

4 Mar 74 Boshier, French Finances

The whole book is well resumed in the ~~xxxx~~ conclusion: that Necker et al. undertook administrative reforms in the last decade of the ancien regime which foreshadowed the Revolutionary creation of a bureaucracy in the Treasury. In Necker's time it represented (if Luethy be correct) the ~~xxxx~~ triumph of commoner banquiers over official (often noble) banquiers, or a reversal of the social hierarchy which had worked in the various treasury categories. In the revolutionary times, it was more philosophical, finally, in the doctrine of social utility, or ~~xxx~~ "fonction". Boshier wants to make this administrative revolution the real solution to France's fiscal problem, not the budget-revenue problem under which it is usually studied. It was solved too late to stop the revolution, but at the same time it prepared the way for the revolution. [This paradox ~~x~~ not handled explicitly, and it bothers one a bit].

p. 11 Misconstrues Loyseau's intentions

[Reviewing the marked parts for important items to put in this summary, one sees the great repetitiveness of the argument. With more extensive use of ~~xxx~~ footnotes to get rid of secondary issues, and rewrite to remove redundancies, the size of the book could have been reduced by ~~x~~ one-fourth, at least.]

p.22-3 Compare England getting public control, after Glorious revolution, and obviously due to Parliament, with France's going in the opposite direction; Boshier does not make the obvious statement of the failure of French to have representative central organs of government, only that they ~~x~~ didn't get centralized power one way or another. [Clearly, ~~xxxxxx~~ if the wealthy class in France had had ways to control via government, they'd not have had to do it by making contracts with the government.]

p.47ff "Minister and his Department"---here and passim one can find nice statements about the ~~xxxx~~ way that ministries were run like principalities, with ruler & subject relation both socially and in power---or master & domestic servants. This goes along with the independence of the traitants vis a vis the king, which is the subject of chapter 4, p. 67ff.

m Accountants a generation behind parlementaires in making way to nobility, Boshier stresses; but he has no tables to show how this is so (relying on Bluche for the most part), and I don't recall any statement that would allow inferences about how the process was accelerating or decelerating at the end of the period. Full description of the system, corporate organization of different ~~xxxxxxx~~ traitants, value of offices, how they used the money they held in own caisses for private ends.. (Later subject, however, proper to Chap. 5: "Private Enterprise in Public Finance p. 92ff: showing how advances made to treasury according to the lease-contract, and then how irregular advances made to the crown in addition. How the accountants' credit rating was so high that he had no trouble getting loans from private individuals if he ~~xx~~ ran ~~xxxx~~ low. p. 104f: Bankruptcies of accountants an interesting section; theme introduced (and repeated ad nauseam thereafter) of how the Chambre des Comptes only thought the system ~~xxxx~~ evil when individuals went bankrupt, and so they as supervisors only interfered when an accountant was absent for a few days and one suspected he'd fled the country. (This is mostly in Chapter 6, p. 111ff.

p. 117: "Gages de la -Magistrature, 1776 (A.N. 4 AP 190) showing all officials, summary of all officers. Treasury types not much less than Parlements (10 percent of total) although only 7 ~~xxxxxxx~~ 7 chambres des comptes compared to 12 Parlements.

p. 120 Remark of oldster about new young members being lazy & skipping work.

Part Two, on the bureaucratic revolution, introduces a philosophical theme that will recur, of philosophe preoccupation with the idea of society as a machine (p. 133); Necker in this spirit. p. 135: the work Bureaucracy in this time begins to take on its meaning of ordered administration, as opposed to the aristocratic form it held when petty despot aristocrats controlled ~~myriad~~ congeries of different agencies.

p. 136. "In Necker's view a financial system composed entirely of salaried clerks would have only major defect: the 'protection' of clerks by the nobles and the wealthy was so general in France that merit would soon become a minor factor in the selection and promotion of employees"

p. 138: Not only short-term credit via financiers was criticized, but also long-term borrowing in the form of the purchase-price for offices. For it was ~~often~~ almost legally announced that the purchase price was the bond ~~of~~ for the accountant's honesty; non-venal offices had to put up a surety bond. So, venality here is very much different than in judicial offices, where ~~the~~ absconding with funds was not a danger.

