Ultraroyalism in Toulouse

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ONCE ESTABLISHED, the July Monarchy carried out a sweeping renewal of administrative personnel in Toulouse and the department. Only one of the senior officials of the préfecture remained, the conseil général and the conseil d'arrondissement were entirely renewed, 412 mayors and 358 adjoints were replaced, the justices of the peace were changed in large numbers, and so were the compositions of the various courts. Two of the three receveurs particuliers, the departmental payeur, two receveurs principaux, the receveur of the hospitals, the officer of weights-and-measures, major officials and subordinates in the customs, municipal departments of the octroi and the public works, and nine of the police commissaires were dismissed. The purge extended even to the municipal library and the observatory. The web of patronage woven during the period of ultra dominance was torn apart. The new préfet was understandably indignant at an accusation brought up in the Chamber of Deputies that Toulouse was still largely under the control of legitimist officials: he retorted that there was probably no other city in France where so many dismissals had been made of those who might obstruct official business.

The victims of these dismissals, together with the majority of the local nobility, became supporters of legitimism. D’Encausse, a relative of Villèle and a commissaire du roi à l'hôtel de monnaie, dismissed in 1830, was among the “sommités légitimistes.” Delpy, the secrétaire général at the prefecture throughout the Restoration

1 ADHG, 4 M 49; Prefect to Minister of Interior, August 30, 1831.
whose initial appointment had been made by Angoulême in 1815, was another. Bastoulh, former procureur du roi, was a well-known legitimist. The advocates Dugabé and Bahuaut were members of a legal-aid organization. Men protected by tenure in the courts, for example, Moly, also made no secret of their legitimist sympathies. The legitimists were reinforced by the retirement to Toulouse of men who had been army officers or officials elsewhere in France before July 1830 and who remained loyal to the former dynasty. Pinaud returned to Toulouse from Grenoble, where he had been procureur du roi. St. Félix Mauremont, a former prefect and deputy, and Puységur, an officer of the royal guard, arrived back in Toulouse. The leadership of the legitimists was drawn from the familiar parliamentary families; names like Rességuier, d’Aguin, Rigaud, Cantalause, and Dubourg appear in police reports and in the columns of the Gazette du Languedoc, the legitimist newspaper published in the city. Naturally enough, Joseph de Villèle was considered the elder statesman of the partisans of Charles X, although he had disapproved of the maladroit policies of the Polignac ministry. Popular royalism had weakened during the Restoration, but there were legitimists among the artisans and former verdets.

Opinions were divided among those who wanted to see Louis-Philippe replaced on the throne. The older men and the émigrés—crusty veterans of the counterrevolution—could not bring themselves to abandon the brother of Louis XVI; to them, the chain of disasters which Charles X had brought on French royalism, from Quiberon to the July ordinances, seemed to have a pathetic grandeur. They hoped for his return to the throne. The majority looked to the young Henri V. Such a regime would maintain the achievements of the Restoration in parliamentary government without continuing the trend towards liberalism; above all, it would give a different tone to public life and reward the faithful servants of the Bourbons. The police thought this view was especially favored by commoner legitimists. Among the nobles, a third opinion prevailed, that of the “Henriquinquistes absolutistes.” This was the conviction that the Restoration failed because of too much liberalism, and the belief that the regency would provide the opportunity for an increase in noble power.²

During the autumn following the proclamation of Louis-Philippe as king, the legitimists began to set up an organization to direct their opposition to the new regime. Like the *Institut Philanthropique* which had been in operation during the Directory and the *chevaliers de la foi* who conspired during the last years of the Napoleonic Empire, the *association légitimiste* used a charitable and religious motive as a pretext for its existence. During the Restoration, the point was often made that the Bourbons and the Faith were at one. The emotion-packed meetings of the evangelizing missionaries and the pastoral letters of the Cardinal Archbishop Clermont-Tonnerre exalted the union of throne and altar. In a city noted for religiosity among the women and devout lower classes, this still had its political utility. However, the new archbishop of Toulouse under the July Monarchy, d'Astros, despite his personal sympathies to the former dynasty, made it clear to his clergy that they were to keep out of politics.\(^3\)

