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0521531349 - Louis XIV and the Origins of the Dutch War

Paul Sonnino

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## Introduction

The war that Louis XIV of France declared against the Dutch Republic on April 6, 1672 is one of those memorable events in European history with enough allurements for every taste. The epic of a proud young king and his gullible English counterpart seeking their revenge over a band of parvenu merchants, the drama of Louis' invasion which almost pierced the gates of Amsterdam, and the last-minute heroics of the Dutch burghers in flooding their countryside and snatching the victory from his grasp, all these charms have turned the Dutch War into part and parcel of our historical lore. This very memorability, however, has tended to obscure some more prosaic questions about the war. Why did a king who had begun his reign as an antagonist of the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs wish to attack the Dutch at all? What did he expect to achieve by crippling a republic which had in the past arrested the power of Spain and had recently become the principal counterweight to the emergence of England? And had he in any way anticipated the dangers involved? The first answers to these questions were as plain as they were divergent. Racine, the official court historian, explained the war in his *Eloge historique de Louis XIV* as a simple matter of putting the Dutch in their place: "The king, tired of their insolences, resolved to forestall them." Saint-Simon, the private aristocratic malcontent, accused in his *Mémoires* a conspiracy of the father and son secretaries for war against the controller-general of the finances: "Le Tellier and Louvois, terrified at the successes of Colbert, had little difficulty in putting into the king's head a war which caused so much fright in Europe that France has not been able to recover." Divergent explanations, but not necessarily contradictory, and both cast implicitly in the Augustinian mold. With one or the other, or with something in between, most contemporary observers would have agreed.<sup>1</sup>

The eighteenth century, when many such pristine histories and *mémoires* were initially published, did little more than to confirm the original impressions. Voltaire, in his highly ambivalent *Siècle de Louis XIV*, managed to press both

<sup>1</sup> The *Eloge historique* was first published as Paul Pellisson's, under the title of *Campagne de Louis XIV, Avec la comparaison de François Ier avec Charles Quint* (Paris, 1730); see esp. p. 4. The *Mémoires de M. le duc de Saint-Simon* were first published in excerpted form (London, Paris, Marseilles, 1788); see esp. I, 11.

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interpretations into the service of his “Enlightenment” ideology. To him the Dutch War was an act of pride, scrupulously premeditated and indolently pursued, which gained the king an ephemeral military reputation, while depriving him of Colbert’s enduring financial reforms. The first sizeable collections of correspondence – D’Estrades’, Louvois’, and Turenne’s – were published during the century, but neither these tantalizing hints of the riches accumulated in the archives nor Adam Smith’s suggestion in the *Wealth of Nations* that the war was “occasioned” by commercial rivalry succeeded in altering the judgment of a philosophic age.<sup>2</sup>

In the nineteenth century sentiment began to shift. However little its liberal and nationalist historians, its Guizots and its Sismondis, may have esteemed the intentions of Louis XIV, they were willing to view his leading advisors, and notably the illustrious ministers of the secret *conseil d’en haut*, as dedicated servants of the emerging nation. One isolated synthesizer, Henri Martin, dared to dissent, particularly in regard to the Dutch War: “It was no longer the commercial war so ably conducted by Colbert. It was a war of conquest that Louis meditated. The thought was his own. Louvois and Le Tellier did not fail to stimulate a project which would increase the importance of the ministry of war.” “As to Lionne,” the secretary for foreign affairs, “he docilely served the king’s thought.” This individual condemnation, however, could not withstand the combined effect of a few prestigious scholars who gained access to the most important archives and exhibited, in massive compilations of sources, the breadth and scope of a single minister’s activity. Mignet, in plumbing the archives of foreign affairs for his *Négociations relatives à la succession d’Espagne*, concluded that “the Spanish succession was the pivot on which almost the whole reign of Louis XIV turned,” and that the brilliant Lionne had worked assiduously to procure it for the king. The Dutch War, by this logic, was an “exaggerated act of vengeance” which, nevertheless, the secretary for foreign affairs arranged with his customary ingenuity. “If,” wailed Mignet, “he had only lived long enough to bring to the execution of this project the same patience and ability as to its preparation!” Rousset, with the archives of war at his disposal for his *Histoire de Louvois*, came to think well of Louis XIV and even better of his young secretary for war as the creators of a disciplined French army. In keeping with his deep admiration, Rousset rehabilitated the Dutch War as their scrupulously dissembled step toward the complete conquest of the Spanish Low Countries, in which they were “seeking at The Hague the keys of Brussels.” And Clément, after scouring various archives for his *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de*

