

**The Comité Régional d'Action Viticole (CRAV):
Regional identity, violence and the challenges of
modernisation in the Languedoc (1944-1992).**

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of PhD

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the Comité Régional d'Action Viticole (CRAV), an active force in the French wine industry since the mid-1960s that has consistently mobilised militant winegrowers in response to economic crisis. Their role has expanded to represent not only the Midi's viticultural heritage, but also a peculiar brand of regional nationalism. They invoked the memory of the "*Grande révolte*" of 1907, which saw hundreds of thousands mobilise against foreign wine imports, financial speculation and ineffective regulation. The legacy of 1907 will be considered in the context of its regionalist significance and the development of political Occitanisme, binding Oc and Vine at the beginning of the century.

The prominent role of winegrowing since 1907 had seen a compact between winegrowers, local elites and the Socialist Party develop. Yet, this began to slowly disintegrate as government programmes targeted the amelioration of Languedoc wine from the early 1970s. Whilst this project embittered winegrowers, events like the shootout at Montredon in 1976 and the torching of a Leclerc store in 1984 saw the CRAV breach the frontiers of acceptability and alienate traditional supporters. Demographic change, economic development and the stain of violent protest all chipped away at the CRAV's rebellious appeal. This regional compact will be analysed both to gauge the impact of development upon regional identity and to understand changing conceptions of modernity in the agricultural South.

The CRAV's survival is testament to their continuing relevance, despite being painted variously as terrorists, revolutionaries and militant syndicalists. These labels were fleeting, but their identity as winegrowers, Languedociens and their desire to live and work their land for a living wage have remained their defining characteristics. This thesis will analyse the limits of these identities and answer broader questions about the tension between regional development and defence against the backdrop of an increasingly global marketplace.

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List of Acronyms:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| ADH | Archives Départementales de l'Hérault |
| ADA | Archives Départementales de l'Aude |
| ADG | Archives Départementales du Gard |
| AJCB | Musée des arts et traditions populaires, Archives Jean Charles-Brun |
| AN | Archives Nationales |
| AOC or (AC) | Appellation d'Origine Côtrolée or (Appellation Côtrolée) |
| CDJA | Comité Départementale des Jeunes Agriculteurs |
| CGA | Confédération Générale de l'Agriculture |
| CGVM | Confédération générale des vignerons du Midi |
| CRAV | Comité Régional d'Action Viticole |
| CRSV | Comité Régional de Salut Viticole |
| CMA | Comité Marcelin Albert |
| CNSTP | Confédération Nationale Syndicale des Travailleurs Paysans |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| FAV | Fédération des Associations Viticole |
| FDCC (A/H/G) | Fédération des Caves Cooperatives de l'Aude/Hérault/Gard |
| FDSEA | Fédération Départementale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles |
| FNSEA | Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles |
| FRF | Fédération Régionaliste Française |
| FTAM | Fédération des travailleurs agricole du Midi |
| HL | Hectolitre (100 litres) |
| IVCC | Institut des Vins de Consommation Courante |

| | |
|---------|---|
| JO | Journal Officiel |
| JV | Jeunes Viticulteurs |
| MIVOC | Mouvement d'Intervention des Viticulteurs Occitans |
| MODEF | Mouvement Ouvrier de Défense des Entreprises Familiales |
| ONIVINS | Office national interprofessionnel des vins |
| PCF | Parti Communiste Française |
| PS | Parti Socialiste |
| PSU | Parti Socialist Unifié |
| RG | Renseignements Généraux |
| SAFER | Sociétés d'aménagement foncier et d'établissement rural |
| SFIO | Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière |
| UJRF | Union de la Jeunesse Républicaine de France |
| VDQS | Vin Délimité de Qualité Supérieure |

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Acknowledgements

The most prominent acknowledgement must be to Professor Julian Jackson for his guidance, constant advice and patience throughout the preparation of this thesis.

Many friends have also helped to proof-read and critique sections of my work. Andrew Dodd willingly discussed many of this project's minutiae, providing an excellent sounding board and partner for debate. Eleanor Davey provided useful insight and constructive criticism of various chapters as a willing reader. Ed Naylor has also helped to read through sections and offered advice. Daniel De Groff listened to many conference papers which tested various sections of my study and provided excellent feedback on these. Likewise, Paul Davidson kindly read through early drafts and provided a base in Paris for several shorter trips to the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Archives Nationales.

The archivists at the Archives Départementales de l'Aude must constitute some of the finest in France. They flagged up many relevant works, none the least that of Lawrence McFalls when they assumed that the name 'McFalls' must mean he was Scottish and wondered if we were acquainted. Lawrence McFalls (Université de Montréal) subsequently provided advice by correspondence was helpful in delineating the boundaries of this study. Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (Université de Lyon) was also very generous in her advice relating to Montredon's relationship with 1968.

I must likewise express gratitude to those that responded to interviews, whether that contact was by email, telephone or simply my knocking unexpectedly

upon their door. Some of those approached offered advice and guidance in longer correspondences. Amongst these was Jean Clavel, a prolific commentator with many publications and an active blog. His work *Mondialisation des vins* was kindly donated to the author by Mme. Béatrice de Chabert of the Syndicat AOC Coteaux de Languedoc. The Editor of *Paysan du Midi*, Philippe Cazal, was also generous with his time and knowledge and even kind enough to forward me articles of interest.

This work builds upon a much more rudimentary study of the CRAV which I undertook as part of my Undergraduate degree. The supervision of Stephen Tyre at The University of St Andrews was formative and essential to the completion of that work. The advice of Gerard De Groot also left a great impression which has shaped my approach to this work.

I am grateful to my family, who have remained convinced that I would complete this project and succeed thereafter, specifically my Mother, Christine. Finally, my Fiancée, Holly Ivins, has provided constant support. She has proof-read copious drafts and listened patiently to plans, ideas and arguments as the thesis took shape. Both her encouragement and her belief were as essential to the completion of this piece as she is to me.

Dedicated to the memory of my Father, Gordon Smith.

Introduction:

Tending Vines & Picket Lines: The CRAV and the Post-War 'Languedoc Viticole'

Vignerons, nous vous appelons à vous révolter. Nous sommes au point de non retour. Soyez les dignes représentants des révoltes de 1907 où déjà certains sont morts pour permettre aux générations futures de pouvoir vivre de leur labeur. Faisons en sorte que nos enfants puissent connaître la viticulture. ¹

When five masked men stood issuing threats of blood and chaos to the French establishment in March 2007, they called on the French public to support them in their violent crusade. This call to arms was issued in the vernacular of a cause a century old, invoking heritage, pride and a very classical interpretation of piety. Yet, these were men in balaclavas, recording in a secret location after having coerced a local journalist to cover the taping. Their threats were more reminiscent of an Al-Qaeda broadcast than something born of the French Republic. Unsurprisingly, they received wide coverage as newspapers discovered the *Comité Régional d'Action Viticole* (CRAV) for the first time in years, ending an unjustified obscurity outside of the Languedoc: in the *New York*

¹ France3/AFP – News Report (Montpellier region), 20/05/2007.

Times an op-ed piece noted that “a new acronym [had] entered the lexicon of terror”²; the BBC spoke of “guerrilla” winemakers who were invoking the spirit of “the French Resistance”³ and in Paris, the *Figaro* warned that after this warning these hooded men could not back down, reminding readers that the group had killed before.⁴ Indeed they had, although this observation only touched upon the history of a group whose evolution is an interesting allegory of the Midi’s post-war experience.



*Image from the CRAV’s 2007 video address*⁵

This thesis will attempt to dispel this amnesia, recounting the story of the CRAV and ultimately accounting for this strange forgetfulness. Put simply, the CRAV are an association of winegrowers who pursue radical tactics to promote what they see as the interests of their industry, specifically protectionism and market regulation within France. Using guerrilla style military tactics, the CRAV has surfaced to mobilize

² ‘Make Wine Not War’, *New York Times* 26/08/2007
[<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/26/opinion/26boyd.html>].

³ ‘French wine-growers go guerilla’, *BBC News*, 17/06/2007
[<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6759953.stm>].

⁴ ‘Le Midi viticole sous la menace d’extrémistes violents’, *Le Figaro*, 14/10/2007.

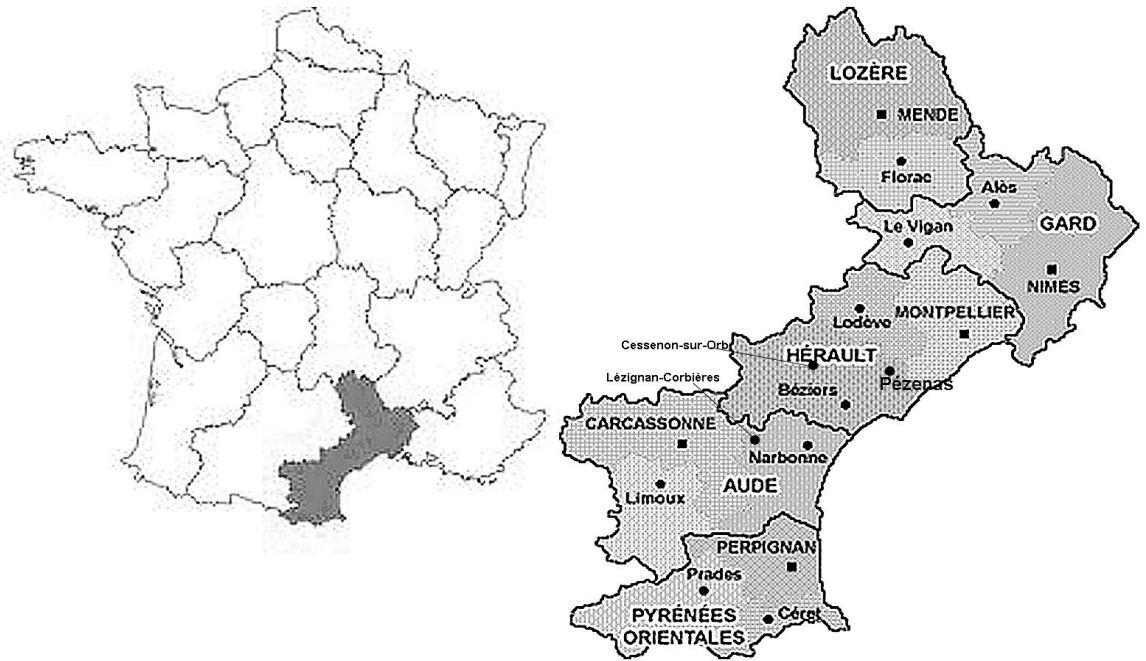
⁵ France3/AFP – News Report (Montpellier region), 20/05/2007.

the aspirations of Languedocian winegrowers at moments of specific economic and social crisis throughout the twentieth century. The organisation is composed of ordinary winemakers from the region, who perpetrate direct action in line with a general strategy devised by vocal members who represent a leadership. Many of these actions take place outside of any coordinated plan, with examples of sympathetic winemakers taking action in the name of the CRAV and subscribing to their ideology and desires if not strictly their organisation. Their desires are the product of long-standing cyclical market fluctuations, the effects of which have been felt keenly in a region where the vine predominates over any other crop or industry.

This dynamic positioned the CRAV as an organised articulation of wider tendencies which had long simmered in the politically boisterous South. Its historical point of reference was the great eruption of 1907, the '*Révolte du Midi*'. An estimated 600,000 protestors on the streets of Montpellier had provided the focal point of a turn of the century wave of unrest that witnessed the defection of the 17th regiment of the *gendarmérie*, which had been ordered to defuse the tension. The momentous nature of these demonstrations is difficult to overstate, with riots on such a scale in this area not recurring until 1968. Such a high watermark has coloured the political and cultural vocabulary of the region ever since, offering a historical founding myth and fostering a notional predisposition to direct action. Specifically, this legacy has been institutionalised by the continuing economic predominance of the wine industry in the region ensuring that it has retained a loud voice in political matters.

