

RE-WRITING THE FRENCH
REVOLUTIONARY
TRADITION

ROBERT ALEXANDER



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*False starts and uncertain beginnings: from the
First Restoration (May 1814) to the elections
of September 1816*

PART ONE: TUMULTUOUS POLITICS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Uncertainty shrouded the First Restoration. Most historians have concluded that the First Treaty of Paris, signed on 30 May 1814, was relatively lenient: France was reduced to her 1792 frontiers and lost colonies in the West Indies and the Indian Ocean, but would not have to pay reparations. The French, however, had grown accustomed to victory under Napoleon and what was lost was at least as apparent to them as what had been salvaged. Talleyrand would represent France at the Vienna Congress, but it was by no means clear that *la grande nation* would have much say in the post-war settlement. Wounded patriotism, thus, posed unsettling questions for a regime installed by the Allied powers.¹

Perhaps the prospect of peace might have enabled the Bourbon monarchy to entrench itself, had the government not exacerbated tensions by committing a series of errors. There was little immediate administrative purge at the start of the First Restoration; 76 per cent of the Imperial corps was maintained. By February 1815, however, the Minister of the Interior, the abbé François-Xavier de Montesquiou, was asking prefects for lists with comments on the worthiness of *fonctionnaires*, and change was accelerating. More potentially explosive were alterations in the army. Reduction by about three-fifths was perhaps not a great danger where common soldiers were concerned; many of the latter had simply melted away in the face of defeat. Nevertheless, 12,000 officers were put on half-pay and sent to cool their heels in the provinces while awaiting recall. To add salt to their wounds, the Minister of War, General Pierre-Antoine Dupont, known mostly for a

¹ For background, see Bertier de Sauvigny, *Restoration*, pp. 3–145; Jardin and Tudesq, *Restoration*, pp. 3–31; Waresquiel and Yvert, *Restauration*, pp. 11–195, and P. Mansel, *Louis XVIII* (London, 1981), pp. 170–343. On electoral procedures, see G.-D. Weil, *Les élections législatives depuis 1789* (Paris, 1895), pp. 60–121; P. Bastid, *Les institutions politiques de la monarchie parlementaire française (1814–1848)* (Paris, 1954), pp. 211–40, and Rosanvallon, *Le sacre*, pp. 209–49.

humiliating defeat at Baylen in 1808 during the Peninsular War, handed out plum positions to returned émigrés who had fought against France.

Expiatory ceremonies to honour royal ‘martyrs’, such as Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette and the Duke of Enghien, gave the opposite message of the Charter’s call to forget. While the state might have preferred not to dwell on regicide, emphasizing royal ‘forgiveness’ more than suggested that something to forgive was remembered. All civil servants were expected to attend and the sub-text of these ceremonies, often made explicit by local clergymen, was that the Revolution was one great sin. Did ceremonies in Brittany honouring former *chouans* not suggest that some Frenchmen were in a privileged position where royal favour was concerned? Why was it necessary to ban all work on Sundays? Doubts increased when, in introducing legislation to restore unsold nationalized lands to the original owners, Minister of State Count Antoine de Ferrand (a notorious advocate of counter-revolution) praised émigrés who had remained in exile with their king to the bitter end. Perhaps there was a link between such sentiments and disappointing implementation of the Charter’s proclamation of freedom of expression? Censorship would continue for writings of less than twenty pages; newspapers would have to apply for a permit prior to publication, and bookshops and printers must obtain a licence.²

Uncertainty over the evolving nature of the regime was greatly exacerbated by the counter-revolutionary inclinations of the king’s brother Artois, and the circle of intransigent émigrés who clustered round the apparent heir to the throne. The two brothers had lived separately through most of their period of exile from France, and the royal household, and patronage network, of Artois was almost as large as that of the king. In essence, Artois stood for royalists who longed for the good old days of the *ancien régime*, and he and his entourage, often referred to as the Pavillon de Marsan (after the wing of the Louvre occupied by the count), could be viewed as a less compromising alternative to Louis XVIII waiting in the wings.

Evidence of surging alarm was manifest in rumours of a return to feudal dues and the Church *dîme* sweeping through the countryside in late 1814 and early 1815. Sensing the vulnerability of the regime, a number of former Imperial and Revolutionary notables began plotting revolt in favour of some alternative regime – perhaps Orleanist or republican. Such conspiracies were then swept aside when the leading threat to the Bourbon monarchy returned to France. Napoleon’s decision to escape from exile at Elba was undoubtedly

² See Kroen, *Politics*, pp. 63–75, and F. Waquet, *Les fêtes royales sous la Restauration* (Geneva, 1981), pp. 79–81 and 130–1.

a gamble, but it was a calculated one. The Bourbon government had failed to pay pensions promised to him as part of his abdication in 1814, and the dignitaries at Vienna were pondering whether to distance him further, to the Azores. Emissaries from France had informed him of growing public apprehension and he decided to roll the dice. Leading a band of roughly 1,200 men, he landed close to Antibes on 1 March 1815 and began his 'Flight of the Eagle'.

Napoleon hoped the Allied powers would accept his return, and to further this end he proclaimed his intention to abide by the First Treaty of Paris. Appreciation of the weakness of his position could also be seen in proclamations declaring he had returned to rescue the new France that had emerged from 1789 onwards from the clutches of the past. Should priests and nobles not desist from seeking to enslave the nation, Napoleon would hang them from the lampposts!

The message held appeal. That the army rallied was no surprise; the fervour of the rank and file ensured that forces sent to arrest the former emperor merely joined in his Flight. More telling was the upsurge of public support apparent among peasants who joined in the march, and the rapturous receptions given at Grenoble and Lyons. To be sure, not all were pleased. At Paris, liberals such as Benjamin Constant likened Bonaparte to Attila the Hun, and, as Bonaparte's march took on the character of a triumphal parade, Louis XVIII saw fit to assemble parliament and promise to uphold the Charter. He also promised to die rather than flee, but departed for Ghent shortly before Napoleon's arrival at the Tuileries on 20 March.