<sup>2</sup> Voltaire, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* (Berlin, 1751); see esp. chs. 10–13 and 30. *Lettres, Mémoires et Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d’Estrades* (the most complete edition being that of London, 1743), 10 vols. *Recueil des lettres pour servir d’éclaircissement à l’histoire militaire du règne de Louis XIV*, ed. Henri Griffet (The Hague, 1740–1), 4 vols. *Collection des lettres et mémoires trouvées dans les portefeuilles du maréchal de Turenne*, ed. Philippe Grimoard (Paris, 1782), 2 vols. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (London, 1776), bk. 4, ch. 2.

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Colbert, sadly reproached the king for not always following the wise counsels of his great controller-general. Yet Clément insisted, when it came to the Dutch War, that “Colbert and Louvois, if only this once, worked with equal ardor to achieve a common goal.” Even Jules Michelet, who despised Louis’ motives, grudgingly admitted that his ministers may have had their good reasons, and the “scientific” historians who topped off the century, the Sorels and the Legrelles, could confidently integrate the war into France’s perennial quest for her “natural,” or at least ideal, frontiers. What had once appeared like a clash of wills seemed in documented retrospect like a perfectly rational venture.<sup>3</sup>

In the early twentieth century a few French historians sought to achieve greater precision by extending their researches to a foreign repository. This was the case with Georges Pagès, who in *Le Grand Électeur et Louis XIV* combined the French foreign affairs with the Prussian state archives. His enterprise and skill were well rewarded. He was the first to observe specific “fluctuations of French policy” on the road to the Dutch War and the first to attribute these to the king or to particular advisors. But the impact of such insights was limited. Lavissee, though his *Histoire de France* spared little sympathy for Louis, continued to present the war as part of a general statist design aimed at achieving natural frontiers. Buttressing this nationalist approach was the metaphysical imprimatur of sociology, issued by Joseph Schumpeter, who proclaimed that it was in the “nature” of the absolute monarchy to be a “war machine,” and a slightly more elaborate economic interpretation, provided by Elzinga in *Het Voorspel van den Oorlog van 1672*, which virtually elevated Colbert’s commercial offensive into the underlying cause of the conflict. Thus when Zeller began to call for a closer psychological analysis of the king and question the theory of the natural frontiers, it looked as if the most authoritative discoveries of scientific history were being impudently challenged.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, during the middle years of our century French historical scholarship has led the world in perfecting ever more “scientific” forms of interpretation.

<sup>3</sup> François Guizot, *Histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe depuis la chute de l'empire romain jusqu'à la révolution française* (Brussels, 1837), Lecture XIII. Jean Charles Léonard Sismonde de Sismondi, *Histoire des Français* (Paris, 1821–44), XXV–VII. Henri Martin, *Histoire de France* (Paris, 1838–54), xv, 251, see also 290–4. François Mignet, ed., *Négociations relatives à la succession d'Espagne sous Louis XIV* (Paris, 1835–42), 4 vols.; see esp. I, lii–iii, and III, 329. Camille Rousset, *Histoire de Louvois* (Paris, 1861–3), 4 vols.; see esp. I, 324. *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert*, ed. Pierre Clément (Paris, 1861–82), 8 vols.; see esp. II, cxxxv. Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France* (Paris, 1833–67), XIII, 154–5. Albert Sorel, *L'Europe et la révolution française* (Paris, 1885–1904), 9 vols. Arsène Legrelle, *La Diplomatie française et la succession d'Espagne* (Paris, 1888–92), 4 vols.

<sup>4</sup> Georges Pagès, *Le Grand Electeur et Louis XIV: 1660–1688* (Paris, 1905), ch. 4. Ernest Lavisse, *Histoire de France* (Paris, 1903–11), VII, pt. 2, 300. Joseph Schumpeter, “Zur Soziologie der Imperialismen,” *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, XLVI (1918–19), 1–39 and 275–310. Simon Elzinga, *Het Voorspel van den Oorlog van 1672: De economisch-politieke betrekkingen tusschen Frankrijk en Nederland in de jaren 1660–1672* (Haarlem, 1926), 298. Gaston Zeller, “Politique extérieure et diplomatie sous Louis XIV,” *Revue d'histoire moderne*, VI (1931), 124–43, and “La Monarchie d'ancien régime et les frontières naturelles,” *Revue d'histoire moderne*, VIII (1933), 305–33.