The *association légitimiste* was established by April, 1831. The central coordinating committee was called the *Grand Prieuré*. Toulouse was the headquarters for an area extending over five departments: the Tarn, Gers, Ariège, Tarn-et-Garonne and the Haute-Garonne.\(^4\) The other regional centers in southern France were at Bordeaux, Lyons, Marseilles, and Nimes. In Toulouse, it was reported that 150 men had titles as civil and military officials, and the total number of adherents was said to be between one thousand and twelve hundred. These figures and details of organization were provided by the police. French historians have recently received a powerful warning from R. C. Cobb against taking the reports of time-serving professional police officers too literally. At any event, these reports provide a genuine insight into the world of "it is rumored that" which, in a tense political situation, has its own reality. There was doubtless some kind of organization. The supreme council of the organization was called the *Grand Prieuré*. It met intermittently either at the town house of Villèle on the Rue Vélane or at that of the Comte d'Hautpoul, the most active member, and implicated in the Ramel assassination of 1815. Delpy, the former *secrétaire général* of the prefecture, and Puylaroque, a


\(^4\) *ADHG*, 4 M 50. The detailed report of November 20, 1833, which came from an informer described the organization of the *Association Légitimiste*. 

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parlementary noble whose estates were in the area of Montauban but who lived mostly in Toulouse, were among the major figures. Below this high command were Petits Prieurés in the chefs-lieux of each arrondissement. They grouped former officials, nobles, retired soldiers and some merchants, and were responsible for the legitimist organization in their area and the transmission of funds to the Grand Prieuré. The police claimed that the Prieurés had decided to exclude merchants, but at the same time listed a number of men involved in commerce, like Servat, a merchant involved in supply, a “richissime boulanger,” and a pharmacist, as enjoying positions of trust. Vignes, the former city receveur, was a member of the Petit Prieuré. At the cantonal level, a commissionnaire de roulage and a newspaper seller of the Gazette du Languedoc were listed as militant supporters of Henri V. Beneath the cantonal organization existed a network of chefs de quartier, men like the cabinet-maker Gerbousc, who was responsible for the area around the Jardin des Plantes. The dizeniers who collected contributions from individual members reported to them, handing over the contributions which were levied on a daily rate according to means. Indeed, some legitimists at this level received money given to support the legitimist counter-police, needy military men, and officials dismissed in 1830 for whom it had not been possible to find alternative employment with the Gazette or elsewhere. The counter-police were said to be a drawing master, a tailor from the Place du Salin, a wigmaker, and a former employee of the Octroi, and were led by an employee of a liberal merchant. Funds were also made available to provide a winter allowance of up to eight pounds of bread weekly to needy members of royalist companies. The rank and file of the seven companies of royalist volunteers was composed of “workers and day laborers from Toulouse itself, and from former verdets.” Legitimism found most support in Toulouse; in the country, there was only a skeleton organization. The arrondissement of Muret was the most royalist and St. Gaudens the least royalist of the four in the department, but in general there was little sign of peasant support.

The memory of the bloody failure of the insurrection of the year VII was still alive, and the religious policy of the government was not one which inspired much resistance, except perhaps on the matter of the schools run by the ignorantins. The oppressive weight of the system of métayage directed by the legitimist landowners
did not lend itself to much genuine sympathy on the part of the peasantry, despite their protestations of loyalty. At all events, legitimism in the Toulousain, as elsewhere in the Midi, was mostly urban in nature.