More serious resistance was launched when Duke Louis-Antoine of Angoulême, elder son of Artois and nephew of the King, organized royalist forces for an attack upon the usurper. Angoulême was made Lieutenant General of the Midi, and Baron Eugène de Vitrolles, a former royalist secret agent who had become a provisional Secretary of State early in the Restoration, sought at Toulouse to organize a royalist government in the south and west. Angoulême's volunteers were, however, almost surrounded close to Valence and capitulated at La Palud on 8 April; Vitrolles had been arrested five days before. As part of the capitulation, Angoulême was allowed to retire to Spain.

The final episode of Napoleonic rule, the Hundred Days, exacerbated the polarization already apparent during the First Restoration. Allied refusal to deal with Napoleon soon made renewal of war inevitable. Many of the French preferred not to choose sides, but France clearly was not the aggressor in the looming conflict and, while it had been short, previous invasion had left bitter memories. Napoleon only partially fulfilled the

promises of renewed liberty made during the Flight of the Eagle, and hence a revision of the Imperial constitution known as the *Acte additionnel* gained a relatively lukewarm response when put to a plebiscite. Deputies elected to a Chamber of Representatives included Bonapartists, but also liberals and republicans less dedicated to the dynasty. Rallying in a federative movement was, however, substantial; perhaps half a million *fédérés* joined, and recruitment gained pace until the cause was lost at Waterloo.

Royalist attempts at subversion were, in the main, unimpressive. Vendean royalists did manage to raise a revolt, but the Imperial government was well on the way to reasserting control prior to Waterloo, and it was defeat abroad that brought Napoleon's second fall. Liberals and republicans in parliament pressured Bonaparte into a second abdication on 22 June, and set up a provisional government led by the Minister of Police, Joseph Fouché, a notorious Terrorist of the Revolution who had become a duke under Napoleon.

The circumstances surrounding the foundation of the Second Restoration were even more volatile than those of the First. Louis XVIII returned to Paris 'in the baggage train of the Allies', strengthening an association that became all the more debilitating as some 1,200,000 Allied troops poured into France, occupying sixty-one departments. Requisitions, rape and plunder ensued. The Second Treaty of Paris, signed in November, proved far harsher than the first. France was reduced to her 1790 borders, ceding strategic territories along the north and eastern frontiers to the Netherlands, Prussia, Bavaria and Sardinia. This time reparations were set at 700 million francs to be paid in instalments over five years. In addition, the French would pay the costs of military occupation by 150,000 Allied troops until the reparations were liquidated.

For Louis XVIII, equally distressing was that Fouché, a regicide, and Talleyrand had played integral roles in engineering his return. Fouché had convinced the provisional government to capitulate rather than fight, and thrown his lot in with a Second Restoration during negotiations with Wellington, commander of the Allied forces. Talleyrand was all too prone to view himself as a 'kingmaker'. The royalist writer François-René Chateaubriand dubbed Talleyrand and Fouché 'sin and vice', but both had to be included in the Second Restoration's initial government.

The king gained deliverance from such unwanted allies by calling for general elections in August. The elections, in turn, yielded the *Chambre introuvable*, wherein extreme royalists held a large majority. In a sense, the king had leapt from the frying pan into the fire in that he now had to compromise with ultraroyalists in order to secure effective government. He

was, however, able to form a cabinet more to his liking on 24 September, and Duke Armand-Emmanuel of Richelieu became head of the new government. An émigré initially thought to be a 'pure' (an ultraroyalist), Richelieu certainly had no love for the Revolution or Napoleon, but his moderate temperament put him more in line with the wishes of the king than with ultraroyalist leaders. Also in the cabinet, as Minister of Police, was Elie Decazes, whose subsequent rise to prominence was based almost solely upon royal favour. The ambitious Decazes soon concluded that the less the king relied on others, including ultraroyalists, the more he would come to rely on his personal favourite.³

The first year of the Second Restoration was marked by struggle in which Louis XVIII gradually sought to free his rule from dependence upon ultraroyalism. During his exile at Ghent, the king had moved closer to the intransigent attitudes of his brother Artois, leader of ultraroyalism. The king realized the dangers of plunging headlong into counter-revolution, and he did intend to abide by the Charter, as he interpreted it; in these regards he differed greatly from his brother. Louis XVIII and his government also intended, however, to root out the Revolutionary and Bonapartist elements in the administration and military upon which the First Restoration had relied; such intentions gave the government a certain amount of common ground with ultraroyalists. Moreover, several members of the cabinet, including Minister of the Interior Count Vincent-Marie Vaublanc (an adviser to Artois), had distinctly 'pure' tendencies. Thus it is not quite accurate to view this period simply as one wherein a moderate government sought to temper the demands of an ultraroyalist Chamber of Deputies. Certainly the cabinet was less extreme and in time it would increasingly distance itself from ultraroyalism, but the White Terror, hardly a product of moderation, was partly its own doing, and something which it intended to direct for its own purposes.

The White Terror of 1815–16 can be divided into legal and illegal components. Illegal White Terror consisted of retribution conducted by individuals or groups allegedly motivated by royalism. Murder and pillage were meted out to a host of victims, usually those who had been most pronounced in supporting Bonaparte during the Hundred Days. The extent to which figures of the Left had rallied made them vulnerable, recommencing

³ Armand-Emmanuel du Plessis, Duke of Richelieu, had emigrated from France in October 1789 and subsequently served Czar Alexander as governor at Odessa. Decazes had earlier been attached to the household of Napoleon's mother, but had refused to take an oath of allegiance to the Emperor during the Hundred Days. Thereafter Decazes assiduously cultivated the affection of Louis XVIII, gaining the pejorative nickname *le favori* among his opponents.

cycles of violence that in some regions predated the Revolution. Thus politics was bound up in a variety of animosities, ranging from confessional differences to clan rivalries, and to this mix was added simple criminality. Illegal White Terror occurred mostly in parts of the Midi; perhaps some three hundred people were murdered and thousands more fled from the region.⁴

Legal Terror had several elements. On 28 June Louis XVIII issued a proclamation granting amnesty to subjects who had been led 'astray', but also vowing punishment of 'the instigators of treason'. To Fouché fell the task of drawing up a list of traitors, and this was then pared back in the ordinance of 24 July to fifty-four leading figures, including seventeen generals to be tried by military tribunal, and thirty-seven others to be placed under house arrest until parliament had decided their fates. Simultaneously, a massive purge of administrative and military personnel began; ultimately, perhaps 80,000 civil servants and 15,000 military officers would be punished.

