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0521395348 - Peasantry and Society in France since 1789  
Annie Moulin  
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This book examines the social, economic and cultural evolution of the peasantry in France and its place in French society since 1789. Within a chronological framework, Annie Moulin analyses the changes experienced by the peasantry, as a subsistence economy has been gradually replaced by a commercial, capitalist farming system. From a position of numerical dominance in French society prior to 1789, the relative population level of the French rural sector has declined dramatically, with corresponding political implications. Cultural and social shifts in diet, housing and education have combined to alter vastly the patterns of rural life in France, and in this lucid account Annie Moulin explores the problems and tensions that have beset the peasantry since the Revolution.

*Peasantry and Society in France since 1789* is intended for a student readership, and will complement neatly successful earlier works by Pierre Goubert and Peter Jones, dealing respectively with the seventeenth-century and revolutionary peasantries. Important undergraduate aids include a chronology and bibliographies of both French and English works, and these, together with the Clearys' expert translation, should make Annie Moulin's the standard introductory account of the post-revolutionary peasantry.

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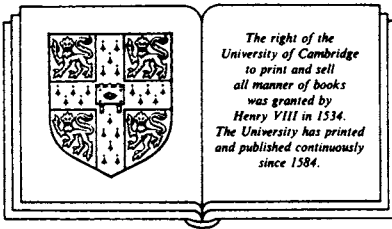
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# Peasantry and society in France since 1789

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**CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS**  
Cambridge  
New York Port Chester Melbourne Sydney  
**EDITIONS DE**  
**LA MAISON DES SCIENCES DE L'HOMME**  
Paris

Cambridge University Press  
 0521395348 - Peasantry and Society in France since 1789  
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[More information](#)

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge  
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP  
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
 10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia  
 and Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme  
 54 Boulevard Raspail, 75270 Paris Cedex 06

Originally published in French as *Les Paysans dans la société française*  
 by Editions du Seuil 1988  
 and © Editions du Seuil, 1988

First published in English by  
 Editions de la Maisons des Sciences de l'Homme  
 and Cambridge University Press 1991 as  
*Peasantry and Society in France since 1789*  
 English translation © Maison des Sciences de l'Homme  
 and Cambridge University Press 1991

*British Library cataloguing in publication data*

Peasantry and society in France since 1789.  
 1. France. Peasants. Social conditions, 1450–1660  
 I. Title II. [Paysans dans la société française. *English*]  
 305.563

*Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data*

Moulin, Annie.  
 [Paysans dans la société française. English]  
 Peasantry and society in France since 1789 / Annie Moulin:  
 translated from the French by M. C. and M. F. Cleary.  
 p. cm.  
 Translation of: Les paysans dans la société française.  
 Includes bibliographical references and index.  
 ISBN 0 521 39534 8. – ISBN 0 521 39577 1 (paperback)  
 1. Peasantry – France – History. 2. France – Rural conditions.  
 I. Title.  
 HD1536.F8M6813 1991 90–22363  
 305.5'633'0944–dc20 CIP

ISBN 0 521 39534 8 hardback  
 ISBN 0 521 39577 1 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2001

WD

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*For Henri Bonnet,  
winegrower  
1866–1955*

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## Outline chronology

### 1789

- March* Elections to Estates General  
*March–May* Agrarian troubles in Provence, Picardy, the Cambrésis and Quercy  
*15 July–6 August* The Great Fear  
*5–11 August* Seigneurial rights declared purchasable  
*2 November* Church property ceded to the nation

### 1790

- January* Peasant uprisings in Quercy, Périgord, Brittany  
*16 March* Legislation allowing communal land to be divided in the preceding thirty years abolished  
*14 May* Procedure for sale of church lands agreed

### 1791

- February* Formation of government-directed clergy  
*28 September* Rural Code established. Recognition of the right to enclose land