The Association Légitimiste was not the only focus of legitimism; indeed, the secrecy with which its acts were shrouded tended to lessen its effects. The masonic lodge La Sagesse, on the other hand, was notoriously Henriquinquiste. The members were able to cover royalist allusions and wishes with the ceremonial of masonry. Another, more public, forum was the Société de Défense Mutuelle which borrowed the ideas which had appeared among liberals during the Restoration. The society was dedicated to the fight against “a centralisation made daily more despotic, which crushes France, chains the provinces, torments the citizens who are ceaselessly delivered to the arbitrariness of a gendarme or a prefect.” Legal and practical advice was offered to those who found themselves at odds with the bureaucracy. There were societies in the Tarn-et-Garonne, Tarn, Ariège, Gers, and Haute-Garonne: the area controlled by the Grand Prieuré of Toulouse. The secretary Soulé was a neighbor of Villelè on the Rue Velane. The membership included a rich tailor, a vintner, a clockmaker, several avocats, a hatmaker, a former sub-prefect, and other ex-officials. A legitimist association existed among the students of the University of Toulouse.

Legitimism was strong in the religious confraternities which were typical of the city. The convent school of St. Antoine du Salin was considered the best Henriquinquiste education for upper-class girls. The convents of the Compassion, St. Vincent de Paul, and the Feuillantines, if less fashionable, were no less fervent in their attachment to the cause of the exiled Bourbons. The sociétés de secours provided jobs for those who were right-thinking. The Confraternity of St. Louis at the St. Exupère church was full of men who had been verdets in 1815; the Black Penitents at the Nazareth Church were presided over by Léopold de Rigaud who had been active during the White Terror. The confraternity of the Ste.-Epine boasted among its members Anglaret, a former lieutenant of the verdets implicated in the assassination of General Ramel. These confraternities joined the nobility and other legitimists in observing the anniversary of the execution of Louis XVI

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7 Gazette du Languedoc, January 20, 1832.
on January 21, and of the assassination of the Duc de Berry on February 13. Only rarely did these events cause any political disturbance. The very nature of these lugubrious ceremonies discouraged any active opposition. The police appreciated this and showed little concern about them, although the congregation was often quite large, as on February 13, 1834.¹

Legitimism was at the root of some scandals within local institutions. The Royal Court was shaken when in August, 1832, Baron Corbière, the former procureur général of the court during the Empire (recalled to office by the July Monarchy), took advantage of the law dealing with the presence of witnesses at the time of court hearings and placed Samuel de Panat, a legitimist nobleman from Saint Gaudens, under confinement in Toulouse. Hocquart, the former ultraroyalist deputy who remained First President of the court under Louis-Philippe, was aggrieved at this officious behavior toward his son-in-law de Panat, who had in fact promised to attend the court when called to do so. This affair was aggravated by the publication of a pamphlet by Corbière, entitled Ma réponse aux cris de M. le Vicomte de Panat. Hocquart deplored this publication even more than the original affront. In the Gazette du Languedoc he described the behavior of the procureur général as "a hitherto unheard of way to clarify points at issue between two magistrates, and especially between the chiefs of a high court." ⁷ The whole incident arose from Corbière's desire to humiliate the legitimist group in the court which excluded him from public office for fifteen years. Tongues wagged furiously in the legitimist salons over this squabble, just as they did later in the same year over a dispute at the Académie des Jeux Floraux. A replacement for the seat vacated by Archbishop Clermont-Tonnerre was pushed through early in the meeting and a physics professor was elected. When the legitimist members of the Académie arrived and discovered the election had already taken place, there was a heated shouting match and the session was suspended.⁸

This kind of trivial incident did not affect public order. To the legitimists, they seemed to typify the animosity of the Orleanist regime, but they were hardly substantial issues which affected the decisions of the new administration. The Gazette du Languedoc,

⁶ ADHG, 4 M 51, rapport, February 14, 1834.
⁷ ADHG, 4 M 35; Gazette du Languedoc, supplément, December 4, 1832.
⁸ ADHG, 4 M 49, report to prefect, September 3, 1832.
subtitled the *Journal des intérêts régionaux*, criticized relaxation of the protectionist legislation on grain imports, but this was an issue which only excited the landowners. The attempt to keep the sympathy of the poor by charity continued, but there were new rivals who offered other alternatives to the selfish social policy of the *juste milieu*. The Saint-Simoniens had appeared in the city, and there was now a significant Republican movement such as had not existed under the Restoration. The legitimists of Toulouse made little effort to win new members into their ranks which were dominated in their upper levels by the prejudices of the nobility. The *Gazette du Languedoc* often published sarcastic literary “vignettes” on the vulgarity of “un bal bourgeois,” the lack of refinement of the Orleans family, and the gross manners of the *juste milieu*. While this provided self-satisfaction to noble legitimists, it was ill-calculated to win new sympathies.