Thereafter, from October to January 1816, parliament passed a series of punitive laws. A law of public security enabled the arrest of individuals on suspicion of conspiracy, and laws against seditious speech and writing complemented this measure. Special courts (*cours prévôtales*) were then established to judge offenders and they would eventually sentence some 6,000 individuals. Finally, an ironically named amnesty law excluded from clemency individuals placed under house arrest by the ordinance of 24 July, including regicides who had rallied to Napoleon in 1815, and any other individuals who had been indicted for treasonous actions committed during the Hundred Days. While most of the targeted individuals were subjected only to imprisonment or exile, several, including Marshal Ney, whose rallying to Napoleon during the 'Flight' had made him a symbol of treachery, were executed.

Legislative initiative for Terror came from ultraroyalists in the Chamber of Deputies, but the laws placed extraordinary power in the hands of the state and, ultimately, enabled the government to wrest control over White Terror away from ultraroyalists in the provinces. There was irony in this process in that ultraroyalists had thus created the means by which the government regained control over coercion. In this regard, however, it should be kept in mind that the dividing line between the cabinet and ultraroyalism was unclear when the laws were passed. Moreover, at that

⁴ D. Resnick, *The White Terror and the Political Reaction after Waterloo* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), and Alexander, *Bonapartism*, pp. 219–47.

stage ultraroyalists expected to grasp the reigns of power exclusively for themselves. Extreme measures could then be used to eliminate all those to whom the king might turn by way of alternative to the 'pures'. It took time before the cabinet's inclination to temper vengeful initiatives became fully apparent to ultraroyalists, who then reacted with steadily mounting anger.

During the First Restoration leading ultraroyalists had proclaimed their distaste for the Charter. When presented with a Chamber of Deputies to their liking in August 1815, however, they rethought their position. If parliament truly did possess power, control over it could be used to counter the compromising proclivities of the king. Ultraroyalists therefore championed parliamentary prerogative, as Vitrolles and Chateaubriand argued that the cabinet must represent the majority in parliament. Although this objective was not achieved, the *Chambre introuvable* did establish important conventions in terms of initiating and amending legislation. Moreover, ultraroyalist obstruction over the budget in 1816 forced the government to concede the right of parliament to approve state expenditures. Thus, in one of the great paradoxes of the era, ultraroyalists who had begun the Restoration by denouncing the Charter's limited provisions for parliamentary government wound up helping to entrench parliament's role within the new regime.⁵

Equally significant were the organizational strides ultraroyalists made in the two Chambers, and crucial to such organization was the secret society known as the Chevaliers de la Foi. The Chevaliers had mobilized support for the First Restoration, had been disappointed by the result, and had then reactivated their network during the Hundred Days. By the Second Restoration most Chevaliers were determined that the mistake of compromise would not be repeated and thus prior to the parliamentary session they purged moderate Chevaliers. A new cell was then formed to act as an ultraroyalist parliamentary steering committee.

Meanwhile, meetings of the mass of ultraroyalists at the salon of the Deputy Jean-Pierre Piet could draw upwards of 228 parliamentarians. It was here that Joseph Villèle began to establish ascendancy over many ultraroyalists, while the star of older Chevalier leaders such as Mathieu de Montmorency (an honorary aide-de-camp of Artois and closely tied to the

⁵ Bertier de Sauvigny, *Le Comte*, pp. 184–5, 212–16, and J. Barthélemy, *L'introduction du régime parlementaire en France* (Paris, 1904), pp. 166–81, 246–65. See also E. Waresquiel, 'Un paradoxe politique. La Chambre "introuvable" et la naissance de parlementarisme français (octobre 1815–avril 1816)', *Commentaire*, 15, n. 58 (1992), pp. 409–16, and R. S. Alexander, "No Minister": French Restoration rejection of authoritarianism', in D. Laven and L. Riall, eds., *Napoleon's Legacy* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 29–47.

Count) waned. Son of a minor provincial noble landowner, Villèle did not possess the social prominence, or the long-term connections to the court, of the aristocratic Montmorency, but his organizational skills and ability to speak in parliament soon drew followers to him. Nothing like full party discipline was achieved among ultraroyalists, as most Deputies voted according to their own lights and sometimes in accord with the government, but divisions within the ultraroyalist camp were basically a product of strength. Meetings held by a small *ministériel* (pro-government) group of moderate royalists, and by a handful of left-wing Deputies, who gathered at the home of the republican Marc-René Voyer d'Argenson, were much less impressive.⁶

For opponents of the extreme Right, the most promising development of the winter of 1815–16 was that growing ultraroyalist criticism of cabinet moderation angered Louis XVIII. Thus the influence of Decazes waxed, leading ultraroyalists to denounce him in the Chambers after Count Antoine-Marie de Lavalette, the Imperial Postmaster General convicted of treason for his actions during the Hundred Days, escaped from prison. All this did, however, was convince Decazes that the leading threat to his own prospects, and hence those of the crown, was the extreme Right.⁷

Just how weak the Left and Centre were could be seen when Vaublanc presented a first electoral law in December 1815. The bill called for maintenance of indirect elections, but with a narrow franchise in which a high proportion of voters would be government officials, civil servants or clergymen. To the minister's chagrin, ultraroyalists, led by Villèle, attacked the proposal for the power it placed in the hands of the administration. They then presented a counter-proposal also calling for indirect elections, but with a broader franchise at both levels. On the one hand, Vaublanc's proposal was a first sign of government desire to control the electorate – hardly a recipe for free expression of opinion. On the other hand, Villèle's counter-proposal was calibrated to favour domination of the electorate by wealthy landowners, perceived to be an ultraroyalist stronghold. For tactical reasons, centrist and left-wing Deputies actually supported the government bill, but fortunately for them, nothing came of either proposal.⁸

By the early months of 1816 public discontent with ultraroyalists demanding the death penalty for individuals found in possession of the tricolour

⁶ Bertier de Sauvigny, *Le Comte*, pp. 187–90; comte de Villèle, *Mémoires et correspondance du Comte de Villèle*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1887–90), I, pp. 349–52, 366–72, 378–9, 397, II, 40–7, and baron de Pasquier, *Histoire de mon temps: mémoires du Chancelier Pasquier*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1893–96), IV, pp. 59–67.