### 1792

- February–March* Counter-revolutionary turmoil in Lozère and the Dauphiné  
*Spring–summer* Anti-seigneurial uprisings in Provence and Périgord  
*14 August* Division of communal land authorised.  
 Application of the text quickly suspended  
*25 August* Requirement that seigneurs be allowed to repurchase their rights permitted only if they could prove exercise of such rights in the last thirty years  
*4 September* Cereals requisitioned and taxed to provide for the military  
*22 September* Troubles in the Beauce over cereal taxation

xii *Outline chronology*

**1793**

- 24 February* Conscription of army of 300,000  
*11 March* Start of Vendée revolt  
*4 May* Price maxima set for grains and flour  
*3 June* Sale of *émigré* property in small lots  
*10 June* Division of communal lands authorised with agreement of community. Decree suspended in 1796  
*17 July* Abolition, without compensation, of all seigneurial rights  
*26 July* Decree of death sentence ordained for all profiteers  
*11 September* National price maxima set for cereals  
*29 September* National price maxima set for wages and foodstuffs

**1794**

- 24 September* Abolition of price maxima

**1795**

- 22 August* Constitution of year III suppresses municipal councils in communes with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants

**1797**

- 21 May* Communes forbidden to sell communal land

**1799**

- 28 December* Churches allowed to open on Sundays

**1800**

- 17 February* Law creating new administrative structures in France

**1801**

- 15 July* Signing of Concordat

**1804**

- 21 March* Civil Code established

**1807**

- 15 September* Work on the *cadastre* starts

**1812**

- 8 May* Taxes on cereals introduced

*Outline chronology*

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- 1813**  
*20 March*            Central *caisse* charged with selling off communal land
- 1816**  
*28 April*            Communes recover all land not yet sold. They are allowed to let such land in blocks
- 1817**  
*February*  
*May–July*            Agrarian troubles in Brie and Champagne  
 Agrarian troubles in the Auvergne, Brittany, Bourgoigne, the Limousin, the Orléanais
- 1825**  
*27 April*            *Emigré* indemnities agreed
- 1827**  
*21 May*              Forestry Code passed
- 1829**  
*Spring*              *Guerre des Demoiselles* in Ariège
- 1831**  
*21 May*              Law reestablishing election of municipal councils by electoral body
- 1833**  
*28 June*              Guizot legislation on schooling
- 1836**  
*21 May*              Communes empowered to maintain local roads
- 1842**  
*11 June*              Legislation on railway construction
- 1844**  
*30 May*              Hunting permits instituted. Seen as a restriction on free hunting established at the Revolution
- 1845**  
                             Publication of Balzac's *Les Paysans*
- 1846**  
*Summer*              Disastrous cereal harvest

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**1847**

*28 January* Legislation facilitating grain imports

**1848**

*2 March* Universal male suffrage

*16 March* '45 centimes' tax imposed

*3 July* Decree allowing election of mayors in communes with fewer than 6,000 people

*3 October* Tourret law on agricultural education

**1849**

*13 May* Legislative elections reveal a 'red' peasantry

**1850**

*6 December* Law allowing individuals to initiate dismantling and redistribution of communal land

**1851**

*December* Rural resistance to *coup d'état* in south-east, northern Massif Central, the south-west

**1860**

*23 January* Commercial treaty with Great Britain

*28 July* First law on mountain communal land. Communes allowed to sell up to one-third of such land

**1863**

First evidence of phylloxera in Gard

**1867**

Creation of Société des agriculteurs de France

**1868**

*11 July* Communes allowed to borrow funds to maintain local roads

**1871**

*16 April* Municipal law allowing election of mayors in communes with less than 20,000 people

**1872**

*27 July* Military law establishing principle of compulsory military service

*Outline chronology*

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- 1875**  
*14 December* Distillers granted special privileges
- 1878**  
*May* Start of Freycinet Plan
- 1879**  
*16 June* Establishment of departmental professors of agriculture
- 1880**  
 Gambetta founds Société nationale d'encouragement à l'agriculture
- 1881**  
*16 June* Free primary education established  
*14 November* Creation of post of Minister of Agriculture
- 1882**  
*28 March* Law establishing obligatory education and non-religious teaching staff  
*4 April* Restoration of communal land in upland areas
- 1884**  
*24 March* Customs tariffs established on imported wheat  
*5 April* Law establishing system of municipal elections
- 1886**  
 Creation of Union centrale des syndicats agricoles de France
- 1887**  
*2 December* Compulsory anti-phylloxera syndicates established.  
 Replanted vines exempted from property taxes.  
 Publication of Émile Zola's *La Terre*
- 1889**  
*9 July* Common pasturing on cultivated lands abolished.  
*15 July* Three-year military service established.
- 1892**  
*11 January* Méline tariffs, reinforcing customs duties on agricultural imports

