

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.

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Although it has long been overshadowed by later *années terribles*, 1815 was one of the most eventful years in French history. Little more than a year after the fall of Napoleon and restoration of monarchy in the wake of foreign invasion, the nation experienced two more regime changes in quick succession. Following the epic defeat at Waterloo, it was also subject to another, even more widespread and brutal, foreign occupation. Amidst this whirlwind of events, tensions between revolutionary or Bonapartist “patriots” and royalists erupted in outright civil war, later dubbed the “White Terror” by liberal historians eager to emphasize the danger of royalism by equating it to the “Red Terror” of 1793-1794. By August 1815, as one British observer noted in “private intelligence” to his government from Paris, a “great proportion” of the country’s eighty-seven departments were “ruined, or in a state of revolt.” Enclosing a copy of a report by the French interior minister Joseph Fouché on the “internal situation” of France, this observer detailed the chaos in the provinces as well as the capital, including massacres of Protestants around Nîmes, revolts in the east, trials of Bonapartists, seditious cries in the capital’s public places, and plots against the lives of the Allied sovereigns gathered in Paris, whose advisors were themselves divided on how to pacify the country. The division of the country was perhaps most vividly conveyed in this observer’s description of the colors of the symbols worn in various locations: “The green cockade (Monsieur’s [the Count d’Artois]) is worn in La Vendée and in Brittany; the white and green along the Garonne. Mademoiselle Mars, the celebrated actress, who had given offence by appearing with [Napoleonic] ‘violets,’ and then withdrew for some weeks from the stage, has reappeared with great *éclat*. Being obliged, however, in her character to change dresses three times, she appeared first ornamented with red flowers and ribands, then with white, then with blue, which, being an ‘adroit’ disclosure of her sentiments, afforded much amusement.” But, as this observer himself admitted, “The times are almost too serious to write such things.”[1] Alongside this superficial symbolic battle waged a real, often violent, civil war between partisans of Napoleon, on the one hand, and supporters of Louis XVIII, on the other.

In comparison to its “Red” precursor, the “White” Terror of 1815 has long been neglected by historians. Since the first archival-based histories by Ernest Daudet in 1878 and Henry Houssaye in 1918, there have been only a handful of studies of the “events” of 1815, as they were termed at the time.[2] These events have received only summary treatment in histories of the Restoration or counter-revolution. As one of these surveys complained at the beginning of this century, there had been no serious study of the “White Jacobins” of 1815.[3] This new study of the White Terror by Pierre Triomphe is thus most welcome. In addition to providing a comprehensive overview of the White Terror in all of its variations across the south of France from its origin before the Hundred Days through its pacification at the end of 1815, Triomphe traces the memories and traditions of these events over the next century and beyond, showing how they constructed such cultural myths

as the brigand-hero Trestaillons, the “Midi” as a region, and the “White Terror” itself. Based on exhaustive research in local and national archives as well as contemporary memoirs, histories, and periodicals, his work should be of interest to historians (and other scholars) not just of the Restoration but of nineteenth-century political history, cultural memory, and comparative violence more broadly.

Among the many strengths of this book is the way in which it situates the events of 1815 in the *longue durée* of French history, including not just the struggle between revolution and counterrevolution but also the religious wars. In some communities such as Montauban, Nîmes, and Uzès, the violence was fueled by confessional differences dating back to the sixteenth century, with Catholics seeking vengeance against Protestants who had benefited from the Revolution.[4] However, as Patrick Cabanel emphasizes in the Preface, *Triomphe* shows that the White Terror was more than an anti-Protestant “pogrom.” The “excesses” of 1815 were the “ultimate episode in a cycle of violences opened in 1789” (p. 16), in which the Terror of 1793-1794 and the Thermidorian reaction were the most extreme episodes to date; the royalist “terrorists” of 1815 were descendants of (and sometimes the same people as) the *sans-culottes* of the Convention and the *Jeunesse Dorée* of the Directory. This particular *montée des extrêmes*, as *Triomphe* terms it, dated from the last years of the Empire, when opposition to conscription and taxation provoked a rise in royalism, especially among Catholics in the south. Organized in secret societies, these royalists rallied around the Duc d’Angoulême in late 1813 and early 1814. Largely dissatisfied with the First Restoration, they mobilized for a more “pure” royalism from the beginning of the Hundred Days. For these *miquelets*, as they were called, the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo was merely a “detonator” of their desire for vengeance (p. 113), which had been building since at least 1810. Once detonated, this desire for vengeance proved difficult to contain: the southern royalists were pacified only gradually, following the recall of the Duc d’Angoulême to Paris, the election of the *Chambre Introuvable*, and a change in ministry in August-September 1815. Moreover, it would continue to shape French politics through the Second Restoration and beyond.