The CRAV therefore serves as a useful barometer for regional reactions to the modernisation of the Languedocian wine industry over the period studied, namely

1944-1992. During the early years of national reconstruction after the war, issues of identity, modernity and political engagement dogged the Languedoc, a heartland of both republican values and economic stagnation. As the wine industry rebuilt, so too its vocal spokesmen began to make themselves heard. Yet, the Languedoc's post-war story is not dominated by recovery, rather by the wine crises of 1953, 1956, 1961, 1967 and then throughout the 1970s. These repeated crises provided the backdrop to a story of radicalisation and direct action which provoked increasingly extreme rhetoric from the *Défense du vin* movement. It too came to symbolise the conflict between regional defence and regional development which fully arose in the 1980s. It was this conflict over the region's trajectory which progressively isolated the CRAV, as its attacks became viewed as increasingly unacceptable. By 1992, the end point of this study, the CRAV had been denounced as terrorists and their influence had shrunk markedly. Yet they were still able to mobilise protest and, more immediately, to direct attacks against representatives of authority. Their changing role mirrors the development of the Languedocian wine industry, as the cooperative mass production of the post-war gave way to a greater focus on quality and independence. Nevertheless, the process by which these changes took place was beset by challenges to regional identity and by an often divisive rhetoric of class politics in the context of an increasing influence of global markets. The CRAV's story, therefore, is not simply one of industrial decline and offers insights into broader social and cultural issues in the region.



The Languedoc: This thesis will focus on the viticultural departments of Aude, Hérault and Gard.

Historicising the ‘Défense du vin’ movement

One of the most useful resources in chronicling public reactions to the CRAV is regional newspapers, whose circulation in the Languedoc was more significant than that of national publications. The stance adopted by the newspapers was capable of providing encouragement and validation to winegrowers, whose professional misgivings about the government’s role in regulating winegrowing were often echoed in local editorials. Likewise, this chimed with the self-image presented by the leaders of the Défense movement like Cases and Castéra, whose narrative of the Languedoc’s history and present circumstances was consistently reflected in the local press, encouraging widespread acceptance of the Défense movement’s rhetoric.⁶

⁶ L McFalls, *In vino veritas: professional ideology and politics in viticultural Languedoc, 1907-87* (Harvard University: Unpublished Thesis, 1989), p.121 n.98.

The three principal newspapers used throughout this thesis were the most influential in the region. They are: the Socialist leaning daily newspaper *La Dépêche*, founded in 1879, which enjoyed a circulation of around 280,000 in 1967;⁷ *Midi-Libre*, which started life as an organ of the Liberation council in Montpellier in 1944 and had an estimated circulation of 200,000 in 1976;⁸ and *L'Indépendant*, founded in 1846, a Perpignan publication with a turbulent history. Banned after the war for continuing to publish under both Vichy governance and German Occupation, it reappeared in 1950 after being acquitted of the charges against it.⁹ These regional publications help to draw the boundaries of acceptability which the CRAV negotiated and, despite their usual support, could indicate when the CRAV transgressed. Many of these were obtained from the holdings of the Departmental Archives of the Aude, Gard and Hérault as well as the National Archives of France. As well as these regional journals, police records in Departmental and National Archives illustrate changing methods and messages of protests. In addition, these sources have been supplemented with interviews of those involved in the Languedocian wine industry, to analyse the extent to which perceptions have changed over time.

These perceptions are an important consideration when analysing the role of the CRAV. The modes of action of the CRAV were governed by popular consensus and the Comité's own ability to communicate its message. This consensus was founded on a sense of inequity and a need to stand up for the marginalised Languedoc, whilst their message remained linked to the memory of 1907. These features formed a tradition of

⁷ E. Derieux; J.C. Texier, *La presse quotidienne française* (Paris: Librairie Arnaud, 1974), p.163.

⁸ [URL: <http://www.gazettedemontpellier.fr/presentation.html>] [Accessed: 18/06/09].

⁹ Derieux; Texier, *La presse quotidienne française*, p.264.

militancy which kept the interests of winegrowers prominent amidst declining economic relevance. The regional historian Jean Sagnes does not pull his punches in ascribing this militant tendency to a desire to find an easy scapegoat for endemic problems. The rhetoric of the *Défense du vin* movement targeted imports and fraud rather than meaningfully addressing natural overproduction inherent in the market itself.¹⁰ This thesis will analyse this rhetoric of 1907, as well as reading into the event a focus on regionalist conflict using new archival evidence. Lawrence McFalls addressed the rhetoric of the winegrowers protest movement in his Harvard thesis of 1989, 'In vino veritas: Professional ideology and politics in viticultural Languedoc, 1907-87'. This work offers a useful insight into some of the by-products of economic modernisation in the 1970s and 1980s, with a full analysis enriched by copious local experience.

McFalls' focus is very much on the interaction of the Socialist party with winegrowers, and he was able to interview some of the prominent winegrowers that feature in this thesis before they later passed away. His definition of "viticultural unity" underpins a sociological study of the relationship between wine and politics in the Aude and the ways in which professional ideology informed responses to change in the 1980s.¹¹ This was a useful starting point for this study, and the interaction of the left with winegrowers was a key issue to be addressed. The supple attachment of the Socialists (the nascent SFIO, then PS, and the more radical PSU) to the winegrowers of the Languedoc has been a formative influence on the *Défense* movement. Their

¹⁰ J. Sagnes, *Le mouvement ouvrier du Languedoc* (Toulouse: Privat, 1980), pp.112-114.

¹¹ McFalls describes this ideology thus: "At the beginning of the century, they [Audois winegrowers] discovered a formula for freezing their professional ideology and values into place, and only in the last few years has their collective professional mind begun to thaw." McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.2.

endorsement and occasionally sanctions would help define the limits of CRAV actions. By identifying 1907 as the moment when this “professional ideology” was formed, McFalls locates the beginning of a preoccupation with fraud, imports and overproduction, yet places less importance on the influence of regionalism and the means by which it became a central fixture of that movement. This thesis moves beyond his analysis of viticultural politics to refocus on the importance of regionalism in this “professional ideology” as an explanation for its stubborn resilience in the face of profound economic change. By re-examining regional identity, one can better explain how the old ideology of 1907 was conflated with a narrative of struggle which pushed winegrowers towards odd alliances with Occitanistes and, eventually, *altermondialistes*. Political loyalties adapted and became more nuanced after the CRAV had begun to bear arms in 1976, when a shootout between the forces of public order, *les Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité* (CRS), and militant vignerons left two dead and some 30 injured.

Published in response to this turbulence, *La révolte du Midi*, an edited collection of essays written by prominent members of the organisation offers a rare glimpse of the CRAV presenting itself to the public on its own terms.¹² This Thesis will differ from the CRAV's self-presentation by analysing the divisions within the movement - especially regarding modernisation. These differences will be decoupled from issues of class, as reiterated with references to 1907 (and as seen in the work of Lem), and instead recognise the value of emergent and competing development models in the midst of a deleterious demographic reality. Dealing with the founding myths and

¹² M. Le Bris (ed.), *La Révolte du Midi* (Paris: Grou-Radinez, 1976).

political realities of their movement, the authors of *La Révolte du Midi* acknowledge and attempt to address inherent criticisms and outline their central beliefs. The principal authors of that work were the Audois figureheads of the CRAV throughout the 1960s and 1970s: André Cases and André Castéra. The rhetoric of 1907 permeates their article 'Qui nous sommes' which traces the birth of the CRAV from the syndicalist movement which arose in response to the 1907 *crise du vin*. Indeed, the article's title quite deliberately echoes one published by the organisational committee headed by Marcelin Albert which coordinated much of the '*Révolte du Midi*', the Comité d'Argeliers.¹³ This correlation is neither accidental nor insignificant, representing the extent to which memories of 1907 constituted the CRAV's founding myth and its constant recourse when it was challenged. This thesis will map the mythology of 1907, whilst acknowledging the political and cultural realities that changed the ways in which the CRAV consciously and unconsciously related it to contemporary issues. The CRAV was both a concrete political organisation – if an intermittent and loosely structured one – and the expression of a more diffuse regional tradition and regional memory which it sought to articulate in political form.

Indeed, the 1976 gunfight at Montredon was a focal moment for the CRAV and, as such, is one of the most widely covered episodes in the historiography. Journalistic accounts of the events which led up to the shootings appeared in subsequent years. Both Pierre Bosc and Bernard Revel, of the ORTF (and then *France 3 Sud*) and the *Indépendant* respectively, focus on the prominent role of the leaders of the CRAV. Their studies have been useful in offering background information on the leading CRAV

¹³ J Sagnes, *Le Midi Rouge: Mythe et Réalité* (Paris: Anthropos, 1982), p.229.

protagonists.¹⁴ Michelle Zancarini-Fournel has, however, flagged up the poor sales of Bosc's book as indicative of a popular reluctance to engage with and relive the events of 1976.¹⁵ If before the shootings the CRAV had enjoyed a certain notoriety, they subsequently became infamous. However, Montredon challenged the role of the CRAV and changed their relationship with public opinion. The stain of spilt blood was not enough to disband the organisation, but neither did it help their cause. Their increasing isolation seemed to represent a lessening appetite for their particular brand of protest.

Several scholars have discussed reactions to the developing Languedocian wine economy. Geneviève Gavignaud-Fontaine's work *Le Languedoc viticole, la Méditerranée et l'Europe au siècle dernier (XXe)*, is the authoritative work on the winegrowing of the South.¹⁶ The work of Jean Clavel, a prominent actor in the *Languedoc viticole* who has been perennially close to reform, is also an important first step.¹⁷ Both these commentators' analyses focus on the changing regulation which led the Languedoc from producing *vin de la bibine*¹⁸ to the independent artisanal produce represented by areas like Pic St Loup. The CRAV receives a fairly negative treatment in these works, and this thesis will attempt to more sympathetically extrapolate the motivation and methods of the group to understand their continued existence holistically. It is my intention to analyse the ways in which resistance to change was expressed and received, to help gauge the social and cultural impact of these economic reforms. In

¹⁴ B. Revel, *Montredon, les vendanges du désespoir* (Portet-sur-Garonne: Loubatières, 1996) and P. Bosc, *Le vin de la colère* (Paris: Galilée, 1976).

¹⁵ M. Zancarini-Fournel, 'Montredon, 4 mars 1976: l'événement comme révélateur' [http://irice.univ-paris1.fr/IMG/pdf_Lettre_27_Zancarini.pdf].

¹⁶ G. Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole, la Méditerranée et l'Europe au siècle dernier* (Montpellier: Presses de l'Université Paul-Valéry, 2000).

¹⁷ J. Clavel, *Mondialisation des vins* (Bordeaux, Féret, 2008).

¹⁸ *Bibine* indicates simply a poor quality drink (principally wine), coming from the diminutive form of the latin verb 'to drink'.

charting the core of this opposition in the 1980s and 1990s, it has been essential to look at the changing messages of the *Défense* movement since 1907. If we recall again the terrorist vocabulary of the 2007 video, produced by this same nucleus of CRAVistes, then this thesis must address the impact of regional heritage upon responses to external pressure.

Historicising regional heritage

Whilst the broad history of France's viticultural South is well documented, there is a lack of any corresponding exploration of the CRAV in the English language. This thesis will document how the legacy of 1907 was mythologized, before moving on to examine the specific mechanisms of its transmission throughout the twentieth century. The widespread viticultural riots of 1907 represented a physical expression of the enduring issues of Southern political resistance and economic specificity. Works on 1907 range from serious scholarship¹⁹ to exercises in historical myth-making²⁰. These form a useful starting point for understanding the region's enduring weaknesses and strengths. In particular it is becoming more important to view 1907 not only from a regional perspective but within a national and even international context, seeing in it a direct comparison with 1968 as a year of tumult. André Burgos highlights the extent to which 1907 was part of a national strike movement, in which March saw Paris, the 'city of light' of the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*, plunged into darkness by an electrician's

¹⁹ F. Napo, *1907 : la révolte des vignerons* (Toulouse: Privat, 1971); J. Sagnes (ed.), 'La révolte du Midi viticole cent ans après: 1907-2007' (Perpignan: Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 2008); R. Pech, *1907 Les mutins de la République : La révolte du Midi viticole* (Toulouse: Privat, 2007).

