Protestant and Catholic Tensions After the French Revolution:
The Religious Nature of the White Terror in Languedoc, 1815

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The Napoleonic Era ended with considerable turmoil across France as four different regimes—Napoleon's Empire, the First Restoration, the Hundred Days, and the Second Restoration—succeeded one another from March 1814 to July 1815. Nowhere was the conflict more marked than in Languedoc.\(^1\) There, the rapid changes of government created the context for the White Terror of 1815, the last major episode in the cycle of religious violence that had marked Protestant and Catholic relations since the Wars of Religion. Scholars, however, have mainly interpreted the White Terror as a political reaction against the Revolution and especially the Hundred Days.\(^2\) The political focus of much of the secondary literature is no surprise given that most of the surviving sources were written by Bourbon officials, many of them Catholic Ultraroyalists, who represented the White Terror purely as the result of factionalism and political

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I would like to thank Professors Rosemary Hooper-Hamersley, Jennifer Popiel, Ralph Menning, and Bethany Keenan for their helpful critiques and suggestions. I would also like to thank Lebanon Valley College for numerous faculty grants. Finally, I want to thank my colleagues in the Department of History, Politics, and Global Studies at Lebanon Valley College for funding from the Dick Joyce Fund.

\(^1\)The focus of this study is on the parts of Languedoc with a Protestant population, most notably the Gard along with adjacent areas of the Hérault, Aveyron, and Lozère.

\(^2\)The key works on the White Terror are: Brian Fitzpatrick, *Catholic Royalism in the department of the Gard, 1814-1852* (Cambridge: 2002); Daniel Resnick, *The White Terror and the Political Reaction after 1815*, (Harvard: 1966); and Gwynn Lewis, *The Second Vendée: Counter-revolution in the Department of the Gard, 1789-1815*, (Oxford: 1978). Resnick puts the events in the Gard into a wider national framework of reaction and provides a reminder that in most of France, the White Terror was primarily political. His discussion of the Midi acknowledges the importance of the persecution of Protestants.
The nature of the sources has meant that the religious dimensions of the White Terror have received less attention even though this episode marked the end of a cycle of violence that started with the Reformation.

The religious policies of the Revolution and Napoleon's Concordat were at once the sources of the violence of 1815 and the reason why the White Terror was the last major outburst of Catholic-Protestant conflict in France. Although the Edict of Toleration of 1787 under the Bourbons began the process of integrating Protestants, the Revolution heightened religious tensions by fully legalizing Protestantism and providing for its reestablishment. The Republican phase of the Revolution led to outright religious conflict due to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and dechristianization. By the time that Napoleon came to power, these policies had created a stigma surrounding religious persecution. Napoleon’s Concordat of 1801 and the Organic Articles added in 1802 ended religious violence for the duration of the Empire by laying out specific terms of coexistence guaranteed to protect both Catholic and Protestant religious communities. The religious settlement also redefined the relationship of both confessions with the state. The turmoil at the end of the Empire provided the opportunity for a violent Catholic reaction to the changes brought by the Concordat. In 1815, as earlier, sectarian conflict overlapped with politics because issues of power were central to the survival of each community and to the terms of coexistence of Catholics and Protestants within the nation. The White Terror in the Protestant areas of Languedoc, was therefore more than a matter of royalism gone amok, or of settling of old scores related to the Revolution and Hundred Days. Because the Bourbon regime reacted to the violence by upholding the main features of the Concordat, the White Terror also marked a watershed in religious relations in France.

**Politics and Religion Before 1815**

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Despite the Ultraroyalists’ insistence on the political nature of the violence, the reality was much more complicated. It is well worth remembering that the Reformation, which had split France between Catholics and Protestants, had initially been about doctrine and religious authority. Over time, differing religious practices and beliefs had created two different communities and identities. These differences also turned into questions of political loyalty to a Catholic monarchy. In this context, political divisions over religion were also about the survival of the respective religious communities and their cultures, as well as about the ability to practice their faiths openly. Consequently, many of the issues were about both belief and the terms of coexistence of the two religious groups that went beyond political factionalism. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 made Protestantism illegal, clearly showing how religious practice depended on politics.

