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Pierre Triomphe, *1815, La Terreur blanche*. Toulouse: Privat, 2017. 475 pp. Tables, maps, notes, bibliography, and index. 21€ (pb). ISBN 978-2-7089-6969-8.

Review by Donald Sutherland, University of Maryland

In the summer of 1815, thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of Protestants, former Jacobins, Bonapartists, and others fled their towns and villages in the south of France to save themselves from a royalist massacre. To no avail for some. Perhaps as many as several hundred people were murdered and royalists pillaged countless numbers of homes and other properties.[1] This was the ‘White Terror’ of 1815, a near complete breakdown of order that permitted crowds and small bands of thugs in Marseille, Avignon, Nîmes, Montpellier and elsewhere to wreck vengeance on erstwhile enemies for wrongs done as much as twenty and more years before. Pierre Triomphe has written welcome book on the White Terror, a subject that almost no one has examined for a long time. Unlike most authors who proclaim the importance of their topic, Triomphe modestly situates his subject in the lesser ranks of insurrections in the nineteenth century, far behind 1830, 1848, the insurrection against the coup of 1851, and of course, the Commune. This is to evaluate importance by the number of casualties but it is also possible to evaluate the significance in another way. The way to do this is to link this White Terror to previous ones in the 1790s, a theme he discusses from time to time but does not fully develop.

He tells his story in a puzzling way. The murders of Marshall Brune at Avignon on 2 August 1815, and of General Ramel at Toulouse on 15 August were the most spectacular events of the White Terror of 1815 yet Triomphe deals with these and other atrocities sporadically. Indeed, he stops short of analyzing the grisly violence the royalists inflicted on the Bonapartists at all, although he presents a handy tabulation of murders throughout the Midi (p. 254). Perhaps he feels the atrocities of the White Terror are already well known. Instead, he emphasizes other themes, in particular the politics of the early Second Restoration in the Midi and the difficulty of effecting the transition from the Hundred Days. He does this part very well. Among other things, he presents his findings on royalist circles like the *Chevaliers de la Foi* that was one secret society among several that had been founded during the Empire. He also shows how the masonic lodges or the learned society called the *Académie des Jeux Floraux* in Toulouse became royalist front organizations. He discusses the role of the local nobility in royalist associations; and he presents some fascinating material on confraternities that linked men of different social classes in a common religious association. Interestingly, the purges following the usurper’s defeat at Waterloo were not that significant—an important finding. The take away from all this is that royalism never succeeded in establishing a regional unity or indeed an ideological coherence. Instead, royalism was localized, a phenomenon of bigger cities like Toulouse, Nîmes, Avignon, and Marseille.

One sign of this localism was the role of women who reinforced community norms. Thus, as Marshall Brune’s corpse was being dragged through the streets of Avignon, women joined the celebratory farandole—a traditional Provençal snake dance in which women and children

frequently participated. In this case, the farandole depicted community solidarity against a hated outsider, a man who was falsely believed to have carried the princesse de Lamballe's head on a pike during the September Massacres in Paris nearly a quarter century before.[2] In Montpellier, women helped mutilate the corpses of four soldiers the mob had massacred. The women joined in trampling them, stripping their clothes, stealing their valuables, and all the while singing verses "en l'honneur du roi" (p. 208). In June 1815, a farandole composed of old women and children wound through Marseille and expelled the hated Corsican from the community by flinging a bust of Napoleon over a cliff (p. 192).

Triomphe shows that the chaos of the transition suited certain interests who saw in it a chance for revenge. Elites could persecute Bonapartists or Protestants who so recently had persecuted them. They could also revise tax rolls to make them pay more, or exclude them from the National Guard which had the great feature of rendering their communities more vulnerable. The elites' failures and complicities were not at all passive. There was an administrative and policing failure—an inability or unwillingness to prevent intimidation of witnesses, for example. There was also a massive bias on the part of the judiciary: in the Department of the Gard, the magistrates were notoriously compromised. They refused to convict even the most obvious criminals or declined even to hear cases involving royalist terrorists.[3] The condemnation of just two assailants for the murder of Marshall Brune, one suspect already dead, the other in absentia, by the tribunal at Riom was a hardly satisfying when dozens were culpable. Many others, like the gang chief Trestailon, who bragged of killing six Protestants in Nîmes, were arrested but never charged.[4] No one even opened an official investigation into the massacre of eleven Mameluke soldiers at Marseille on 26 June.[5] Terrorists could thus strut about their home towns in nearly complete safety, just as the Jacobin terrorist Jourdan *Sans Pouce* did at Avignon after his amnesty for his role in the Massacre of La Glacière in 1791.