²⁰For example G. Bechtel, *1907, La Grande Révolte du Midi* (Paris: Laffont, 1976).

strike.²¹ That the memory of 1907 remains centred on the South is indicative of the scale of the events that took place, as well as their importance to the regional population.

Recent trends in scholarship have engaged more fully with French regionalism, especially in the late 19th century. The Félibrige and other cultural movements have emerged as serious topics of study and their relevance to organisations in Paris and national conceptions of regional differentiation have received some attention.²² Yet, the regionalism of the Félibrige remained, above all, intellectual and cultural. There were marked differences between Jean Charles-Brun in the *Fédération Régionaliste Française* and Frédéric Mistral in the Félibrige. Charles-Brun offered support to the protestors of 1907, coordinating sympathetic publicity in Paris. Mistral, however, refused to associate himself with the movement, as we shall see. Their differing engagements with the events of 1907 constituted a formative moment for the Languedoc and specifically the way in which activists in the wine industry interacted with ideas of regionalism. The CRAV were labourers and small-holders motivated more by francs per hectolitre than romantic conceptions of the ‘genius’ of the South. This study is intended to bridge this gap between cultural identity and economic reality, reconciling the extremes of intellectual and cultural exceptionalism and mass demonstrations motivated by economic pressure. The CRAV are a useful key to decipher the process

²¹ A. Burgos, ‘Les événements de 1907 dans leur context national et international’ in J. Sagnes (ed.), ‘La révolte du Midi viticole cent ans après: 1907-2007’ (Perpignan: Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 2008), p.13.

²² C.F. J. Wright, *The Regionalist Movement in France 1890-1914: Jean Charles-Brun and French Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); R. Zaretsky, *Cock & Bull Stories: Folco di Baroncelli and the Invention of the Camargue* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); S. Peer, *France on Display: Peasants, Provincials, and Folklore in the 1937 Paris World’s Fair* (New York: SUNY Press, 1998); E. Storm, *The Culture of Regionalism: Art, Architecture and International Exhibitions in France, Germany and Spain, 1890-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

by which regional identity mutated and adapted to the pressures of a changing France. The CRAV placed itself as a traditional defender of the region's body against a predatory state, a metaphor which often epitomised the attitudes of individual winegrowers in the region, whose recourse to protests came to colour perceptions of their identity.

The Occitan resurgence of the 1960s centred around the work of writers like Robert Lafont²³ and a new core of sociologists keener to attach Occitanisme to issues of class and social function than to the gilded cultural reserve of the Félibrige. This modern movement sought to forge alliances with other contestatory groups in the Languedoc. As a result, the convergence of the 'Défense du vin' movement with Occitanistes in the 1970s was representative of both their shared values, informed by the events of 1907, and also of a more functional expediency which united them in criticism of the government. One of the most striking aspects of Occitanisme has been its specifically Republican heritage. The connection of the Midi to Radicalism as well as Socialism ensured that the cooperative movement which arose around the wine industry was rooted not in revolutionary but republican traditions. In a radio interview, the prominent CRAViste, Emmanuel Maffre-Beaugé would clarify (and simultaneously complicate) his attachment to the Occitan movement by stating, "Je ne suis pas Jacobin et je ne suis pas séparatiste."²⁴

Both post-war regionalists and the CRAV shared these roots, and despite being characterised as left-wing movements, they had a nuanced relationship with socialism

²³ R. Lafont, *La révolution régionaliste* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967); R. Lafont, *Sur la France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968); R. Lafont, *Décoloniser en France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971); R. Lafont, *Clefs pour l'Occitanie* (Paris: Seghers, 1971).

²⁴ Radioscopie, 17/03/1977 [ina.fr].

as an ideology. *Le Midi Rouge*, by Jean Sagnes, explores and extrapolates just such a traditional myth of Southern leftism. He is firmly aware throughout, however, of the fallacious potential of such myth-making and has led the field in plotting the transfers and interactions between opinion, inheritance and the tangible groups which govern the region. Indeed, Sagnes, far from throwing out the myth, recognises an abiding character within the Midi which motivates and directs revolts against the government. However, Sagnes is also at pains to point out that this is not bound to doctrinal adherence to any one political party, despite a historical tendency towards the left. In his analysis of the working class South, *Le mouvement ouvrier du Languedoc*, Sagnes plots the progression of grower radicalism, as noted by Southern historian Olivier Dedieu,²⁵ yet demonstrates that it was never effectively channelled into the Communist party. Instead, the extreme left chafed against democratic socialists, sacrificing unity to political jostling over class and land ownership. This struggle, embodied in the turbulent relationship between 1907's leaders Marcelin Albert and Ernest Ferroul, would remain a prominent issue throughout the twentieth century. Indeed, Sagnes takes pains to highlight the extent to which all regional Socialists were overwhelmed by the maelstrom of 1907, washed along upon a tidal wave of activism upon which they had no purchase.

After the challenges delivered to the centralised Gaullist state by the events of 1968, a new wave of commentators engaged with the question of Southern regionalism and Occitanisme in particular. Indeed, Vera Mark describes engagement with Southern regionalism in the 1970s as "both an expression and a by-product of post-1968

²⁵ O. Dedieu, 'Les élus locaux face à la crise du vignoble Languedocien' in F. Nicholas (ed.), *La Grappe au Poing* (Nîmes: Champ Social, 2007), p.71.

regionalism.”²⁶ The CRAV's relationship to the dynamics of the *années 68* is a contentious topic which requires careful unpicking.²⁷ This thesis will attempt to locate the winegrowers of the Languedoc within this period by understanding their relationship to the social pressures which motivated *soixant-huitard* activism and the after-images of the May-June events. Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, one of the central figures in any discussion on 1968's historical import, highlighted the CRAV as an embodiment of a certain regional aftershock which saw them involved in fatal violence in 1976.²⁸ The focus on the *années 68* within this thesis has very much been informed by her sympathetic understanding of the pressures which moulded regional responses to central authority. Although this thesis is not centrally concerned with the historiography of 1968, the events of this year could not do other than affect the

²⁶ V. Mark, 'In Search of the Occitan Village: Regionalist Ideologies and the Ethnography of Southern France', *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (April, 1987), p.64.

²⁷ Of particular relevance to this study was the literature of the *années 68*, expanding the significance and history of the '68' movement beyond and before its immediate historical context. Likewise, scholars have recently moved to refocus analysis on political protest and the significance of industrial disputes as opposed to the self-publicised representations of student revolt. In particular, see M. Zancarini-Fournel, *Le moment 68: Une histoire contestée* (Paris: Seuil, 2008); K. Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); P. Artières and M. Zancarini-Fournel, *Le moment 68: une histoire collective 1962-1981* (Paris: Découverte, 2008). Also important has been the increasing focus on the impact of the "Events" on French industry and syndicalism, which ties more readily into their relationship with the Midi. In particular, see X. Vigna, *L'insubordination ouvrière dans les années 68: Essai d'histoire politique des usines* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007); B. Gobille, *Mai 68* (Paris: Découverte, 2008). Whilst, also focussing on industrial relations and the *années 68*, Vincent Porhel addresses the regionalist dimension of the Events in Brittany, which is of direct relevance to the experience of Occitanistes. See V. Porhel, *Ouvriers bretons: Conflits d'usines, conflits identitaires en Bretagne dans les années 1968* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008). Springing from the processes which created the May-June events, the *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (LCR) are a useful parallel to the CRAV at this moment in time. During the *années 68*, they were both involved in violent protest linked to the political left and denounced as terroristic by the government. This comparison will be explored in later chapters, although the LCR are discussed in J.P. Salles, *La Lige communiste révolutionnaire (1968-1981): Instrument du Grand Soir ou lieu d'apprentissage?* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005).

²⁸ Zancarini-Fournel, 'Montredon, 4 mars 1976: l'événement comme révélateur'; M. Zancarini-Fournel, 'Récit: Le début de la fin' in P. Artières; M. Zancarini-Fournel (ed.s), *68, une histoire collective* (Paris: Découverte, 2007).

CRAVistes and Occitanistes. As such, its impact and its legacy form part of this analysis, although the student revolts which spearheaded a movement of millions involved in industrial action will play a peripheral role. This thesis will focus on the themes of the *années 68* rather than the *Événements* of May-June specifically.

Thesis Structure and Methodology

The first chapter will analyse the events of 1907 and the ways in which they crystallised a broad paradigmatic shift in the politics of the Midi. It was the sheer scale of the events which created new archetypes for regional expression, effectively writing the 'Myth of 1907'. The importance of mythology is paramount at this stage, as the broad themes of 1907 and their transferability helped to dictate the extent to which future discontent in the wine industry was channelled along similar lines. As a founding myth, 1907 symbolises an upheaval in which a whole region was mobilised for justice. Both the CRAV and the Occitan movement deployed this myth of continuity, depicting themselves as the vanguard of a struggle incarnated in the regional resistance narrative. After all, in the eyes of those most intent on servicing regional culture, the Languedoc was "le pays de révoltes, de Montmorency, des hommes de 1848, des hommes de 1851, des hommes de 1871, des révoltes de 1907, des maquisards de 40-45..."²⁹

This chapter hence examines 1907 as a revelatory moment, imbued with many of the characteristics which would be redeployed throughout the twentieth century.

²⁹ O. Dedieu, 'Les élus locaux face à la crise du vignoble Languedocien' in F. Nicholas (ed.), *La Grappe au Poing* (Nîmes: Champ Social, 2007), p.71.

The myth or legacy of 1907 is, in essence, the narrative of this redeployment. Its application to the history of the Midi involves teasing out the relationship between historical fact and its successive political re-interpretations, out of which developed a set of enduring 'regional tendencies'. I will outline the fundamentals of the Midi's enduring mythology, analysing the ways in which it has been adapted to contemporary pressures and also the manner in which it has shaped regional responses to these pressures. From regional commemoration of 1907 to shootouts and fraud scandals, the same terms have dominated debate and ensured that the flexible and protean regional mythology of protest has remained central to its political discourse. Using the holdings on 1907 from the Departmental Archives of the Aude, I first establish the course of events before moving on to explore their political afterlife. I will also bring in archival evidence from the Paris archives of Jean Charles-Brun, the former head of the *Fédération Régionaliste Française*. Whilst the actual events of 1907 are well documented in existing historiography, I draw out new relevance from specific incidents in the context of 1907's enduring impact for the Midi. The extent to which such inheritances from 1907 influenced subsequent moments of crisis is inextricably bound up with the mechanism of their transmission, and their embodiment in the local government structures of the Languedoc. The structural peculiarities of the Languedoc wine-region helped to forge a continuing lineage of political and cultural intransigence which stressed regional autonomy as a central feature of political vernacular.

The second chapter will trace the development of the diffuse *Défense du vin* movement into an articulate and independent organisation possessed of its own membership and its own strategies. It focuses on the post-war period. Much existing

wine legislation had been modified under Vichy and then abandoned after the Liberation. 1944 therefore resulted in something of a *tabula rasa*. Economic recovery from the Second World War was spearheaded by cooperatives. Yet, as the volume of wine produced returned to pre-war levels, the consumption of wine in France was decreasing. The awareness and resentment of foreign imports was thus heightened. Suddenly, in the mid 1950s, the cooperatives which had been at the heart of recovery seemed to be part of the problem, as the government sought to decrease the volume of production and increase its quality. The first groups formed to represent the interests of winegrowers in this post-war period represented a return to the central 'navel' of the wine industry's regional narrative. By reactivating the myth of 1907, they ensured that the rhetoric of previous generations could be deployed in the service of modern political issues. Throughout the 1950s, the *Défense du vin* movement was dominated by a pluralist dynamic as myriad groupuscules jostled for prominence. This created something of a crisis of representation, as winegrowers faced division and struggled to unite their message. By attempting to outflank each other, however, these representative groups also injected a degree of dynamism into the debate, forcing the *Défense* movement to reinvigorate itself at key points in its development. The resulting turbulence established many of the defining characteristics of the unified movement which would emerge in the 1960s. In the 1960s, the CRAV would become the ultimate embodiment of the *Défense* movement which opposed efforts to aggressively change the shape of the Languedoc's traditional staple.