In recounting the events of 1815 itself, *Triomphe* keeps his focus sharply on the “Midi,” which he claims was invented as a distinct region as a result of the White Terror. Emphasizing that events here were rooted in a long tradition of localism and resistance against centralization in Paris, he takes care to delineate this region between the Alps and the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, which constituted a quarter of the Hexagon in terms of territory as well as population in 1815 (p. 17). Providing a detailed timeline of the “contagion” of royalist movements and incidents from Marseille across this region following the arrival of the news from Waterloo in late June, he also pays close attention to the differences as well as similarities between localities. For instance, in contrast to the corridor of the Rhône River, where much of the royalist violence occurred, the western part of this region (with the exceptions of Bordeaux and Toulouse) along the Spanish frontier remained more peaceful, in part because of a higher presence of national troops (pp. 72-3 and pp. 126-7). Through such careful analysis, *Triomphe* shows how variable and fluid was “the” White Terror.

Even more original and important is *Triomphe*’s close sociological study of the popular as well as elite “Whites” who participated in royalist activities in the Midi. In addition to the government of the Duc d’Angoulême in Toulouse, these activities were led by noble administrators such as Joseph de Villèle (mayor of that city); royalist societies and associations, both old and new; looser

“movements” of notables, most of whom were of an older generation who had experienced the Revolution as adolescents or adults; and royal guards under the Count d’Artois. Although they shared a hatred of the Revolution and the bourgeoisie that had profited from it, these elite royalists had complex and often rival aims. Alongside these elite counter-revolutionaries were large numbers of popular royalists, who did not so much follow their social superiors as initiate violence on their own in an effort to seek not just vengeance but also patronage. Employing judicial records, Triomphe provides us with the first real glimpse of these actors. Consisting mainly of urban artisans, shopkeepers, porters, and cultivators, who suffered from the collapse of the Empire, these “brigands” engaged in farandoles, *émeutes*, pillages, and executions against their “patriot” enemies, whom they denigrated as “savage beasts.” While Triomphe questions whether these popular royalists were really “old Jacobins who had whitened with age” (p. 202), he does show that, with an average age of 38, some of them might previously have been *sans-culottes* and that many of their practices—such as the *farandoles*—were continuous with revolutionary culture as well as previous counterrevolutionary violence, particularly in 1795. In addition to this significant point, Triomphe also illuminates here (esp. pp. 101-2) and elsewhere the role of women (and children) in the royalist violence in 1815.[5]

In tracing the actions of these royalists, Triomphe emphasizes the role played by rumor in the political vacuum of France in the summer of 1815. Highlighting the “noises” and “plots” that fueled their “excesses,” he thus contributes to a recent historiographical vein on the role of rumor and conspiracy in politics.[6] Reminding us that between the fall of Napoleon and the re-consolidation of the monarchy there really was no state apparatus across much of France, Triomphe vividly recreates the sense of incertitude and anxiety felt by inhabitants of the Midi in the summer of 1815. As one military commander reported from Montauban in late June, “We had the sense of sitting all day on a volcano.”[7] This anxiety persisted well beyond the reestablishment of King Louis XVIII on the throne. Through the end of the year and beyond, inhabitants continued to fear the return to power of the “patriot” camp, often linked by the rumor mill to perfidious Albion, which was deemed sympathetic to the Protestant victims of royalist excesses (pp. 143-4). Rather than dismissing such anxiety as paranoia or hysteria, Triomphe demonstrates that fear—the original meaning of terror—was a key factor in politics in this period.

Fear shaped not just the events of 1815 but the battle over their memory. In the last section of his book, Triomphe provides the first comprehensive account of the way in which the “White Terror” has been constructed, contested, and eventually elided, in public memory. Situating the memory of 1815 in the larger partisan battle between the Old France of the ancien régime and the New France of the Revolution, he argues that this battle was quickly won by the patriots. After a brief period of amnesia as the Restoration government sought to legitimize itself, the liberal turn of 1817 unleashed a wave of hypermnesia, in which the civil war of 1815 was memorialized not just in monuments but in publications, speeches, prints, public trials, and petitions for indemnities by victims. In this hypermnesia, which peaked with an anti-royalist song by Béranger on the death of the royalist “brigand” Trestaillon in 1827, liberals succeeded in branding the violence of 1815 a “White Terror,” on a par with 1793-1794. Following the Revolution of 1830, this memory was revived in the regime’s indemnification of some of the (patriot) victims of 1815 as well as the failed attempt at insurrection by Madame de Berri on behalf of her son, the Bourbon claimant to the throne, in 1832. Under Napoleon III, the memory of 1815 became linked with that of the resistance to his coup d’état in the south. Following yet another regime change, it finally fizzled

