HOW THE FRONDE MADE A DIFFERENCE

IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ANJOU

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The Frolic of Ponts-de-Cé

The town of Ponts-de-Cé arches across the shifting islands and shores of the Loire just south of Angers, halfway from Saumur to the border of Brittany. These days the road from Angers to the Ponts-de-Cé passes through nearly unbroken ranks of drab shops and apartments. Although the willows of the river offer a refreshing break from the roadway's stone, slate, and carbon monoxide, the town itself now seems no more than a commercial suburb of Angers. At the start of the seventeenth century, however, four kilometers of open country separated the walls of the old city of Angers from the north bank parish of St. Aubin-des-Ponts-de-Cé. St. Maurille, the twin of St. Aubin, occupied an island in mid-river.

At high water, the meandering Loire often flooded the nearby islands, the adjacent plains, and part of St. Maurille's island as well. But the Ponts-de-Cé, as their name implies, stood on high enough ground to hold the series of wooden drawbridges that crossed the Loire to connect Angers with southern Anjou. A seventeenth-century journalist put it this way: the city

> is a long street on an island in the Loire River, with two big bridges which span a half-quarter league. The one on the side toward Brissac is longer by a third than the one on the Angers side. Within the bridges there are drawbridges, so that when they are up you can only enter the city by boat. The city has for its defense a good castle on the high part of the island, which commands all the roads across the bridges; the lower part contains a few houses. Except for the castle the whole place without walls. At the ends of the two bridges there are also a good many houses which serve the city as suburbs (Mercure, VI, 1620: 331).

The twin towns were Angers' chief port for goods moving up or down the river: her "nurse in grain, wheat and bread," according to another seventeenth-century observer (Louvet 1854-1856: IV,36). That was no doubt why Angers' customs area (octroi) bulged out to include the Ponts-de-Cé. By water, the river town was Angers' chief connection with the rest of the world. By land, the road across the Ponts-de-Cé was Angers' principal link with Poitou and with the regions farther south.

In 1620, that link was vital to Marie de Medici. Marie (widow of Henry IV and

mother of the nineteen-year-old king Louis XIII) had become Governor of Angers in 1619. Her appointment was part of the settlement of a three-year war against her son, the King. She had marked her entry into Anjou by spending the night of 15 October 1619 in the castle of Ponts-de-Cé. On the 16th, she had ridden her litter past six thousand armed burghers in regular ranks, passed through four triumphal arches erected in her honor, and endured incessantflowery speeches from Angers' officials (Mercure VI, 1619: 313-332).

Now, nine months later, Marie was settled in Angers, and at the center of another vast conspiracy. It aligned Marie, her advisor Richelieu and a whole web of great lords against Louis XIII and his minister de Luynes. Many of Marie's noble co-conspirators had joined her in Angers. Some nine thousand soldiers were in the city under their command. Marie's allies held strong positions in a number of cities in northwestern France, including Rouen, Caen and Vendome. But several of Marie's most important allies, including the dukes of Epernon and Mayenne, kept their troops in readiness south of the Loire. The Ponts-de-Cé provided the sole practical line of communication between the Queen Mother and her armed supporters outside of Angers.

During much of July, the young king and his sometime ally the Prince of Condé were marching their armies from stronghold to stronghold in Normandy, Perche and Maine. There they chased away the queen's allies and extracted guarantees of loyalty from the local authorities. Then they headed for Anjou. Dread seized the Angevins; after all, many of them could still remember the sieges and sacking of the recent wars of religion.

Jehan Louvet was there. The modest clerk at Angers' présidial court kept a journal in which he recorded the city's everyday events -- especially its legal events -- from 1560 to 1634. (The journal, properly speaking, began in 1583; the earlier entries were retrospective.) We can imagine Jehan Louvet on the evening of the

24th of July, 1620: lighting his candle, opening his notebook, sharpening a goose quill, dipping it into his inkwell, and scratching these words into the journal:

> Le vendredy, vingt-quatrieme jour dudict mois de juillet, audict an 1620, M. le duc de Vendosme est arrive Angers de La Flesche, ou il estoit avec la royne . . . Comme aussy cedict jour, M. Le Grand, M. le president Janin et aultres depputez, qui estoient venuz de la part du roy Angers vers la royne, mere de Sa Majeste, pour conferer avec elle sur le traitté de la paix, s'en sont allez et sortiz d'Angers, ou ilz estoient venuz le douzieme de ce present mois, sans avoir faict aulcune conference, faict ny arreste aulcune chose, dont les habitants de la ville d'Angers ont este grandement faschez et marriz, prevoyant que c'estoit signe de grande guerre, maulx et afflictions que Dieu preparoit envoyer auldicts habitants, M. Lasnier, maire de la ville d'Angers, n'a voullu bailler les clefs des portes de Boisnet pour les ouvrir . . . (Louvet 1854-1856: IV, 30).

> On Friday, the twenty-fourth day of said month of July of said year 1620, the Duke of Vendome arrived in Angers from La Fleche, where he had been with the queen . . . On the same day M. Le Grand, the President Janin and other deputies who had come to Angers on the king's behalf to see the queen, the king's mother, to confer with her about a peace treaty, left and departed from Angers, where they had arrived on the twelfth of this month, without making any announcement, without any decree, because of which the residents of the city of Angers were greatly angered and upset, foreseeing that it was the sign of a great war, of evils and afflictions that God was preparing to send the said residents. And to increase the fright and fear of said inhabitants, M. Lasnier, mayor of the city of Angers, did not want to hand over the keys of the Boisnet gates for them to be opened. . .

The fears, negotiations and preparations for war continued.

Within Angers, Marie de Medici drafted the inhabitants to work on the ramparts, as rumors of treason and destruction ran from door to door. When the king's forces came close, the Queen Mother imposed a rigid curfew, made the inhabitants surrender all their arms, and released the prisoners from Angers' jail to serve in her army. Meanwhile, Marie's troops fortified the Ponts-de-Cé and lived off the nearby land. In an age-old routine, people from the defenseless countryside fled to the relative safety of Angers' city walls. According to Jehan Louvet, the

> poor people of the fields and faubourgs left and abandoned everything, carrying and dragging into Angers anything they could bring away. It was a piteous and frightful thing to see them, and to hear them cry and lament, saying that the Queen Mother's companies and soldiers had greatly pillaged, beaten and ransomed them, leaving some of them nothing, and that they had been forced to leave grain they had just begun to cut, and that where people had already cut and stacked their grain, the soldiers -- led by the devil, spiteful and full of anger -- lighted the stacks and burned them (Louvet 1854-1856: IV, 36-37).

As the king's armies approached, fear and anger mounted.

Passing through Le Mans and La Flèche, the royal forces feinted toward Angers, then rushed toward Ponts-de-Cé. The battle, such as it was, took place on Friday, 7 August. Near the river the royal army confronted a rebel garrison reinforced by several thousand troops dispatched from Angers. The front-line rebel troops stood along a trench which ran parallel to the river for about 500 meters. The remainder of the force spread from there to the town of St. Aubin, across the bridge and to the castle. "The unlucky cavalry," reported the marechal Marillac, "was placed on the city's parapet in the broiling sun, in no position to serve" (Pavie 1899: 678). As one of the rebel commanders who bore the brunt of the royal attack, Marillac had strong reasons for complaint.

The condition of the cavalry set the tone for the day: for one reason or another, many of the rebel troops on hand never entered the action, and many more left before a serious battle had begun. The most important defection was that of the duc de Retz, who led some 1,700 men south across the bridges "in a single file so long the enemy could easily see half of it" (Marillac in Pavie 1899: 679). The duke was apparently furious at signs that the Queen Mother and the king were discussing peace terms without consulting him. That loss of more than two regiments opened a gap in the middle of the line of defense, and made it easier for the royal forces to attack and to rout the rebel army. The battle was so unequal that it entered history as the "drôlerie des Ponts-de-Cé": the Ponts-de-Cé Frolic. "A two-hour skirmish," wrote du Plessis-Mornay, "broke up the largest dissident group that had formed in France for several centuries" (Bazin 1838:115).

Battle, skirmish or frolic, the clash at the Loire brought Louis XIII into the castle at Ponts-de-Cé, and started several days of negotiations. It produced the Peace of Angers. On the 13th of August Marie de Medici and Louis XIII sealed their agreement in a tearful reunion at the chateau of Brissac, ten kilometers below the

Loire on the road to Poitiers. Thus ended the so called Second War of the Mother and the Son. All that remained was to bury the dead, nurse the wounded, pay off and dismiss the troops, make sure they left the region quickly without marauding, and then rebuild the city's burned, bombarded suburbs.

No: There was one more thing to do. That was to pay for the war. War has always been one of mankind's most expensive activities, and wars have usually strained the finances of the states that have waged them. It is nevertheless impressive to see how the rapid expansion of European warmaking in the seventeenth century overran the capacities of existing governments, and how much every statemaker scurried from expedient to expedient, seeking to squeeze more out of established sources of revenue, to invent and enforce new forms of taxation, to beg, borrow and steal. The French state was no exception. The civil wars that racked France between 1614 and 1622 elevated the national budget from about 27 million livres to about 50 million (Clamagéran 1868: II, 453-454). That was an increase of 85 percent in eight years.

To raise that enormously increased sum, the royal ministers stepped up the basic property tax (the taille), augmented the salt-tax, increased all sorts of internal customs and sales taxes, sold offices and more offices, borrowed money, forced loans, devalued old debts by one trick or another, and resorted to such nasty old reliables as formally expelling Jews from the kingdom in order to extort special residence fees from the Jews who could affort to remain. In the process, the crown relied increasingly on financiers and tax-farmers who had the ruthlessness and ingenuity to bring in money fast in return for broad powers, large profits, and extensive claims on future royal revenues. The growing power of these traitants and partisans threatened the prequisites of established office-holders as it increased the oppression of ordinary taxpayers.

Yet the treasury was often empty. On his very way to Ponts-de-Cé in 1620,

Louis XIII had to stop in Le Mans and declare the reestablishment of the annual tax on venal offices (the droit annuel), designed "to bring in very quickly the large sums he needed" (Mousnier 1971: 636). That edict precipitated an eight-month struggle with the high courts of the land. No new money arrived without struggle.