The third chapter will analyse the development of the CRAV after 1961, when it emerged as a distinct group within the milieu of viticultural discontent in the Midi.

Piecing together their fragmented story into a coherent narrative will allow us to assess the evolving themes and significance of protest. In this way, ruptures and continuities can be seen in the message and demands of the CRAV. It skirted direct political allegiances, instead exhibiting an adaptive character which saw it form divergent attachments across its fissiparous development. Political currency won and lost by the CRAV and other regional movements was ultimately geared towards the improvement of their material condition, a factor which has been absolutely central to the motivation of direct action. Economic malaise and financial hardship have repeatedly filled the streets of Montpellier, Narbonne, Nimes and Carcassonne as the wages of modernisation have paid the Midi poorly. This chapter will end with a discussion of the most controversial moment of the CRAV's existence: the disastrous confrontation at Montredon-les-Corbières which led to the death of a winegrower and a CRS officer.

Having outlined the emergence of the CRAV as an independent organisation, the fourth chapter will analyse the nature of the grand social alliance which allowed them to reach the heights they did in the 1970s. It will analyse the comparative strength of the 'viticole' and the 'Occitan' movements and trace their convergence. By recognising the fluctuating successes of both the Défense du vin and Occitaniste movements, it becomes possible to chart their respective influence in the region. Gauging the efficacy of government responses to demands from the winegrowers requires an understanding of the prevalence of viticultural politics in the region; their convergence with the politics of regionalism and ethnicity was an interesting and instructive passage which illustrated some of the core values of both movements.

Marxist sociologist Winnie Lem describes how the CRAV have frequently mobilised the vernacular of Occitanism in demonstrations, flying the Occitan cross as a means of mobilising distinct local dissatisfaction with central government.³⁰ This thesis moves beyond Lem's village-level case study and its focus on class and gender to offer a broader view of the region and of the political development of Occitanisme, highlighting the importance of *patrimoine*. The potency of the Occitan movement has motivated political parties to court its endorsement, yet the regionalist movement has remained functionally aloof from either right or left. The political success of the Occitan movement in these social conflicts has been an emblem for broader discontent with the French state, prefixed on the economic hardship exacerbated by unequal development. As such, Occitanistes of the 1960s and thereafter engaged with industrial protests, like those surrounding the Decazeville pit closure. The later occupation of the Larzac step by protesters fed into this same dynamic, binding Occitanisme, regionalism and gauchisme in a popular movement which garnered global attention. When external pressures endangered the livelihood of the Languedocian winegrowers alongside regional activists, the events of 1907 provided a revolutionary handbook for the conduct of such a protest – with direct action at its heart. This chapter therefore examines the nature of this grand social alliance in the 1960s and 1970s.

By delineating the issues on which these two social pressure groups converged, we are presented with a fuller picture of their developing agendas. The dual narratives of alienation elaborated by both Occitan and viticultural movements aligned to form a powerful social alliance based on emotive grievances. This revivalism relied on the

³⁰ W. Lem, *Cultivating Dissent* (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), p.91.

proliferation of 'ethno-history' and regional myth-making, in which kernels of regional heritage were extrapolated into myths of more contemporary relevance.³¹ By highlighting the themes of identity and progress in the rhetoric of the two movements, I intend to study both their compatibility and individuality in representing regional interests.

The fifth chapter will continue the narrative of the CRAV from the dramatic turning point of 1976. This extended narrative will aim to probe the relevancy of the CRAV, emerging from the remnants of the once grand social alliance of the Midi. By analysing the continuity of both message and method, I will demonstrate its enduring qualities alongside its changing message. As the CRAV moved into opposition towards European integration – taking precedence over its earlier opposition to Parisian economic policy – the need to address these new challenges saw the nature of the organisation change. The expansion of the European Economic Community placed the regional economy under pressure from external regulation and different visions of modernity. Suddenly Italian wine became the new enemy, and suspicions of fraud found a new target. The names changed and yet the rhetoric and modes of protest continued in the vein established and adapted since the heady days of 1907.

Likewise, the CRAV's place at the top table of Languedocian representation was challenged by an ever shrinking support base. As the Giscardian model of modernisation pressured the region to embark on campaigns of uprooting and restructuring, the long-established principle of monoculture was slowly eroded. With that went the CRAV's ability to rely on 'l'unanisme viticole' as they struggled to

³¹ A.D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), pp.62-63.

maintain their traditional relevance. The Socialist victory in 1981 was celebrated in the Languedoc, where Mitterrand had been overwhelmingly favoured. Yet within a few years criticism of the PS began to rumble amongst the *Défense* movement as modernisation spread over the Midi and the traditional organs of *Défense* were diminished by government politicking. The actions of the CRAV became increasingly unacceptable thereafter and their rhetoric ever more brusque. The inability to draw the same numbers to mass demonstrations forced their hand towards more and more direct action, a trend which would continue throughout the later 1980s.

The final chapter will focus on the changing economic realities of the Languedoc and the subsequent effects on the CRAV's ability to speak for the winegrowers as they had done since the 1960s. The year of 1984 was a turning point for the CRAV, as long-vaunted modernisation programs began to genuinely impact on the demographics of the *milieu viticole*. The FNSEA, likewise began to make advances in the Midi. Their conservative politics were alien to the historical identity of the *Midi rouge*, yet their national stature and closeness to government presented an alluring prospect for growers disenchanted with the lack of progress attained by traditional methods. Slowly, as they franchised their Departmental subsidiaries in the Languedoc, their influence grew. As 'l'offensive moderniste' increasingly scored victories in the Languedoc, the certainty of viticultural unity evaporated. The CRAV began to fragment as prominent leaders of la *Défense* were co-opted into the modernising project. Increasingly this pushed the CRAV towards methods which breached the boundaries of acceptability, drawing accusations of terrorism and a renewed resolve by the forces of order to combat the CRAV's influence. Declining relevance in the

milieu viticole and the marginalisation of public opinion forced the CRAV ever further away from the political mainstream.³²

By collating contemporary press reactions and CRAV communiqués with the emerging picture of the organisation and their movement to date I will analyse their relative success and opportunities for continued relevance alongside an interpretation of their role. Interviews play a part in building this picture of a historical organisation's role in the Midi today, whilst indicating the extent to which it can be considered a formative force of regional identity. This thesis will draw upon a series of interviews conducted principally in the summer of 2010. From over 200 requests,³³ 17 respondents provided answers to a script containing 22 questions as a starting point.³⁴ This sample of interviews is too small to draw any quantitative analysis, though they have helped add colour to the thesis. Responses came from a wide variety of participants: grape-growers and independent winegrowers to local counsellors and cooperative managers. The CRAV remains an organisation which allegedly carries out criminal acts and some interviewees were reluctant to offer specific details, but rather furnished broad opinions and anecdotes which have been reproduced where necessary. These interviews proved a valuable insight into the divisions within the industry, the perception of government initiatives (such as the shame associated with uprooting vines) and perception of the region's relationship with national identity.

³² For a very brief description of this process, see X. Crettier, I. Sommier, *La France Rebelle* (Paris: Michalon, 2006), p.221.

³³ Some of the prominent members of the CRAV who feature in this analysis, such as Jean Huillet, were contacted for comment both personally and through colleagues. They were unwilling to offer responses.

³⁴ A list of these questions is provided in the appendix.

The Epilogue to this piece will broaden the story to analyse the ways in which elements of the Défense movement became involved in the *alter-mondialiste* movement, combining regionalism, syndicalism and a focus on *paysan* values in a durable political context.³⁵ The most striking examples of 'rural resistance' in the Midi have owed much to the anti-globalisation movement, drawing in figures such as Aimé Guibert in his resistance of Mondavi and José Bové's outspoken attacks on McDonalds, linking back to the Larzac protest of the 1970s.³⁶ In this movement, prominent CRAVistes like Jean Huillet were natural allies of others fighting the external economic pressures facing the Midi. Such reactions were based on a rejection of globalisation and the belief that the region is the most fundamental unit of economic development. In this sense, they draw a straight line of continuity from regionalists like Jean Charles-Brun and even Charles Camproux, the supporters of Occitanisme who had engaged with the events of 1907.³⁷ The perpetuation of traditional messages has provided a red line of continuity which allows us to examine the role of the CRAV in an historical context.

It will be necessary at this point to judge the extent to which the CRAV can be seen as successful in their avowed aims throughout the twentieth century. Did they,

³⁵ For a broader discussion of peasant identity within France, see R. Hubscher, 'Réflexions sur l'identité paysanne au XIX siècle: identité réelle ou supposée', *Ruralia*, vol.1 (1997), pp.65-80.

³⁶ On the fusion of the 'peasant movement' with broader trends of left politics, see Jean-Phillippe Martin, *Histoire de la nouvelle gauche paysanne* (Paris: Découverte, 2005); Jean-Phillippe Martin, 'La Confédération paysanne et José Bové, des actions médiatiques au service d'un projet?', *Ruralia* no.6 (2000), pp.1-25; Jean-Phillippe Martin, 'José Bové un activiste sans projet?', *Modern & Contemporary France*, vol.11, no.3, (August, 2003) pp.307-321. For studies of the *altermondialiste* movement from a global perspective, see Nonna Mayer, Eric Agrikoliansky, Olivier Fillieule (eds.), *L'altermondialisme en France: La longue histoire d'une nouvelle cause* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005); I. Sommier, O. Fillieule, E. Agrikoliansky, *Généalogie des mouvements altermondialistes en Europe* (Paris: Karthala, 2008); Geoffrey Pleyers, *Alter-Globalization* (London: Polity, 2010); C. Aguiton, *Le monde nous appartient* (Paris: Plon, 2001); C. Bonfiglioli, S. Budgen (eds.), *La Planète altermondialiste* (Paris: Textuel, 2006).

³⁷ These figures will be further explored in Chapter 1.

indeed, make themselves redundant? Have they altered the framework of interaction with the government? The answers to these questions are a large part of assessing whether they have been an active force pressing for specific, tangible reforms at key points in the development of the modern wine industry or simply represent rambunctious wine growers interested only in a selfish protection of their own livelihoods. In a sense, these questions shoulder the potential justification of the often violent actions of the CRAV, allowing us to reflect on their successes and failures in the light of a fuller appreciation of their story.

Chapter 1:

1907: L'incident comme révélateur

During the summer of 1907, France experienced one of its largest social disturbances since the Revolution. The demonstrations which swept over the Midi culminated in a gathering of some 600,000 people in Montpellier before the protests turned violent. As France's periphery edged closer to sedition, protesters were shot dead, buildings were torched and a locally levied army regiment defected.³⁸ Perhaps, then, it is of little surprise that such a momentous episode has remained prominent in the Languedoc's history. However, whilst 1907's influence is felt keenly in the Midi as a motivation for action and rhetoric it remains "mal intégrée dans la conscience nationale".³⁹ In French history more broadly, 1907 remains a strange moment, with the left supporting a seemingly anti-Jacobin uprising, Socialists, Monarchists and anti-Dreyfusards voting in unison, and the hero of the Revolt eventually forsaken by his own movement. At once integral and obscure, the role of this mythologised conflagration is one which is

³⁸ This analysis of 1907 is drawn from a collection of archival and newspaper sources where stated and also more generally using: Guy Bechtel, *1907, la grande révolte du Midi*, (Paris: Robert Lafont, 1976); J. Sagnes, M. Pech & R. Pech, *1907 en Languedoc et en Roussillon*, (Lunel-Viel: Espace Sud, 1997); F. Napo, *1907: La révolte des vignerons* (Toulouse: Privat, 1971); J.R. Fontvielle, *Paure Miejour, Pauvre Midi* (Paris: Editions de la Courtille, 1977).

³⁹ Bechtel, *1907, La Grande Révolte du Midi*, p.324.

defined along clearly regional lines. 1907 was the founding myth of viticultural radicalism in the Languedoc.