By restoring Protestantism a century after the Revocation of 1685, the French Revolution inaugurated a new phase in the tensions over Protestant/Catholic coexistence as well as political differences between the two groups. Most Protestants supported the Revolution because it guaranteed their right to exist as French citizens and to openly practice their faith. Although the Edict of Toleration of 1787 had allowed Protestants the right to register marriages, births, and deaths, it did not remove political disabilities. Only in 1789 did the Declaration of the Rights of Man grant Protestants the guarantee of liberty of conscience. Although uneasy about the Edict of Toleration and the Declaration, Catholics as well as Protestants in the mixed communities of Languedoc initially supported the Revolution. The National Assembly's vote against the proposal from Dom Gerle, which would have established Catholicism as the state religion, did nothing to reassure Catholics. Clearly, this vote indicated a shift in the Protestant position within the nation by rejecting the privileged position of the Catholic Church. Catholics, however, only definitively turned against the Revolution with the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. During the Terror dechristianization affected both Protestants as well as Catholics, but Catholics had more to lose as the government condensed the bishoprics, closed


monasteries, took the Church’s wealth, persecuted the clergy, and shuttered churches. Although the church closures under the Terror also restricted the liberty so recently granted to Protestants, they had had little time to organize and so had few pastors and little property to be confiscated.

Napoleon’s Concordat and the Organic Articles also added to the polarization of Protestants and Catholics along political lines, but for religious reasons. For the Protestants, the Concordat upheld the principle of religious liberty, permitted them to worship freely, and confirmed the status guaranteed by the Declaration of the Rights of Man as full citizens of France. The Concordat and the stability of the Napoleonic period gave them the opportunity to finally reestablish religious practice openly after the long period of the Revocation. Although Ultraroyalists resented the new status of the Protestants, Catholics as a whole also welcomed the Concordat’s guarantee of religious liberty, a principle they had embraced after the persecution of the revolutionary years.

In contrast to the Protestants’ situation, for Catholics, the Revolution had marked a short rupture in their traditions and they had hoped for a complete return to the practices of the pre-revolutionary Church. Although Catholics now found their Church restored, it had been demoted in status. Like the Protestants, they were subject to state controls and organization. Catholics also found that they no longer completely defined the nation or community, for the Concordat recognized Catholicism only as the religion of the majority of the people. Catholics now had the guarantee of religious liberty and the right to restore their churches and traditions, but in so doing they would have to take the liberties of Protestants into account.

The Concordat and Organic Articles set the ground rules for a process of reconstructing both Protestant and Catholic churches in a way designed to prevent a violent replay of the numerous conflicts over buildings and property that had accompanied the Wars of Religion, the Revocation, and the Camisard revolt. Complicating these decisions was the fact that some “Catholic” churches had been Protestant before the Revocation, and often Catholic prior to the Reformation. Simply deciding how to divide Church property evoked the conflicts of the past. For example, the church of Lézan in the Gard had been Catholic before the Reformation, but became a Protestant temple in 1562. In 1680, the crown awarded the building to the Catholics who partially demolished and rebuilt it so as to remove all vestiges of Protestantism. During the Camisard Revolt, Protestant rebels had seized the building and again made it a Protestant temple only to lose it to the Catholics when the crown repressed the uprising. The

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6 André Encrevé, Protestants, (Paris: 1985); Robert, Églises réformées.
8 Encrevé, Protestants, 51.
revolutionaries closed the church in 1795. Out of recognition that Lézan was primarily Protestant, Napoleon’s regime awarded the building to the Protestants in 1803. Sorting out who owned any particular church building as part of the Napoleonic settlement was a fraught issue, one that relied on contested memories and revived many old grievances.9

Implementation of the Concordat and Organic Articles involved more than allocating church buildings but required other ways of dividing space and resources. Saddled with the cost of expenses for both confessions, the Napoleonic state had no intention of funding the Catholic Church at the prerevolutionary level. That meant once again redrawing boundaries for bishoprics and more importantly for villagers, of parishes. This process also now had to take into account the religious needs of the Protestants by designating some towns as the center of consistories. In many cases, officials in each department based decisions about funding parishes and assigning priests on the balance between Protestants and Catholics in each village. Not only did Catholics in small hamlets find that their village church would henceforth be designated as satellite chapels, and so would not have a priest, but in villages with a large number of Protestants, the government might assign the original parish church to them, leaving the Catholics to trek to another village to attend mass. The converse often applied to Protestants as well. Protestant villagers who did not live in the seat of a consistory or were left without a reassigned Catholic church, would have to travel through rugged country to religious services or they would have to raise funds to build their own temple. Subsequent laws under the Napoleonic regime required communes to supplement salaries and provide lodging for the clergy of both confessions. These provisions led to even more conflicts as citizens in mixed

villages protested the need to pay for the upkeep of the opposite faith. Because the Organic Articles had mandated a division of property that had been Catholic (at least since the Revocation) and Protestants were the beneficiaries, even when allocations were not equal, the Concordat evoked much more resentment on the part of the Catholics.