⁷ R. Langeron, *Decazes, ministre du roi* (Paris, 1960), pp. 77–80.

⁸ Vaublanc, *Histoire*, IV, pp. 175–89.

was reaching serious proportions. Nevertheless, moderates in the cabinet could not move precipitously to reign in extremism. For one thing, ultra-royalist approval of the budget had to be gained, and to secure this Louis XVIII had virtually to promise not to call for general elections prior to the next parliamentary session. Moreover, compromise had to be made with some of the theocratic aspirations of ultraroyalism: divorce was abolished, although a bid to transfer control over civil registers back to the clergy was blocked by the Peers.

Worse still for proponents of national reconciliation was that ultraroyalist warnings against compromise were given credence by the discovery of several left-wing plots to overthrow the regime. Most of the conspiracies were minor, far-fetched affairs, but rebellion at Grenoble in May 1816 was another matter. Didier's revolt took on serious proportions, and briefly seemed to substantiate allegations of imminent revolution.

More significant in the long run, however, was public outrage at the severity of ensuing repression at Grenoble led by the ultraroyalist General Donnadieu. Also significant for the cabinet, though less publicized, was another affair at Nancy in July; subsequent court testimony revealed that a police spy and the local prefect had in fact provoked an alleged conspiracy. Meanwhile, prosecution of four leading *fédérés* for 'conspiracy' at Dijon during the Hundred Days went badly awry, much to public satisfaction. Decazes and Louis XVIII rightly assessed that White Terror was binding the regime to ultraroyalist fanaticism in the perception of much of the French public, and at this point they moved directly towards winding down repression.⁹

To maintain pressure on the government during the parliamentary interim, ultraroyalists presented themselves as the true representatives of public opinion in the summer of 1816. Mass gatherings were organized to receive leaders arriving from Paris, and in the most notorious episode Villèle passed through a triumphal arch upon his return to Toulouse in late May. The houses of the city were bedecked with white flags, church and municipal bells rang, and Villèle enjoyed an escort of the National Guard as his cortege wound through the streets. For Louis XVIII, wrapping partisan politics in state ceremonial was the last straw, and Decazes was able to convince the king to call for general elections in September.¹⁰

⁹ Alexander, *Bonapartism*, pp. 175–6, 258, and G. Richard, 'Une conspiration policière à Nancy en 1816', *Annales de l'Est*, 10, n. 3 (1959), pp. 173–88.

¹⁰ AN, F7 9659, 16 May 1816. See also P. de Rémusat, ed., *Correspondance de M. de Rémusat pendant les premières années de la Restauration*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1883–4), II, pp. 1–10, 34, 72–6; Villèle, *Mémoires*, II, pp. 49–52 and III, p. 15, and E. Daudet, *Louis XVIII et le duc Decazes* (Paris, 1899), pp. 115–49.

That ultraroyalist roots were shallow was the message of the elections of September. One should not underestimate 'pure' successes: the north and east thoroughly rejected ultraroyalism, but the Midi remained a bastion and elsewhere results were close to even. A rough final count yielded 92 ultraroyalist Deputies and 150 *ministériels*. Given the threat posed by ultraroyalism, the Left was generally content to throw in its lot with Decazes and combined with government followers in an electoral block known as the *constitutionnels*. The term *constitutionnel* indicated defence of the Charter against ultraroyalist hostility, but, as time would tell, such a defence left little room for liberty.¹¹

Thus the prospects for a successful Restoration 'experiment' looked dim after the first two years of Bourbon rule. Association with the Allied powers was an inevitable liability for the monarchy, but more telling was fear that the Bourbons would favour the interests of the former privileged orders. Bonaparte had exploited such association and fear to engineer his Flight of the Eagle, but he had not created them. Moreover, it was the military might of the Allied powers, not the strength of internal French royalism, that had overthrown the Imperial regime of the Hundred Days. Without Allied intervention, or fear of further intervention, the Bourbon regime could not have withstood assault by its leading rival.

In the immediate aftermath of Waterloo, Louis XVIII and his government had collaborated with ultraroyalists to strike against Bonapartist and Revolutionary elements accused of having betrayed the First Restoration; it was only towards the end of 1815 that Richelieu's cabinet's inclination to temper ultraroyalist calls for retribution had become apparent. Gradually the regime had managed to substitute legal state repression for illegal ultraroyalist-dominated White Terror, but polarization between royalists and their opponents had only increased in the meantime. In his electoral triumph of September 1816 Decazes had managed to cobble together a coalition based on expedience and fear of ultraroyalism, but whether this could provide a foundation for future stability remained very much in question.

PART TWO: POLITICAL WAR AT THE GROUND LEVEL: THE RISE OF ULTRAROYALISM

For much of the Restoration, politics consisted of government initiative followed by opposition response, but ultraroyalists, especially members of the Chevaliers de la Foi, reversed this order from May 1814 to September 1816.

¹¹ Bertier de Sauvigny, *Le Comte*, pp. 185–6, 214–16, 243–5.

During the First Restoration, Chevalier organization was uneven nationally: it was already significant in the Midi, but cells in departments such as the Isère, Doubs, Côte-d'Or and Seine-Inférieure were at most embryonic. Nevertheless, ultraroyalist groups did generate fear throughout France.¹²

Because of their social prominence and penchant for aggressive public pronouncements, ultraroyalists could provoke alarm even in regions where they were relatively few in number. A visit to Grenoble in October 1814 saw Artois surrounded by 'pures' who criticized compromise with the Revolution, sparking anxieties over whether any Bourbon ruler would adhere to the Charter. Such doubts were exacerbated by affronts to wounded patriotism throughout the Isère as banquets and balls given to Allied officers and potentates led to the fatal association of royalism with 'anti-national' interests. Ostentatious displays in a time of hardship were also tactless; subsequently there would be a widespread tax revolt when the regime sought to collect indirect consumption taxes (*droits réunis*) that Artois had promised would be abolished. Tensions were equally apparent in the Bas-Rhin, where alarm over the apparent ascendancy of émigrés and the 'anachronistic pretensions' of clergymen led to rumours of an end to religious toleration and revocation of nationalized land sales. While the Protestant Consistory rallied to the new regime, in June the prefect had to instruct the crown prosecutor general to take measures against anyone threatening owners of nationalized lands.¹³

Ultraroyalists were just a small core of malcontents in the Isère and Bas-Rhin, but matters were otherwise in the Midi, where the Chevaliers had given royalists an organizational structure. The Chevaliers were essentially a continuation of counter-revolutionary groups that dated back to the 1790s; continuities in personnel with, and similarities in practice to, groups such as the Philanthropic Institutes were pronounced. At points such groups had sought to achieve their objectives through insurrection, but they had also taken a legal path when it seemed efficacious, seeking to gain restoration by the election of royalists. As part of the latter non-violent tradition, they had sought to sway public opinion, although repression had often forced them to resort to covert distribution of writings.