This Chapter will analyse the ways in which Socialists attempted to engage with the Revolt of 1907, and the reasons that they failed to take ownership of it. The lessons from this Revolt would shape their continuing relationship with the *Languedoc viticole*, articulating a specific paradigm for Southern Socialist Deputies in these viticultural departments. The disparity between Marcelin Albert's Comité d'Argeliers and Ernest Ferroul's Socialist followers was washed away in an 'inter-classiste' movement which allowed temporary cooperation but would not survive the Revolt. The basis of this 'inter-classisme', however would constitute an important mobilising tool of later movements in the post-war period. Specifically, 1907 raised the spectre of the 'union sacrée' between local elites, smallholding winegrowers and the trade union movement. Achieving this 'union' in later protests would be the key to mass mobilisation, giving the 'Défense du vin' movement a blueprint for coordinating protest and direct action. The prominent role of specific Socialist officials also hinted at the potential for 'Députés du vin' to construct a specific mandate in the Midi. Yet by failing to take account of 1907's 'inter-classisme' at the time and not fully appreciating the regionalist potential of the Revolt, the Socialists laid the groundwork for the Défense movement's later political independence and the repeated crises of representation which plagued the *Languedoc viticole* until the 1960s.

Phylloxera & Monoculture: The Pre-history of the Revolt

1907 was more than merely a “spontaneous *jacquerie*” and needs to be placed in the longer context of the economic evolution of the Midi.⁴⁰ The modernisation of the national economy during the latter part of the nineteenth century had led to the ‘peripherisation’ of the Midi. Suddenly the Languedoc, having previously played a central role in the Mediterranean economy, was drawn into a peripheral relationship with the Parisian centre.⁴¹ Long-thriving silk, cotton, and wool industries in the Languedoc shrivelled in the late nineteenth century. The textile industry which had employed 12,147 people in the Hérault in 1864, was reduced to less than 7,000 by 1896. As textile industries flourished in Alsace and Flanders, so the Languedoc’s industry declined.⁴² This industrial atrophy occurred during a broader French trend of de-industrialisation in the countryside and the subsequent shift of industrial investment to urban centres. Dutch social scientist Nico Kielstra described the Languedoc as an example of a ‘relictual space’ or area almost forgotten by modern progress, having once played an important (if unequal) role in the national economy and now almost completely sidelined.⁴³ In a further development of the processes described by the regional geographer Raymond Dugrand,⁴⁴ Kielstra highlights the disintegration of regional capital and the failure of heavy industry to implant in the region as characteristic of the sidelining of the Languedoc. Lacking any discernible industry

⁴⁰ J. Harvey Smith, ‘Agricultural Workers and the French Wine-Growers’ Revolt of 1907’, *Past & Present*, No. 79 (May, 1978), p.101.

⁴¹ N. Kielstra, ‘The Rural Languedoc: periphery to relictual space’ in R.Hudson & J. Lewis (ed.s), *Uneven Development in Southern Europe* (London: Methuen, 1985) p.249.

⁴² Raymond Dugrand, *Villes et Campagnes en Bas-Languedoc* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963) p.391.

⁴³ Kielstra, ‘The Rural Languedoc: periphery to relictual space’, pp.246-252.

⁴⁴ He terms the process “[l]a destruction de l’appareil usinier et l’atrophie du grand capital urbain” in Dugrand, *Villes et Campagnes en Bas-Languedoc*, p.548.

which was capable of encouraging further integration into the national economy,⁴⁵ the Midi had one obvious asset – the mass cultivation of the vine.

The introduction of railroads stimulated the expansion of wine production and gave the Languedoc the ability to all but monopolise the national market for table wine.⁴⁶ This convergence of factors further encouraged the cultivation of high-yielding vines in a climate which encouraged high-volume production.⁴⁷ Fractured holdings, irregular quality and low profits meant that it was impossible to escape the grip of the vine on the Midi, so innovation was largely limited to profit-maximisation. Growers in Nîmes decided to take the initiative of importing sturdy American vines in 1867, expecting high-yields and healthy vines.⁴⁸ Yet, with these imports came the *Phylloxera Vastatrix* louse, a tiny insect native to North America which burrowed into the roots of vines and ate the sap within. Whilst American vines had developed immunity, their European counterparts remained disastrously vulnerable.⁴⁹ In the Midi, Phylloxera all but destroyed wine production as it spread unabated across the region. In the Hérault,

⁴⁵ Unsuccessful experiments with metallurgy and coal extraction failed to transform the region and fell into obscurity. If the textile industry lasted for nearly two centuries, then these attempts at industrialisation were conspicuous by the rapidity of their decline in less than half a century; cf. Dugrand, *Villes et Campagnes en Bas-Languedoc*, p.395.

⁴⁶ For the introduction of railways on agriculture, see Hugh D. Clout, *Agriculture in France on the eve of the railway age* (London: Croom Helm, 1980). For an analysis on the process by which Revolutionary land tenure reform brought about an increase in the planting of vines long before the introduction of railways is outlined in Noelle Plack's *Common Land, Wine and the French Revolution: Rural Society and Economy in Southern France, c.1789-1820* (Surrey: Ashbridge, 2009).

⁴⁷ Trevor C. Knox, 'Organization Change and Vinification Cooperatives in France's Midi', *University of Connecticut Economics Working Paper Series* (1998) p.11.

⁴⁸ For a study of the epidemiological pattern of *Phylloxera* see I. Stevenson, 'The diffusion of disaster: the phylloxera outbreak in the département of the Hérault, 1862-1880', *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol.6, no.1 (January, 1980), pp.47-63.

⁴⁹ The European vine (often referred to as the Noble vine) is *Vitis vinifera* (literally 'wine producing vine') whereas the North American vine is *Vitis Labrusca* (literally 'wild vine') which was largely unsuitable for winemaking. The eventual solution which set the pattern for later growing was to graft *Vitis vinifera* onto the hardier *Labrusca* root stock to produce a productive but resistant vine.

for example, a total planted vineyard area of 220,000HA in 1874 had dropped to 47,000HA in 1883. Small and medium winegrowers were worst hit, with their vulnerability heightened by their size.

This crisis established the context in which later strike movements formed. Throughout the period, the villages of the Bas-Languedoc lost some 10-25% of their population as those devastated by Phylloxera moved in search of better fortune elsewhere.⁵⁰ Surviving small-holders were often unable to afford the costs of replanting or expanding into vacant plots and this period consequently witnessed “l’implantation du grand négoce d’origine externe”.⁵¹ This influx of capital altered the fragile setup of the Midi’s social compact, opening the *chasse gardée* to outside encroachment whilst reducing many former landholders to the status of an agricultural proletariat through bank-led land forfeitures. The spectre of *grand capital* would haunt the *Languedoc viticole*, and suspicion of those drawing huge profits from the depressed market would lead to accusations of fraud. By the time of recovery in 1890, widespread replanting ensured that an abundant crop flooded the market. This created an overheated regional economy leading to price drops and the establishment of a chronic cycle of boom and bust vintages.⁵² The Midi was drawn into truly large-scale viticulture, producing low quality, low-cost wine in vast quantities for a fixed market.⁵³

⁵⁰ Many migrated to North Africa to establish vineyards, fuelling the growth of the wine industry there.

⁵¹ Dugrand, *Villes et Campagnes en Bas-Languedoc*, pp.363-366.

⁵² Kielstra, ‘The Rural Languedoc: periphery to relictual space’, p.252.

⁵³ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.57.

Inter-classisme, Socialism and Cooperatives

If industrialisation had bypassed the Languedoc, a form of agricultural industrialisation had taken hold in its stead. The end of the nineteenth century saw almost a third of the Aude under vine, with some villages having up to 70% of their population working in the vineyards or auxiliary industries.⁵⁴ Within these communities, confluence of class, diversity of labour roles and strong occupational identity formed the boundaries which would come to define the Midi *vignerons*. The interpenetration of classes was encouraged by the predominance of extremely small land-holders who also laboured elsewhere to supplement their income.⁵⁵ Outside investors had not disappeared, yet only 1.7% of the population in the Aude owned vineyards over 40HA and 78.8% owned under 5HA by the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁶ The social structure thus ranged from absentee owners who employed large numbers of local people to work on their 1,000 hectare estates, to independent smallholders with 3 to 5HA and a corresponding need to take on extra paid labour.⁵⁷ Indeed, the agricultural census of 1892 lists over a third of labourers as also being landholders.⁵⁸ Traditional definitions of wage-earner and land-owner thus became skewed, as the predominance of wine meant that all classes in the region depended to some extent on the wine market. Indeed, these smallholders were not the isolated, unsophisticated peasantry of the 1870s described by Eugen Weber.⁵⁹ The Aude's

⁵⁴ Frader, 'Syndicalists, socialists and the peasant question in the Aude' p.451.

⁵⁵ R. Zaretsky, *Cock and Bull Stories* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), p.87.

⁵⁶ Frader, 'Syndicalists, socialists and the peasant question in the Aude', p.452.

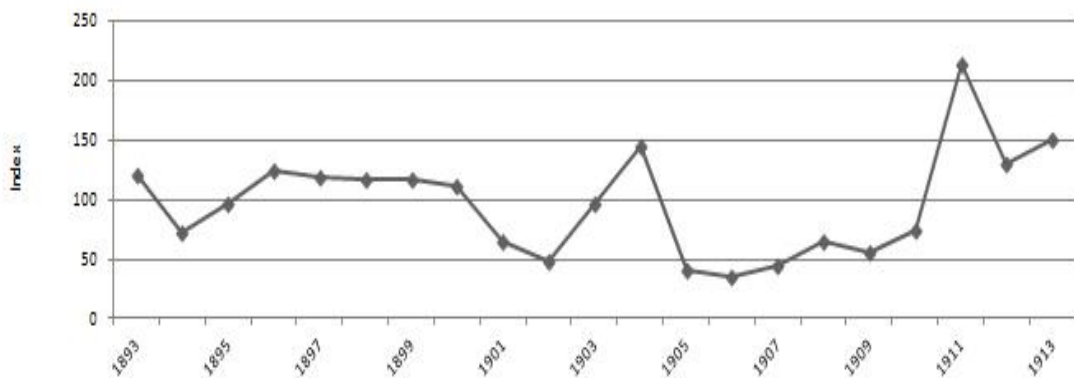
⁵⁷ Smith, 'Agricultural Workers and the French Wine-Growers' Revolt of 1907', p.102.

⁵⁸ MacFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.73.

⁵⁹ E. Weber, *Peasants Into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1880–1914* (California: Stanford University Press, 1976).

viticultural villages had, for some time, been strongly linked to the towns and forced to interact with urban merchants to sell their wine.

These early years of the twentieth century were confusing for winegrowers and labourers alike as an unstable market undermined the optimism which had characterised the recovery from the blight of Phylloxera. Labourers who owned their own land tended to be the best paid, followed by non-landholding labourers and then the live-in workers who were often drawn from immigrant labour from Italy and Spain.⁶⁰ Skilled workers also tended to be the most unionised, with the greatest ability to demand wage rises through the *Fédération des Travailleurs agricoles du Midi* (FTAM), whilst unskilled farmhands remained subject to market fluctuations.⁶¹ The table below highlights the volatility of prices between 1893 and 1913 in the Midi:



Index of average annual prices of wine in the Languedoc (100% = 20yr average price)⁶²

The brief upturn between 1903 and 1904 saw 129 strikes taking place in the Aude, Hérault and Pyrénées-Orientales that year as viticultural labourers sensed that

⁶⁰ MacFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.74.

⁶¹ Frader, 'Syndicalists, socialists and the peasant question in the Aude', p.460.

⁶² R. Pech, *Enterprise viticole et capitalisme en Languedoc-Roussillon* (Toulouse: Publications de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1975), p.131.

concessions could be gained during the upturn and promptly mobilised.⁶³ These strikes were coordinated by the FTAM which was formed in 1903 as a subsidiary of the national *Confédération générale du travail* (CGT). In contrast to the region-wide 'inter-classisme' of the 1907 demonstrations, this strike movement supported the wage demands of agricultural labourers and was therefore figured principally as a class-based strike. This was important, as it would condition the Socialist response to 1907 and, as we shall see, contributed to their inability to capitalise fully on the wave of unrest.