The Organic Articles also regulated processions, another long-standing source of Catholic-Protestant conflict. Catholics had traditionally held outdoor processions, especially on Corpus Christi, a holy day that celebrated the consecrated host and therefore featured a central difference from Protestantism in regards to the mass. In addition, processions emphasized the unity of the community, the Catholic religion, and even the alliance of the Church and French state. Pressures on Protestants to participate and conform to the Corpus Christi processions reflected the underlying power struggle within mixed communities over control of space, who belonged, and national identity. Consequently, although the Concordat guaranteed Catholics the right to public worship, Article 45 of the Organic Articles declared that they could hold no public worship outside the confines of the Church, including processions, in towns with Protestant consistories. The ban on public processions, more than any other issue, made the new order of things clear, for without this right, Catholics in towns with a consistory could not practice their traditional religion. Nonetheless, the decree about public processions was often not enforced during the Napoleonic era, because the government authorized Protestants in the Midi to have consistories in some towns that did not completely meet the population requirement out of practical considerations of distance for the outlying inhabitants. In return for being granted a consistory, Protestants in some towns agreed to the processions as a compromise. Consequently, the conflicts over the implementation of the Concordat, especially those over shared spaces and processions, demonstrate the compromises that each group had to make and the resentments that these compromises engendered.

Although most Protestants in the Midi had been firm supporters of Napoleon, at the end of the Empire, like other Frenchmen, they were war-weary.


11Ibid, Robert, Églises réformées; McCoy, “Lieux de Mémoire”; McCoy, “Restoring the Church”; and “Liberty of Religion.” Research on processions drew heavily on series V in the departmental archives of the Gard, Hérault, Aveyron, and Lozère, as well as AN F/19 5547-5551 and 10105-10106. Other material is scattered through judicial and police records both in the national and departmental archives.

12McCoy, “Liberty of Religion.”
and rallied to the king. The repression of the First Restoration, however, disillusioned them much as it had other citizens. The First Restoration brought changes in the policies that had shaped the implementation of the terms of the Concordat and Organic Articles and added to the sense of specifically religious grievance on both sides. The Charter issued by Louis XVIII in 1814 reaffirmed the principle of “liberty of religion” but also made Catholicism the state religion, thereby suggesting a partial return to the ancien régime or at least a reshaping of the Concordat and a different accommodation with the past if not an outright return to it. Nonetheless, these half measures did not satisfy the Ultraroyalist leaders who were bent on revenge and wanted an even closer relationship between throne and altar. The changes also did not address the grievances of Catholic peasants whose day-to-day concerns were with the allocation of churches, priests, and the other compromises required to live with the Protestants. The Restoration government made few alterations in Napoleonic policies on these points.\textsuperscript{13} It did, however, in the name of religious liberty, insist on the right of Catholics to process in all towns with consistories. Officials also now, with government backing, returned to a pre-Revocation policy of forcing Protestants to decorate their homes and take their hats off as the host passed, practices they considered idolatrous.\textsuperscript{14} Given the changes in the Concordat and Organic Articles at the beginning of the First Restoration, along with rumors of a Catholic and Ultraroyalist reaction, Protestants had religious as well as political reasons to support the return of the Bonapartist regime. Consequently, many of them did welcome the return of Napoleon due to the policies of the Restoration government.

The White Terror

The White Terror in the Gard employed a familiar repertoire of ritual confessional violence and symbolism, thereby making clear to all participants and observers that it was yet another episode in a recurring cycle of violence.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13}The Bourbon regime continued and even accelerated the periodic inquiries into the state of Protestant and Catholic buildings. AN F/19 10615.
\textsuperscript{14}McCoy, “Liberty of Religion.”
The violence began as soon as the news of the Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo reached the Midi during the period June 25-28. Following familiar patterns, Catholic crowds in Alès and Uzès immediately assembled against the Napoleonic authorities just as supporters of the Bonapartist forces, led by General Jacques Laurent de Gilly (a Protestant), marched on Montpellier and initially expelled the royalists. Once the triumph of the Bourbons became clear, Gilly and his forces fled the new regime by retreating into the Cévennes, a region dominated by Catholics. In Nîmes, the mayor, a Protestant, provoked royalists by waiting to raise the white flag until the arrival of news on July 15 of the king’s entry into Paris. After negotiations for safe passage out of the city, the Bonapartist troops stationed in the garrison surrendered. In the meantime, however, Catholic peasants from the surrounding countryside had swelled the crowds in the streets in Nîmes. Unhappiness with the new position of Catholics in the nation and the reorganization of the Church was not the main source of resentment for Ultraroyalist leaders, but the regime of the Concordat and Organic Articles did stoke resentments at the popular level. In 1815, these resentments were one element that fueled the willingness of Catholic villagers to flock to Nîmes in support of Catholics in the city. As the troops, now disarmed, left the citadel, the crowd fell upon them, injuring and killing some of the soldiers. Murdering and looting directed at Protestants escalated throughout the city.17