out around 1880, with the consolidation of the Third Republic. As Triomphe concludes, “Product of the confrontation between the two Frances, the White Terror could exist only through it, and thus disappeared with the affirmation of the Republic” (p. 392). Out of this almost century-long contest, however, were consolidated three myths in the French political imaginary: the “Midi” as a region, which has shifted from white to blue to red and back again; the anti-hero Trestailons, representative of the royalist brigand; and the “White Terror” itself, originally employed by liberals to minimize the violence of their own revolution but now widely identified with the events of 1815. This section of the book alone revolutionizes our understanding of the White Terror and its long-term significance.

In discussing the memory of the events of 1815, Triomphe acknowledges that it was often connected—especially for liberals—with the foreign occupation (e.g., pp. 290-2). As he rightly notes, liberal journals repeatedly denounced not only the “men of 1815” or “slashers [*égorgeurs*] of 1815” but also the “treaties of 1815” (p. 363), in which the Allied powers imposed financial and territorial penalties—as well as a multi-year peace-keeping occupation—on the French. However, in his close attention to the regional dimension of the White Terror, he neglects the broader (non-Parisian) national and international context in which it occurred. While he occasionally notes the presence in certain southern communities of Austrian troops, who helped to contain royalist violence and restore state authority (e.g., p. 148 and pp. 226-7), he overlooks the role of not just Austrian but other occupying troops in provoking as well as suppressing fear. At exactly the same moment that the “contagion” of violence swept the Midi, France was invaded by well over one million troops from across Europe. According to a “note” signed by the Allies on 24 July, these troops were assigned to different national zones, covering two-thirds of the country. While some of the south-west remained outside of these zones, the territory east of the Rhône River, from Dijon down to the Mediterranean, was occupied by 320,000 troops from Austria, plus at least 15,000 more from England and Piedmont-Sicily who landed in Marseille in mid-July. In the wake of Waterloo, Spanish troops also made incursions across the border into southwestern France, and in late August and early September, Austrian forces extended beyond their zone into the Gard, Ardèche, and Lozère, to maintain order. This foreign presence was accompanied by significant pillaging, destruction, violence, and even rape. This occupation was regularized in early August, when the Allies agreed (at least in theory) not to appropriate supplies or funds, in exchange for two payments of 50 million francs toward salaries and requisitions financed by means of a forced loan on the richest taxpayers in France. However, until a final peace settlement was reached in November, it remained rather arbitrary and, often, brutal.[8] This foreign occupation certainly increased anxiety and resentment among French inhabitants, already unsettled by yet another regime change. The bitterness toward the foreign troops, even among royalists, is evident in contemporary accounts from the Midi in the summer and fall of 1815. In Marseille, Julie Pellizzone bemoaned already in mid-July: “But, in spite of the urgent need that we had in the present circumstance, we still felt a painful sentiment in seeing foreigners come to do what we should have done ourselves, that it reestablish order and maintain the Bourbons. It is like a big family which, unable to get along, resorts to lawyers to arrange their affairs.”[9] Later that fall, from the Bouches-du-Rhône, the lieutenant-general of police reported, “Since the return of the King, spirits seem less favorable to His Majesty than last year... The behavior of the Allied troops in Marseille is generally orderly; but the inhabitants have a pronounced aversion to the Austrians; Thus, the appearance of the hereditary Prince [of Austria] was not looked upon favorably. The Marseillais, once so attached to the English, declaim against them today with a sort of virulence... The

impulsion given to the cause of Royalism in this country has exceeded its bounds.”[10] For local inhabitants, the foreign occupation and the White Terror were intimately linked.

Moreover, the White Terror conditioned the peace settlement signed in November 1815, which in turn shaped the political reconstruction of France. In response to the violence between the French themselves, the Allied powers implemented a more punitive settlement than the one they had accorded the year before. In addition to territorial losses and financial reparations, they insisted upon a lengthy “occupation of guarantee” against such civil unrest. Centered along the (more revolutionary) northeastern frontier, this peace-keeping occupation would last until November 1818. Alongside the occupation, the foreign powers instituted a Council of Allied Ambassadors, which met at least once per week during these three years to discuss international relations but also to oversee domestic politics within France. Although unacknowledged by him, this council was instrumental in what Triomphe terms the “*prise en main*” of state authority by the monarchy in 1816 (p. 246). Influential in the dissolution of the *Chambre Introuvable* in September of that year, it helped to initiate the “liberal” turn of the Second Restoration.

