over control of public offices. In the mainly Protestant city of Pamiers, the Consuls sought to exclude all Catholics from the Consulate. In March 1623, the Catholics demanded representation; they persuaded the Parlement to decree equal representation of the two religious groups. The Consuls closed the city gates to the Parlement's emissary, and then to the emissary who carried confirmation of the decree by the king's council. Only when the king sent troops did the Consuls give in (Mercure françois 1624: 381-385). Later the same year,

the emboldened Catholics complained against the stay in the planned destruction of local Protestant churches, and demanded a division of the city keys -- two per gate -- between Protestants and Catholics. By that time, Pamiers actually had three competing factions: the Protestants, the Catholics who had stayed in town during the Protestant/Catholic wars of Languedoc in the previous years, and the bishop, priests and (presumably wealthier) Catholics who had fled Pamiers when the wars came too close (Mercure françois 1624: 871-877). In 1625, the Pamiers Protestants joined those of a number of other cities of Languedoc in a new rebellion against the crown. In this case, as in most, the national conflict and the local one reinforced each other. Louis XIV continued the effort. Then, in the 1680s, he began the drive to rid France entirely of the Huguenot scourge.

The striving of kings and intendants to weaken the Protestants produced the largest-scale religious conflicts of the seventeenth century. We have already seen Louis XIII marching out his armies to besiege La Rochelle, Montauban, Nîmes and other Protestant strongholds. Those campaigns against the Protestants were veritable civil wars. They continued through the 1620s. By the time France reentered the world of international war after 1630, the autonomous military strength of the Protestants had cracked. Even during the Fronde Protestants did not appear as a distinct national bloc, or as a major threat to the monarchy.

From the 1630s to the 1680s, the government ground away at the "so-called Reformed Religion" intermittently and without drama. Local battles continued. A case in point occurred in the Protestant stronghold of le Mas-d'Azil, near Pamiers, in October 1671: a day-laborer who had recently converted to Catholicism

was attacked in the middle of the fair by François and David Cave, former Huguenots . . . and many others armed with swords and staves. They wounded him so badly that he was left for dead . . . The Brother

Prior and the Benedictine monk who happened by complained to them . . . and they shouted against [the day-laborer], Get the Rebel, Get the Rebel, for taking a religion that is worthless to its supporters and other words forbidden by law on pain of death (Wemyss 1961: 36, quoting interrogations of witnesses).

But no sustained, large-scale conflict developed at le Mas-d'Azil or elsewhere until after 1680, when the government of Louis XIV began the campaign to squeeze out the Protestants. In le Mas-d'Azil the campaign started in earnest with the decree of 29 April 1680, which forbade Protestants to sit on a city council they had previously divided equally with the Catholic minority. In 1685, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, local people went through the mechanics of conversion to Catholicism en masse and without open resistance. A trickle of emigration began. The "new converts" of le Mas-d'Azil survived by stratagem and subterfuge. The first serious confrontations there began, after the Peace of Ryswick (1697), when word spread that royal policy toward Protestantism was going to relax. The local Protestants -- not nearly so converted as it had seemed -- began holding secret "assemblies," or church services, in the countryside. Royal prosecution drove Protestant religious practice back underground very quickly that time. But whenever the royal authorities and the Catholic clergy turned their attention elsewhere, the hidden organization of the local Protestants started to reemerge (Wemyss 1961: 96-107)

Elsewhere in Languedoc the struggle between Protestants and royal authorities turned to open rebellion, to civil war. The cockpits were the mountain regions of the Vivarais and the Cevennes. As early as 1653 "a band of seven or eight thousand Protestants tried to establish by force of arms the right to hold services at Vals in the Vivarais" (Bonney 1978: 398). That became the standard pattern: Protestants assembled to hold

forbidden services in the countryside, royal officials sent troops to stop them, the "assemblies in the desert" evolved into armed rebellions. By August 1683, the intendant of Languedoc was reporting that the Huguenots of the Vivarais

are continuing not only to preach in forbidden places, but also to prepare for war. It is true that they have no leaders, not even some moderately-qualified gentry, as a result of the effort we have made to take away all those who came into view or whom we suspected. Nonetheless those who remain have set up a sort of encampment. They are organized by companies under designated leaders. They have taken various castles, have dug in, have ammunition and weapons and, in a word, show every sign of intending to resist the king's troops, aroused as they are by ministers who preach nothing but sedition and rebellion (A.N. C⁷ 296).