Violence spread into the countryside around Nîmes following patterns that were all too reminiscent of the past. Bands of peasants and royalists began attacking the rural estates of Protestants in the immediate environs of Nîmes whom they accused of holding Bonapartist sympathies. Rumors of these events then percolated throughout the countryside, affecting the rest of the Gard as well as the Protestant regions of the Gard and Hérault and the Aveyron. Protestant refugees from Nîmes, Uzès, and Alès spread the panic by fleeing towards the towns of the Cévennes where many had friends and relatives. They particularly congregated in Anduze, the former stronghold of the 17th century Protestant leader, the Duc de Rohan, and recognized by both confessions as a symbol of Protestant resistance and militancy.18

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16 Ibid, 183-184; Sottocasa, Mémoires affrontés, 327.
17 ADG 1M535, “Procès verbaux sur interrogations des soldats blessés à la caserne à Nîmes.” Testimony is from Charles Stanislaus Lefebvre, commander of the 19th military division. See also Lewis, Second Vendée, 187-188, 193-194. Note that other accounts do explore the economic reasons that also fueled discontent at the popular level. See especially Fitzpatrick, Catholic Royalism.
Attacks on churches—sites that physically embodied both religions—also took place in 1815, a form of violence that had a long history. The grievances over changes in the designation of parish and consistory boundaries, and over the allocation of church properties, made Protestant church buildings a target. During the White Terror, Catholics repeated the cycle by looting and destroying Protestant churches in the mixed communities of the Gard, Hérault, and in Saint-Affrique in the Aveyron. The upheaval of the Hundred Days and the aftermath provided the context for Catholics to react violently to the practical consequences of the Concordat and the reestablishment of Protestantism as a legitimate religion in France.

In Nîmes in November 1815, Catholics demonstrated in front of the Protestant temple, incited by Ultraroyalist officials. But given that the temple was a Catholic church until the Terror, protestors had their own religious reasons to vent their anger. In the rest of the Gard, Protestant temples were closed and worship suspended. Other religious activities such as meetings and charitable subscriptions also came to a halt. In Villeveyrac in the Hérault, not only did

\[^{19}\text{Andrew Spicer, ‘‘Qui est de Dieu, oit la parole de Dieu’’; Keith P. Luria, ‘‘Protestant Temples,’’ ‘‘Let God Arise,’’ passim; and Sottocasa, Mémoires affrontés, passim.}\]
\[^{20}\text{AN F/19 10096, Arbaud-Jouques, prefect of the Gard to Conseiller d’État, Nîmes, 1 September 1815; Robert, Églises réformées, 281-282; Fitzpatrick, Catholic Royalism, 42-34; and Lewis, Second Vendée, 217.}\]
\[^{21}\text{More churches were closed in the Hérault, simply because the Protestants there had built their own churches during the Napoleonic era. In the Gard, Protestants often did not have temples. The Protestants in the Hérault were often more exposed to Catholic violence because they lived in communities in which they were the minority, and did not form bands of Protestant villagers to defend themselves as was the tradition in the Gard. Evidence for the church closures comes from a variety of sources, but most especially from government surveys conducted regularly after 1815 about the state of church buildings, among them ADH 7V27, ‘‘État des situations des temples,’’ 25 June 1822; AN F/19 106015, Survey 1814; AN F/19 10665, dossier of correspondence on repairs to churches in the Hérault, 1815-1830. Petitions for reconstruction provide another source, most notably from AN F/19 101096, Cazelles, Protestant pastor to the Minster of the Interior, Sète, 14 July 1817; and ADH, 7V9, Mayor of Montagnac to the prefect of the Hérault, 2 August 1817; Municipal Council, 19 August 1817; and the prefect of the Hérault to the Minister of the Interior, 3 October 1817. Records in the departmental archives of the Aveyron also document the destruction at Saint-Affrique. This last incident is thoroughly described in Sottacasa, Mémoires affrontés, 330-334.}\]
\[^{22}\text{Consistory records ended abruptly in 1815 and in many cases, did not resume until 1817, suggesting the lack of religious activity during this period. Consistory records consulted included those of Nîmes, Saint-Ambroix, Aigues-Vives, and Vauvert in the Gard; Saint-Affrique in the Aveyron; and Montagnac, and Courmontell in the Hérault. All are located in the departmental archives of the Gard and Hérault (even though Saint-Affrique is actually in the Aveyron).}\]
Catholic mobs attack the church, but in the aftermath the mayor bragged that “as long as he was in office, the Huguenots would not hold services.” So bitter was the opposition to reformed religious practice that Protestants at Villeveyrac were unable to reopen their temple until 1817 and only then after the Minister of the Interior made an inquiry and the prefect fired the mayor. In Montagnac, also in the Hérault, violence also closed the Protestant temple. This building had formerly been a chapel of the White Penitents, then national property awarded to the Protestants in 1804. In 1817, Protestant services at Montagnac had still not resumed. The mayor, apparently a Catholic, admitted that the White Terror had demonstrated the need to make concessions in order to maintain peace, but objected to Protestant use of the formerly Catholic chapel. Nonetheless, he grudgingly conceded that justice demanded that they be allowed to worship freely. The municipal council then petitioned the government for funds to indemnify the Protestants for church property that had been destroyed but also to build a temple in exchange for the chapel of the White Penitents. Consequently, for a brief time in 1815 and sometimes until 1817, Catholics managed to disrupt most forms of Protestant worship in Languedoc.