Although in 1903-1904 FTAM was initially successful, with close to 15,000 members in 1904, its numbers waned after the failure of the strikes to produce tangible results.⁶⁴ The increasingly perilous state of the wine market conspired to diminish the validity of wage demands, as growing unemployment in the sector took the edge off strikes and saw many return to work wherever they could find it.⁶⁵ The intensification of the 'wine slump' in 1905 and 1906 saw joblessness and wage-cuts rise, as vineyards became less financially viable.⁶⁶ Moreover, the Midi's urban centres equally bore witness to the crisis years of 1904-1907 as unemployment rocketed to 50% in Beziers and Montpellier, with all commercial trade in Montpellier declining a corresponding 50%.⁶⁷ Such widespread hardship elicited a willingness to cooperate across classes and drew FTAM closer to engagement with landholders as a practical measure.

⁶³ C. Tilly, *The Contentious French* (New York: Harvard University Press, 1986), p.364.

⁶⁴ Frader, 'Syndcalists, socialists and the peasant question in the Aude', p.459.

⁶⁵ C.K. Warner, *The Winegrowers of France and the Government since 1875*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p.22.

⁶⁶ Winnie Lem, *Cultivating Dissent* (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), p.56.

⁶⁷ Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, pp.21-22.

Between January and July 1905, a movement led by the winegrowing proprietor from Béziers, Antonin Palazy, tried to reconfigure the momentum of these recent labour strikes around a cross-class platform and a simpler message which cited fraud as the principal reason for the downturn. On 20 January, and with the help of Socialist Elie Cathala, Palazy held a consultative meeting in Béziers which drew 1,900 delegates from seven Departments to discuss the wine slump. This was perhaps the first time that the representatives of both workers organisations and proprietors had met, demonstrating that 'inter-classisme' could serve to unite the *Languedoc viticole*. Smallholders and labourers remained bound by a mutual suspicion of the large *propriétaires*,⁶⁸ yet this suspicion alone was not enough to construct the 'union sacrée' between smallholders and labourers of which Palazy had dreamt. Cathala had experimented with his own ideas of class cooperation and these had been drawn from the function of cooperatives in the region, though not yet scrutinized in the political arena.

The first cooperative created in the Languedoc was *Les vigneronns libres* in Maraussan, Hérault, which formed a sales partnership in 1901 before constructing a fully cooperative winery in 1905. Elie Cathala was central in the formation of the cooperative, which received a visit from Jean Jaurès on its opening. In April, Jaurès had addressed a rally of around 15,000 people in Béziers to mark the establishment of the SFIO⁶⁹ and paid specific tribute to *Les vigneronns libres*. This organisation attempted to

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the specific class identity of Audois smallholders see L. Frader, *Peasants and Protest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp.163-167.

⁶⁹ This was a period of transition for the Socialists, with the formation of the SFIO in 1905 having consolidated the reformist faction of Jean Jaurès and Jules Guesde's revolutionary worker's party.

employ landless labourers across their cooperative holdings, acting as a labour agency, union of proprietors and bulwark against regional instability. Jaurès celebrated how

L'idée maîtresse des militants socialistes et coopérateurs qui, à Maraussan, ont créé tout un ensemble d'institutions socialistes, a été de grouper les petits propriétaires paysans, les petits producteurs vigneron, de les arracher à cet esprit d'individualisme outré et défiant, à cette habitude d'isolement qui a fait jusqu'ici la faiblesse du travail rural.⁷⁰

With the Musketeers' motto emblazoned above its door - "Tous pour chacun, chacun pour tous"⁷¹ - this cooperative was a working metaphor for Jaurès' social-democratic hopes for the SFIO. Yet it was also an example of how an 'inter-classiste' movement should be created in the Languedoc. The "union sacrée" would eventually be hamstrung by the FTAM, however, which sought to avoid 'collaboration' with proprietors. From this perspective, if the ideology of *Les vigneron libres* echoed a natural affinity in the region for the social-democratic stance of Jaurès, that is not to say that the competing rhetoric of his great rival Jules Guesde was absent.⁷²

Palazy's movement was a precursor to the events of 1907, yet failed to gain the same traction in the region. As arguments broke out over demands that proprietors should contribute to a strike fund, the united front began to collapse and the 'union sacrée' which Palazy had hoped to forge seemed illusory. When proprietors categorically refused to pay, workers' organisations walked out, led by the Socialist

⁷⁰ *L'Humanité de Dimanche*, 07/05/1905.

⁷¹ R. Lauraire, 'La Honte. La Coopérative Viticole Languedocien', in A. Bensa & D. Fabre (ed.s), *Une histoire à soi: figurations du passé et localités* (Paris: Editions MSH, 2001), p.287.

⁷² Jules Guesde had been the leader of the *Parti Ouvrier Française*, before he created the *Parti Socialiste de France* in 1903. Guesde was to the far-left of the Socialists and initially refused to 'collaborate' with bourgeois governments, rejecting the 'reformism' of Jaurès in favour of socialist opposition and a more orthodox Marxian belief in the necessity of revolution.

mayor of Narbonne, Ernest Ferroul.⁷³ The controversial mayor was a Doctor to the poor and a former Guesdiste Deputy, who had ceded his seat at the formation of the *Bloc des Gauches* out of reluctance to leave the role of opposition.⁷⁴ Whilst Palazy and Cathala, backed by Jaurès, had attempted to found a movement based on class cooperation, the Guesdiste Ferroul remained opposed to 'collaboration'. Ferroul would play an important part in the success of the 1907 revolt, and it is poignant that Palazy's movement was destroyed by his reticence. In essence, Ferroul's focus on the primacy of labourers would characterise the Socialist response to the problems of the *Languedoc viticole*.

Southern Socialists had been engaged with the question of viticulture for some time. In a series of debates from 1901 to 1905, Justin Augé, the Radical-socialist Deputy for the Hérault, had called for the government to assume a monopoly over the distillation of alcohol and criticised the sugaring of wines.⁷⁵ This campaign fed into a series of meetings in Béziers during the winter of 1905, culminating in a detailed programme of measures in February 1906. This programme proposed a ban on sugaring wines and greater regulation of *négociants*, a reduction of tariffs on the railways for transporting wine, controls on the flow of wines coming from Tunisia and Algeria, and the encouragement of the growing number of cooperatives in the region.⁷⁶ These issues would become the accepted script for Languedocian Socialist Deputies

⁷³ R. Cazals & D. Fabre (ed.s), *Les Audois* (Carcassonne: Amis des Archives de l'Aude, 1990), p.162.

⁷⁴ R. Pech, 'Les thèmes économiques et sociaux du socialisme Ferrouliste à Narbonne', in A. Martel (ed.), *Droite et Gauche de 1789 à nos jours* (Montpellier: Centre d'Histoire Contemporaine du Languedoc Méditerranéen et du Roussillon, 1975), p.269.

⁷⁵ J. Sagnes & J. Séguéla, *1907: La Révolte du Midi de A à Z* (Béziers: Éditions Aldacom, 2007), pp.88-89.

⁷⁶ *La Dépêche*, 30/04/1906.

throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Yet, at this juncture, the programme had a pronounced *ouvriériste* tone and included demands for a vineyard labourers' minimum wage and that vineyards employ no more than 10% foreign workers. Following a drubbing in legislative elections in 1906, however, the Hérault socialists lacked the platform to push this programme⁷⁷ until the national SFIO conference in Nancy (11-14 August, 1907).⁷⁸ Furthermore, as the region had fallen further into decline and proprietors faced the same hardship as labourers, the gaps between the classes had dissolved and the Midi as a whole entered into a period of open revolt. The Socialist response to these economic difficulties failed to encapsulate this developing inter-classisme, instead retaining a focus on the labour strikes which had preceded 1907. They engaged with the developing Revolt on the assumption that it had issues of class at its heart.

Fostering *inter-classisme* was perhaps the greatest achievement of Marcelin Albert, the café-owner and small-holding winegrower who was to emerge as the leader of the 1907 events. Commonly nicknamed "the messiah" or "the redeemer",⁷⁹ he gathered vast crowds of anxious winegrowers who were drawn to his rhetoric: he took the tension and grievances from the labour strikes of the early 1900s and translated them into a broader, unifying social movement, overcoming the difficulties which demolished Palazy's united front. The demands for a right to employment in the vineyards became a more general, and much more saleable, demand to live from the

⁷⁷ J. Sagnes, 'Le mouvement de 1907 en Languedoc-Roussillon: de la révolte viticole à la révolte régionale', *Le Mouvement Social*, no.104 (July - September, 1978), p.15.

⁷⁸ J. Sagnes, *Le mouvement ouvrier du Languedoc* (Toulouse: Privat, 1980), pp.112-113.

⁷⁹ Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, p.23.

vine.⁸⁰ This rhetorical shift was indicative of the opening up of the Défense movement, and the beginnings of what caused 1907 to become such a seminal event in the history of the Midi. By stressing their vulnerability as small-holders and petty producers, vineyard labourers overcame the potentially alienating focus on wage demands whilst retaining a tangible motivation to protest. This *rapprochement* formed a base for *inter-classisme* to bridge the gap between urban and rural labourers and landowners, fuelling an apolitical mass movement.

Marcelin Albert and the 1907 'Révolte du Midi'

The viticultural crisis was discussed in a series of debates in the National Assembly between January and June 1907. A member of Clemenceau's own majority raised the issue, though a group of Southern Radicals rallied to support the government. They proposed a parliamentary commission to study the problems of the Languedoc. Investigations, however, were insufficient to satisfy the government's vocal critics, who condemned them for protecting the interests of *grand capital* in the Midi.⁸¹ The turbulent political climate after the dissolution of the *Bloc des Gauches* left the dominant Radical party with enemies on the left and right of the Assembly, and in this climate every issue retained the potential for attacking the government.⁸²

⁸⁰ Smith, 'Agricultural Workers and the French Wine-Growers' Revolt of 1907', p.110.

⁸¹ Sagnes & Séguéla, 1907: *La Révolte du Midi de A à Z*, p.89.

⁸² With Jean Jaurès at its head, the SFIO was faced with the challenge of defining its political future. Jaurès notably called an end to the *Bloc des Gauches* in June, 1906 after having achieved the goal of implementing the separation of Church and state. His confrontation with Clemenceau in the Chamber defined the ideological divide between the SFIO and the Radicals, with Jaurès defending strikers and Clemenceau focussing on the need for order.

While discussions in the Assembly stalled, however, local movements in the Midi were to have a far greater influence. On 18 February, the café-owner Marcelin Albert sent a telegram to Clemenceau, detailing the plight of the Midi in the face of its economic difficulties. On 11 March, the Parliamentary commission arrived in Narbonne and received a delegation led by Albert. After this meeting reached an unsatisfactory outcome, Albert's first major meeting took place in the village of Argeliers and a petition was signed by around 400 people demanding immediate government intervention.⁸³ The signatories of this petition were to become central to the coordination of the 1907 riots, with the formation of the *Comité de Salut Public de la viticulture*. This was followed by the appearance of *Le Tocsin* on the 21 April, a news-sheet which lasted for 22 editions and helped to mobilise and unify the protests for the next 5 months.⁸⁴ Its influence was felt for many decades and its editorials and headlines were echoed in the banners and speeches of future protests.

In its first issue, *Le Tocsin* outlined the identity of the Comité d'Argeliers, the group who would set the tone for the entire *révolte*. With Albert at their head, they were keen to validate their claims to represent the Languedocian *masse viticole* as a cross-class, apolitical movement reacting to grave economic pressure:

Nous sommes ceux qui aiment la République, ceux qui détestent et ceux qui s'en foutent; nous sommes ses ardents défenseurs ou ses adversaires déclarés; radicaux ou conservateurs, modérés ou syndicalistes, socialistes ou réactionnaires, nous sommes ceux qui ont leur jugeote et aussi leur opinions. Mais nous avons un ventre et nous sommes ceux qui crèvent de faim.⁸⁵

⁸³ Fontvielle, *Paure miejour, Pauvre Midi*, p.84.

⁸⁴ The *Tocsin* was published by Albert's Comité and principally edited by Louis Blanc.