Within two years, the intendant was sending armies into the hills to search out and exterminate the Protestant guerrilla forces, who eventually became known as the Camisards. The outlawing of Protestantism in 1685 started a brutal civil war. With many interruptions and changes of fortune, the War of the Camisards lasted twenty-five years.

War and the Rhythm and Geography of Contention

Our scale of distance from war, it seems, bends back on itself. As we move away from the forms of contention which occurred as the most immediate consequences of royal warmaking, we approach another sort of war. No contradiction there: early in the seventeenth century the distinction between international war and domestic rebellion barely existed. Later, every new surge of warmaking stimulated popular rebellion, and every popular rebellion posed a threat to the state's ability to wage war. In a state so strongly oriented to war, it could hardly have gone otherwise.

A new wave of conflicts followed each acceleration of French warmaking.

The seventeenth century's most impressive examples were the dozen years of war against Spain and the Empire beginning in the late 1630s and ending in the Fronde, and the 1690s, dominated by the War of the League of Augsburg. In 1643, for example, the child-king Louis XIV and his mother Anne of Austria took power after the death of Louis XIII, Cardinal Mazarin took over the prime ministry from the recently-deceased Richelieu, the resourceful Particelli d'Emery became finance minister, the war with the Habsburgs continued, and the new team squeezed the country for revenues as never before. Conflicts and rebellions multiplied. Here is a partial list of 1643's larger affairs:

multiple armed rebellions against the taille in Guyenne and Rouergue

an uprising against the taille in Alençon

armed rebellions against the taille in Tours and its region

multiple local revolts against the taille in Gascony

armed resistance to the collection of the taille in villages around Clermont

attacks on tax collectors in the Elections of Conches and Bernay

"seditious" crowds complaining about the lack of cheap bread in Bordeaux

attacks on tax collectors in Caen, Bayeux, Vire, Mortagne and elsewhere in Normandy

insurrections in Tours and vicinity, beginning with the mobbing of wine-tax collectors

rebellious assemblies of notables in Saintonge and Angoumois

In Anjou, 1643 brought an unauthorized assembly of Angers' parishes against the military-inspired subsistances. In Languedoc, the people of Valence chased out the tax collectors with the declaration that the Parlement of Toulouse had forbidden the payment of the taille, while in Toulouse itself a crowd killed a tax collector. At the edge of the Ile de France, an assembly of "five or six hundred peasants" attacked the company of soldiers sent to enforce the collection of taxes. Most of these conflicts centered on the

royal effort to raise money for the war.

The catalog of contentious gatherings in our five regions from 1630 to 1649, displayed in the appendix, simply extends the same pattern to two full decades. It shows the relatively urban concentration of large-scale conflicts -- or at least of those which have left traces in the archives and historical literature. It shows the bunching of events in years and places in which local people were already organized and mobilized around their interests. And it shows the repeated importance of taxation and other efforts to raise the wherewithal of war. The timing of major conflicts varied from one province to another, but it varied as a function of that province's relationship to a growing, grasping national state.

A full analysis of seventeenth-century rebellion would include a presentation of the century's major risings: the several rebellions of the Croquants (southwestern France, 1636 and after), the Nu-Pieds (Normandy, 1639), The Tardanizats (Guyenne, 1655-1656), the Sabotiers (Sologne, 1658), the Lustucru rebellion (Boulonnais, 1662), the revolt of Audijos (Gascony, 1663), that of Roure (Vivarais, 1670), the Bonnets Rouges (also known as the Torr ben: Brittany, 1675) and the Camisards (from 1685 onward). Many others could easily find their way onto the list. All of these risings involved significant numbers of peasants, or at least of rural people. Their frequency, and the relative importance of land and landlords as direct objects of peasant contention within them, require some rethinking of peasant rebellion. The universal orientation of these rebellions to agents of the state, and their nearly universal inception with reactions to the efforts of authorities to assemble the means of warmaking, underscore the impact of statemaking on the interests of peasants. Not that landlords and capitalists had no impact on the fate of the peasantry; that was to come, with a vengeance. But in the

seventeenth century the dominant influences driving French peasants into revolt were the efforts of authorities to seize peasant labor, commodities and capital. Those efforts violated peasant rights, jeopardized the interests of other parties in peasant production, and threatened the ability of the peasants to survive as peasants. Behind those incessant efforts lay the attempt of the national government to build a giant warmaking machine.