xvi	<i>Outline chronology</i>	
<b>1894</b>		
30 March		Seigfried law on inheritance practices
6 November		Local credit <i>caisses</i> established
<b>1897</b>		
29 March		New upper limit for customs barriers depending on domestic prices
<b>1899</b>		
31 March		Creation of regional credit <i>caisses</i>
9 July		Right of common pasturing abolished. Eugène Le Roy's <i>Jacquou le Croquant</i> published. René Bazin's <i>La Terre qui meurt</i> published
<b>1904</b>		
January		Strikes by agricultural workers in Hérault and Aude
4 July		Statutes of the <i>mutualité agricole</i> established
<b>1905</b>		
January		Congrès de défense du Midi viticole held at Béziers
March		Military service reduced to two years
9 September		Law on Separation of Church and State
<b>1907</b>		
June		Viticultural revolt in Midi
29 June		Laws regulating addition of sugar to wine
22 September		Creation of Confédération générale des vignerons
<b>1911</b>		
April		Demonstrations by viticulturalists in the Aube
16 September		Office Central at Landernau founded
<b>1914</b>		
2 August		Mobilisation of troops
<b>1915</b>		
16 October		Control of wheat market introduced
<b>1916</b>		
20 February		Legislation on cultivation of unused land
29 July		Taxes on cereals

*Outline chronology*

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**1918**

- 10 February* Price controls introduced  
*27 November* Chauveau law on *remembrement*

**1919**

- July* Strikes by farm workers in the Paris Basin

**1920**

- 5 August* Creation of national *Crédit agricole*

**1922**

- 25 March* Programme for creating national electricity grid drawn up  
*15 April* Legislation on accident insurance in farming

**1924**

- 3 January* Chambers of Agriculture established  
*March* Creation of Association générale des producteurs de blé

**1925**

- 18 January* Worker-peasant syndicates regrouped into *Conseil paysan français*

**1928**

- December* Dorgères organises the first *Comités de défense paysanne*

**1929**

- Creation of JAC

**1930**

- 16 April* General revision of the *cadastre* begun

**1931**

- 4 July* Wine statute drawn up. Modified between 1933 and 1934

**1933**

- 13 February* Creation of *Confédération nationale paysanne*  
*10 July* Minimum wheat price fixed

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**1934**

- April* Creation of Front Paysan  
*24 December* Minimum wheat prices abandoned.  
 Law allowing distillation of surplus wine. Grants for pulling up vines

**1936**

- 20 June* Paid holidays instituted  
*5 August* Extension of family allowances to farm labourers  
*15 August* Office nationale interprofessionnel du blé created

**1937**

- July* Strikes by farm workers in the north and Paris Basin

**1939**

- 21 April* Law granting farm inheritors who continue working on the farm to inherit without having to split the farm  
*29 July* Extension of family allowances to farmers

**1940**

- 21 November* Law to improve rural living conditions  
*2 December* Corporatist organisation of agriculture instituted

**1941**

- 9 February* Regulations to govern sowing and harvesting of crops  
*30 May* Grants available for those wishing to move into farming  
*5 July* Measures to improve agricultural education  
*13 October* 'Family gifts' system brought in

**1942**

- 16 December* Organisation of Corporation paysanne

**1943**

- 15 January* New legislation to prevent excessive division of farms on inheritance  
*4 September* Rights of tenant-farmers reinforced

**1944**

- 26 July* Corporation paysanne suppressed  
*12 October* Creation of CGA



*Outline chronology*

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**1946**

- 13 March* Creation of FNSEA  
*13 April* New statutes for farmers and sharecroppers  
*18 May* Creation of INRA