It was no coincidence that prior to the formation of the Chevaliers in 1810, Ferdinand de Bertier and his brother Bénigne-Louis, sons of the royal

¹² On ultraroyalist theory and response to legislation, see N. Hudson, *Ultra-Royalism and the French Restoration* (Cambridge, 1936) and J.-J. Oechslin, *Le mouvement ultra-royaliste sous la Restauration* (Paris, 1960).

¹³ ADI 52M5, 25–8 February and 3 March 1815; ADBR, 3M11, 9 May 1814 and 24 January 1815; A. Gras, *Grenoble en 1814 et 1815* (Grenoble, 1854), pp. 15–23, and P. Leuilliot, *La Première Restauration et les Cent-Jours en Alsace* (1958), pp. 29–175.

intendant murdered by the Parisian crowd on 22 July 1789 and thereafter repeatedly involved in counter-revolutionary organization, had joined a masonic society to learn freemasonry's structure. As good royalists knew, Jacobinism sprang from 'masonic conspiracy', and while ultraroyalists denounced organization among others, they were keen to employ it themselves. Among the first initiates in Paris were Jules de Polignac (whose mother had been attached to Marie-Antoinette) and Mathieu de Montmorency; thus the fledging society reached into the highest levels of the *ancien régime* nobility, was closely tied to Artois, and was resolutely counter-revolutionary. Although the Bertiers gave the Chevaliers an organization modelled upon freemasonry, the association was designed to combat the latter and, indeed, from its origins the society possessed the character of a religious order – allegiance to the Papacy was as strong as loyalty to the Bourbon dynasty.¹⁴

Covert reorganization at Toulouse began in 1812 when Mathieu de Montmorency arrived to implant a chapter of the Chevaliers that ultimately extended as far as Montpellier. Among active agents were leading nobles and clergymen such as Baron Guillaume de Bellegarde, Robert de MacCarthy and the abbé Nicolas MacCarthy, and membership included men who, as we shall see, would provide the Haute-Garonne's ultraroyalist leadership: d'Escouloubre, de Limairac, Joseph de Villèle, Count Montbel and Léopold de Rigaud.

In the Midi, ultraroyalism possessed a mass base. Religious discontent with the anticlerical policies of Revolutionary governments had been central to the Institutes, and refractory priests had encouraged recruitment into the Institute's secret armies. Perhaps more importantly, royalist Catholics had been able to maintain domination of provision of charity to the poor. Given Napoleon's clash with the Papacy, such ties were potentially threatening and the years 1812 and 1813 saw extensive correspondence between Imperial officials over worker mutual aid societies organized by clergymen. Attempts to remove the religious elements of the associations foundered, however, against opposition from the societies themselves. Correspondence does not reveal how many such associations existed, but there were over thirty in Toulouse alone, with memberships ranging between seventy and one hundred.

Charity thus fostered royalist influence, but it was resistance to conscription that provided the Chevaliers with a rank and file for their secret armies. While nobles led the secret armies, commoners conducted recruitment.

¹⁴ See Bertier de Sauvigny, *Le Comte*, pp. 29–65, and J. Godeschot, *The Counter Revolution* (Princeton, 1971), pp. 141–296, 327–83.

Inflated estimates of membership ran as high as 50,000, but probably most of these individuals could be counted on only after victory. As Montbel and Villèle pointed out, Bonaparte did not fall because of royalist insurrection in 1814; more important was general indifference to the Imperial regime resultant from the burdens of incessant warfare. Nevertheless, when Wellington entered Toulouse after the battle of 10 April 1814, crowds sporting white cockades supplied by the Chevaliers greeted him as a liberator.¹⁵

Ultraroyalists expected to gain the spoils of victory, and Wellington appointed a member of the Chevaliers, Louis-Gaston d'Escouloubre, as interim mayor in place of Baron Joseph-François Malaret, who had retreated with the French army. What such an appointment might herald became apparent during speeches celebrating the arrival of Angoulême in late April; Escouloubre's greeting implied that the only true French were those who had always awaited the return of the Bourbons. In such a context Jules de Polignac, who reached Toulouse as *commissaire du roi* in early May, perhaps appeared an apostle of reconciliation. He called for past conflicts to be forgotten, although he surrounded himself with fellow Chevaliers. Then again, news had yet to arrive of the proclamation of Saint-Ouen, wherein Louis XVIII promised France representative government.¹⁶

Ultraroyalist disenchantment with the government grew amidst discussions leading to the Charter, and Villèle gained prominence with a pamphlet lauding the institutions of the *ancien régime* and arguing that to make the sale of nationalized lands irrevocable was 'to consecrate an injustice'. Discontent was also fuelled by failure to gain monopoly over government office. Alexandre Hersant-Destouches was retained as prefect and Malaret resumed his post as mayor. Matters improved, however, when Louis Beaupoil de Saint-Aulaire replaced Destouches in November 1814. Beaupoil was a former Imperial court chamberlain and ultraroyalists had little confidence in him, but he did at least appoint a 'pure' as sub-prefect at Muret and, better yet, he soon departed for Paris, leaving the running of the prefecture to an ultraroyalist. A purge of mayors accelerated, but clearly much remained to be done.¹⁷

When news arrived of Napoleon's escape from Elba, leading Toulousains rallied to the monarchy, contributing funds to the organization of a mobile

¹⁵ Correspondence on the mutual aid societies can be found in AN, F15 3618. See also P. Wolff, ed., *Histoire de Toulouse* (Toulouse, 1974), pp. 428–38; Higgs, *Ultraroyalism*, pp. 50–3; comte de Montbel, *Souvenirs du Comte de Montbel* (Paris, 1913), pp. 65–103, and Bertier de Sauvigny, *Le Comte*, pp. 72–3, 102–12.