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Working on the assumption that narrative history has been sufficiently investigated, the members of the *Annales* school have striven to grasp the most quantitative meaning of the human adventure through the intensity of the sun, the statistics of baptismal certificates, and the fluctuation of grain prices, with the result that it has devolved upon a horde of irrepressible foreigners to sustain the qualitative approach to French history. Andrew Lossky, in his seminars at the University of California at Los Angeles, began a dignified subversion of the statist thesis by stressing the limitations on Louis XIV's style of absolutism, while Herbert Rowen, in his penetrating *The Ambassador Prepares for War*, explicitly advanced the heretical proposition that "the French plans for war upon the republic were flawed." Such rumors, however, counted for nothing in the quantifications of Pierre Goubert, who nevertheless provided a solid foundation for the anti-statist position with his stark demonstration of the economic stagnation and social torpor of the mid seventeenth century. How chastening to the nationalist perspective is his picture, in *Louis XIV et vingt millions de Français*, of the king and his ministers, "aided by a handful of councillors of state and masters of requests, a few dozen scribblers, and less than thirty intendants with hardly any staff, trying to recall France to order and obedience." But it is interesting to note that, for all his scientific airs, Goubert constructs his entire book around the memorable Dutch War as a tragic struggle of impotent heroes against cosmic forces which they could not comprehend. Louis was "obsessed" by the idea of "punishing" the insolent republicans, and "powerless before the economic superiority of the Batavians, Colbert could see only one means to bring it to an end: war." And even though it may now be the computing oracles of the twentieth century who interpret the decrees of fate, it is still the fervent nationalists of the nineteenth who provide the motives for the tragic heroes. Not so in the majestic American *Louis XIV* of J. B. Wolf. Taking a fresh look at the very materials that Goubert claims to have outgrown, Wolf presents us with the most sympathetic portrait of the king since the days of Racine. If Louis went in for grandeur, he was doing it intentionally as the living symbol of the burgeoning bureaucratic state. If he engaged in wars, it was that early modern kings were expected to do so, and if the Dutch War brought him disappointing results, he had every right to blame it on his "experts" who had counseled him badly. The revealing symposia which have in recent years been published by John C. Rule and Ragnhild Hatton further illustrate this absence of consensus.<sup>5</sup>

I myself make no claim to have uncovered more causes for the Dutch War, but

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Lossky's long-held position has been expressed concisely in his recent article, "The Absolutism of Louis XIV: Reality or Myth," *Canadian Journal of History*, XIX (April, 1984), 1-15. Herbert H. Rowen, *The Ambassador Prepares for War: The Dutch Embassy of Arnauld de Pomponne* (The Hague, 1957), 199. Pierre Goubert, *Louis XIV et vingt millions de Français* (Paris, 1966); see esp. 65, 84, and 94. John B. Wolf, *Louis XIV* (New York, 1968); see esp. 182-3, 213-27, 358-78, and 403. John C. Rule, *Louis XIV and the Craft of Kingship* (Columbus, 1969). Ragnhild Hatton, *Louis XIV and Absolutism* and *Louis XIV and Europe* (both London, 1976).

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I do find it compelling that the debate, even when it reaches up to the heavens, eventually comes back down to the question of human motives. The problem of these is so pervasive that I feel justified in trying to resolve it. Nor does it matter to the solution whether the king and his advisors were driven by their subconscious or whether they exercised any impact upon the course of history. This is a study of moments, of personal interaction, and of options, whose success depends on whether we can arrive at a more intimate level of contact with a selected cast of characters during the period immediately preceding the Dutch War. We want to know what they were feeling and their views of the world, how they were getting along with each other both inside and outside the secret *conseil d'en haut*, and what else, within the framework of their perceptions, they could have done under the circumstances. This leads us, therefore, to reconsider the evidence.