**1948**

- 10 March* Limit of 2,400 working hours per year for salaried farm workers

**1950**

- 11 February* Chambers of Agriculture reinstated

**1951**

- 15 February* Creation of Centre national des indépendants et paysans

**1952**

- 10 July* Old-age insurance introduced for farmers

**1953**

- 28 July* Violent demonstrations by viticulturalists in the Midi  
*22 September* Comité de Guéret created  
*12 October* Road-blocks set up in central France  
*15 December* Creation of SIBEV and Interlait

**1954**

- 19 January* Statutes of CGA modified – much of its power lost

**1955**

- 1 May* Pierre Poujade's initiative created Union de défense des agriculteurs de France

**1957**

- 25 March* Treaty of Rome  
*Summer* Series of peasant demonstrations  
*18 September* Agricultural prices indexed

**1959**

- February* Abandonment of price indexing  
*7 April* Creation of MODEF. It becomes a syndicate in 1975

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**1960**

- February* Series of agricultural demonstrations  
*2 August* Law on agricultural education  
*5 August* Orientation Law established

**1961**

- 25 January* Sickness, disability and maternity provisions for farmers  
*June* Violent peasant demonstrations in Brittany  
*8 August* Complementary Orientation Law passed (Pisani Law). Creation of GAEC and IVD

**1962**

- 14 January* Start of Common Agricultural Policy

**1967**

- 1 July* Single EEC market for cereals comes into effect

**1968**

- 1 June* Agricultural workers granted right to minimum wage (SMIG – *salaire minimum garanti*)  
*10 December* Publication of Mansholt plan

**1969**

- 2 December* Creation of Fédération française de l'agriculture

**1970**

- 31 December* Groupements fonciers agricoles legalised

**1973**

- 13 July* Law regulating position of farm assistants (family members) drawn up

**1976**

- 6 February* Grants made available to young farmers  
*March* Violent peasant demonstrations

**1980**

- 4 July* New Orientation Law

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*Outline chronology*

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**1981**

*4 June*

Creation of Confédération nationale des syndicats de travailleurs paysans

**1982**

*23 March*

Agricultural demonstrations in Paris at instigation of FNSEA

*6 October*

Creation of offices nationaux interprofessionnels d'intervention

**1984**

*30–31 March*

Establishment of milk-quota system in EEC

## Abbreviations

CETA	Centre d'études agricoles
CGA	Confédération générale de l'agriculture
CNASEA	Centre national pour l'aménagement des structures des exploitations agricoles
CNJA	Cercle national des jeunes agriculteurs, later Centre national des jeunes agriculteurs
CNSTP	Confédération nationale des syndicats de travailleurs paysans
CUMA	Coopérative d'utilisation du matériel agricole
DJA	Dotation aux jeunes agriculteurs
FASASA	Fonds d'action sociale pour l'aménagement des structures des exploitations agricoles
FFA	Fédération française de l'agriculture
FNSEA	Fédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles
FNSP	Fédération nationale des syndicats paysans
FORMA	Fonds d'orientation et de régularisation des marchés agricoles
GAEC	Groupeement agricole d'exploitation en commun
GFA	Groupeement foncier agricole
INRA	Institut national de la recherche agronomique
INSEE	Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques
IVD	Indemnité viagère de départ
JAC	Jeunesse agricole catholique
MODEF	Mouvement de défense des exploitants familiaux
ONIB	Office national interprofessionnel du blé. Became in 1940 ONIC: Office national interprofessionnel des céréales
PCF	Parti communiste français
POS	Plan d'occupation des sols
RBE	Revenu brut d'exploitation
RPR	Rassemblement pour la république
SAF	Société des agriculteurs de France
SAFER	Société d'aménagement foncier et d'établissement rural
SAU	Surface agricole utilisée

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*List of abbreviations*

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SFIO	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière
SIBEV	Société interprofessionnelle du bétail et des viandes
SMIG	Salaire minimum interprofessionnel garanti
SNEA	Société nationale d'encouragement à l'agriculture
SNIPOT	Société nationale interprofessionnelle de la pomme de terre
UDF	Union pour la démocratie française
UTA	Unité de travail annuel
UTH	Unité de travail-homme