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS IN ANJOU, BURGUNDY, FLANDERS, ILE DE FRANCE AND
LANGUEDOC, 1630-1649

A "contentious gathering", for the purposes of this compilation, is an occasion on which ten or more people gather in a publicly accessible place and visibly make claims which would, if realized, affect the interests of some other set of persons. (The appendix of Tilly 1978 gives more details on the application of the definition to the study of nineteenth-century Great Britain.) I have used that definition, reinforced by a series of rules of thumb, in cataloging events reported in a) some major national series, notably C⁷, for the Generalities of Burgundy, Flandre Flamingante, Flandre Maritime, Hainaut, Ile de France, Languedoc and Tours, in the Archives Nationales, Paris; b) some seventeenth-century periodicals, notably the Mercure françois and the Gazette de France; c) major police series and proceedings of the municipal council in some communal archives, notably those of Angers, Dijon and Lille; d) scattered series, notably A¹, in the Archives Historiques de l'Armée, Vincennes; e) a wide variety of historical works, both general and specialized. The compilation is not finished, much less "complete", whatever that might mean. On the average, it contains one or two contentious gatherings per province per year, while in nineteenth-century Great Britain the application of a similar definition to much more comprehensive material identifies over a thousand contentious gatherings in the average year. The compilation is unquestionably biased toward larger events, those to which authorities attributed national significance, and those that occurred in urban areas. The contentious gatherings enumerated for 1630 to 1649 include a smaller proportion drawn from archival material, and a larger proportion drawn

from periodicals, than those identified for later in the century. The material from seventeenth-century "Flanders" is very thin, because most of the area lay under Spanish domination most of the century, and I have not worked in the Belgian and Spanish archives which contain much of the day-to-day correspondence concerning Spanish administration. With all these qualifications, the catalog is still useful: it serves both to put information from different provinces on a roughly comparable basis, and to place major conflicts in the context of smaller-scale contention.

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS IN ANJOU, 1630-1649

YEAR	PLACE	EVENT	SOURCES
1630	Angers	uprising against official suspected of tax profiteering	AMA BB 72
1630	Angers	"emotion" at rumor of mayor's assassination	AMA BB 73
1630	Angers	attack on bakers	AMA BB 73
1630	Angers	sacking of royal official's house, murder of tax collectors	AMA BB 73, Louvet V/2: 167-170, Lebrun 123-126
1641	Angers	attack on tax collectors	Mousnier I 487,490; Porchnev 614
1643	Angers	concerted refusal to pay taxes	Mousnier I 592-593; Porchnev 619-620; Lebrun 129-130
1643	Doué	attempt to expel tax collector	Mousnier I 502-503
1647	Angers	attack on tax collectors	AMA BB 81; Debidour 39-41
1648	Angers	church congregation protects bailiff who protests billeting	Jousselin 432-433
1648	Angers	citizens lock troops out of city	Debidour 75
1649	Angers	militia forms	AMA BB 81, Debidour 86, Jousselin 434-435
1649	Angers	militia and citizens erect barricades	Débidour 374, Jousselin 434
1649	Angers	attack on tax collector	Débidour 89, Jousselin 436
1649	Angers	attack on castle and on homes of soldiers	Débidour 104, Jousselin 437
1649	Epluchard	attack on tax collector	AMA BB 82; Jousselin 439-440
1649	la Pointe	freeing of prisoners, seizure of salt	Jousselin 437
1649	Angers	reception of new bishop	Gazette 1649: 270
1649	Angers	reception of new governor	Gazette 1649: 283
1649	Angers	fight between soldiers and citizens	Jousselin 445-446

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS IN BURGUNDY, 1630-1649

YEAR	PLACE	EVENT	SOURCES
1630	Dijon	insurrection of Lanturelu	AMD B 267, AMD I 117, 118, Patouillet 1971, Porchnev 135-143, Mercure 1630: 148ff.
1632	Dijon	citizens refuse entry to army of Prince of Condé	Gazette 1632: 242
1632	Dijon	citizens refuse entry to army of Monsieur	Gazette 1632: 260
1636	Dijon and vicinity	concerted resistance to troops and tax collectors	Mousnier I, 349-352
1637	St. Jean de Lône, Auxonne, Bellegarde	attacks on enemy villages by local peasants	Gazette 1637: 263
1639	Voitout	violent resistance to tax collector	Gazette 1639: 132
1641	Troyes	butchers' attacks on tax collectors	Bonney 328-329
1642	Troyes	butchers' attacks on tax collectors	Bonney 328-329