The first of the sources to see the light of print, the *mémoires*, are also the most contemptuously dismissed by professional historians as being self-serving, gossipy, and inaccurate. Yet elementary common sense and my own researches into the *Mémoires* of Louis XIV have convinced me that it is a wasteful presumption to reject such documents out of hand. With careful dating of texts, verifications of authorship, and comparisons with other references, *mémoires* can become psychological foundation stones, storehouses of unique information, and extremely revealing even in their exaggerations. The second set of sources, the French archival series, are of course more highly reputed and would seem to have been more thoroughly pondered. It should not be surprising, however, if their initial investigators occasionally suffered from an embarrassment of riches. The great Mignet completely ignored the treasure of *mémoires* sent by Lionne to the king between 1667 and 1671. These on-the-spot interconciiliar memoranda, when properly analyzed, are the key to isolating the intentions of the secretary for foreign affairs. The great Rousset did not observe that in the archives of war most of the original letters received by Louvois between 1667 and 1670 are missing and are only partially supplemented by eighteenth-century copies. Though doing better in some ways than Mignet had done by Lionne and proudly excerpting some fascinating correspondence of the young secretary for war with his father and with Louis, Rousset gives no hint of Louvois' scattered letters to other ministers in which violent recriminations are elegantly couched in frigid courtesy. And the great Clément, who presents numerous priceless *mémoires* from the controller-general to the king, could produce only 17 letters of Colbert to anyone else for all of 1668. Perhaps this is why, whenever Clément found an undated *mémoire* which he could not conveniently place elsewhere, he would casually assign it to the controller-general for that hazy year. The careful student, therefore, can still hope for good results by centering on the interconciiliar correspondence, compensating for lost materials with copies in other collections, and pouncing upon every suspicious document as if it were the

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philosopher's stone. This, however, does not exhaust the types of sources. There is also the correspondence of the foreign envoys at the court of Louis XIV, not merely in the Prussian archives utilized by Pagès, but in those of the great early modern powers, of the Vatican, and of the smaller states. Once again, as in the case of private *mémoires*, it is not a matter of believing everything that the document asserts. It is a matter of studying the author's mind, following his leads, and evaluating his reliability.<sup>6</sup>

I would be the first to admit that this approach requires more tenacity than wit, but eventually it becomes obvious that the personal convictions of the king and his advisors are literally strewn throughout their communications with each other and in their official correspondence. How frequently do we find a minister in his own official letters expressing an opinion on affairs which suddenly changes when he is composing Louis' letter or relaying his direct orders! Thus the secrecy of the *conseil d'en haut* is not an insuperable obstacle to the identification of individual positions. This council, in any case, was not a free-for-all between the king and his ministers. It was more like a sounding board, where the secretary for foreign affairs read the incoming dispatches to Louis and recommended the answers, with the other ministers only occasionally chiming in, and debate reserved for major decisions. Louvois, who for most of the period prior to the Dutch War did not enjoy the rank of minister nor sit in this council, conferred privately with the king on military matters, and Colbert, who was a full-fledged minister, also had his own council of finances in which to confront Louis. I have already attempted in a series of articles to outline some earlier results of my inquiries, and Carl Ekberg has employed analogous methods in his sensitive study of the second year of the war: 1673.<sup>7</sup> I now offer a detailed account of the king and his principal advisors as they meandered their way towards a war against the Dutch Republic. As may be imagined, some previous hypotheses are here confirmed, some modified, and some rejected. It is my argument, in brief, that Louis, feeling his youth slipping away, was extremely impatient to go to war, but he would much have preferred to continue his conquest of the Spanish Low Countries, which had been interrupted by the Triple Alliance of England, the Dutch, and Sweden. Le Tellier initially joined his fellow ministers of the *conseil d'en haut* in urging restraint, but he gradually

<sup>6</sup> Please see my "Dating and Authorship of Louis XIV's *Mémoires*," *French Historical Studies*, III, 3 (Spring, 1964), 303–37, and my "Louis XIV's *Mémoires pour l'histoire de la guerre de Hollande*," *French Historical Studies*, VIII, 1 (Spring, 1973), 29–50.

<sup>7</sup> Please see my "Arnauld de Pomponne, Louis XIV's Minister for Foreign Affairs during the Dutch War," *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History*, I (1974), 49–60; "Hugues de Lionne and the Origins of the Dutch War," *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History*, III (1975), 68–78; "Jean-Baptiste Colbert and the Origins of the Dutch War," *European Studies Review*, XIII (1983), 1–11; "Jean Racine and the *Eloge historique de Louis XIV*," *Canadian Journal of History*, VIII, 3 (1973), 185–94; "Louis XIV and the Dutch War," in *Louis XIV and Europe*, cited in note 5, above, and "Marshal de Turenne and the Origins of the Dutch War," *Studies in Politics and History*, IV (1985), 125–36. See also Carl J. Ekberg, *The Failure of Louis XIV's Dutch War* (Chapel Hill, 1979).