¹⁶ See the speech of Lannéluc in BMT, LmC 8799. See also M. Albert, *La Première Restauration dans la Haute-Garonne* (Paris, 1932), pp. 13–52, and Bertier de Sauvigny, *Le Comte*, pp. 133–49.

¹⁷ Albert, *Restauration*, pp. 13–52 and 77–93, and Villèle, *Mémoires*, 1, pp. 218–23 and 499–509.

National Guard. By 23 March 1815 a voluntary battalion of 400 men had set off. Crown officials described the masses as unpredictable, but reported that members of the local councils and National Guard remained devoted to Louis XVIII. Enthusiasm mounted when it was learned that Angoulême had been named Lieutenant General of the Midi, and that Toulouse would be the centre of royalist operations. On 26 March, Vitrolles arrived to set up a new government dedicated to waging war against Bonaparte. He quickly converted the *Journal de Toulouse* into a new *Moniteur Universel*, and sent instructions to the prefects of the Midi. Control of the post could not, however, keep news of Napoleon's triumphs from reaching Toulouse, and General Bertrand Clausel's securing of Bordeaux proved to be the last straw. Royalist ardour cooled, and on 4 April General Delaborde had Vitrolles arrested.¹⁸

Toulouse was, nevertheless, the last major city to recognize the emperor's return, and the majority of officials soon resigned. Although the *arrondissements* of Villefranche and Saint-Gaudens were quicker to acknowledge the returned Imperial regime, outside Toulouse men who remained in place were at least as much a concern as those who departed. Through the remainder of April, reports stressed the almost uniform hostility of Toulousain nobles to the emperor, and the clergy's refusal to hold prayer services for Napoleon until 23 April was equally worrisome. Most ominous of all was that officers who had returned from their futile mission to confront Napoleon were maintaining relations with the men who had marched with them.¹⁹

Throughout the Hundred Days, Imperial officials remained alarmed by the threat posed by secret royalist organization as National Guardsmen openly recruited for volunteer armies. An antidote to royalist organization was, however, found with formation of the Federation of the Midi at Toulouse on 26 May. Royalists in the surrounding countryside had been busy: guns had been procured and perhaps some 800 Toulousains had been recruited. After news of Waterloo, rebellion was attempted on 26 June, but *fédérés* and soldiers responded immediately, and within several hours all monarchist demonstrations had been brought to a halt. In consequence, royalist forces were not mobilized until 17 July – after General Charles Decaen had ordered the *fédérés* to disband and departed with his troops for

¹⁸ AN, F7 3785, 27–30 March 1815; F7 9659, 23 March – 6 April 1815; F1C III Garonne (Haute-), 14, lists of volunteers, and Albert, *Restauration*, pp. 95–164.

¹⁹ AN, F7 9659, 8–13 April 1815; F7 3785, 9–13 April, 5–17 May 1815; F1B II Garonne (Haute-), 7, 7–19 April and 26 May 1815; F1C III Garonne (Haute-), 14, 6–9 May 1815; ADHG, 2M20, 5 May 1815; 13M57bis, 7 September 1815; Albert, *Restauration*, pp. 157–64.

Narbonne. By then the Second Restoration had already commenced, and, indeed, Louis XVIII had returned to Paris by 8 July.²⁰

Ultraroyalism thereafter made great strides in the first months of the Second Restoration. With the monarchy scrambling to reassert authority, the time was ripe for those who were unquestionably royalist to advance their claims. In the Midi, forces that had rallied to Angoulême during the Flight of the Eagle seized control over local government. Elsewhere, ultraroyalist societies, often linked by the Chevaliers, rapidly formed to organize the royalist vote in the elections of August.

Gaining control over the National Guard was central to the takeover of local power, as disarray in the regular army meant that provision of order fell largely to the Guard. At the national level, Artois became Commander of the Guard and his personal followers, including Polignac, dominated a committee of inspectors. Below this was a sub-structure of inspectors at the departmental and *arrondissement* levels, and, crucially, the inspectors were subordinate to neither the civil administration nor the regular army.

To be put to full effect, the Guard had to be rendered unquestionably royalist. Everywhere the officer corps could be purged, although in many parts of France there was a limited pool of ultraroyalists upon which to draw. Especially in the Midi, however, total purging could be combined with merging the rank and file of the secret royalist armies into the Guard. These steps made the Guard very effective for the elimination of political rivals. Much of this was conducted by illegal White Terror, which was largely confined to the south. Elsewhere ultraroyalists had to advance their interests through legal Terror, and they were less able to entrench themselves in local government.²¹

In subsequent accounts, ultraroyalists claimed that illegal White Terror was simply a product of spontaneous mass anger, but there can be no doubt that ultraroyalists directed violence to serve their own ends. When Angoulême departed France after the failed attempt to block Napoleon's return, he retained his powers as Lieutenant General of the Midi and left behind agents who would organize a provisional government in the event of the tyrant's overthrow. Jurisdiction was divided along departmental lines: the Marquis Charles de Rivière de Riffardeau would organize government for the Bouches-du-Rhône, Count René de Bernis for the

²⁰ AN, F7 3785, 29 April, 8–26 May, 10–19 June 1815; F7 9659, 22 June 1815; F9 515–16, 20–22 May, 5 June–1 July 1815; FiB II Garonne (Haute-), 7, 26 May 1815; FiC III Garonne (Haute-), 6, 15–27 May 1815; ADHG, 4M34, 18 May 1815; 4M35, 10–15 June; 4M37, 18 May 1815. See also J. Loubet, 'Le gouvernement toulousain du duc d'Angoulême après les Cent-Jours', *La Révolution Française*, 64 (1913), pp. 149–55.

²¹ L. Girard, *La garde nationale 1814–1871* (Paris, 1964), pp. 58–70.

Gard, the Marquis Hippolyte de Montcalm for the Hérault, and Marshal Dominique de Pérignon for the Haute-Garonne. Local committees were then formed under these delegates, and the Chevaliers de la Foi played a major role in coordinating the committees and recruiting secret armies.