In addition, the Second Restoration continued the policy of the First Restoration, stipulating that Catholics could hold public processions everywhere, a policy that lasted until 1830. Protestant refusal to decorate during the processions of the Corpus Christi became a major form of resistance after 1815. Catholics in turn, continued to see this refusal as further evidence of their revolutionary and Bonapartist sentiments and lack of loyalty to the king. Clearly, collisions over religious issues such Protestant and Catholic forms of public worship and church buildings were part of the underlying reasons for the confluence of religion and politics.

In July 1815, the political disarray in the Midi added to the chaos and also evoked memories of earlier violence. Allied soldiers did not occupy the south immediately, leaving the door open for the Ultraroyalist underground, led by the Duc d’Angoulême, newly returned from exile, to take control. The Duc d’Angoulême had appointed extraordinary commissioners to assume government functions as soon as Napoleon capitulated. These commissioners traveled throughout the region in the month of July, urging pacification in the name of unifying behind the royal government. They also began an all-out purge of Napoleonic officials that lasted well into 1816. Through August of 1815,

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23 AN F/19 10106, Cazelles, Protestant pastor to the Minister of the Interior, Sète, 14 July 1817.
24 ADH, 7V9, Mayor of Montagnac to the prefect of the Hérault, 2 August 1817; Municipal council, 19 August 1817; prefect of the Hérault to the Minister of the Interior, Montpellier, 3 October 1817.
Angoulême’s network operated independently and in opposition to the government in Paris. For example, Angoulême’s supporters created militias from among the local Catholics and demobilized royalist military units that had supported Angoulême. These groups, called Micquelets, terrorized Protestant villagers. The most notorious Micquelet groups were led by Jacques Dupont and Jacques Graffan, who took on the *noms de guerre* “Tréstaillons” and “Quatretaillons”, meaning three/four morcels, to signify what they would do to Protestants and Bonapartists.26

In a perfect spiral of panic, fear, and violence, Protestants in the Cévennes mobilized not only to go to the assistance of their compatriots in Nîmes but also to protect their own communities.27 This mobilization triggered panic among the Catholic minority in the Protestant regions of the Gardonnesque, the Vaunage, and Cévennes as well as among Catholics in Nîmes, many of whom had long memories of the dangers posed by Protestant peasants.28 The rumor that the Bonapartist and Protestant General Gilly was hiding in the Cévennes evoked memories of the Protestant bands of the Camisard Revolt that had swooped down from the Cévennes to terrorize Catholic villagers and burn churches.29

The violence peaked in August 1815 with the elections to a new Chamber of Deputies, an event that coincided with the anniversary of St. Bartholomew’s Day. On the eve of this anniversary, Protestant villagers, who had long feared a repeat of that massacre, organized because they were fearful for their lives. Officials responded by directing royalist and Austrian troops as well as groups like those of Tréstaillons and Quatretaillons towards Protestant regions to disarm the villagers and also to intimidate Protestant electors so that they would stay away from the polls.30 At Aigues-Vives, in the Vaunage, peasants mistook a patrol of royalist soldiers for brigands and terrorists (which they might well have been), with bloody results. Protestant villagers, assembled at Ners to protect themselves,