⁸⁵ 'Qui nous sommes', *Le Tocsin*, 21/04/1907.

In this articulation of the group's beliefs, Albert's Comité stressed their independence from the dominant political parties of the day and their detachment from specific political demands. Yet, in reality, Albert's Comité was composed of a rural bourgeoisie which was unrepresentative of agricultural labourers. Amongst their number, they counted Radicals, conservatives and some few who might be considered Socialists. In the words of Jean Sagnes: "Bref, le Comité d'Argeliers n'a rien de révolutionnaire. Il ne peut même pas être classé à gauche."⁸⁶ This makeup risked the same fate as Palazy's forlorn 'union sacrée'. Yet, Albert's message relied simply on an appeal to defend the region, crack down on fraud and provide bread to the impoverished. The Comité's ability to simplify this message into an apolitical and personal plea ensured that they avoided the divisive class entreaties of previous years.

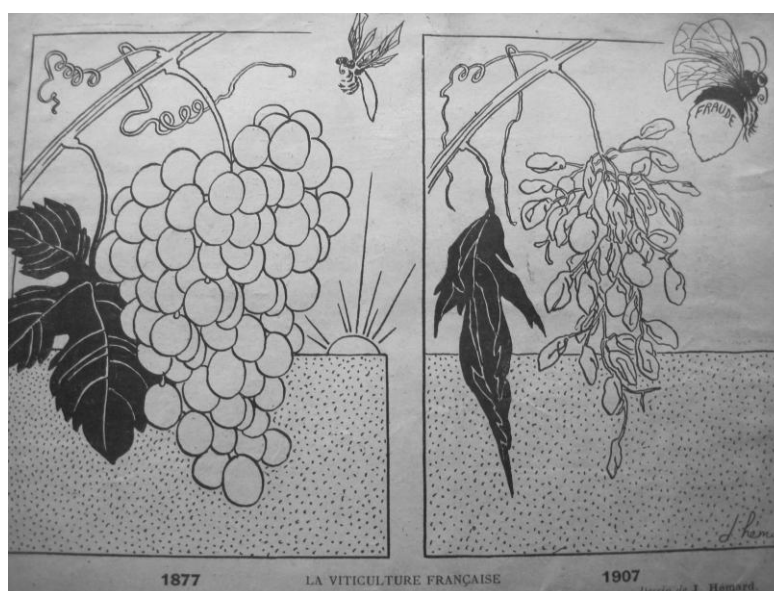
Albert's apolitical rhetoric was to shape the relationship between the Midi vigneron and the government for a hundred years hence, as he spoke of the Midi as a patient in need of saving by Parisian doctors. The Socialist Deputy Justin Augé echoed this in the Assembly, quoting Albert in declaring "Vous êtes le médecin qui devez guérir le malade." The derisive laughter and cries of "Buvez le vin!" which met his statement were, in turn, illustrative of the contempt many in the chamber felt for this negation of responsibility.⁸⁷ Albert, as leader, took no responsibility for finding this cure, stating only the end result winegrowers wanted (wine sold above production cost and stricter regulations to eliminate fraud and sugaring) and that the government

⁸⁶ Sagnes & Séguéla, 1907: *La Révolte du Midi de A à Z*, p.155.

⁸⁷ *Journal officiel, débats parlementaires*, (hereafter Jo, débats) *Assemblée nationale*, séance du 28/06/1907, p.1574.

should endeavour to make it a reality. Essentially Albert articulated a culture of dependency which would be inherited by the later *Défense* movement.

Simplifying the causes of the crippling *crise de mévente* was an important step which would allow the *Défense* movement to articulate its cause more successfully. Of the many possible causes, (such as the over-planting of vines at the turn of the century, increasing yields or Algerian imports) the theme of fraud quickly became the dominant issue of the *Comité d'Argeliers* and the entire 1907 movement. Jean Sagnes highlights the role of the regional press in highlighting this primary cause.⁸⁸ The *Tocsin* would play a pivotal role in distilling this message.



*Cartoon depicting the primacy of fraud as a cause of the 1907 downturn*⁸⁹

Following the emergence of *Le Tocsin*, attendance at meetings rose exponentially. One in Capestang on 21 April attracted an estimated 12,000 winegrowers. In the next week demonstrations in Lézignan attracted between 18-

⁸⁸ J. Sagnes, 'La crise viticole de 1907 devant la Chambre des députés', *Parlement(s)*, no.5 (2006), p.155.

⁸⁹ Unattributed Clipping - AJCB - Box 18.

25,000 protestors doubling in the following week in Narbonne, which saw Dr Ernest Ferroul alongside Albert for the first time. They were unlikely allies, and the extreme-leftist Ferroul's distaste for Albert and his bourgeois Comité ensured that their rivalry would not be resolved. Ferroul began to assume the leadership of events, capitalising on Albert's success in creating a simple, mobilising message and constructing a unified inter-classiste platform. This represented an attempt by the Socialists to take ownership of the Revolt, yet Ferroul, the man who had scuppered the 1905 movement, was unable to harness the resilient 'inter-classisme' and apolitical character of the protesters.

Although the riots of 1907 found their full expression in the cities, their roots were strongly in the countryside. J. Harvey-Smith highlights the role of the urban *Bourses de travail* in motivating the radicalism which underpinned these demonstrations, but it was the interpenetration of city and village in the region which explained how it spread so far and so fast.⁹⁰ It is rash to overstress the traditional 'inter-classisme' model of 1907 without acknowledging the peculiar mixture of classes represented by the small-holding wine growers and their vineyard labouring employees (many of whom were also landowners, as mentioned). The large industrial growers remained a class enemy both of the urban working class and the rural wine-workers. Although the streets were filled with urban workers, artisans and shopkeepers, the subsidised trains which ferried wine-growers and labourers to the cities helped swell numbers and make the cause more immediate. If the organisational impetus fell to Ferroul and the adroit urban Socialists, mass support came from Albert's newly consolidated rural disciples.

⁹⁰ Harvey-Smith, 'Agricultural Workers and the French Wine-Growers' Revolt', p.117.

Regular Sunday protests became a fixture offering winegrowers an escape from the drudgery of their work (or, indeed, unemployment). The week of 12 May, 150,000 met in Béziers, followed by 185,000 in Perpignan on 19 May, 200,000 in Carcassonne on 24 May and 150,000 in Nîmes on 2 June. The movement took on the appearance of a genuine uprising. The climax came at a colossal meeting in Montpellier of an estimated 600,000 people on 9 June. During this time, Ferroul's importance rose dramatically; with the protest movement becoming a fixture of the cities, he rallied the establishment in the Midi's towns to support the cause and brought an end to the sequence of peaceful protests which had so far characterised the movement. On 10 June, he addressed around 20,000 protesters in front of Narbonne City Hall in a fiery meeting which issued an ultimatum for the government to eliminate fraud or face a tax strike.⁹¹ This time the crowd did not disperse, however, and Narbonne's Theatre was set ablaze by rioters caught up in the spirit of the Revolt.⁹²

After 10 June, the sheer scale of the meetings which had swept across the Midi and the sudden ferocious turn of the movement prompted Radical, Socialist and Monarchist Deputies to appeal across the benches for a solution to the crisis. Felix Aldy, the Socialist Deputy for the Aude, spoke on behalf of this unlikely coalition, rejecting the focus on over-production and reiterating the role of fraud at the centre of the crisis.⁹³ Aldy, Ferroul's successor as Deputy for the Aude and a close ally, sensed an opportunity to use the Revolt as political capital against Clemenceau's

⁹¹ Tax has represented a perennial trigger for the mobilisation of Languedocien winegrowers. Noelle Plack of Newman College University read a paper outlining this phenomenon in the 18th century to the conference of the Society for the Study of French History in June 2011. It is also explored briefly in C. Tilly, *The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp.46-48.

⁹² Fontvielle, *Paure miejour, Pauvre Midi*, pp.87-102.

⁹³ Sagnes, 'La crise viticole de 1907 devant la Chambre des députés', p.157.

government. After Aldy's speech, however, another SFIO Deputy, André Dubois (of the Seine), took to the floor with a radically different approach, condemning the large land-holders of the Languedoc who had planted vines uncontrollably. Dubois blamed the crisis on the land-owners, separating the viticultural labourers as innocent victims of speculative greed.⁹⁴ Jaurès, beset by the demands of his own party, declined to support Aldy's statement without reservations. Despite having constantly supported the suppression of viticultural fraud (by sugaring) and the control of distillation (to ensure that unsalable wines could still be profitably disposed of), Jaurès criticised the winegrowers' lack of coherent demands and constant recourse to the government for solutions.⁹⁵ Although he was supportive of the movement, he refused to compromise the ideals of the SFIO in favour of the Midi. Instead, alongside his erstwhile Socialist rival Jules Guesde, Jaurès proposed the nationalisation of the wine industry as a solution to the crisis. This proposal failed to be taken seriously and debate reached an impasse, with Southern Socialists out of step with the SFIO.⁹⁶

The failure of the Assembly to arrive at a response did not obstruct the emergence of an increasingly punitive approach to events in the Midi. As Mayors and local councils resigned, the South lost many of its direct links to Paris and the tax strike which began on 13 June seemed to verge on secession.⁹⁷ Whilst recognising the perilous economic state of the winegrowers, Clemenceau refused to sanction the non-payment of taxes, viewing it as an affront to public order and the cohesion of the state: "Je dis

⁹⁴ Sagnes & Séguéla, 1907: *La Révolte du Midi de A à Z*, p.120.

⁹⁵ Sagnes, *Jaurès*, pp.168-169.

⁹⁶ Rémy Pech posits that Jaurès was never serious about this proposal, but rather sought to highlight the collectivist standpoint whilst standing back from the debate. R.Pech, 'Jaurès et les politiques agricoles du protectionnisme républicain aux réformes socialistes', *Cahiers Jaurès*, no.199 (January - March, 2011) pp.71-82.

⁹⁷ Lem, *Cultivating Dissent*, p.56.

que cela ne donne pas le droit aux paysans du Midi qui souffrent de déclarer qu'ils ne payeront pas l'impôt."⁹⁸ A particular worry for the government was that tax strikes would spread to neighbouring departments, a fear seemingly confirmed by similar threats made in Burgundy in August of 1907 by the Mayor of Paris-l'Hôpital.⁹⁹ On 18 June, Clemenceau ordered the arrest of Ferroul, the man apparently responsible for the intensification of the Revolt. The response was an immediate escalation of violence, with crowds setting wildfires and demanding the Mayor's release. The military occupation on 19 June which followed the torching of Narbonne's Theatre merely fed the tension in the troubled centres of the Midi's *colère*.

The day of the military's arrival, rioters erected barricades and skirmishes during the night left many injured and the first of six protestors dead, Louis Ramon. As news of this filtered through the town, there were angry confrontations with troops. One besieged unit panicked, firing indiscriminately into the crowd and killing four more protesters, including a 20 year old girl.¹⁰⁰ Fires burned the next night, as funeral pyres were erected on the streets of Narbonne and violence spread to Montpellier where rioters lamented the killing of innocents and the imprisonment of Ferroul. In Perpignan, an unfeeling local Prefect's pronouncements on the Revolt had incensed the crowd. As the Prefect barricaded himself in the Prefecture, 2,000 rioters stormed the building, starting fires and ransacking property. After several cavalry charges from the military, the Prefecture was retaken and many protestors arrested.

⁹⁸ *JO, débats, Assemblée nationale, séance du 28/06/1907*, p.1564.

⁹⁹ 'Les Bourguignons protestent', *L'Intransigeant* 08/07/1907 – AJCB – Box 18.

¹⁰⁰ The girl was Cecile Bourrel and the others killed were winegrowers: Henri Rougier, Léon Maignan and Gaston Pagès. A fifth, Elie Danjart, died of his injuries the next day.