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shifted in favor of war as his son and the king became intimate collaborators. Colbert, contrary to the scholarly consensus, was completely opposed to any war, but insisted on burying his head in the sand until it was too late, and Lionne, for whom, rather than for Louis, the Spanish succession was pivotal, organized the rickety alliances against the Dutch only to avert greater evils. Louvois, most often accused of inspiring the war, may well have done so indirectly by forging a tempting instrument with which to wage it, but if we are to name the evil spirit, it would have to be the ambitious marshal, Turenne, who kept plying the secretary for foreign affairs with schemes for easy alliances and the king with visions of easier victories. The marshal's rival, both in generalship and for Louis' admiration, the Prince de Condé, was very slow to lend his support to the war. Amazingly, its entire plan called for besieging a few outlying Dutch strongholds. No one ever dreamed of taking Amsterdam, and when he began to advise the king on strategy, the prince never failed to point out the extreme difficulties of the enterprise. But Louis preferred to believe that the Dutch could be panicked into humiliating concessions, or better still, that the Spanish could be prodded into intervening on their behalf. This perception of the personal compromises that went into the preparation of the war makes it, I believe, all the more of a recognizable human experience and clarifies, it seems to me, a good number of the empirical points in repeated contention. First, the war emerges as the object of the king's desires, slightly attenuated, and does not require us to imagine him as the plaything of his favorites. Secondly, the different perspectives of Louis and of his advisors coincide perfectly with particular emphases in policy during the years leading up to the war, and we can now assess the extent to which each protagonist advanced or retreated on the occasion of each major shift. Finally, the study of options permits us to turn the tables on the question of inevitability. Perhaps the war was natural, economic, or expected, but the king's advisors were not so sure. Whether they favored or opposed it, all of them acted as if the future were open. And if these "experts" were by no means unanimous about the war, what happens to the argument for its rationality?

It is also possible, within the limits of my method, to submit a compromise suggestion in the dispute over Louis' absolutism. While, on the one hand, no informed person in the mid seventeenth century had any doubt that the French monarchy possessed the most varied resources, the most centralized bureaucracy, and the most powerful army in Europe, on the other hand, no informed person in our own time could deny that its king had considerably less means of enforcing his will than any petty modern dictator. What, then, could Louis' mounted musketeers have accomplished when helicopter gun ships are unable to subdue a determined people? It was his singular good fortune that the age of demographic explosion, economic mobility, and aggressive "reforms" had given way to a more stable era. He thus profited from a change in mood by the very mainstays of society, the nobility, the magistracy, and the bourgeoisie, who

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had in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, with the aid of popular dissatisfaction, shaken the monarchy to its foundations. Nervously accustoming themselves to a tolerably stagnating economy, no longer trusting in religious panaceas, these same pillars of society now exhibited an extraordinary willingness to indulge him in his fantasies, as long as he did not seriously tamper with their traditional privileges. And as so often happens with practical expediency, it immediately became the partner of moral and religious duty, giving the mid-seventeenth century its distinctive veneration for absolutism and divine right. Nowhere was this conjunction more in evidence than among Louis' principal advisors, who had so many private advantages to protect, with disgrace bringing social ignominy or exile. Whether they agreed or not with his specific policies, they were all by now devoted absolutists, believing in their heart that the worst of kings was better than a thousand tyrants; aside from the fact that, as they shifted importantly between their Paris hôtels, their country châteaux, and the royal palaces, Louis hardly ever took on the aspect of a monster.



## I

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## Peace without end

On August 14, 1667, the handsome 28-year-old Louis XIV of France, accompanied by his brother, by ministers, generals, courtiers, and by an army of 25,000 men, was laying siege in the hot sun to the great Flemish city of Lille. Charleroi, Bergues, Furnes, Tournai, Ath, Courtrai, Douai, Oudenarde, and a number of smaller Spanish strongholds had already fallen to the victorious young king, who had magnanimously confirmed their privileges, but the burghers of this proud city, notwithstanding the presence of the plague within their walls, planned to make a stout resistance in the name of their distant five-year-old sovereign, Carlos II of Spain. Louis felt perfectly confident in the justice of his cause, blessed as he was with a plentiful capacity for self-delusion. He based his claim to large portions of the Spanish Low Countries on a local law of devolution, according to which a daughter by a first marriage inherited property prior to a son by a second. The king held that the daughter in this case was his queen Maria Theresa – who was discounting her own previous renunciations on the grounds that her full dowry had not been paid – the father the late Philip IV of Spain, and the son the little child king. Critics such as Baron Lisola, the Imperial diplomat, in his widely read *Buckler of State*, were quick to point out that the law of devolution was a *private*, not a *public*, law and did not pertain to sovereignty, but the sword was proving mightier than the pen. Louis had already paraded his queen through his first conquests in the War of Devolution, that simple woman's delight in her husband's knight-errantry apparently compensating for the indignity of sharing her carriage with his two mistresses, the declining Mlle. de La Vallière and the rising Mme. de Montespan. The charm of femininity was wearing thin, however, even for a mistress in the ascendant.<sup>1</sup>