The legitimists were a classic example of a group so deeply imbued with a set of religious, political, and cultural prejudices as to be unable to adjust to a changing situation. They were frustrated by change and wished it would stop; they were worried by new ideas and political debate. These social fossils tried to ward off the disruption of the society they had dominated by invoking a conspiratorial explanation of French history. They were an opposition which it was not crucial to placate as they progressively isolated themselves from new skills and attitudes. The noble landowners of the Toulousain began to lose their landed wealth as well as their political influence when the great estates began to splinter as a result of rural depopulation from the mid-1840’s on. While they had always kept precise records of the process of rack-renting the *métayers* and *maître-valets*, the poor yield of the area showed how little genuine innovation of new methods took place in the first half of the nineteenth century. The English translator of the exceptional farmer Picot de Lapeyrouse, a man with a specialized knowledge of current agricultural techniques, noted that the agriculture of the Garonne Valley was far behind that of other parts of France.9

During the Restoration, commerce and industry in Toulouse was too weak to produce a group of wealthy commoners able to fight against the ultra ascendancy. Certainly men like Chaptive, Viguerie,

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Barre, and Cassaing were liberal merchants who made plain their hostility to all that was proclaimed by Villèle and his colleagues at the town hall, at the conseil général, and among the deputies. They had less access to power than the conservative faction in city business circles—men like Félix Gounon, Duchan, Saint-Raymond, and Ville-Teynier—who sympathized with the Old Regime organization of trade and city government from which their families derived their social position. The presence of a very conservative political opinion among merchant groups was characteristic of many southern cities. In the Eure, one of the most economically advanced parts of France, the rule of local landowners during this period was increasingly opposed by merchants and manufacturers who found an electoral following. The same could be said of Alsace. However, in Toulouse, and to some extent in other southern cities like Montauban and Nîmes where religious frictions played a part, or in Bordeaux, Marseille, and Montpellier where Old Regime families still kept an important place, there was a strong body of conservative opinion in the business elite.

The ultraroyalist views on the nature of society, which had emerged during the Restoration, were crystallized in local legitimism. The animosity against the rejecters of traditional values intensified. The Revolution of 1830 seemed yet another confirmation of ultraroyalists' suspicions of the big cities, bureaucrats, and speculators. They despised "this Parisian bourgeoisie, composed of shopkeepers and jackals [loup-cerviers] on whom the salvation of the juste-milieu has so often depended."¹⁰ In a long article praising Villèle, the Gazette wrote in the same vein:

There will be neither rest, prosperity, nor order in this land for as long as society is led by men of letters and advocates. Men of letters govern their little republic very ill... as for the advocates, vain chatterers, they bristle with difficulties and are full of disputes and chicanery. Nothing can succeed with them. The restored France will wish to be led by its natural leaders [les grandes influences]: men of the soil, of war, of the magistrature, of the priesthood, and by large-scale industry, the only realities of a well-organized social order.¹¹

The suspicion of the advocates which the parliamentarians had voiced in 1789, the blame attached to the philosophes for causing

¹⁰ Gazette du Languedoc, January 5, 1836.
¹¹ Gazette du Languedoc, January 25, 1836.
social disturbance, the hostility to centralization, the conviction that it was Protestants, Jacobins, and Napoleonic bureaucrats who had destroyed public "morality" were heard again in the legitimist press. These ideas, now stylized into prejudices, made them grotesque to less dogmatic contemporaries.\textsuperscript{12} In almost petulant defiance of their critics, the legitimists of Toulouse long continued to repeat these ideas which affected southern France until the present century.

\textsuperscript{12} E. de la Bédollière, "Le Languedocien" in Les français peints par eux-mêmes, encyclopédie morale du dix-neuvième siècle (Paris, 1841), II, 57.