Thus the machinery of war ground away at the resources of the country. The machinery often broke down, whether bent by its own weight, immobilized by the cracks in its structure, stopped by the sheer exhaustion of resources, or blocked by outside resistance. Despite their apparent mutual contradiction, the pretentions of absolutism, the growth of the war machine, the rise of tax farmers, the proliferation of fiscal makeshifts and outbreak of fierce popular rebellion were part and parcel of the same process of statemaking.

From Civil War to Popular Rebellion

The War of the Mother and the Son was anything but a popular rebellion. Even the word "rebellion" sits on it uneasily; the term presumes all too readily that the king was the rightful authority and his mother an illegitimate challenger. And "popular"? The Queen Mother and her co-conspirators had enthusiastic supporters in some cities, but those supporters were for the most part magnates who brought their own clienteles into the anti-royal party. As for the rest of the people, wars among the greats of the land meant forced labor, burned fields, requisitioned cattle, billeting, rape . . . and taxes, ever more taxes. None of that, to say the least, was popular. The armies, like all armies of the time, consisted of mercenaries, clients and retainers of the great lords. The wars pitted elite against elite, at the expense of ordinary people.

Yet, by a nice negation, the closing battle of this elite civil war produced a small popular rebellion. On the fifth of August, as the king's armies approached Angers, Marie de Medici had ordered the city's inhabitants to surrender their arms to the civic guards. More exactly, they were to deposit them at the homes of their

parish captains or at the castle. Marie wanted to keep the populace out of the fighting that was likely to occur in the city -- and, no doubt, to deprive them of the means of collaborating with the enemy outside the walls. When it finally came time for the citizens to reclaim their muskets and swords nearly three weeks later, word spread that one of the captains was planning to keep some of the arms, probably to sell them to the occupying armies. The rumor was true; the scoundrels were an échevin, Pierre Marchant, and his son-in-law Mathurin Leferon, lord of la Barbee. They had already sent some of the impounded guns off to Leferon's estate outside the city. A delegation of outraged citizens went to the mayor, complained, and asked permission to chase after the horse carrying the weapons and bring them back to Angers. Permission granted.

While the citizens went for the horse, the mayor sent a formal warning to Pierre Marchant; Marchant laughed and denied everything. It was harder for him to deny when a crowd brought his servant and a gun-laden horse back through the city gate. As the mayor wrote an affidavit -- a procès-verbal, the necessary preliminary to an old-regime criminal proceeding -- people came from all over the city to the square outside Marchant's house. It was no longer a laughing matter. The mayor's affidavit, according to Jehan Louvet,

> did not prevent a great emotion and popular uproar of the people who gathered in front of M. Marchant's dwelling, shouting that all the inhabitants' weapons had been put in the dwelling. On that cry and uproar a great many inhabitants took up the belief (justified by what has been said before and by other true reasons yet to be stated), and on that belief all or most of the people who were assembled in the said Pillory Square wanted to enter by force into the dwelling of said Marchant, saying loudly that said Marchant and said M. de la Barbée, his son-in-law, were robbers and thieves of the king, of the queen his mother as well as of the city's inhabitants and the public (Louvet 1854-1856: IV, 131).

As the crowd milled before Marchant's door, various people stated grievances against him: he had used his judicial powers to enrich himself, he had judged people cruelly and arbitrarily, and so on. The crowd, Louvet noted, consisted almost entirely of

artisans. Off to the side gathered a number of "inhabitants and honorable persons" who worried about the threat to the person and property of one of Angers' dignitaries, but were held in check by some mysterious, intriguing "lords and gentlemen who were there, and made a point of criticizing and threatening them" (Louvet 1854-1856: IV, 133). The workmen took stones, smashed every window they could reach from Pillory Square, then threatened to break down the door and burn down the house. Only the intervention of the city's mayor, its military commander and other dignitaries saved the house. Although the crowd finally dispersed around 6 P.M., the discontent continued for days, and a group of citizens filed suit against Marchant. The Queen Mother herself, in her farewell address to the people of Angers, made a point of guaranteeing that every householder would get back the weapons he had surrendered before the battle at Ponts-de-Cé.

Angers' attack on Pierre Marchant made an exceptionally direct connection between war and popular contention. Ordinary people, it is true, also resisted war rather directly when they fought against billeting, against the requisitioning of food, animals and other supplies for the military and, later on, against the pressing or conscription of young men for military service. By and large, however, the seventeenth-century connection between war and popular contention was more indirect. It took the form of resistance -- passive, active or even collective -- to the new and expanded taxes with which French statemakers sought to raise the money for their larger wars and growing armies. The seventeenth century became the classic time of large-scale popular rebellions against taxation. The Croquants, the Nu-Pieds and the Bonnets Rouges were only the most visible insurrections of the series.

Taxes, Tax Collectors and Protest

The big rebellions burst out from a backdrop of repeated local protests about taxes and tax collectors. Most of them ended with no more than an indignant but

restrained complaint to local authorities by some group of aggrieved citizens; in most cases the complaint produced no more than a fearful, vague promise of action by the authorities. On the morning of 19 September 1623, for example,

> a large number of poor baker women from Bouchemaine and Ruzebourg came to the royal palace in Angers and raised a great clamor and complaint before M. Jouet, the city's mayor, and the echevins about the bad treatment, cruelty and tyranny they were getting from the salt-tax guards . . . (Louvet 1854-1856: V, 4).

But the authorities did nothing. The citizens, according to Jehan Louvet, "greatly murmured against the mayor and magistrates" (Louvet 1854-1856: V, 4).

The mayor and council tended to act, unsurprisingly, when new taxes or fiscal officials threatened their own privileges, competed with their own sources of income, or affected some major group of local powerholders. In Angers, judicial officers held a near-monopoly of public offices. They sought to fill existing offices by cooptation, and to resist the creation of new positions. Thus in 1626, when the crown farmed out the five percent sales tax (the pancarte) in Angers to a certain Guillaume Abraham, the city fathers staged an extraordinary assembly, stated their opposition, and chose two of their most distinguished citizens as a delegation. The delegation went off to Paris to plead with Marie de Medici and Richelieu for intervention on behalf of the city.

Fiscal innovations and injustices were the most consistent bases of contention in the Angers of the 1620s, but they were not the only ones. Louvet's journal provides a running account of the long struggle for precedence between the new bishop and the cathedral chapter, a struggle which sometimes divided the city's whole elite into bitter factions. Louvet chronicles the maneuvering between the local Huguenots (who were already confined by royal edict to one place of public worship in a village outside the city) and the city authorities, who were reluctant to grant them any privileges at all. There are more quarrels over precedence, brawls, processions to mobilize sentiment against the English, assemblies of trades to air particular

grievances. There are hard times for the executioner: in July 1625, when the waiting crowd massacred a hangman who botched his job; again seven months later, when a group of lackeys snatched one of their own from the hangman's hands, and the hangman went to jail for it. And there is the Merchants' Mardi Gras of 1629.

On Jeudi Gras (Thursday, 22 February) of that year, the city's law clerks had held their mock court, with the son of the city's chief judge persiding. In the course of their pleading, the clerks had insulted many of Angers' leading citizens, including the wife of a prominent merchant. On Mardi Gras (Tuesday, 27 February), more than four hundred members of the merchants' guilds gathered at St. Nicolas Field, just outside the city. They donned masks and elaborate costumes made for the occasion, mounted fine horses "that a large number of nobles and lords had loaned them" and entered the city two by two. Passing by the city's major streets and squares,

> they tossed a dummy wearing a long robe, a square bonnet, with bags and writing-board attached to its belt. People said it was a trial lawyer they were mocking. They did the same thing in front on the law court in the rue St. Michel. They went out the St. Michel gate and proceeded along the moats. A great many people gathered in the shops and at the windows of houses in order to see them. Because of the mock pleading, the masquerade and the display of the dummy a great many divisions and hostilities developed among numerous families in the city (Louvet 1854-1856: V, 54).

Mutual mockery reinforced the existing division between the legal officials, on the one side, and the merchants and artisans, on the other.

Even local power struggles, however, became more acute when compounded with new and increasing taxes. During the 1620s, although Louis XIII was not yet heavily involved in international wars, his reduction of the principal Huguenot strongholds within France required large armies, and therefore a rapid increase in revenue. (The siege of Protestant La Rochelle along cost more than 40 million livres, in a time when, at 20 sous per livre, a laborer's daily wage was 10 or 12 sous and a bushel of wheat generally ran around one livre; Clamagéran 1868: II, 478). Toward the end of the decade, furthermore, Louis was organizing campaigns in Italy against the

Habsburgs and the dukes of Savoy. As usual, the expanded military effort meant more taxes.

As taxes rose from the later 1620s on, the tempo of protest also increased. The cluster of conflicts which beset Angers in 1629 and 1630 were tame affairs compared to the bloody insurrections elsewhere in France, but they illustrate the smaller-scale versions of contention about taxation. The sequence was impressively standard: royal officials announced a new or increased tax, the people most affected by the tax (typically the workers in a given trade) protested the impropriety of the new action by petition or declaration, the protest was rejected or ignored. The tax collectors then arrived with their commissions, a crowd formed outside the tax collectors' premises, the people involved restated their protest and then attacked the homes or persons of the tax collectors.

The tanners of Angers, for example, protested vociferously at the levying of a new tax on hides and skins. Around 10 P.M. on 5 September 1629, sixty to eighty of them went to the inn "where the image of St. Julian hangs as its sign". They found the hotel locked, then "made a great noise and uproar and threatened to throw said tax collectors into the water and even to burn down the inn, and made a point of breaking down the doors to get into the hostelry, broke the lower windows with stones, and went away" (Louvet 1854-1856: V, pt. 2, 136). The judges to whom the tax collectors complained the next day advised them to leave town, in order to avoid greater violence.

In April 1630 another variant of the tax rebellion took place in Angers: after placards attacking the magistrates for their role in the collection of new taxes had appeared in the city, the company of trial lawyers assembled to debate their own fiscal problems. The lawyers -- confronted both with new fees and with the necessity of buying off the appointment of prosecutors the crown was otherwise threatening to impose on them -- resolved not to show up for work again until they

had brought their case against the greedy tax-farmers to the king and to the Parlement of Paris.