27 ADG 1M522, provides an entire carton of correspondence from local authorities, both mayors and the subprefects about the upheaval in their communes and troop movements designed to repress the disorder.
28 Sottacasa points out that from the national perspective, Protestants were the victims of persecution in 1815, but that seen locally, Catholic villagers, especially where they were a minority, had memories of the Wars of Religion that led them also to be afraid in 1815. *Mémoires affrontés*, 293-312.
29 AN F/7 9050, 3 May 1816. Bulletin no.6, Ville d’Alès. The author is probably the subprefect, Vallabrix. In ‘*Let God Arise*,’ Monaghan details this pattern during the Camisard revolt.
clashed violently with Austrian troops.\footnote{ADG 1M522, Combe, mayor of Aigues-Vives to the prefect of the Gard, 2 August 1815; circular to the mayors of Gallargues, Ners, Vergèze, Codognan, and Aigues-Vives, from Cords, commissioner of the Prefect; Lewis, \textit{Second Vendée}, 204; ADG 1M522, Petition from the Municipal Council of St. Jean-du-Gard, 29 August 1815; Provisional subprefect of Alès to the prefect of the Gard, 29 August 1815; Boudon, mayor of St.-Jean-du-Gard to the prefect of the Gard, 19 August 1815; Bossens, mayor and Daumas, adjoint, of St.-Jean-de-Serre to the prefect of the Gard, 28 August 1815.} In turn, the royalists labeled both peasant villagers and the Protestant refugees from Nîmes, Alès, and Uzès as in rebellion and part of a Bonapartist conspiracy, thereby justifying more extreme measures.\footnote{Fitzpatrick, \textit{Catholic Royalism}, 37-38; Lewis, \textit{Second Vendée}, 198.} Adopting practices reminiscent of the Wars of Religion, officials also ordered home searches for outsiders, and quartered troops in civilian homes. The troop quartering invoked further outrage among both Catholics and Protestants. The Protestant villagers of St. Jean-du-Gard and St. Jean-de-Serre protested the troop quartering, bitterly noting that they had been among the first to swear the oath of loyalty to Louis XVIII in July and had experienced no troubles.\footnote{ADG 1M522, mayor of Lézan to the subprefect of Alès, Narbonne de Larcy, 21 July 1815; Philip Cantilly, to the subprefect of Alès, Lédignan, 12 August 1815; Narbonne de Larcy to the prefect of the Gard, Nd. [1815]; Narbonne de Larcy, 1 October 1815; Procès verbale d’information, Narbonne de Larcy, 27 September 1815.} In the mixed village of Massillargues, resentment over the assignment of troop billets led to renewed bouts of violence because Catholic villagers (the majority) maintained that the Protestant mayor had disproportionally quartered troops in their households.\footnote{ADG 1M522, To Jules de Calvière, prefect of the Gard, Lédignan, 14 August 1815; Philip Cantilly, Lédignan, Billet, 12 August 1815.} In some of these occupied villages, the Austrian troops who were ostensibly there to maintain order, contributed to the terror by exacting rations and looting.\footnote{Fitzpatrick, \textit{Catholic Royalism}, 43-49.}

After the August elections the new prefect, appointed by the government in Paris rather than by Angoulême, began to rein in the royalist bands of Miquelets by forming a national guard composed primarily of Catholics, many of whom had served in the rogue bands.\footnote{Fitzpatrick, \textit{Catholic Royalism}, 43-49.} Nonetheless, the reopening of the temple in Nîmes in November 1815 occasioned one last spasm of violence when a Catholic mob swarmed the army units sent to protect the Protestants assembled inside, and a national guardsman assassinated General Lagarde, the commander. Evidence suggests that the Ultraroyalist leadership in the department was
complicit in the murder.\textsuperscript{37} Despite the end to the most overt violence, arrests of suspected Bonapartists continued. Because Ultraroyalist appointees dominated the courts until 1817, when a more moderate government came to power in Paris, arrestees were likely to be acquitted due to the partiality of the judges or witness intimidation.\textsuperscript{38}

**The Ultraroyalist Position on Religion and Politics**

As the officials in control of the administration and judiciary in the Midi, the Ultraroyalists were the primary authors of the records that are the main sources on the White Terror. Consequently, their viewpoint has shaped subsequent interpretations of this violence. As the White Terror unfolded as well as during the aftermath, the Ultraroyalist prefects, subprefects, police, and mayors in the Midi consistently reported to Paris that the events were purely political and not religious despite the obvious attacks on Protestants. Not only were Ultraroyalist officials—both those appointed by Angoulême and by Paris—complicit, but they also, in spite of their stated hatred for the Revolution and its principles, wanted to avoid the stigma of being accused of religious persecution. Given the rapid changes of regime in 1814 and 1815, it was easy to couch their representation of events in terms of the very real political divisions that beset the Midi. In fact, the ministers in Paris, despite the dominance of an Ultraroyalist Chamber of Deputies, were insistent on repressing the violence and on adopting a stance of impartiality. In response, local officials claimed that the White Terror was merely a matter of natural “exasperation” among the royalists given the oppression of the Revolution.\textsuperscript{39} Indeed, many of the Ultraroyalists surrounding Angoulême and who came to power in 1815 had been \textit{émigrés} who had returned due to Napoleon’s amnesty but had not embraced the political and religious changes brought by the Revolution and continued by the Bonapartist regime. The conciliatory policy of the First Restoration had also fuelled their resentment.\textsuperscript{40} The Hundred Days not only enraged the Ultraroyalists but provided the chaos necessary for them to assume control in the Midi and to take revenge. According to one memoir sent to the prefecture: “…when one has for twenty-five years built up a thirst for vengeance, it is necessary to have more than eight days to assuage it.”\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid, 42-43, 55.
\textsuperscript{39}Arbaud-Jouques, \textit{Troubles}, 21; and AN F/7 9050, Pignot, police commissioner of Alès to the minister of police, 1 February 1816.
\textsuperscript{40}ADG, 1M522, Armand Vallabrix, subprefect of Uzès, 10 August 1815.
\textsuperscript{41}AN F/7 9050, Observations sur la situation présente de quelques contrées du Midi de la France. N.d. [1815].