The king was a man of regular habits, premeditated actions, and resolute intentions. He had in his childhood silently watched as his mother Anne of Austria and her prime minister Cardinal Mazarin successfully concluded the Thirty Years War against the Austrian Habsburgs with the Treaty of Westphalia

<sup>1</sup> On Louis' claims, see Antoine Bilain, *Traité des Droits de la Reyne Très-Chrétienne sur divers Etats de la Monarchie d'Espagne* (Paris, 1667), 2 vols. For François-Paul de Lisola's reply, see his anonymous *Bouclier d'estat et de justice, contre le dessein manifestement découvert de la Monarchie Universelle, Sous le vain pretexte des pretentions de la Reyne de France* (n.p., 1667).

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and then affirmed the superiority of the absolute monarchy over the squabbling rebels of the Fronde. Louis had, though increasingly confident of his own capacities, dutifully permitted the cardinal to continue as prime minister, arrange the Peace of the Pyrenees with the Spanish Habsburgs, and procure the fateful marriage to Maria Theresa. The king had, finally, taken the opportunity of Mazarin's death in 1661 to inaugurate the personal reign. Louis' manner of presiding over his own councils and regulating his brilliant court quickly gained him the admiration of Europe. The one minister who might have sought to step into the cardinal's shoes, Fouquet, the superintendent of the finances, was dramatically disgraced, he and his cohorts prosecuted by a Chamber of Justice. To his people, whether nobles, bourgeois, or peasants, the Sun King, as he styled himself, radiated social order and financial stability. He also projected, much to the distress of his mother while she still lived, the aura of an independent young hedonist making the most of his virility. But this was not all he wanted out of life. He fully intended, as he approached his thirtieth year, to exchange the cautious governing and regrettable transgressions of youth for a rich portion of military glory. That, to the alarm of some and to the joy of others, is what he was seeking before Lille.<sup>2</sup>

As a man of routine, his habits of peace carried over into the war with only slight modifications. He would rise around 11 a.m. from his quarters in the abbey of Loos, unusually late for him. The *lever du roi*, with its *entrées* of courtiers and attendants, assumed its leisurely pace, eliminating, however, the possibility of audiences with foreign envoys. He went as a good Catholic to mass. Then it was time for the ministers waiting in the *conseil d'en haut*, now remanded to the afternoon and somewhat altered in composition. There was the faithful and prudent Michel Le Tellier, 64 years old, heart and soul of Mazarin's legacy, expert administrator and secretary of state for war. Also at the table was the equally faithful but more obtrusive Jean-Baptiste Colbert, a sickly 47 years of age, once a servant of the cardinal and of Le Tellier, though, as controller-general of the finances, increasingly estranged from the secretary for war. Both were regular members. It was Colbert who, since the disgrace of Fouquet, had guided Louis through six exemplary years of domestic reform, now interrupted. The next person in attendance was the legendary Marshal de Turenne, a

<sup>2</sup> There is no better nor more compelling treatment of the king's childhood and youth than John B. Wolf's *Louis XIV* (New York, 1968). There is no better guide to Louis' mood around 1667 than in BN *Ms. Fr. 6732-4*, 10329, and 10332, his *Mémoires pour l'instruction du Dauphin*, published most prominently by Grouvelle, Dreyss, and Longnon. For the analysis of the king's *Mémoires*, please see my "Dating and Authorship of Louis XIV's *Mémoires*," *French Historical Studies*, III, 3 (Spring, 1964), 303-37. See particularly *Ms. Fr. 6733* (*Mémoires* for 1666, Text B), fol. 1 [published in Grouvelle, II, 3, and Sonnino, 121], and *Ms. Fr. 6734* (*Mémoires* for 1667, Text X), fols. 373-4 [published in Grouvelle, II, 290-5, Dreyss, II, 313-16, Longnon, 257-60, and Sonnino, 246-8]. See also AST MPLM *Francia* 80 (30 and 67), Saint-Maurice to Charles Emmanuel, May 17 and June 16, 1667 [published in Saint-Maurice, I, 39-42 and 68-74, with another letter of the same last date].