

Ancien Regime and the French Revolution (Penguin Classics)

Alexis de Tocqueville



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Ancien Regime and the French Revolution (Penguin Classics) Alexis de Tocqueville A powerful new translation of de Tocqueville's influential look at the origins of modern France

The Ancien Régime and the Revolution is a comparison of revolutionary France and the despotic rule it toppled. Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–59) is an objective observer of both periods – providing a merciless critique of the ancien régime, with its venality, oppression and inequality, yet acknowledging the reforms introduced under Louis XVI, and claiming that the post-Revolution state was in many ways as tyrannical as that of the King; its once lofty and egalitarian ideals corrupted and forgotten. Writing in the 1850s, Tocqueville wished to expose the return to despotism he witnessed in his own time under Napoleon III, by illuminating the grand, but ultimately doomed, call to liberty made by the French people in 1789. His eloquent and instructive study raises questions about liberty, nationalism and justice that remain urgent today.

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