Three days later, on the 9th of April, a crowd gathered to block the bailiffs sent to enforce the payment of deliquent taxes in one of Angers' faubourgs. When one of the bailiffs injured a recalcitrant tavern-keeper with a blow of his sword, the crowd chased away the lot of them. (One of the bailiffs had the bad judgment to flee for protection to the city's jail; there the authorities held him, tried him for assault, and sentenced him to hang.) On the 10th, another crowd besieged a local dignitary "suspected of tax-gouging" in his home (A.M.A. BB 72/97 [Archives Municipales, Angers, series BB 72, folio 97]).

Not all the action was negative. On the 21st of May the civic militia honored the mayor of Angers for his opposition to the tax-farmers. The militia companies marched through the streets with banners, drums and trumpets, firing their muskets and carrying a May tree. They finally planted the tree at the mayor's door. After that the ordinary militiamen received ten sous each to dine on the town together, while their officers enjoyed a banquet at the mayor's house. On the 30th of May the tribute continued with the citizen's building of an elaborate tableau. On the river they constructed a fort, a stage and a giant figure representing, in effect, the French people resisting tyranny. In a mock battle on the river, the giant Alastor and his forces repelled attack after attack. Gunsmoke clouded the river, fireworks sprayed from the fort, orators declaimed verses written for the tableau and everyone who saw the show (according to our ever-observant Jehan Louvet) "went away pleased" (Louvet 1854-1856: V, pt. 2, 162).

In June 1630 it was again the turn of the salt-tax guards, the archers de la gabelle, to feel the people's anger. Two of the guards had been arrested for murder and theft in a village near Angers. On the 13th, as the popular mayor (who was also a judge at the présidial) took his two prisoners to hear witnesses at the scene of the

crimes, the captain of the salt-tax forces came up with more of his guards. Brandishing a pistol, he threatened the mayor. The mayor sent to Angers for help. Help came, in the form of a swarm of people who rushed out the city gates bearing all sorts of weaapons. The attack on the guards ended with two archers dead, the captain's house in Angers sacked, his wine drunk, and his household goods consumed in a giant bonfire (Louvet 1854-1856: V, pt. 2, 167-170).

As it happened, St. John's Eve (the 23d of June) was only ten days away. While the people of Paris gathered for fireworks at the Place de Grève, the youths of Angers organized their own spectacle. They were, said Louvet, accustomed since time immemorial "to light fires in honor and reverence of the holiday in the squares and other places and locations of the city" (Louvet 1854-1856: V, pt. 2, 171). This time, according to the royal prosecutor, the participants were residents "of base and vile condition"; that probably means journeymen, apprentices and servants. They made a dummy of the hated captain, a sword in his hand and a sign on his back. They took their staves and halberds, bearing the dummy through the streets with drums and banners, drubbing the effigy as they went, shouting taunts and eventually tossing the figure into the flames.

The citizens of Angers soon suffered for their enthusiastic opposition; no matter how badly he behaved, after all, a capitaine des gabelles embodied royal authority. For the events of April and June, thirty-odd people went to jail in the castle, five were shipped to Tours for trial, two were hanged, and the city had to reimburse the archers' captain for his losses.

These protests were, to be sure, minor as compared with Dijon's Lanturelu, which occurred earlier the same year. In Dijon, the rebels sacked houses of dignitaries, took over the town, and cursed the king. The grievances of Dijon were greater: there, the king was trying to abolish the city's special tax exemption and to establish a local tax administration (an Election) directly responsible to the crown.

By 1630, Anjou already had an Election. It had long since lost the protection of its own provincial Estates. The province had seen much of its fiscal independence disappear in earlier centuries.

Yet the struggles over taxation in Dijon and Angers had important traits in common. They had, of course, the common background of war-induced demand for greater royal revenue. They also shared a standard sequence of popular resistance running from principled formal protest (where possible) to direct attacks on the collectors (where necessary); the importance of corporate trades and professions such as the trial lawyers and the tanners as nuclei of resistance; the special hatred reserved for local officials who made money on new taxes or abused the authority given them by their appointment as tax collectors; the frequent hesitancy or complicity of local officials when it came to overcoming popular objections to royal taxes; the brutal but highly selective repression that arrived when royal authorities entered onto the scene.

The forms of popular action also had much in common: the attack on a miscreant's house, the ritual mockery, the costumed parade, the borrowing of legal forms such as burning in effigy, the recurrent threat to throw enemies into the water. Anti-tax actions drew on a standard repertoire. In general, they conveyed a popular attitude we might call aggressive supplication. "Give us our rights," people said, in effect, "and we will stay in our place; deny us our rights and we will fight." Ordinary people saw more or less clearly that royal taxes were cutting deeper and deeper into their own lives, local authorities saw their own power and autonomy being circumscribed as royal officers multiplied, and both realized that the new levies often violated long-standing, legally-sanctioned rights and privileges.

With the end of Jehan Louvet's journal in 1634, we lose some of the texture of contention in Anjou. The official proceedings of Angers' city council for the period of Louvet's journal (A.M.A. BB 28 to 74) mention most of the events in the journal,

but soberly and laconically. The proceedings lack the loving detail prized by a gossipy clerk of the court. Yet the official record makes it clear that the basic conflicts of the 1620s recurred through the 1630s and 1640s: running battles with the salt-tax guards, an intensifying struggle between the judicial officers and the bourgeois of the city, an unceasing effort of royal officials to pry more taxes from Anjou, an unceasing effort of Angevins to keep from paying.

Between the end of Louvet's journal in 1634 and the start of the Fronde in 1648, the largest struggles came in 1641 and 1643. Both were anti-tax movements, but they took different forms. In 1641, crowds attacked the collectors stationed as the city gates to collect the new royal subvention of one sou per livre (that is, five percent) on the value of goods entering the city. Although the people in the streets were poor and obscure, the Intendant reported that

> a number of merchants are encouraging the sedition. I cannot find a single person to make a deposition, do what I may; everyone tells me, "I don't know those folks." These people have reached such a high degree of insolence that they are threatening to burn the house of anyone who testifies; they haven't the least concern for the magistrates (Mousnier 1964: 487).

Two years later, in 1643, the tax in question was the subsistances, a levy designed to pay for feeding the royal troops which were then attacking the Habsburgs in Catalonia and Flanders. When the military governor pressed for payment of past-due amounts, the Angevins refused. Unauthorized parish assemblies named speakers (syndics) and declared they would not pay the illegal tax. Although the intendant boasted in August that he had "broken their syndicate" (Porchnev 1963: 619-620), in one form or another the alliances which appeared in the near-rebellion of 1643 continued through the rest of the 1640s. They aligned the city's workers, many of the clergy and a cluster of lawyers not only against royal fiscal officers, but against the magistrates who monopolized city offices and did the dirty work of the crown (Lebrun 1965 1965: 129-130).

The Fronde

AtThe local level, the Fronde continued the same struggles, but complicated and aggravated them. In its simplest terms, the Fronde amounted to a series of challenges to royal authority. The challenges ranged from passive resistance to remonstrance to open rebellion, and lasted from 1648 to 1652. there were four major clusters of actors:

1. the king, the queen mother, cardinal Mazarin and their agents;
2. the high judiciary, clustered around the Parlements, especially the Parlement of Paris;
3. a shifting coalition of great magnates such as the Prince of Condé, aligned against the crown most of the time, but constantly vulnerable to defection, cooptation and internal rivalry;
4. a set of local popular parties, variously drawn from merchants, professionals, artisans and rentiers.

The complexities of the Fronde resulted partly from the changing positions of the individual actors (e.g. the great princes only moved into open rebellion well after the popular insurrections of 1648), partly from the changing alliances among the actors (e.g. the Fronde began with Condé the king's chief military supporter but ended with him as the king's chief enemy), and partly from tensions and splits within the big clusters (e.g. when the workers and shopkeepers threw up barricades throughout central Paris in August, 1648, the big merchants and municipal officers first sat on their hands, then turned against the rebels.)

Fortunately, we do not have to follow all the intricacies of the Fronde. As a broad framework, we can accept the conventional chronology: a Parlementary Fronde (1648-1649), a Princely Fronde (1650), A Coalition of Princes and Parlements (1650-1651), a Fronde of Condé (1651-1653). Within that chronology, Figure 1 situates the major events of the Fronde in Anjou and in France as a whole.

As the chronology indicates, Angers and Anjou were heavily involved in the various rebellions of 1648 to 1652. From the viewpoint of popular contention, the Fronde breaks up into many separate events, most of them having a good deal in

FIGURE 1: THE PERIOD OF THE FRONDE IN ANJOU AND IN FRANCE AS A WHOLE

YEAR	FRANCE AS A WHOLE	ANGERS AND ANJOU
1635	beginning of open war with Spain and Austria; rebellion of Guyenne and Languedoc	
1636	Croquant rebellion in Southwest begins	(to 1639) plague epidemic in Angers and vicinity; August: parishes of Angers voluntarily raise money for troops to defend Picardy
1638		increasing resistance to a variety of war-linked taxes
1639	Va-Nu-Pieds rebellion in Normandy, further insurrections in Langedoc	
1640	rebellions in Rennes, Moulins and their regions	city residents imprisoned for failure to pay forced loans to crown
1641	French crown allies with Catalans and Portuguese after their successful anti-Spanish rebellions of 1640; rebellion of Count of Soissons; other rebellions in Poitou, Saintonge	October: attacks on collectors of subvention tax in Angers
1642	conspiracy of royal favorite Cinq-Mars with Spanish; Cinq-Mars executed	
1643	Louis XIII dies; regency for five-year-old Louis XIV includes Anne of Austria, Mazarin; multiple insurrections in western and southern France (continuing in South to 1645)	parish assemblies in Angers to resist subsistances taxes
1644		August: warm reception of exiled Queen Henrietta of England in Angers, Saumur and elsewhere
1645	uprising in Montpellier	

FIGURE 1: THE FRONDE (P. 2)