The Journal of the Western Society for French History
“revolutionary party” as a code for Protestants. Armand Vallabrix, subprefect of Alès, argued that the charge that religion was at the heart of the troubles, was “a strange imposture,” because the real cause was a “system of opposition,” a reference to revolutionary and Bonapartist opposition to the Bourbons.\(^{42}\) They found ideological support in essays by the seventeenth-century apologist for absolutism, Bossuet, for their view that the Wars of Religion and all conflict since had been purely political. Finally, they showed their own adherence to a definition of being French that conflated loyalty to the Crown and the Church and called into question the admission of Protestants to the body politic by arguing that Protestants were incapable of being loyal to the crown.\(^{43}\)

Seen through the prism of this ideology, the Ultraroyalists in the Midi maintained that the violence was the result of factionalism (“esprit de parti”), between those who supported the new regime and those who were not loyal to the king, especially the Fédérés.\(^{44}\) Increasingly, Ultraroyalist officials talked about “good” and “bad” parties, and the rhetoric clearly associated the “bad” not only with Bonapartist sympathizers but Protestants.\(^{45}\) To any charge of religious motives, they countered that the Protestants took every occasion to claim religious persecution and that they required disorder and rebellion in order to destabilize the monarchy.\(^{46}\) Accordingly, they also insisted that the Protestant refugees in 1815 were fundamentally disloyal and that they had left Nîmes for the Gardonnesque and Cévennes as part of plot. Furthermore, Protestant villagers who had mobilized in time-honored fashion to defend their villages were also depicted as being a part of a Bonapartist uprising. Even local officials, all Ultraroyalist appointees, tended to minimize religion as a cause for the violence.\(^{47}\)

\(^{42}\)ADG, 1M522, Armand Vallabrix, subprefect of Uzès, 10 August 1815.
\(^{43}\)Fitzpatrick, Catholic Royalism, 34.
\(^{44}\)AN F/7 9050, Arbaud-Jouques to the Minister of Police, Nîmes, 28 July 1815; and Vidal, police commissioner of the Gard to the Minister of the Police General, Paris, 2 August 1815. In the same letter in which Arbaud-Jouques insisted on the political causes of the White Terror, he also discussed the long-standing religious hatreds of the region.
\(^{45}\)AN F/7 9050, Grenier, commissioner general of the police at Nîmes to the Minister of Police, 13 May 1816.
\(^{46}\)AN F/7 9050, Grenier, commissioner general of the police at Nîmes to the Minister of Police, 19 March 1816.
\(^{47}\)As early as 1816, numerous accounts emerged in what amounted to a pamphlet war, although most were on the royalist side. Among them are Joseph Charles André Arbaud-Jouques, Troubles et agitations du département du Gard en 1815. For the Protestants: P. J. Lauze de Peret, Éclairissemens historiques en réponse aux calumnies dont les protestans du Gard sont l’objet et précis des agitations et des troubles de ce département depuis 1790 jusqu’à nos jours. Paris: 1818). Note that Peret was actually moderate Catholic. See also, McCoy, “Legacy of the White Terror.”
Ultraroyalist officials in the Midi used other shorthand that allowed them to deny the reality of Protestant persecution during the White Terror. In their reports, they failed to mention the religion of those murdered and looted or the religious composition of the towns involved in the violence. The areas deemed in rebellion or problematic, where the citizens were “bad,” or that were rife with “factionalism,” were synonymous with Protestantism (i.e. the Vaunage, the Gardonnesque, and the Cévennes). They argued that the “good party” represented two-thirds of the citizens and the “bad” faction made up the other third, a clear reference to the proportional distribution of Protestants in the Gard. In some reports, officials inadvertently contradicted their insistence that the conflict was a matter of political factionalism. In the Hérault, the prefect reported the absence of religious or political fanaticism, and cautioned the ministers against taking reports of religious violence seriously even as he commented on the burning of a Protestant temple in the village of Pignan. As much as the Ultraroyalists insisted that the White Terror was the result of political differences, the evidence, their own rhetoric during the latter part of 1815 and during 1816, and their obvious equation of Protestantism and Bonapartism belied these protestations.

