

FRANCE IN CRISIS, 1620-1675

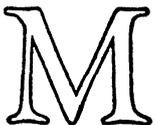
# FRANCE IN CRISIS

## 1620–1675

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Selection, introduction, editorial matter and translation  
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# Preface

The aim has been to make available in English major contributions to the historiography of seventeenth-century France, and to provide, in an introductory chapter, the general context of discussion within which they may be studied. The decision to include this article and to exclude that was not an easy one. From the outset, I decided that it was preferable to present a limited number of articles intact, and fairly extensive extracts from longer works, rather than a larger number of shorter fragments. The basis of my selection was that, taken separately, the articles and extracts should be important in themselves; that, taken together, they should raise, as far as possible, most of the essential considerations involved in the debate on the French seventeenth century which has been in process for over a generation; and that, both separately and together, they should contribute to the general theme of the whole work, which is clearly indicated in its title.

I have taken the fifty or so years which fall almost equally on either side of the Fronde as the chronological framework for this study. Everything suggests, and will I think increasingly suggest, the need to read these years as a continuous period, not divided as they so often have been at 1653 and 1661. The consolidation of the *ancien régime* in the later seventeenth century stems from the crisis and resolutions of these crucial decades. They are fundamental to the formation of French absolutism. They are by far the most important decades in modern French development before the era of the Revolution and Napoleon.

It has given me very great pleasure to translate and prepare these articles and extracts for publication in English. Their publication is of course only made possible by the generous permission given to me to undertake it. I am indeed grateful to Professor Roland Mousnier, Professor Pierre Deyon and M. Hubert Méthivier for their permission to translate and publish their work; and to Professor Fernand Braudel and Professor Robert Mandrou for their permission to translate and publish extracts from the French edition of Professor Boris Porshnev's work on popular uprisings in France before the Fronde. A major aim of this collection has indeed been achieved by my being able to draw together in one publication the work of Roland Mousnier and Boris Porshnev.

I wish also to record my thanks to Professor W. R. Fryer, who read an early draft of my introductory chapter and made many valuable com-

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ments upon it. I am grateful too for the awarenesses which have arisen from my teaching and learning from successive classes of final year students reading 'France under Louis XIV' in the History Department of the University of Nottingham.

I am grateful to my publishers for their providing me with space to include the authors' notes to their work virtually intact, as collected notes at the end of the chapters. My own interpolated notes, wherever they occur, are clearly indicated as editorial material.

I have appended a glossary of French terms which have been left untranslated, and whose meaning is not immediately clarified in their context. Technical terms are always I think best left untranslated, even when they may seem to have approximate equivalents. I do not like rendering *bailliage*, for example, as 'bailiwick', or *officier* as 'official'. A word given in the glossary is indicated by the glossary mark (†) on the first occasion when it occurs in any chapter.

The bibliography is intended to assist any further reading which this work may encourage.

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