YEAR	FRANCE AS A WHOLE	ANGERS AND ANJOU
1647		attacks on agents of pancarte tax lead to stationing of troops in Angers
1648	June-July: assembly of high courts (Parlements and Chambres) demands major reforms including recall of Indendants, high court control of new taxes and sales of offices; peasants assemble in Paris to demand reduction of taille; insurrection in Pau; August: Mazarin arrests leaders of parlementary movement; barricades spring up in central Paris; Mazarin releases prisoners, later (October) accepts parlementary demands; October: treaties of Westphalia end Thirty Years War, although French war with Spain continues intermittently until 1659	September: citizens of Angers boycott troops sent through the city
1649	January: Mazarin and royal family flee Paris, order exile of high courts; Parlement of Paris seizes government; popular pressure against royalist municipality; movements of support for Parlement in many provinces; Conde blockades the capital for king; March: provisional settlement (opposed by popular protest in Paris); August: royal family reenters Paris.	February-March: merchants, artisans and minor officials form autonomous militia in Angers; barricades, alliances with la Tremouille and other Frondeurs; attacks on tax collectors; April: militia attacks royal forces in Angers; later, reconciliation of inhabitants with royal governor

FIGURE 1: THE FRONDE (p.3)

YEAR	FRANCE AS A WHOLE	ANGERS AND ANJOU
1650	January: queen has Condé and his allies, who seek to displace Mazarin, imprisoned; February-August: Duchess of Longueville, Princess of Conde and other allies of Prince of Conde organize resistance and rebellion in provinces, especially in Bordeaux and Flanders; popular movements in Tulle, Bordeaux and elsewhere; rebellions defeated by December; September-December: Paris rentiers press claims against the government	March: civic assemblies in Angers oppose royal policy; royal siege of rebels in castle of Saumur; April: numerous nobles of the province declare for the Frondeur princes; May: popular party in Angers names its own deputies
1651	February: Parlement of Paris, allied with princely opposition, demands removal of Mazarin; Mazarin liberates princes and leaves France; February-September: numerous conflicts between royal troops and residents in Paris region; Spring: the Ormée (a dissident assembly of artisans, shopkeepers, petty officials, etc.) forms in Bordeaux; beginning of open rivalry among Frondeurs, many of whom reconcile with queen; September: Condé leaves Paris for the Southwest; Fall: Condé organizes support in South and West; December: Mazarin re-enters France with his own troops.	January: deputies of Angers' popular assemblies attempt to exclude judiciary from municipal offices; February: bonfires in Angers for release of princes; May: Angers elections bring in popular-party mayor and council; widespread resistance to tax colectors; December: governor of Anjou (duc de Rohan) refuses to turn over Ponts-de-Ce to royal forces, sides with Condé, courts Angers' popular party

FIGURE 1: THE FRONDE (p.4)

YEAR	FRANCE AS A WHOLE	ANGERS AND ANJOU
1652	May-July: Condé advances on Paris, seizes the city; June: the Ormée takes power in Bordeaux; Summer: displays of popular support and popular opposition to Mazarin in Paris; July: anti-Mazarin crowd attacks the Hotel de Ville; August: next exile of Mazarin; October: Condé, beset by increasing resistance, leaves for the Low Countries Louis XIV and Anne of Austria make triumphant re-entry to Paris; cleanup of Frondeurs begins throughout France	January: duc de Rohan keeps royalist bishop (Henry Arnauld) from returning to Angers, breaks up assembly of judiciary called to condemn him; February: people of Angers attack royal sympathizers; February-March: royal armies besiege and capture Angers and Ponts-de-Cé, pillage the region, reorganize the municipality and militia; factional fighting ensues within city, and popular party regains some strength; April-July: popular party revives assemblies and maneuvers to regain power, but finally capitulates at approach of new royal army; August: banishment from Angers of leaders of popular party
1653	February: Mazarin returns to Paris; August: the Ormée capitulates in Bordeaux	April: crown names new municipality for Angers, with severe restriction of municipal rights

common with the tax rebellions and factional struggles of the 1620s and 1630s. The Fronde impinged on Anjou's ordinary people as a series of occasions on which troops were billeted or removed, as a set of changes in taxes, as an intermittent opportunity to resist taxation or billeting with an unusual likelihood of support from some group of powerful people and, now and then, a chance to reshape government by organizing militias, holding local assemblies and choosing deputies to present popular demands.

The solemn journal of Mathurin Jousselin, cure of Sainte-Croix in Angers, recorded many of the crucial events. (Jousselin began jotting notes in his parish register when he took office in 1621, and continued his observations to 1662; but he only came close to a day-to-day chronicle during the years of the Fronde.) His first entry for 1648 described a typical grievance, the provincial governor's billeting of a company of Scottish soldiers, and several companies of French troops, to force the payment of back taxes. Those troops, he reported,

> cost more than XII thousand livres a day, not counting their thieving and violence; to avoid that expense, a number of people bought off their liability for large sums, not daring to show the slighest resistance for fear of irritating the marechal de Breze, governor of the province, who had been angered by the indiscreet words of a few hotheads; besides which the troops had come to press for the payment of the subsistances of 1644, 45, and 46, delayed by the stubbornness of a few. As a result, instead of the 32 thousand livres the inhabitants had arranged to pay each year, it was necessary to pay more than 57 thousand livres, plus two sous per livre and VIII sous per tax bill for each year of arrears. All this completely stripped the city of money, to such a point that many people had to melt down their silver and sell or pawn their pearls (Jousselin 1861: 431-432).

No open, concerted resistance occurred during the six weeks the troops were living on the town. The clergy, however, created opportunities for subtle symbolic opposition by sponsoring "continuous prayers for the protection of the oppressed," and organizing a general procession to attract divine mercy.

Some priests went farther than that. Gaultier, cure of La Trinité, was one. A "tumult" had arisen as two officials chased a bailiff into the cure's church during a service, and the congregation attacked the officials. At the entrance to the castle,

the bailiff in question had posted a set of legal charges against one of the occupying soldiers. The cure was convicted of aiding and abetting his congregation in their protection of the daring bailiff. He paid a fine of 240 livres (it was to be used, conveniently enough, for the costs of lodging a military officer billeted on the judge in the case: Jousselin 1861: 432-433). Few others dared resist at all. The governor and the occupying troops did what they would with the city. Arriving at the start of January, they only decamped in mid-February, when the city had yielded the bulk of its delinquent taxes.

Royal pressure for taxes had not ended. Nor had Angevin resistance to royal demands disappeared forever. By the end of April, 1648, the city was having to collect a new version of the old royal sales tax, the pancarte, on wine, hay, and other goods entering its walls. The governor's granting of tax exemptions to a number of his friends and then to the clergy as a whole added indignation to dispair. Repeated deputations to the governor did nothing but increase his threats to impose the tax and the exemptions by force. By the end of June, however, the opposition that the Parlement of Paris was showing to royal demands encouraged the people of Angers to draw the line; although the parish assemblies called to answer the governor reluctantly confirmed the clergy's exemption, they did so with the clear reservation that the exemption would not serve as a precedent for other taxes (Debidour 1877: 62). The governor's sword-rattling did not shake the city from that position. At the same time, wholesale evasion of the pancarte began and a move to challenge the tax on the gound of illegal ratification gained strength. After having been completely subjugated in February of 1648, the people of Angers lined up against royal authority once more in July.

From July, 1648 to the beginning of 1649, the Angevin commitment to the opposition deepened. No open protest in Angers accompanied Paris' Day of the Barricades (the 26th of August. 1648, when the queen ordered members of the

parlement of Paris arrested, saw barricades spring up all over central Paris, and then released the Parlementaires under popular pressure). But on the 30th of September the people of Angers blocked the gates, ignored the orders of a frightened city council, and temporarily kept a royal regiment from marching through the city. That flouting of royal authority, as the mayor and council well knew, brought the city within a hair's breadth of punishable rebellion.

Still, the city's visible and durable break with the king did not come until February, 1649. In mid-January, the Parlement of Paris had issued an appeal for support from the country as a whole; Angers' high courts and council avoided any official recognition of the appeal, but word eventually seeped out into the city. In February, a great crowd gathered at the city hall and demanded the creation of an armed civic militia. The council gave in. Armed civilians manned the city gates and ringed the castle, with its royal garrison. Municipal sentries marked the limits of royal power.

Yet the city authorities hedged: They failed to answer the Paris Parlement's call for support. On 6 March, the officers of two major courts (the Sénéchausée and the Presidial) wrote to Paris on their own, declaring that "they would never falter in their fidelity and obedience due to His Majesty's service, nor in their respect for the rulings of your court, under whose authority we count it an honor to continue to fulfill our functions . . ." (B.N. Cinq Cents de Colbert 3). That amounted to an elaborate but definite statement of alignment with the Parlement. A still-hesitant city council temporized; it tried to reduce the civic guard, but according to Jousselin,

> at once the anticipation of a trick obliged the people to demand a major that is, a head of the civic militia ; since that was not to everyone's taste, the people came to the city hall on 16 March; they all unanimously named M. de Lespine Lemarié, a counselor at the Presidial Court, as major. His excuses, his protestations about his youth and inexperience in war did not keep the people from carrying him off and taking him to the city hall to take the oath before the mayor, whom they forced to come back from his house to the city hall for that purpose (Jousselin 1861: 434).

Lemarié, the new major, was one of the two signers of the 6 March message to the Parlement of Paris.

This naming of a major who was not the council's creature -- who was, in fact, the nominee of a self-selected popular assembly -- was at once a rebellion against the municipal authorities and a heavy step toward open alliance with the Fronde. For the next three years, Lemarié and his ally Claude Voisin (professor at the law faculty) led a popular party within Angers. The party sometimes dominated the city government, and almost always pushed it to demand municipal autonomy, to resist royal taxation and the billeting of troops, and to align itself with the national opposition to Mazarin and the queen. So far as one can tell from the passing references in city council proceedings, Jousselin's journal and similar sources, the heart of the popular party was the same coalition of merchants, artisans and minor officials that had led the anti-tax movements before the Fronde. Their methods, too, were much the same: the solemn convocation of unauthorized parish assemblies, the defiant election of chiefs and delegates, the direct attack on the persons and premises of tax collectors, and so on. The difference was that they now had powerful potential allies outside the city.