Triomphe needs to develop the social analysis of the White Terror further. He points out that it was an urban phenomenon but does not explore this issue in depth. In Lower Provence in the 1790s, there was a White Terror because there was a vigorous and violent popular Jacobinism. In other words, the White Terror was one segment of factional strife. And these factions tore the agrotowns and cities of the region apart because early on, a struggle broke out over taxes and representation. To his credit, Triomphe realizes these struggles were more complicated than class or between rich and poor. He points out that Bonapartists and popular royalists resembled one other socially, with a fair representation on each side of the unskilled and apparently poor. But he needed to go further. He comments that education, residence and wealth may have made a difference but he neglects the work that explores these factors more thoroughly. Fabio Sampoli brought these variables into play in explaining the differences between the *Chiffonistes* and *Monnadiers* in Arles.[6] I tried it with the small town of Aubagne near Marseille. In that case, it was possible to estimate how much each variable contributed to choices of political loyalty relative to others. Thus the occupational value, "peasantry," not wealth or education, was most important in explaining adherence to fiscal and municipal reform. Then most interestingly, when it came to measuring the reasons for division among the most violent men of either side, the *comité de surveillance* versus membership in the murder gang, socio-economic variables mattered hardly at all. Membership in confraternities did.[7] That is, loyalties formed over generations in male associations created the confidence and solidarity to undertake to the most violent acts.

Jacobinism and anti-Jacobinism grew out of local situations. Assailants and victims knew each other. Triomphe remarks that this was true in 1815 as well. This is a matter of context. Triomphe devotes much of the last part of the book to the memory of the White Terror. He argues that its memory died out in the Second Empire. Maybe so, but if we conceive of the White Terror as an end point, its significance in relation to the Revolution is greater.

The White Terror of 1815 resembled that of 1794-98 in many respects: the complicity, the failure of the courts to punish politically inconvenient suspects, the revenge on political enemies, the humiliation and maiming of corpses—that of Marshall Brune was dragged through the streets of Avignon, beaten, robbed, and dumped in the Rhône for three days. Even the number of victims was comparable, although it should be pointed out that Marseille witnessed more politically inspired murders in 1815 than it had in the *année terrible* of 1792. Most interestingly, the justifications for murder were the same. White terrorists in both epochs justified lynching and murder by claiming the courts were incapable of rendering expedited justice and that they had to take preemptive action against attacks from Jacobins, Protestants, or Bonapartists.

The difference is royalism itself. Whatever it meant—the Pretender's Declaration of Verona of 1795, the Charter of 1814, or, more likely, the ancient peasant dream of a just king ruling without oppressive nobles or clerics to thwart his true will—royalism in the 1790s was not the mass movement it became in 1815. The defection of Toulon in August 1793 notwithstanding, royalism was absent from meridional Federalism in 1793; from the Thermidorean reaction of 1794-5; and from most of the murder gangs and anti-Jacobin mobs from 1794 to 1801. How places like Marseille transformed themselves from Jacobin cauldrons in the Revolution into delirious supporters of Louis XVIII would be a fruitful agenda for future research.

Frequently, murder, beatings, and pillage was revenge for offenses that had occurred during the Hundred Days but these in turn had a long history that links the 1790s to 1815. Gwynne Lewis argued for an unbroken history of sectarian strife stretching from the *bagarre de Nîmes* in May 1790 to the White Terror of 1815.[8] There were other continuities as well. The victims of the rioting in Marseille in June 1815 included a member of the *comité révolutionnaire* of the Year II; a pair of brothers who transformed lampposts into gallows in 1792; a former Jacobin municipal official; and a militant who made his way to Milan, perhaps to protect himself from reprisals, as so many others had, in the Army of Italy.[9] Finally, Trestaillon's father had been murdered in the *bagarre de Nîmes* a generation before his son's murder spree.[10]

1815 is an important contribution to the White Terror in the Midi. With around 40 pages of archival and printed sources, it is an impressive discussion of the early Restoration.

NOTES

[1] The author has examined these panics in detail in his “Des bruits qui courent aux mots qui tuent. Rumeurs et violences dans le Gard en 1815,” *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle* no. 36 (2008/1), pp. 59-73.

[2] Ernest Daudet, *La Terreur blanche: épisodes et souvenirs de la réaction dans le midi en 1815, d'après des souvenirs contemporains et des documents inédits* (Paris: A. Quantin, 1878), p. 222.

[3] Brian Fitzpatrick, *Catholic Royalism in the Department of the Gard, 1814-1852* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 54-5.

[4] Triomphe, 243-4. Paul Prosper Vermeil de Conchard, *L'assassinat du maréchal Brune: épisode de la terreur blanche* (Paris : Perrin, 1887).

[5] Paul Gaffarel, 'Un épisode de la terreur blanche : les massacres de Marseille en juin 1815,' *La Révolution française*, XLIX (1905): 335-7. See also his "La Terreur blanche à Marseille dans les derniers mois de 1815," *Revue historique* 122, no. 2 (1916): 241-87.

[6] Fabio Sampoli, "Politics and Society in Revolutionary Arles : *Chiffonistes and Monniadiers*," (Ph. D. dissertation, Yale University, 1982).

[7] D. M. G. Sutherland, *Murder in Aubagne: Lynching, Law, and Justice during the French Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 27-33.

[8] Gwynne Lewis, *The Second Vendée: The Continuity of Counter-Revolution in the Department of the Gard, 1789-1815* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), *passim*.

[9] Gaffarel, 'Les massacres de Marseille en juin 1815,' pp. 317-23.

[10] Fitzpatrick, *Catholic Royalism in the Department of the Gard*, p. 53.

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