Angoulême's alternative government played a negligible role in the liberation of France. Roughly one week after Waterloo, the commanding general, worried by the presence of the British fleet, retired the Imperial garrison from Marseilles, leaving the port to the tender mercies of Rivière, who duly seized control against little resistance. Rivière's plans to liberate Toulon then foundered, however, when Marshal Guillaume Brune proved more obdurate. It was only on 24 July that Brune and his garrison evacuated Toulon. Elsewhere, royalist advance was similarly mixed. Although Beaucaire rapidly followed the example of Marseilles, Nîmes did not fall under royalist control until 17 July. Results were similar at Montpellier, which held out until 15 July.

The importance of Angoulême's supporters thus lay in what they did after victory. Mass violence was perpetrated by bands, such as the *verdets* in the Haute-Garonne or the *miquelets* in the Gard, which had been recruited into the secret royalist armies. They were acting under the directions of ultraroyalist committees, and even after Angoulême's special powers had been revoked by the royal government in late July, they continued to slaughter and pillage well into 1816. Claims by Rivière and Bernis that popular desire for vengeance was beyond their control were, in fact, a cover for their own complicity. Rivière and his committee, for instance, imprisoned all those who otherwise might have suffered 'popular' vengeance, but the crown-appointed prefect found it necessary in August to release them because concentrating potential victims simply facilitated massacre.²²

White Terror served a purpose, and the Haute-Garonne provides an instructive example of how ultraroyalists used it to secure local domination. Hard upon the departure of Decaen, royalist forces under the command of Léopold de Rigaud (a Chevalier) swept into Toulouse on 17 July. Initially there were about 600 soldiers, although only a small minority had guns. Rigaud and a Toulousain committee then set up a suitably noble, ultraroyalist provisional government. Villèle became mayor, Charles-Antoine Limairac (brother-in-law of Villèle) prefect, Louis-Maurice Delpy secretary general of the prefecture, and Jean-François de Savy-Gardeilh lieutenant general of police. Royalists who by right of appointment during the First Restoration should have resumed their positions were pushed aside. The

²² See Resnick, *White Terror*; Lewis, *Second Vendée*, pp. 187–218; Fitzpatrick, *Catholic Royalism*, pp. 33–59, and Alexander, *Bonapartism*, pp. 219–47.

same fate awaited Auguste-Laurent de Rémusat, an *ancien régime* noble who had served in the Napoleonic prefectural corps, when he arrived on 21 July. Although Rémusat had been named prefect by the cabinet in Paris, Marshal Pérignon, who had accompanied Angoulême to Spain and subsequently been appointed governor of the tenth military division, informed him that only orders from Angoulême were valid. Cabinet orders from Paris putting an end to the Duke's authority, received on 25 July, were ignored.²³

A 'military' commission was established to judge *fédérés*, who were ordered to turn in their guns within twenty-four hours. It appears that none of them did so, but at any event the order was simply a pretext for *verdetts* to go about their work. Some ninety to a hundred arrests soon followed, and *verdetts* made a point of looting and extortion, but there was no slaughter. Although *fédérés* had frightened royalists, the one fatality during the Hundred Days had been the work of soldiers. Moreover, given there were at least 1,200 *fédérés* and the Toulousain crowd was far from uniformly royalist, a certain measure of restraint made sense.²⁴

When questioned by cabinet ministers about the lengthy imprisonment of *fédéré* leaders thereafter, Villèle deployed the argument about potential mass violence should hated individuals be released. If we look at two incidents of crowd agitation, however, we begin to see how convenient 'popular' revenge was for the ultraroyalists of Toulouse. The most notorious was the assassination of General Jean-Pierre Ramel. As garrison commander of Toulouse, Ramel possessed control over the National Guard, and he was twice attacked by *verdetts* after he had refused their demands to be included into the Guard as entire units (rather than be integrated as individuals and hence be divided) and to draw their pay from the Guard. Ramel had decided that the government must bring the *verdetts* into line, and his reason for doing so brings us to a closely related prior incident.

The leniency he had shown royalists as mayor during the Hundred Days perhaps led Malaret to believe all would be forgiven; at any event, when the government appointed him president of the departmental electoral college in August 1815, he decided to return from Paris. Even before he had reached Toulouse, however, lieutenant general of police Savy-Gardeilh had advised Rémusat that 'popular' discontent would make it difficult to protect Malaret. Upon his arrival, the former mayor found that a petition opposing

²³ AN, F1B II Garonne (Haute-), 7, 22 July 1815, F7 3786, 8 August 1815; ADHG, 1M75, 25 July 1815, 13M57bis, 23 July 1815; Loubet, 'Le gouvernement', pp. 165, 339–50, and Resnick, *White Terror*, pp. 20–40.

²⁴ AN, F7 3786, 9 August; ADHG, 4M35, 1–22 August and 19 September 1815; Loubet, 'Le gouvernement', pp. 149–65, 337–66, and Higgs, *Ultraroyalism*, pp. 56–63.

his appointment as college president, undersigned by thirty 'pures', had been presented to Angoulême. Crowds demonstrated outside his house on the evenings of 13 and 14 August, and Malaret fled. Given that one of the leaders of the crowd was Savy-Gardeilh's son, it is rather obvious why the police were of no aid.

These developments led Ramel to rebuke Savy-Gardeilh *fils*, while Rémusat attempted to read the riot act to Savy-Gardeilh *père*. On 15 August, Ramel was attacked and left badly wounded, though not dead. National Guardsmen and police then stood aside while a second visit of *verdets* finished Ramel off on the night of 17 August. Subsequent investigations did lead to the punishment of several *verdets*, but they failed to reveal the role of the upper echelons of the ultraroyalist organization.

Certain points do, however, emerge from official reports. No one in a position of authority could claim much credit for his part in the affair. Neither Villèle nor Rémusat, for example, spoke to Ramel after the first attack. Although the prefect did go to Ramel's residence, he did not enter, seeing Pérignon 'in control'. Villèle's account in his memoirs ignored the period between the two attacks, giving the impression that it was all a single incident, but such was not the case and the fact that the small number of guards posted after the first attack conveniently went away strongly suggests an arrangement by which *verdets* were enabled to complete their mission.