Angers continued its march toward the Fronde. On 25 March, a general assembly of the city's parishes ceremoniously opened letters from two great Frondeurs, the marquis de la Boulaye and the duc de la Tremouille, asking for recognition of the authority granted the two chiefs by the Parlement of Paris. After due deliberation, the assembly sent delegates to grant that recognition. In the meantime began attacks on royal salt-tax officers and skirmishes with the royal garrison at the castle. The collection of taxes virtually ended, and citizens treated themselves to the luxury of importing their own untaxed salt. After the formal entry of the duc de la Tremouille and the marquis de la Boulaye into the city, the residents pledged moral, financial and military support for a siege of the castle. At

that point they had committed themselves willy-nilly to armed rebellion against the crown. So had a great many other towns throughout France.

Much more was to come: attacks on the royal garrison in Angers, running of a weak-kneed mayor out of town, reconciliation with the royal governor after a truce had checked the parlementary rebellion in Paris, intercession by Angers' bishop Henry Arnauld to prevent brutual punishment of the city after its capitulation, more billeting of troops to enforce collection of delinquent taxes, more struggles between troops and townsmen, tilting of a new royal governor (the duc de Rohan) toward the princely Fronde, repeated swings of Angers' popular party toward insurrection when the national situation looked promising, intermittent alliances between the city's popular party and the insurgent nobles of the surrounding region, frequent tergiversation by the city's judicial elite. Anjou's Fronde was complex, tumultuous and changeable. Yet it returned again and again to the same themes: preservation of local and regional privileges against an omnivorous monarchy, hostility to everyone who profited personally from the royal expansion, opposition to the billeting of unruly, demanding troops on the citizenry, resistance to arbitrary taxation, especially when farmed out to financiers, and particularly when applied to the necessaries of life.

Angers did not carry on its Fronde alone. Smaller cities joined as well. In Saumur, for example, we find people resisting the salt-tax in March of 1651. The riming Muze historique recorded the events:

> La populace de Saumur
> Trouvant le joug un peu trop dur
> Et menacant d'etre rebelle
> touchant les droits de la gabelle,
> Comminge, gouverneur du lieu
> Sans presque pouvoir dire adieu

Sans mesme avoir loizir de boire,

Alla vitement vers la Loire

Pour au peuple seditieux

D'abord faire un peu les doux yeux;

Et, s'il s'abstinoit d'aventure

En son sot et brutal murmure

Agir apres comme un lion

Pour punir la rebellion (Muze historique, Livre II, lettre XIII, 3/25/1651, p. 103).

In Saumur as well, resistance to arbitrary taxation joined other forms of opposition to the regime, and compounded into a local version of the Fronde.

One moment of the Fronde in Anjou shows us the joining of many of these themes: When the hesitant duc de Rohan finally took possession of his new governorship in March, 1650, and made his first ambiguous gestures of sympathy toward the regional movement of resistance, the city gave him an old-style hero's welcome, complete with processions, cavalcades, Te Deum, banquets and balls. The day after his pompous entry into the city, "he released a number of poor tax collectors, whom the poverty of the people had kept from paying their quotas, leaving in jail only those who had received more money than they had turned in" (Jousselin 1861: 448). The contrast with the previous governor, who had billeted troops and jailed hapless collectors that did not deliver their quotas, could not have been sharper . . . or, no doubt, more deliberately contrived. Still, Rohan managed to keep from putting himself into obvious personal rebellion against royal authority until December of 1651. Then, summoned to turn over the fortress of Ponts-de-Cé to an emissary of the crown, he refused. He thereby aligned himself with the Prince of Condé.

Anjou's Fronde ended effectively in March, 1652 with the capitulation of Rohan and the surrender of Ponts-de-Cé. Then began the conventional retribution. The

occupying troops, declared cure Jousselin,

> committed previously unheard of excesses and violence, such that one would not have expected of the Turks: houses burned with their furnishings, all the provisions ruined, murders, rapes, sacrileges extending to chalices and monstrances, churches converted into stables (Jousselin 1861: 470).

Yet for four months the popular party held together in the city, and even bid to regain power over the municipality; only the approach of a new mass of royal troops in July put them down for the last time. Their leaders were banished, and in the spring of 1653 Angers lost the tattered remnants of her municipal liberties. By that time, Mazarin and the fifteen-year-old Louis XIV were again masters of France.

After Anjou's Fronde

Anjou's history had reached a fateful moment. Two linked changes were occurring whose profound importance would only be clear in retrospect. On the one hand, the province's great nobles were never again available for alliance with a popular rebellion -- not, at least, until the great counter-revolution of the Vendee, in 1793. On the other hand, continuous and direct royal administration of the province really began at that point, with the absorption of the municipality into the royal bureaucracy and the definitive installation of an Intendant, at Tours, with jurisdiction over Anjou. Those two changes greatly altered the odds and opportunities for popular resistance to royal demands.

How did those changes shape popular involvement in contention? The most obvious break with the past was the virtual disappearance of the popular rebellion headed by, or allied with, the region's great magnates. Such rebellions had flowered in Anjou during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but now they withered away. Closely related to the decline of the elite-led rebellion were three other important departures: of armed combat by organized military units as a primary means for deciding the outcome of popular protests; of the clienteles of important nobles and officials as major actors in insurrections and other struggles; of that recurrent routine

in which the members of a community assembled, stated their grievances, elected a captain (or major, or syndic) as a substitute for the duly-constituted authorities, and refused to obey the orders of those authorities until they had reached some agreement about their grievances and demands. We witness, that is, the decline of war, clientelism and mutiny as means of collective action.

Both the lords and the commons, however, took a while to recognize the great transformation. In 1654, for example, the Frondeur Cardinal de Retz escaped from imprisonment in the castle of Nantes, fled to the castle of Beaupréau in southern Anjou, and gathered around him a small army of sympathetic nobles. In the fall, after the Cardinals capture, his faithful in Southern Anjou tried to raise troops for an expedition to free him. Over the next two years a veritable league of potentially rebellious nobles formed in the province; they divided Anjou into ten "cantons" for the purpose of organizing the nobility and collecting their grievances. The language of their act of association was that of the Fronde:

> All the gentlemen and others undersigned, obedient to the authority of the King, have promised support, aid, protection and maintenance against those who are abusing the authority of His Majesty, and who want to abolish the immunities, prerogatives and freedoms possessed by gentlemen . . . (Débidour 1877: 303).

A canny Frondeur did not, of course, blame the king himself when there was a Mazarin around to hate; one blamed the king's advisors, executors and clients. The nobles knew the seventeenth-century rules of rebellion by heart. Yet that noble league disbanded, checked by a judicious mixture of threats and concessions. The nobles of Anjou had been neutralized or coopted.

The rest of the population did not see their privileges so well treated. Anger's city council struck at the gilds in the name of economic advancement: in 1653, they set up a municipal cloth works which competed with the local masters; in 1655, they appealed successfully to the Parlement of Paris for an edict dissolving the weavers' gild and permitting any weaver to come to the city and set up in the trade. (It may

not be coincidental that a major element of the popular opposition to Angers' civic and judicial elite during the Fronde had been the organized trades.) They also reinstated the old taxes.

The reinstatement of taxes revived two old cycles of conflict. The first was the familiar sequence in which the city fell into arrears on its royal tax bill, the provincial governor billeted troops to force payment, the citizens fell to squabbling over the burden of lodging the troops, while the soldiers themselves robbed, stole, caroused, and raped until the burghers finally bought them off. As early as the spring of 1655, Angers' city council was conducting a major inquiry into the thefts committed by soldiers billeted in the St. Jacques and St. Lazare suburbs, and into "the violence committed by their lieutenant against the sieur Herbereau, échevin of Angers" (A.M. Angers, BB 86/16). The second cycle was the one in which the city or the crown, hard-pressed for cash, farmed out one of its taxes to a local capitalist who would advance the necessary sum, then permitted him to tighten and broaden the collection of the tax in question, only to confront wide, indignant resistance from those expected to pay, and once again to call in military force against the city's population.

In 1656, the city council made that second cycle worse by agreeing to farm out all the city's taxes to one of their own number. He was bound to squeeze hard in order to make his profit on the lease. He even dared to extend the pancarte to everyday foods entering the city. On 2 October 1656, the day after the tax farmer's lease began, a crowd destroyed his guardhouses at the city gates. That routine, we already know well from the time before the Fronde. The arrival of the province's royal military commander did not end the agitation. At an emergency meeting of the city council on 22 October, according to the council minutes,

> so large a number of unknown people, mutinous and angry, entered the council chamber that it was filled immediately; they began to shout that they wanted no more tax profiteers, no more pancarte and no more sou per pot (the entry

> tax on wine), no more guardhouses and salt-tax collectors at the city gates; that they would have to kill and exterminate all the profiteers, starting with those on the city council (A.M. Angers BB 86/170).

After much shouting and some negotiation, they extracted from the royal prosecutor, de Souvigné, a written declaration that the taxes would be abolished; at its reading, the crowd roared, "Long live the king and M. de Souvigné." In the ensuing discussion, members of the crowd took up the city officials' other derelictions. At one point, according to the vice-mayor's minutes, a man said to him, "There you are, you who don't want us to be master weavers. Ha! There will be master weavers in Angers when you're long gone from this world!" (A.M. Angers BB 86/170)

Neither that abolition of taxes nor the triumph of the weavers lasted beyond the one happy day in October. Far from it. A few weeks later the inevitable occupying force of royal soldiers marched into Angers; they were not to leave until February 1657. Once more the city council began hearing citizens' complaints about the "exactions of the soldiers lodged in the city" (A.M. Angers BB 86/205). This time the soldiers brought with them an ominous figure: the royal Intendant from Tours. An improvised court, including some members of the city's old judicial elite, cranked into action. Three persons hanged for their parts in the rebellion of 22 October. And, in the spring of 1657, the king once again took away the few privileges he had restored to the apparently docile city in 1656. If there had been any doubt that the Fronde was over, that wisp of uncertainty had blown away.