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS IN FLANDERS, 1630-1649

YEAR	PLACE	EVENT	SOURCES
1636	Rocroy	peasants resist foraging of troops	Gazette 1636: 323
1637	Bicques	cities of Douai, Lille and Orchis send delegation to Cardinal, requesting tax exemption	Gazette 1637: 200
1641	near Lille	urban militia battles French troops	Liagre 113

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS IN ILE DE FRANCE, 1630-1649

YEAR	PLACE	EVENT	SOURCES
1632	Paris	procession of poor through streets	Gazette 1632: 348
1633	near Paris	disorderly assemblies of young people	Gazette 1633: 348
1636	Paris	disorderly gatherings	Gazette 1636: 244
1638	Chartres	violence and pillage by troops	Gazette 1638: 176
1641	Cheroy, Nemours, Aigneville	attacks on tax collectors	Bonney 329
1642	Chartres	attack on tax collectors	Bonney 329
1642	Paris	disorderly assemblies of young people	Gazette 1642: 148
1643	St. Germain près Montargis	peasants resist exactions of troops	Mousnier I, 534-536
1644	Paris	masons and other workers gather and commit "outrages"	Gazette 1644: 538
1644	Argenteuil	"emotion" against tax collectors	BN Fr 18432
1645	Paris: faubourg St. Denis	resistance to salt-tax officers	BN Fr 18432
1648	Paris	citizens throw up barricades vs. arrest of judge	Mousnier PC 258-272
1648	Paris area	peasants surround Duke of Orleans	Mousnier PC 258
1649	Charenton	battle at bridge between royal party and opposition	Gazette 1649: 126
1649	Brie-Comte- Robert	battle between royal convoy and enemy	Gazette 1649: 136-138
1649	Paris	confrontations between troops and citizens	BN Fr 6881
1649	Melun	confrontations between troops and citizens	Gazette 1649: 1199-1200

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS IN LANGUEDOC, 1630-1649

YEAR	PLACE	EVENT	SOURCES
1630	Carcassonne	"rioting"	Bonney 321
1632	province as whole	Duke of Montmorency raises rebel force and battles royal troops	Porchnev 155-156 etc.
1632	Beaucaire	rebellion of troops at castle against crown	Mercure 1632: 542, 741ff.
1632	Montréal	citizens expel occupying troops	Gazette 1632: 410-411
1633	Vivarais	rebellion	Liublinskaya VP: 21
1633	Toulouse	brawl between troops and citizens	BN Fr 17367
1633	Carcassonne	"rioting"	Bonney 321
1639	Montpellier	"riot"	Bonney 327
1640	Gimon	"seditious assembly"	Gazette 1640: 630
1643	Valence	forcible resistance to tax collector	Liublinskaya VP: 36-38
1643	Toulouse	attack on tax collector	Mousnier I 589
1643	Ribaute	Protestant assembly	Liublinskaya VP: 40-47
1644	Nimes	dissident municipal assembly	Liublinskaya VP: 77-82
1644	Montpellier	resistance to edicts of Intendant	Porchnev 639-640
1644	Montpellier	dissident Protestant assembly	Liublinskaya VP: 100-104
1645	Montpellier	uprising against taxes and elsewhere	Porchnev 242-260, 643-644 BN Fr 18432, Mousnier II, 737-738, 763-772
1645	Nimes	forcible freeing of prisoner	Liublinskaya VP: 133-137
1645	Aubenas	illicit Protestant assembly	Liublinskaya VP: 140-141
1645	Carcassonne	protests against bishop	Porchnev 654
1646	Cevaudan	anti-tax rebellion	Liublinskaya VP: 189-190
1646	Beziers	resistance to reestablishment of police authority	Mousnier II 789-790, Porchnev 655-656

LANGUEDOC, 1630-1649 (CONTINUED)

YEAR	PLACE	EVENT	SOURCES
1646	cities on Rhone	attacks on fishermen who blocked river	Liublinskaya VP: 184-186
1648	Toulouse	seizure of salt from salt-tax collectors	Mousnier II 828

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 AMD = Archives Municipales, Dijon
 AN = Archives Nationales, Paris
 BN Fr = Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Fonds Français

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