Chapters on Necker's reforms (centralization) & Calonne's reaction (return to private accountants autonomy), Lomenie de Brienne (founding modern treasury in a sublimated edict at time of Assembly of Notables), and the struggle for the control of treasury during the early phases of the Revolution.

p. 241. Repayment for offices suppressed. [This subject very little treated by Boshier; he could have given some idea of the number who got their money out, how many not--as Dawson does for the baillis.] The democratic-republican phase, as Boshier calls it, turned into a purge, and no high-ranking accountant type survived who had stayed in the financial side in early revolutionary years.

255 ~~ix~~ "Nationalizing the Debt" a good summary of the problem of origin and function of the ~~sa~~ assignats; the alternative of a national bank defeated because it would have set up a commission of extremely wealthy and so kept the essence of the old system of ~~the~~ state borrowing from individuals (the cautionnements, or securities that these people put up to get shares of the banks would establish the credit of that bank; it ~~should~~ rest on faith in state alone, by face value of the note, said the revolutionaries.)

266 Debate over property: natural & therefore inviolable, or ~~the~~ civil & ~~confiscatable~~ confiscatable?

269f Comité de l'aliénation some interesting statements on re-sale of land confiscated from the church. The repayment of various old debts, salary arrears, etc., perhaps more burdensome than office-repurchase?

276, "Towards Public Administration" has many interesting observations on social attitudes in relation to public service. Handbook of 1760 links aristocratic patronage and private enterprise with royal financial services as utterly natural.

278: Comparison of king ruling "in a personal way with no obvious distinctions between his private life and his public duties" and each royal ~~the~~ official setting himself up "as an individual person rather than a member of a bureau." One high-born type refused in ~~any~~ advance any salary from Necker, since this would have put him in inferior position to Necker, which he could not bear.

283 "In the normal course of events a man could not get a post in which he might have authority over his social superiors~~xxx~~. At all events, a venal office-~~holder~~ holder necessarily stood outside the administrative hierarchy like any professional or businessman, and took orders only from the King or the royal councils." [This is worth pondering upon, for part of the breakdown of the system might come from the functioning position of the~~xxx~~ new nobility putting them above older nobles whose social inferiors they were.]

284. Imagines that a certain rivalry developed between the high ministerial types (mostly nobles) and the premiers commis who were on the way ~~up~~ up. Necker, Lomenie de Brienne & Revolution favored the latter, but in the democratic-revolutionary phase the premiers commis are hounded, too, mostly by reducing their wages ~~to~~ to the point where they drift into business.

283 Subordinate employees of the old treasury survive everything, because they are not ~~the~~ the object of suspicion. The revolutionary social ethic of elimination class ~~diff~~ deferences raises the morale of these types..

290 In discussing elimination of patronage, etc. cites this decree on naval administration during convention: "There may not be in the~~xxx~~ civil administration of a port more than two individuals from the same family, ~~an~~ even second cousins, brothers-in-law and nephews."

296: prevalence of machine analogy; absence of corporate one.

304-5, in Conclusion, makes reference to how the financiers had become noble in such large numbers by the later 18th century that there was no longer the chance of using Chambres de Justice against them; 1717 ~~was the last~~ saw the last one. I'm not happy with the casualness of the statement; it needs more solid documentation.

314. The public interest vs. private gain dichotomy is stretched to the limit; indeed, Boshier overdoes it throughout. He cannot conceive, in the end, of the viability of the ~~ancien~~ ancien regime paradigm, though he clearly sees many of its traits. It's always bad, in the end, ~~xxx~~ and so his judgment is blighted.

315-8. A few glimpses into the later developments; the lapsing into old aristocratic system in Directory (Barras the main culprit) and Napoleonic eras did not undo all the old good work; so that the next phase of reform, during the Restoration, has a ~~solid~~ solid basis on which to build.