A. Lloyd Moote, historian of the parlementary Fronde, tells us that a "miniature Fronde" sputtered on through the 1650s (Moote 1971:357). In the case of Anjou, the word exaggerates the fact. The coalition which had made the region's Fronde shook apart well before the end of the 1650s. The nobles, artisans, merchants, and secondary officials who had sometimes worked together against Mazarin between 1648 and 1652 occasionally conducted their own little wars against royal or municipal authority in the following decades. But after the crushing of the Fronde they never

again showed signs of consolidating against the crown. Furthermore (as Moote also tells us) the decline of the Parlement of Paris as a model, locus, and rallying-point of opposition greatly diminished the chances of coordination between Anjou's aggrieved parties and their counterparts elsewhere.

When it came to local conflict, Anjou returned to some of the class alignments which had prevailed before the Fronde. After Charles Colbert (brother and agent of the king's great minister) visited Angers in 1664, he reported that the city:

> is divided into two parties: that the magistrates and officers, both of the city and of the Presidial, Prevote and Salt Administration; and that of the ordinary bourgeois such as attorneys, barristers, merchants, and artisans. The enmities of the two parties cause great trouble in the city. The latter party complain that . . . the others never let anyone into the city administration but the law officers, who are almost all relatives and confederates, all powerful people who, out of common interest, join with the other officials to exempt themselves from all taxes, and to push them onto the people, and furthermore eat up public revenues, which were once 75,000 livres each year; nor can they ever provide justification or receipts for their expenditures. And not satisfied with that, they persecute in different ways individuals who complain about this state of affairs, and dismiss them as mutinous and seditious with respect to the powerful.
>
> The other party says that the leaders of the people are composed of very proud and disrespectful characters, lacking subordination to their superiors, that all they want is independence, that they have never failed to embrace the party of novelties when the opportunity arose, and have often called exemplary punishment upon themselves as a result" (B.N. Fr 18608, Estat de la Generalité de Tours).

The veiled reference to popular support for the Fronde ("the party of novelties") should not mislead us: large-scale rebellion had disappeared. Contention on a smaller scale was apparently declining as well.

From Hurricanes to Summer Squalls

The decline of contention did not mean that grievances evaporated, or that conflict utterly disappeared. Louis XIV continued to make war; he therefore continued to require men, money, and food for his growing armies. Taxes continued to rise after the middle of the seventeenth century, although at a slower rate than before the Fronde. The crown drew an increasing share of its income from forced

loans, currency depreciations, the sale of offices, and other complements to the regular tax burden. Ordinary people, for their part, continued to fight the new exactions when they could -- especially when the royal demands gave large profits to middlemen, appeared without due show of legality, or threatened people's ability to survive as contributing members of their communities. All these were old conditions for resistance to taxation and other governmental demands.

Despite the decline of civil war, clientelism, and mutiny as means of collective action, many of Anjou's conflicts of the later seventeenth century ran along familiar lines. The nearly unbroken series of wars in Spain, on the eastern frontiers and in the Low Countries kept large armies on the move, living on the towns and villages through which they passed. Furthermore, the Intendants maintained the practice of billeting soldiers in order to speed the payment of delinquent taxes. The two sorts of billeting imposed similar costs: the basic expenses of food and lodging, the additional pain of raping and brawling. Through the victorious French campaigns of the 1670s in Flanders and Franche-Comté, the minutes of Angers' city council follow an insistent counterpoint between Te Deums and bonfires for battles won in the East, on the one hand, and complaints and contestations about the local troops, on the other. In December, 1675, the city fathers debated how to pay the ustensile, the assessment for troops stationed the region. "It seems that the regular way to take care of it," declared the mayor,

> would be to impose a head tax. But that looks impossible, since most residents of the city and its suburbs have been ruined both by the frequent passing of cavalry and infantry and by the soldiers who are here in winter quarters and who have to be fed entirely at the expense of the residents. In addition, head taxes have always caused divisions within the city (A.M. Angers BB 94/129).

They chose instead to take the money out of the entry taxes -- which was a way to push the burden toward the poor.

The échevins must have calculated correctly. No more that century did the people of Angers mount one of their major attacks on tollbooths and tax collectors.

The only notable struggle with the salt-tax officers during the next few decades, for example, came in November 1663; then soldiers of captain Brette's company, regiment of Champagne, attacked the archers who had been blocking their repeated attempts to smuggle salt into Angers. Captain Sanche of the salt-tax forces, declining a duel but finding himself backed into a sword fight with the company's sergeant, then set upon by other soldiers, drew his pistol and killed the sergeant. Then captain Sanche "retreating with his men, pursued by twelve men armed with swords and by a stone-throwing populace, after standing them off four or five times, was forced to fire a shot, which killed someone." Only then did the salt-tax clerk (who told the story just quoted) and the soldiers' officers manage to restore order (B.N. Melanges Colbert 118, report of 12 November 1663). Again in 1669, five men who appear to have been soldier-smugglers broke into the jail at Pouancé, rescued a colleague, attacked a salt-tax guard, and sped away (B.N. Mélanges Colbert 151, letter of 7 April 1669). With soldiers on their side, Angevins still took out after the hated salt-tax guards. On their own, however, Angevins no longer dared.

Perhaps enforcement had simply become more severe. When John Locke visited Angers in 1678, he was impressed with the weight of the salt-tax:

> Here a boisseau of Salt costs a Luis d'or & about 10 livres of it is sold for 10s. This makes them here very strict in examining all things that enter into towne, there being at each gate two officers of the Gabelle who serch all things where they suspect may be any salt. They have also in their hands iron bodkins about 2 foot long which have a litle hollow in them neare the point, which they thrust into any packs where they suspect there may be salt concealed, & if there be any, by that means discover it. The penalty for any one that brings in any salt that is not a Gabeller, pays 100 ecus or goes to the galleys. It i also as dangerous to buy any salt but of them . . . I saw a Gabeller at the gate serch a litle girle at her entrance, who seemed only to have gon out to see a funerall that was prepareing without the gate, which had drawn thither a great number of people (Locke 1953:222).

Yet salt-smugglers continued to ply their trade, and to run into occasional confrontations with the salt-tax guards.

As the salt tax rose, the profitability of smuggling -- for those who weren't

caught -- increased as well, Soldiers found the supplementary income from salt-smuggling more attractive, and more regular, than their meager and tardy wages. As smugglers, they had several advantages: location near the frontiers, a degree of invulnerability to search and seizure, the right to bear arms. Whole military units seem to have made a practice of riding off to areas of low-priced salt and bringing it back in their saddlebags. The tax farmers were not, to be sure, amused; they sent their own armed forces, the salt-tax guards, out to apprehend the lawbreakers. These lawbreakers, however, not only thought they had a right to a little smuggling, but also were armed. Bloody battles ensued.

In Anjou, toward the end of the century, the regiments of Arsfeld and St. Simon joined enthusiastically in the salt-smuggling. In March, 1693, the dragoons of Arsfeld were bringing 25 horses loaded with salt back from the low-priced province of Brittany when they met the archers de la gabelle. The outcome of that encounter was one dead on each side. (The intendant collected compensation for the family of the dead salt-tax guard by deducting the money from the salary money due the regiment's officers: A.N. G7 521.) Five horsemen of the St. Simon regiment were tried for salt-smuggling in January 1693. All were convicted, and two of them chosen by lot to serve life sentences in the galleys; the other three were held "at the king's disposition" (which ordinarily meant they would find their way back into military service after symbolic punishment). The comrades of the two unlucky convicts broke into the St. Florent jail and rescued them, then attacked their own officers when the officers tried to arrest the perpetrators of the jailbreak (A.N. G7 521). Around 1700, Anjou's larger struggles over the salt tax usually involved military men as well as the armed guards of the gabelle.

Other conflicts persisted as well. fights between soldiers and civilians, sometimes amounting to pitched battles, seem to have been more common than before the Fronde. Plenty of bitter arguments and attacks on officials grew out of

billeting. Now and then forced enlistments in the local regiments became bitter issues. Units of the civic militia and other corporate groups continued to jostle each other for precedence at public ceremonies, as in the fracas of July 1686 at the dedication of the statue of Louis XIV; there units of the civic guard fired at each other in a disagreement over who should lead the parade (A.M. Angers BB 97/33). Still, the once-ample capacity of Angers' ordinary people for rebellion seems to have dwindled in the seventeenth century's later decades.

During this period, the region's Protestants (a mighty political force one hundred years earlier) gave an outstanding example of acquiescence. True, they faced overwhelming odds: a few hundred people in a province of 400,000, with the face of royal authority set against them. In 1685, with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Angers' presidial court decreed the destruction of the region's one Protestant church at Sorges, not far outside the city; five thousand Angevins went to tear the church down (Lehoreau 1967: 58-59). A few months later, royal officials turned an old tool to new tasks:

> . . . the King sent an order to oblige the Huguenots of this city to abjur their faith. They sent a great many soldiers from the Alsace regiment to live in their houses at will. The great expense forced all the Protestants to embrace our religion right away. God grant that it be for His glory! (Toisonnier 1930-31: V, 239).

Although there were plenty of later complaints about the "insincerity" and "incompleteness" of the Protestant conversions, the Huguenots dared not offer open resistance to the royal drive against them.

There are two significant exceptions to the general decline of open rebellion in the later seventeen century: industrial conflict and struggles over the food supply. The sources I have examined document only one clear-cut major movement of workers against employers in Angers, and that at the very end of the century. In 1697, the master serge-weavers complained that

> the journeymen in their trade are gathering each day to insult them and to make other journeymen leave work by force and violence, and to leave the city as well; they call that "hitting the road"; when one of the journeymen displeases them or agrees to work for a lower wage than the one they want to earn, they threaten the masters, insult them, and mistreat their women. It is important to stop these conspiracies and assemblies, since they will lead to sedition (A.M. Angers BB 101/25).

Angers' city council agreed. They ordered the arrest of the two "most mutinous" journeymen, and the end of these riotous assemblies. The gatherings amounted to an old-fashioned strike; the antiquated English word "turnout" describes the journeymen's actual behavior better. It probably followed a wage cut agreed upon by the masters. In any case, the fact that the masters complained to the city council gives us a momentary glimpse of a struggle that was probably much more continuous than the record tells us.