The immediate violence of the White Terror at the end of the Hundred Days was hardly designed to win Protestant loyalty. Therefore, Catholic fears about the popularity of Bonapartism were not completely misplaced. In the Midi, the Napoleonic commander, Gilly, went uncaptured, leading to fears that he would lead an uprising similar to the Camisard Revolt. The mobilization of Protestant villagers in the Gardonnesque to defend themselves in 1815 reinforced the fears elicited by these memories. Yet admiration and sympathy for Napoleon, especially as the Napoleonic legend developed, did not preclude rallying to the king, and most Protestants insisted that they were loyal. On 18 July, for example, just three days after receiving word of the King’s return, the mayors of a number of villages in the canton of Lédignan in the Gardonnesque appeared before the subprefect of Alès to make their submission to the royal government and insist on their loyalty to the king. The subprefect reported ten days later that he had gone to the town of Anduze, mainly Protestant, where he received the loyalty oath. He reported that many of the inhabitants there were well-disposed to the king, but would take some time to understand the benefits of royal rule. In the

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48 AN F/7 9050, Grenier, commissioner general of the police at Nîmes to the Minister of Police, Nîmes, 21 June 1816.
49 AN F/7 9663. Prefect to the Minister of the Interior, Montpellier, 26 August 1815.
50 Sudhir Hazareesingh shows how the power of the Napoleonic legend and the popularity of Bonapartism grew in the wake of the Hundred Days. The Legend of Napoleon, (London: 2004).
51 ADG 1M522, Comte Narbonne de Larcy, subprefect of Alès, 18 July 1815.
52 ADG 1M522, Narbonne, subprefect of Alès to the prefect, 27 July 1815.
super-heated climate of 1815 and even throughout the Restoration, the Ultraroyalists’ paranoia about Bonapartism led them to measure all citizens by their support for past regimes and their ideological conformity. As a result, they confounded political preference past and present with political loyalty to the Bourbon regime.

Conclusion

The White Terror of 1815 marked a major milestone in French history because it was the last major spasm of religious violence between Catholics and Protestants in France, thereby ending a cycle of religious violence that had continued since the Reformation. After 1815, religious tensions continued, however, religious conflict was only sporadically violent, and played out primarily in the form of overheated rhetoric, threats, harassment, and demonstrations. Catholics and Protestants in the Midi gradually accepted the need for tolerance, albeit grudgingly. That during the Restoration, Ultraroyalist officials in the Midi coded the violence as purely political, demonstrates the extent to which they had embraced the idea that persecution was unacceptable. After the end of the reaction in 1817, the Bourbon regime was anxious to promote “oublié” or forgetting as a means to maintain order, and so perpetuated the tendency to gloss over the religious issues that had been such an important part of the White Terror. Furthermore, the narrative about the political nature of the White Terror and religious conflict overall fit in with the Bourbons’ fears about revolutionaries and Bonapartists, and the threat they posed to the legitimacy of the Monarchy.

As a result, the White Terror has assumed an importance in French historiography primarily for what it reveals about the transition from Bonapartism to the Restoration and the ending of the Revolution. Indeed, the political context of this important turning point explains why the White Terror took place. Catholics faced enormous upheaval in their religious lives and challenges to their assumptions about community and nation when the Revolution legalized Protestantism and first reformed the Church and then pursued dechristianization. Napoleon’s Concordat, enforced by an authoritarian regime, established a new status quo that was a compromise in which the Catholics had much more to lose than did Protestants. Religion and politics were, therefore, closely entwined in the violence of 1815, as they had been since the

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Reformation. The issue of power had consequences for the ability of ordinary people to practice their faith and maintain their confessional communities and so had an important link to questions that were intrinsically religious. Political views about the role of Catholics and Protestants in the polity had ramifications for the nature of political authority and even the definition of French identity. That the White Terror marked the end of a cycle of violence also suggests that the Bourbon regime, because it was committed to order, also had to uphold the compromises of the Concordat, albeit with modifications, as part of the revolutionary settlement. Although conflicts over the terms of the Concordat played out over the next decades, the Napoleonic religious settlement did provide a framework for Catholic-Protestant coexistence. In subsequent decades, the White Terror became a cautionary tale of what might happen if that compromise was abandoned.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{54}Series 1M (series on \textit{esprit publique}) in the departmental archives, especially in the Gard, includes numerous references to the White Terror on the part of mayors, subprefects, prefects, and the police and the need to prevent civil war, to restrain religious passions, and to keep order.