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GEOFFREY ELLIS

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For Patricia, substantially

Editor's Preface

The main purpose of this new series of studies is to make available to teacher and student alike developments in a field of history that has become increasingly specialised with the sheer volume of new research and literature now produced. These studies are designed to present the 'state of the debate' on important themes and episodes in European history since the sixteenth century, presented in a clear and critical way by someone who is closely concerned himself with the debate in question.

The studies are not intended to be read as extended bibliographical essays, though each will contain a detailed guide to further reading which will lead students and the general reader quickly to key publications. Each book carries its own interpretation and conclusions, while locating the discussion firmly in the centre of the current issues as historians see them. It is intended that the series will introduce students to historical approaches which are in some cases very new and which, in the normal course of things, would take many years to filter down into the textbooks and school histories. I hope it will demonstrate some of the excitement historians, like scientists, feel as they work away in the vanguard of their subject.

The format of the series conforms closely with that of the companion volumes of studies in economic and social history which has already established a major reputation since its inception in 1968. Both series have an important contribution to make in publicising what it is that historians are doing and in making history more open and accessible. It is vital for history to communicate if it is to survive.

R.J. OVERY

Note on References

References are cited throughout in square brackets according to the numbering in the general bibliography, with page references where necessary indicated by a colon after the bibliography number. Where the same reference gives more than one bibliography number, the latter are distinguished by commas.

Preface

This booklet was commissioned and outlined in rough draft while I was the Oxford Visiting Professor at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, during the spring semester of 1984. During that time I had the privilege of working closely with Professor Owen Connelly, America's foremost Napoleonic scholar, and of chairing his excellent graduate seminar on the French Revolution and Napoleonic Era. The Program Committee over which he presided shortly afterwards invited me to chair a plenary session at the annual conference of the Society for French Historical Studies which met at the same university in March 1988. On that occasion I also had the pleasure of introducing Professor Louis Bergeron as one of the guest speakers.

My readers will soon recognise the debt I owe to the published works of both these scholars, although the bibliographical requirements of the present series allow me to note them in only a very general way. Professor Bergeron's doctoral thesis, articles and textbook (*France under Napoleon*) have greatly influenced my own approach to Napoleonic history. A similar debt to Professor Connelly's earlier works was reinforced when his *Historical Dictionary of Napoleonic France* appeared just as I was preparing my final drafts. This enabled me to check a good many facts and bibliographical references before going to print. I should like to acknowledge in full measure all I owe to the scholarship of both professors and to thank them for their generous help and encouragement. I also hasten to dissociate them from any shortcomings of this work.

G.J.E.