Food and Contention in Anjou

Another ground over which people were struggling toward the end of the seventeenth century was control of the food supply. After the Fronde, the monarchy became increasingly invoved in efforts to influence the distribution of food in France. The crown had several reasons for increasing concern about the supply of food, especially of grain: the need to feed growing armies, which often marched off far from their bases and outside the country; the difficulty of supplying the expanding capital cities in which the royal bureaucracies were stationed; the side-effect of regularizing and extending the powers of the Intendants, which was to enmesh the central government in pressing provincial affairs, especially affairs which affected the province's capacity to produce revenues; that emphatically included the price and

supply of grain.

Through most of Anjou's seventeenth century, the principal way in which problems of food supply generated open conflict was actually via taxation: as we have already seen, when the hard-pressed authorities decided to tax everyday victuals, they almost always encountered outraged resistance from producers and consumers alike. That was one of the implicit rules of the age: you don't tax the necessaries. (The salt-tax was a hated exception to the rule, a tax which people evaded whenever they dared.) But violations of that rule produced smuggling and attacks on tax collectors, not food riots. Food riots, after all, consisted of blocking shipments, or of breaking into storehouses to seize hoarded grain, or of forcing the sale of foodstuffs below the current market price. It was only at the end of the seventeenth century that the food riot, in the full old-regime sense of the term, became common in Anjou. For 150 years thereafter, it remained one of the most frequent forms of violent contention in Anjou, as elsewhere in France.

One important reason why food riots were rare through most of the seventeenth century was that local authorities themselves took the responsibility for blocking shipments, seizing hoarded grain and controlling prices. To twentieth-century eyes, it is surprising how much of the old regime's public administration consisted of watching, regulating or promoting the distribution of grain. The archives are jammed with information on prices and supplies; they contain, among other things, the voluminous mercuriales which make it possible to gauge price fluctuations from year to year, sometimes even from week to week, for most of France over most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. When Nicolas de la Mare summed up the seventeenth-century wisdom concerning routine public administration (that is, what was then called Police, in the large sense of the term) in his Traité de la Police, a good half of his reflections dealt with control of the food supply.

The distribution of food required continuous attention because the statemakers

were anxious to assure the state's own supply, because the margin between survival and disaster was both slim and hard to guarantee, and because food shortage and high prices figured so frequently in conflicts at the local level. The tie between conflict and food supply was more complex than one might think, since the intensity of contention over food did not vary simply as a function of the badness of harvests or even the steepness of price rises. Shipping grain among regions aggravated or mitigated the effects of harvest failures; along with public subsidies and controls, the shipping of grain significantly affected local prices. When prices did rise to impossible heights, open conflict was still unlikely in the absence of a profiteering miller, a merchant shipping needed grain elsewhere, a royal official commandeering part of the local supply, a speculator waiting for an even better price, or a city administration unprepared to take the standard remedies against shortage.

All these stimuli to struggles over food became more common in the eighteenth century. Despite modest increases in agricultural productivity, the accelerating urbanization and proletarianization of the population in the eighteenth century meant that a declining proportion of Frenchmen raised their own food, that more and more people depended on the purchase of food for their own survival, and that the transportation of grain from one place to another became more active and crucial. In addition, grain merchants became increasingly enterprising, prosperous, and sensitive to price differentials among regions or between city and country. Finally, the state (in implicit collaboration with the merchants) involved itself increasingly in promoting the delivery of grain to cities and armies; that meant taking the grain away from communities which often had both acute needs for food and prior claims on the local supply. During the century, the state leaned more and more toward a policy of "freeing" the grain trade: that is, encouraging and protecting merchants who would buy up grain in lower price areas for delivery to the starving, high-priced cities. These shifts all increased the frequency of circumstances in which merchants and

local citizens found themselves at loggerheads over the disposition of the grain on hand, while the authorities refused to activate the old controls and subsidies. Those were the conditions for food riots.

This set of mediating factors helps us understand the weak correspondence, in Anjou, between acute food shortages and struggles over the food supply. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some years of exceedingly high prices (e.g. 1699) followed harvests which were not disastrous, but merely mediocre. In terms of prices, Anjou's most acute crises of the two centuries fell in these years:

1630-31

1661-62

1693-94

1709-10

1713-14

1724-25

1752

1771-73

1788-89

Crises arose thicker and faster during the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the famine of 1661-62 was "the most serious one to occur in Anjou during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (Lebrun 1971: 134).

1630 and 1631 were (as Louvet's journal has already told us) turbulent years in Anjou. In Angers, repeated general assemblies discussed measures for assuring food supplies, decided to control prices, and took the standard preventive measure: expelling "outside paupers" from the city to reduce the number of months that had to be fed (A.M. Angers BB 73). Yet as compared with tax-gouging, food supply was a relatively minor theme in the Angevin contention of those years. Some attacks on bakers occurred in Angers, and some minor battles broke out between hinterland

villagers and city-dwellers who wanted to cart off part of the village food stocks (A.M. Angers BB 73). But that was all.

Historians sometimes call the great hunger of 1661-62 the "crisis of the accession" to mark its coincidence with Louis XIV's personal assumption of power after the death of Mazarin. It was one of the great Mortalities, as people said back then: one of those recurrent shocks of famine and devastation that battered the old regime. Early in 1662, the intendant of the Generality of Tours reported of the three provinces in his jurisdiction -- Touraine, Maine, and Anjou -- that they were:

> more miserable than one can imagine. The harvested no fruit in 1661, and very little grain; grain is extremely dear. The extreme famine and high prices result, first of all, from the crop failure, which was universal this year, and then from the resistance of the leaders of Nantes to letting pass the grains required for the subsistence of Tours and surrounding areas . . . Famine is even worse in the countryside, where the peasants have no grain at all, and only live on charity (B.N. Mélanges Colbert 107).

By June 1662, the Intendant was reporting that "misery is greater than ever: purpurant fever and fatal illness are so prevalent, especially at Le Mans, that the officers of the Presidial have decided to close the courthouse, thus cutting off trade completely" (B.N. Mélanges Colbert 102). In Anjou, death rates rose to several times their normal levels (Lebrun 1971: 334-338).

The great crisis focused renewed administrative attention on the distribution and pricing of grain. With official approval, Angers imported grain from Holland. The intendant reported that he had offered grain from the royal supply to the mayors of Angers and Saumur, who unexpectedly refused: "Since they had thought the grain would be supplied free, and since they had no cash for payment, they preferred to take grain on credit from their own merchants" (B.N. Mélanges Colbert 109). Despite this sort of administrative maneuvering, there was even less popular contention over the problem in 1661-62 than in 1630-31 (A.M. Angers BB 89). The whole province simply devoted its under-nourished energy to survival.

1693-94 was different. As early as 3 June 1693, a General Police Assembly

met in Angers to discuss subsistence problems. (The Assembly, a sort of all-city welfare council, brought together representatives of the Church, the courts, and other major institutions with city officials). The Assembly proposed that the city buy "a quantity of wheat for the provision of the city's residents, in order to prevent the utter famine and dearness with which we are threatened because of the bad weather and harshness of the season" (A.M. Angers BB 100/10). The city council decided on a cash purchase of fifty or sixty septiers (some 100 hectoliters) from the leaseholder of the abbey at St. Georges-sur-Loire. But when a member of the council, the city assessor, two guards, and a wagon-driver went off to St. Georges to fetch the grain, "they were blocked by a number of people, gathered together and armed, who sounded the tocsin for two hours, and made a great sedition and emotion" (AM Angers BB 100/10).

Intendant Miroménil glowered. "I have bawled out the mayor of Angers," he wrote to Paris, "for trying thoughtlessly to show the common people his zeal by sending to St. Georges-sur-Loire for grain at a time when he knew that some was coming from Nantes and when there surely was some left in Angers, where there were a number of granaries that could have been opened up" (AN G7 1632, letter of 15 June 1693). The mayor of Angers had not only caused an "emotion" at St. Georges, but also violated royal policy in the process.

Over the next year the struggle with the countryside only intensified. By May, 1694, merchants of Angers were unable to carry off grain they had bought in the vicinity of Craon, a small city to the north. Angers dispatched its city attorney with forty gendarmes. Then, according to the journal of a lawyer at the presidial court,

> They met with resistance. A large number of peasants and woodsmen armed with guns, picks and hatchets ambushed them; one of the soldiers had his hat punctured with a bullet. That blow stunned him. Nevertheless, he advanced and killed his man. There were two others mortally wounded and four prisoners. If the peasants hadn't retreated, there would have been real butchery. They brought back fifty loads of grain (Saché 1930-31: V, 307-308).

The expedition from Angers, and the resistance it encountered, anticipated militia marches into the countryside under the Revolution, almost exactly a century later. Although within the city we have evidence of great concern but no major confrontations, the struggle over food in the province as a whole had reached a new level of bitterness.

From that point to the Revolution, each subsistence crisis -- even the minor ones -- renewed the struggle. The second-rank shortage of 1698-99, for example, became serious mainly because merchants began buying up the region's grain for consumption in Paris. We see Angers' city council, in the fall of 1698, shackled by the Intendant's recent declaration of the "freedom of the grain trade" in and from Anjou. The problem drove them to the official equivalent of a food riot. "At the word that was going around the people at the city hall and the market," read the minutes, "that there was no grain, not a setier, available," the council asked the royal military governor for authorization to call a General Police Assembly; he refused, on the grounds that a regular assembly was already scheduled for five days later, that a special assembly would alarm the people, and that anyway the Intendant had decreed the freedom of the grain trade (A.M. Angers BB 101/99-100).

Having heard that some grain was stored in a house in Bouchemaine (where, as the village's name indicates, the Maine River flows into the Loire) the council dispatched two officials, the échevin Poulard and the procureur Gasté, to check out the rumor and commandeer what they could. Poulard and Gasté did, indeed, find a securely-padlocked house bulging with grain. They peeped through the windows longingly, but found no one to open the door for them. Walking down the riverbank, they came on three big boats of wheat. Since the wheat was earmarked for shipment to Paris, they dared not touch it. They put it somewhat differently: "Considering that they were only looking for rye in order to give help quickly to the common people," they moved on the next village (A.M. Angers BB 101/101). There

they found another locked storehouse, again could get no one to open it for them and again trudged on. At the river was a barge loaded with rye: at last!