Between the assaults, Ramel had informed justices of the peace that Savy-Gardeilh and Rigaud were responsible for the attacks, although he had been unable to identify his assailants. It was not, however, in any local official's interest that all matters should come to light; after all, Savy-Gardeilh and Rigaud were Chevaliers who had accompanied Angoulême into exile, and were key figures in the latter's provisional government. Nor was full revelation likely. Initial investigations went nowhere under the guidance of the crown prosecutor Jean-Antoine Miègeville, son of a councillor of the Toulousain *parlement* and a notorious 'pure' who had refused to take office during the Empire.²⁵

Ultimately, struggle for local control was at the heart of White Terror. Malaret and Ramel had posed no threat to royalism, and their actions during the Hundred Days had not made them likely targets for popular revenge. They had, however, challenged ultraroyalist ascendancy at a time when elections were taking place.

²⁵ AN, F7 9659, 16 August 1815; F7 3786, 22–4 August 1815; F9 515–16, 24 August 1815; ADHG, 4M35, 3–19 August and 19 September 1815; Bertier de Sauvigny, *Le Comte*, pp. 193, 274–6; Louis Eydoux, *L'assassinat du général Ramel à Toulouse* (Toulouse, 1905), and Villèle, *Mémoires*, 1, pp. 298–303.

When Louis XVIII called for elections in August 1815, recourse was had to the Imperial system, with modifications. The Imperial system stipulated indirect elections: voters in colleges of the *arrondissements* would vote a list of candidates, and members of a departmental college, gathered at the *chef lieu*, would then elect Deputies, half of whom must be chosen from the list of the *arrondissements*. There would be one elector in the departmental college for every thousand inhabitants of the department, and the electors must belong to the 600 leading departmental taxpayers. The king could add twenty individuals to the departmental college and ten to each of the colleges of the *arrondissements*. The minimum age for voters was lowered to twenty-one and that of candidates to thirty, and the number of Deputies was raised from 258 to 402.

In most colleges, only ultraroyalists were organized; leading left-wing figures were in hiding, or found their influence negligible after having backed a losing emperor. In the Seine-Inférieure, the prefect called on voters to eschew candidates who could 'again attract the hatred and mistrust of Europe'. Better still for ultraroyalism, the administrative chain of command was at low ebb, so that the wishes of the Talleyrand–Fouché ministry counted for little. Repeated purges and transfers meant that most prefects either had barely arrived on the scene, or were yet to appear. Even where prefects were willing to follow the cabinet line, their influence over lesser officials was often far from secure. Moreover, many ultraroyalist prefects simply ignored the wishes of a cabinet they despised.²⁶

Thus ultraroyalists had exceptionally favourable circumstances in which to operate. At Toulouse, Limairac took charge of adjusting voter lists, and did so to full ultraroyalist advantage. Rémusat's first choice as replacement for Malaret as college president was in fact Villèle, who, however, declined. The presidency therefore fell to the lawyer Mathieu Espinasse, on Villèle's recommendation. Given that Villèle's attack on the Charter was still circulating, Rémusat's reliance on the mayor was striking.²⁷

While Ramel was being attacked, Villèle was attending a pre-election meeting of royalist voters directed by the Chevaliers de la Foi. During voting on 16 August, messages were delivered to Espinasse informing him that crowds were preventing voters from entering the hall. According to the official college minutes, measures were taken to ensure that troops secured passage for troubled voters, but this was contradicted by the commander

²⁶ See *Journal de Rouen*, 14 August 1815, and N. Richardson, *The French Prefectoral Corps, 1814–1830* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 44–69.

²⁷ AN, FiC III Garonne (Haute-), 6, 9–13 August 1815 and 7 October 1816, and F7 3786, 24 August 1815.

of the *gendarmerie*, who reported that members of the Legion of Honour had been so harassed that they had departed.²⁸

In the event, elections went in a predictable direction. All the new Deputies were wealthy nobles and confirmed royalists, but there were nuances among them. Limalrac, Hippolyte d'Aldeguier (a former councillor of the Toulousain *parlement*) and Baron Jean-Pierre de Marcassus de Puymaurin (a son of a former Toulousain *capitou*) would sit with the Right and take directions from Villèle. The Marquis Jean-Antoine de Catellan, also a former member of the Toulousain *parlement*, would, however, break ranks and sit with the Centre-Right. As president of the departmental college, he had called for the election of men who loved the throne, but were also committed to the Charter. Villèle secured victory by the slimmest of margins on the third ballot, a sign that he was not yet established as a leader over local ultraroyalist rivals.²⁹

Ultraroyalists were similarly aggressive at Mende, where a volunteer royalist army also intimidated voters, so that the crown-appointed college president could not block the election of candidates chosen by a Chevalier committee. Such means, however, were not usually necessary. Intimidation certainly was not restricted to the Midi, but in truth the composition of the *Chambre introuvable* was more a product of the disarray of local rivals, and an electorate hopeful of reducing reprisals through selection of the seemingly most royal of royalists.³⁰

In the Isère, the Casino, a branch of the Chevaliers, directed royalist strategy. Largely noble in composition, but using priests as agents, the Casino had been formed in late July and early August. At Grenoble Jacques-Pierre de Chaléon, departmental inspector of the National Guard, and his son-in-law Charles de Pujol, who sent reports to Artois by means of Count MacCarthy, ran the Casino. Correspondence was also maintained with Polignac and Vitrolles, but it would appear that Viscount François-Joseph Dubouchage was the leading patron of the Casino. Dubouchage was a former minister of Louis XVI who had emigrated in 1792 and then returned under Bonaparte to live on his estates. He had not, however, publicly rallied to Bonaparte and had been placed under police surveillance for suspected conspiratorial plotting in 1805. Louis XVIII had made him Minister of the Marine, where he distinguished himself primarily by the appointment of

²⁸ AN, F7 3786, 17 August 1815; F1C III Garonne (Haute-), 6, 18 August 1815; ADHG, 2M19, 16 August 1815, and Bertier de Sauvigny, *Le Comte*, pp. 184–90.

²⁹ ADHG, 2M19, college minutes for August 1815; Rémusat, *Mémoires*, 1, pp. 229–33, and Villèle, *Mémoires*, 1, pp. 306–7.

³⁰ See T. Beck, *French Legislators 1800–1834* (Berkeley, 1974), pp. 50–8.