In short, the Battle of the Two Frances and its memory was shaped by the foreign powers who occupied the country in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. More consideration of this broader context would have strengthened this account of the White Terror. At the same time, Triomphe might have done more to explicate the racial nature of some of the violence, especially in Marseille, in line with recent work by Ian Coller.[11] Nonetheless, this book makes a groundbreaking contribution to the historiography on the events of 1815. With its careful attention to chronology as well as locality, it deepens our understanding of that pivotal year in modern French history.

NOTES

[1] “Private Intelligence from Paris” signed E.B., 7 Aug. 1815, accompanying Report of the Minister of the Interior, *Supplementary Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington, K.G.*, vol. 11, ed. by his son, the Duke of Wellington, K.G. (London: John Murray, 1858-1872), pp. 107-10.

[2] Ernest Daudet, *La Terreur blanche: Épisodes et souvenirs de la réaction dans le Midi en 1815, d’après des souvenirs contemporains et des documens inédits* (Paris: A. Quantin, 1878), and Henry Haussaye, *La Seconde abdication/La Terreur blanche* (Paris: Perrin et Cies., 1918). After Haussaye, the main works on the subject were Daniel Resnick, *The White Terror and the Political Reaction after Waterloo* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), and René, Duc de Castries, *La Terreur blanche: L’épuration de 1815* (Paris: Perrin, 1981).

[3] Emmanuel de Waresquiel and Benoit Yvert, *Histoire de la Restauration, 1814-1830* (Paris: Éditions Perrin, 1996), p. 151. Histories of the counter-revolution or Restoration that discuss the White Terror include Donald Sutherland, *France, 1789-1815: Revolution and Counterrevolution* (London: Fontana Press/Collins, 1985); James Roberts, *The Counter-Revolution in France, 1787-1830* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1990); Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, *The Bourbon Restoration*, trans. Lynn M. Case (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966; orig. pub. 1955); André Jardin and André-Jean Tudesq, *Restoration and Reaction, 1815-1848*, trans. Elborg Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; orig. pub. 1973); and Francis Démier, *La*

France de la Restauration, 1814-1830: L'impossible retour du passé (Paris: Gallimard, 2012). More recently, Yann Guerrin has detailed the trauma of the years 1814-1818 in *La France après Napoléon: Invasions et occupations, 1814-1818* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2014).

[4] This point has been made by Brian Fitzpatrick, *Catholic Royalism in the Department of the Gard, 1814-1852* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, new ed. 2002), and, more recently, Rebecca McCoy, in "Protestant and Catholic Tensions After the French Revolution: The Religious Nature of the White Terror in Languedoc, 1815," *The Journal of the Western Society for French History* 43 (2015), pp. 131-47.

[5] Pierre Triomphe, "Des femmes royalistes contre l'armée dans le Midi en 1815," *Revue historique des armées: Service historique de la Défense*, special issue on "1815-1816: Le peuple contre l'armée, no. 283 (2016), pp. 39-48.

[6] See, for instance, François Ploux, *De bouche à oreille: Naissance et propagation des rumeurs dans la France du XIXe siècle* (Paris: Aubier, 2003), and Gilles Malandain, *L'Introuvable complot: L'affaire Louvel: Attentat, enquête et rumeur dans la France de la Restauration* (Paris: EHESS, 2011).

[7] Report from Montauban by Maréchal de camp Baron Barrié, commandant le dept. du Tarn-et-Garonne, 28 juin 1815, Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre 18C 37, cited p.117.

[8] On the invasion and occupation of 1815, see Roger André, *L'occupation de la France par les Alliés en 1815 (juillet-novembre)* (Paris: E. de Boccard, Éditeur, 1924).

[9] Julie Pellizzone, *Souvenirs: Journal d'une Marseillaise*, vol. 2, 1815-1824, ed. Hélène Échinard et Georges Reynaud (Paris: INDIGO & Côté-femmes éditions, 2001), pp. 86-7.

[10] Report from Bouches-du-Rhône, 18 Oct. 1815, Archives Nationales, F7/3823: Police général: Rapports hebdomadaires des départements, October-December 1815.

[11] Ian Coller, *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe, 1798-1831* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), esp. chapter five, "Massacre and Restoration."

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H-France Forum
Volume 13 (2018), Issue 1, #2