After asking around, the two delegates duly concluded that the barge was being smuggled into Brittany, and seized it in the name of the city. The bargemen refused to bring the shipment to Angers for them, so Poulard and Gasté hired their own wagoner to tow in the barge. They returned in triumph, only to have the barge hit some submerged piles as it approached the dock; it began to sink. The city council, apprised of their emissaries' victories, decided to rescue the barge and put the boatload of rye into a storehouse to dry (A.M. Angers BB 101/101-102). This new impotence of the city opened the way to popular initiative: during the spring and summer of 1699, Angers experienced many threats and at least one substantial food riot.

Monsieur de Miromenil, the Intendant, frowned again. In his reports of January 1699, he denounced the frequent blockages of grain shipments and the widespread use of the excuse that the grain was illegally destined for Brittany. "We will spare nothing," he warned,

> to guarantee the freedom of trade, despite the bad will of certain judges who, in order to make themselves popular, invent their own arguments, saying that people may not buy grain in the vicinity of cities or ship it down the river from one city to another, since the King only wants boats loaded for the upstream passage to Paris and Orleans to be let through (A.N. G7 524).

Thus in the waning years of the seventeenth century judges and municipal officers faced a hard choice. Administrative tradition and popular pressure both called for them to assure the local food supply before letting grain escape their grasp. But if they sided with local people and defended what remained the old system of controls, they risked the wrath of the crown.

We can conveniently, if unconventionally, end Anjou's seventeenth century in 1710. The acute subsistence crisis of 1708-10, again compounded by the pressure to supply armies of the eastern frontiers, stirred up food riots all over France. Within

Anjou, the seesaw swung: conflicts within the cities because the merchants and officials did not bring in enough cheap grain; struggles outside the cities because merchangs and officials were trying to ship out needed grain. One of the earliest "popular emotions" in the series occurred in Saumur at the end of July 1708. There, a crowd broke into a stock of grain which was being readied for shipment to the French colonies in the Caribbean. The Intendant's report on the trial conveys the event's texture, and shows that he took it seriously:

> We had six people in the jails of Saumur. The first was a woman named Bottereau, who incited the others -- more by words than by actions -- as she returned from washing clothes at the port. She served as an example. She was sentenced to undergo the full routine of public apology for her wrongs before the Court, since its judges' authority had been violated by the riot; then to be whipped there; next to be taken for whipping to the site of the crime and to the three suburbs where the most common people live; finally to be branded with a fleur de lis and banished for life.
>
> There was a crippled beggar who had eagerly smashed the containers with his crutches, divided up the flour, and incited the others by his talk. He was put in the stocks, whipped in the public square, and banished for nine years.
>
> Three other women, who had taken a few bushels of flour, were sentenced to be given a lecture in court and to pay three pounds to charity; I proposed adding that they be required to attend the public apology and punishment (of Bottereau), for the sake of the example.
>
> Finally, a journeyman woodworker, who was at the six o'clock emotion, and rolled away some empty barrels: held over for further investigation (A.N. G^7 1651, letter of 31 August 1708).

Conflict over the food supply only reached its height, however, eight months later, during the spring of 1709. Then, the attempts of Angers to supply itself incited resistance in the countryside, the failure of those attempts produced commotions in Angers, and both sorts of conflicts agitated the region's medium-sized cities.

Of that spring's many food riots, one of the biggest occurred in Angers. Let the chaplain of Angers' cathedral tell the story:

> . . . the people rose up on the 18th and 19th of March 1709; they stopped the boats loaded with grain that someone was shipping to Laval . . . The police judges and others went to the site in their official robes, but did nothing, because the mutinous people threatened to do them in and drown them. Finally people calmed down at the agreement that the grain would remain and be sold here, which was done. Not content with that, the people forced open the storehouses of several grain merchants in the city, and broke into the shops of bakers suspected of having grain. Many people were killed. The stirred-up populace guarded the city gates so well that it was impossible to take out any grain; they even stopped shipments of bran that poor people from the country came to buy here (Lehoreau 1967: 191-192; cf. A.N. G^7 1651).

They kept that watch more than a month. The mobilization of the "populace" inspired the city council to take every opportunity for the purchase or forced sale of grain.

City officials even became willing to benefit by other people's food riots. On the 27th of March, the mayor reported to his colleagues that "a few merchants who were having boats loaded with grain shipped down the Loire and who wanted to move them under the Ponts-de-Cé were blocked and stopped by the residents of that city, who asked that the grain, being there for their subsistence, be sold and distributed to them, since they couldn't find any grain elsewhere and since the markets of nearby cities didn't have enough for everyone who needed it. The merchants refused, on the pretext that they had passports validated by the Intendant that permitted them to take their grain to Nantes and Bordeaux" (A.M. Angers BB 104/44). Insufficiently impressed by these arguments, the citizens of Ponts-de-Ce let eight boatloads go, but seized three others. They sold off the contents, below the current market price, to poor people who had been certified by their cures as needy (Lehoreau 1967: 191). The officials of Angers, noting the success of their suburban counterparts, sent a delegation to the intendant in Tours: the delegation was to ask that part of the grain seized at Ponts-de-Cé be sold to the poor of Angers (A.M. Angers BB 104/44). The intendant actually ratified that arrangement, although he coupled his ratification with a stern sermon on maintaining the freedom of trade (A.N. G^7 1651). The distinction between "riot" and sound municipal management blurs before our very eyes.

Anjou and France

From the Ponts-de-Cé Frolic of 1620 to the Ponts-de-Ce grain blockage of 1709, nearly a century of social change had transformed the character of popular contention

in Anjou, and in France as a whole. Well into the seventeenth century, the rivalries and armed combats of elite clienteles had interwoven with the competition of corporate groups and the recurrent insurrections of taxpayers to give Anjou's contention a rough and tangled texture: each new mutiny had the chance of attracting aristocratic protectors, each new elite faction the chance of encouraging a popular movement. The century's great news, in this regard, was the blocking of the opportunity for alliance between elite and popular opposition to an expanding monarchy. The failure and repression of the Fronde marked the most important moment in that transformation.

Why did the Fronde make such a difference in Anjou? Two pieces of the answer are fairly clear. The first is that the outcome of the Fronde cowed and coopted the chief elite supporters -- notably the great landlords and the second-echelon officials -- of popular resistance to royal demands. The stripping away of municipal liberties, the strengthening of the intendant, the retreat of nobles to the court or to their rural properties all reduced the chances for a conjunction between elite maneuvering and popular rebellion. The second part of the explanation concerns the crown itself: despite the continuing increases in the national budget, royal fiscal policy shifted away from the brutal, abrupt imposition of new levies toward a more subtle (although just as pernicious) blend of indirect taxation, currency manipulation, sale of privileges and borrowing. It is likewise possible that after Colbert supplanted Fouquet, at Louis XIV's assumption of personal power in 1661, the visible inefficiencies and inequities of the fiscal system declined. It may also be that the Intendants' more continuous control of tax collection began to break up the old cycles linking unrealistic assessments, large arrears, municipal complicity, the billeting of troops to enforce payment, and popular rebellion.

In any event, the period after the Fronde brought a general decline in Angevin rebelliousness. Yet there was an important exception: the rise, at the very end of

the seventeenth century, of struggles over the food supply. If the earlier fluctuations in contention followed the rhythm of statemaking, this time the expansion of mercantile capitalism combined with changes in governmental policy to reshape popular contention. For centuries local wage-workers had been vulnerable to sudden food shortages and price rises. Local authorities had ordinarily responded to the threat of dearth with a complex of control measures whose essence was to administer the distribution of whatever food was already on hand, to increase the stocks through public action where possible, and to subsidize the cost of food to the deserving poor. Toward the end of the seventeenth century we find the crown fighting that old system in order to assure the food supply of its armies, bureaucracies and capital cities. The new program's slogan was "free the grain trade", its executors the Intendants and the big grain merchants. Local officials found themselves increasingly torn between royal demands and local needs, at a time when the crown was steadily eating into their power and autonomy. Confronted with unwilling or incompetent local authorities, ordinary people responded to food shortage by taking the law into their own hands.

We might sum up the great themes of Anjou's seventeenth-century contention with three catch words: swords, purse and loaf. The sword figured both directly and indirectly in Anjou's conflicts, since the armies of great lords crossed and recrossed the province during the first half of the century, since the lodging and feeding of troops imposed on the province was the source of acute disagreement throughout the century, since the troops sent to punish nonconformity or to force conformity to the royal will generated new grievances by their plundering, raping and brawling, and since the bulk of the other royal demands which called up popular resistance had their origins in the drive to build larger armies and bigger wars. The purse had, however, its own rationale, as royal officials and financiers sought to increase the crown's revenues by any possible expedient, and ordinary Angevins resisted those

exactions which violated their rights or cut into the necessaries of life. The loaf was, of course, one of those necessaries; when local officials ceased to be willing or able to guarantee fair access to whatever bread and grain were available in times of shortage, people acted on their own against merchants, bakers and the officials themselves.

Sword, purse, and loaf were three of the great themes of the seventeenth-century contention throughout France. Outside of Anjou, a fourth theme loomed large as well: the cross. At the beginning of the century, the struggles between Protestant and Catholics which had torn France apart in the 1500s continued in diminishing form. As the seventeenth century moved on, the kings (and especially Louis XIV) shifting from containing the Protestants to dominating them, and then finally to eliminating them from France's public life. We have seen only the faintest traces of that series of battles. In seventeenth-century Anjou, despite the presence of a famous Protestant academy in Saumur, Huguenots were a small, unimportant, largely foreign population. Elsewhere in France, on the other hand, Protestants were sometimes crucial members of the regional elite, a majority of the population, or both. In those areas, contention over religious rights and privileges absorbed a great deal of energy.

Despite Anjou's repeated insurrections and despite the Fronde, finally, the province did not produce one of those great regional rebellions that racked seventeenth-century Normandy, Perigord and others parts of France. In order to understand why it has been so easy for historians, as well as their seventeenth-century forebears, to think of the century as one continuous crisis, we have to consider those repeated, massive challenges to the central power. Having squinted at Anjou, we must open our eyes to the rest of France.

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