Yet, many of those arrested confounded expectations, with important consequences. The presence of avowed royalists and one young anarchist changed the way the riots were perceived. Audois Radical Albert Sarraut, who had resigned his cabinet post when Clemenceau had used force in Narbonne, continued to warn that conservatives and revolutionaries were attempting to use the Revolt to topple the parliamentary regime.¹⁰¹ Shoot-outs in the streets of Montpellier over the following nights further increased the sense of violent confrontation. This proved too much for the soldiers of the 17th Regiment, drawn from young men of the region on military service. On 21 June, 500 men mutinied, seizing weapons and joining the ranks of protestors to blockade Béziers. Their mutiny was lauded in song and in protest, as barricades rang out with the newly composed 'Gloire aux 17eme'. Protesters were buoyed by the gesture, which, in turn, convinced the government to give no quarter.

The vote which endorsed the government's ability to deal with the Revolt was passed with a large number of dissenters (327 to 223 against). The minority of 223 brought together a curious alliance of left and right. The 65 Deputies of the SFIO (including Jaurès, Aldy and Guesde) combined with the dissenting Midi radicals aligned against Clemenceau (Lafferre, Pujade, Sarraut) in opposition. On the right, there were: monarchists like the Marquis of Rosanbo, the Barons of Reille and Fernand de Ramel; conservative republicans like Emmanuel Brousse and Pierre Leroy Beaulieu; and the anti-Dreyfusard right like Lasies.¹⁰² Count Henri du Pérrier de Larsan, a conservative Deputy from the Gironde, claimed it was unacceptable that fraudsters could escape punishment, whilst the Marquis de Rosanbo highlighted the

¹⁰¹ L. Loubere, *Radicalism in Mediterranean France: its rise and decline, 1848-1914* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1974) p.214.

¹⁰² Sagnes, 'La crise viticole de 1907 devant la Chambre des députés', p.165.

responsibility of the Republic itself in creating the crisis.¹⁰³ The presence of the right in the protests and the strange alliance of left and right in the Assembly was enough to convince the Radicals that this was a potent threat to the Republic as they rallied to support an end to the Revolt.

Following erroneous reports of his arrest carried by Reuters on 20 June, Albert secretly travelled to Paris, hoping that the Audois Deputy Aldy would rally to his aid and help campaign in the Assembly. Yet Aldy, a supporter of Ferroul, remained unconvinced of Albert's suitability as leader. When the two finally met, Aldy coldly advised him to go back to Montpellier. Sensing a betrayal, Albert sought out the Premier himself. Their interview was stormy, with each accusing the other of fuelling the discord in the Midi. Clemenceau accused Albert of having contributed to "faire le lit du duc d'Orléans" in weakening the Republic, whilst Albert protested that his Republican credentials were not in question. Eventually, they agreed that they would do their part to quieten protests if fraud was more rigorously prosecuted, parting on a note of mutual sympathy.

This reconciliation was an unexpected conclusion for those in the South who had heralded Albert as a 'redeemer'. Suspicions were raised when newspaper reports spoke of the winegrower's 'Apostle' in tears before he surreptitiously set off back South. Accounts of the interview further related that Clemenceau had given Albert a 100Fr note. The money was a subsidy to allow the penniless Albert the means with which to travel home yet, to the protestors of the Midi, this pocket money loomed like 30 pieces of silver after Albert's furtive capitulation in Paris. Clemenceau had

¹⁰³ Sagnes & Séguéla, 1907: *La Révolte du Midi de A à Z*, pp.88-89.

impeached the unassailable morality of the 'great Redeemer' whilst securing the quiescence of the movement. With Albert central to 1907's effectiveness, his discrediting was a fatal blow to the movement's cohesiveness. By 25 June, order had been re-imposed in the Midi and the mutineers of the 17eme removed by further infantry regiments. The *grande révolte* and the violence which had emerged from the mass protests had ended in compromise and disappointment. On his release from prison, where he had been placed for over a month for his own safety, Albert narrowly avoided being lynched. Chastened by his involvement in politics, he died forsaken by the movement he had created. His remaining days were spent in obscurity, his legacy as a mythic figure at odds with his pariah's fate. Echoing this sense of desperation, Warner describes the 1907 revolt as "a picturesque and pathetic episode in French history."¹⁰⁴

Albert's legacy, however, had been in successfully distilling the message of the Défense movement and mobilising an *inter-classiste* movement to historic effect. The Radical Albert Sarraut continued to campaign on the fact that Marcelin Albert had been an honest and simple man whose interview with Clemenceau had been revelatory, whilst the villain of the piece was the relentlessly ambitious Ferroul who had abandoned the 'winegrower's apostle' as soon as was expedient.¹⁰⁵ The conflict between Ferroul and Albert had been symbolic of the Socialist party's desire yet inability to take ownership of the Revolt. If Albert represented the limits of the Revolt's potential, then Ferroul was more indicative of the movement's incompatibility with national politics. The Revolt had highlighted a uniquely Méridional situation in the

¹⁰⁴ Warner, *The Winegrowers of France and the Government*, p.23.

¹⁰⁵ Loubère, *Radicalism in Mediterranean France*, p.214.

representation of winegrowers, born of a very specific process of development which confounded traditional class definitions. Furthermore, the role of Southern Socialists would have to adapt and diverge from the national model of the SFIO to highlight the region without falling into the trap of regionalists. The regionalist potential of the movement had been too strong for Jaurès to stand behind, and the haziness surrounding the class relationships of Albert's movement could have left the SFIO open to criticisms of pandering to the proprietors.

Socialism & Regionalism

The government's firm reaction to the revolt of 1907 is seen by some as a sign of fear at its regionalist implication.¹⁰⁶ For this reason, it is important to document the contemporary reaction to the revolt's regionalist significance. The threat of contagion from the protests in the Midi was worrying for those in Paris if it challenged the unity of the Republic. The Radical *L'Aurore* cautioned that "si l'exemple du Midi devenait contagieux, nous n'aurions bientôt plus de représentants de la France, de représentants de la République, de représentants du peuple. Devant une telle situation, je me permettrais de dire: un peu de jacobinisme, s'il vous plaît!"¹⁰⁷ Clemenceau's record of energetically putting down strikes¹⁰⁸ belied the left wing heritage of the Radicals, yet in his commitment to Jacobinism he highlighted the flexibility of the Radicals at the centre

¹⁰⁶ This opinion is repeated in later Défense movement and Occitaniste newspapers like *Echo des Corbières* and *Lutte Occitane*, as we shall see in Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁷ 'Les Départements Fédérés', *L'Aurore* 27/06/1907 – AJCB – Box 18.

¹⁰⁸ Such as sending 30,000 - 40,000 soldiers against protesting Northern miners in April 1906 after the Catastrophe at Courrières, as described in J. Sagnes, *Jaurès*, p.231.

of the Third Republic.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, *Le Radical* warned of a grim future should this “cri de guerre insensé s’adressait à la nation” not be properly answered, foreseeing that “la statue de la Liberté soit voilée une fois de plus”.¹¹⁰ These outpourings exaggerated the destructive and disruptive potential of the disturbances in the Midi as a means to attack the Socialists, whose relationship with the Radicals following the withdrawal from the *Bloc des Gauches* had remained difficult.

The Socialists were not ignorant of the movement’s regionalist potential, nor of the incompatibility of this with their ideological base. The sensationalised royalist or separatist strands which had emerged in the Revolt were an uncomfortable issue. Compounding these fears, Marcelin Albert had written in the *Echo de Paris* that the rioting Midi was “le germe d’un petit État dans le grand État de France!”¹¹¹ Albert’s leadership made unconditional support difficult, and his incompatibility with the Socialist party ensured a distance remained between the central Comité d’Argeliers and the SFIO. Jaurès was forced to distance his party from such pronouncements, instead choosing to minimise grandiose rhetoric and focus on the economic plight of vignerons. He criticised “la folie mystique” of Albert’s movement, cognisant that as the head of a national party he could not endorse federalism based solely on the demands

¹⁰⁹ For further discussion of the Radical party during the Third Republic, see J. Jackson, *The Politics of Depression in France, 1932-1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985; Serge Bernstein, *Un siècle de radicalisme*, (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2004), vol.II, p.327-336; Jessica Wardhaugh, *In pursuit of the people: political culture in France, 1934-39* (London: Palgrave, 2009). Also useful are articles written by Jacques Kayser, one of the leading lights in the Radical party and a supporter of its ties to the Socialists. See J. Kayser, 'Le parti-radical-socialiste et le Rassemblement populaire 1935-1938', *Bulletin de la société d'Histoire de la Troisième République*, vol.14 (April-July, 1955), especially p.14 for the relationship between Radicals and labour unrest; J. Kayser, 'Souvenirs d'un militant 1934-1939', *Les Cahiers de la République*, vol.12 (March, 1958).

¹¹⁰ 'Pour l'unité', *Le Radical* 28/06/1907 – AJCB – Box 18.

¹¹¹ *L'Écho de Paris*, 22/05/1907.

of the South. France, he reminded the révoltés, “n’est pas toute dans les départements de l’Aude, de l’Hérault et des Pyrénées-Orientales.”¹¹²



Protest poster glorifying Albert in Occitan yet draped in the flag of the Republic¹¹³

In reality, as long as the 1907 Revolt remained essentially apolitical, the anti-Jacobin appearance remained a projection. Albert’s scatter-gun pronouncements were intended to provoke a reaction from the establishment. Whilst federalism or secession could be inferred from his rhetoric, the Comité d’Argeliers itself had consistently championed “ni réaction, ni révolution”.¹¹⁴ To the extent that the Socialists supported the Revolt, it was as solidarity with an impoverished minority in a sector which required regulatory reform. This reading was echoed by Justin Augé, who agreed that

¹¹² Sagnes, *Jaurès*, pp.156-157.

¹¹³ Protest poster - AJCB - Box 18.

¹¹⁴ ‘Vive les gueux’, *La Petite République* 11/06/1907 – AJCB – Box 18.

the exploited of the Midi “fatigués d’user de la voie légale, a cherché un moyen pour appeler sur lui d’une façon plus efficace l’attention de ceux qui l’avaient trop longtemps dédaigné.” They perceived no immediate threat to the nation as they had been unable to marshal the movement themselves, owing to their mishandling of ‘inter-classisme’. With the labour strikes of the 1900s firmly in mind, the Socialist Mayor of Toulouse, Albert Bedouce, supported the rioters in the Assembly: “La vérité est que la mouvement n’est ni séparatiste, ni politique, mais que c’est un mouvement économique.” This summation of the riots is supportive yet also denies the revolt’s broader significance, perfectly encapsulating the SFIO response. Yet, when Bedouce clumsily used the phrase “départements fédérés” to describe the centres of the Revolt, transcripts record loud exclamations from all benches and a subsequent intervention from the President of the Chamber to remind Bedouce of the indivisibility of the Republic.¹¹⁵ Such a reaction was further indicative of the sensitivity felt towards the divisive potential of regionalism.

The strongest link between the SFIO and the regionalist movement was Ernest Ferroul, whose attachment to the Midi was deep-rooted. Ferroul is purported, whilst still a University student, to have travelled to the tomb of the original hammer of the Cathars, Simon de Montfort, just to spit on his grave.¹¹⁶ Such antics were reflected in the references Ferroul made to the Albigensian campaign and to the Cathars as a means of mobilising support. He used the imagery as a means of pitching the region against the north:

¹¹⁵ *JO, débats, Assemblée nationale, séance du 26/06/1907*, pp.1574-1551. This phrase also echoed the division between Girondins and Jacobins, especially relating to the troops from the provinces who had travelled to Paris to celebrate the Feast of the Federation in 1790 and 1792.

¹¹⁶ Zaretsky, *Cock and Bull Stories*, p.89.

Un souvenir me hante, souvenir de misère pareille à la vôtre!
Lorsque les barons féodaux envahissaient le Midi et le saccageaient,
un troubadour pleurait ainsi: Ah! Toulouse et Provence, et la terre
d'Argence, Béziers et Carcassonne, qui vous a vu et qui vous
voit! Depuis, les barons de l'industrie du Nord nous ont envahis et
ruinés. Nous ne voulons pas les supporter davantage. En avant!
Debout pour les repousser, eux et leurs complices. Parlez plus fort,
unissez vos voix, votre prière prendra le ton d'un commandement.

Likewise, Marcelin Albert made direct reference to the crusades during one rally
outside the resonant Cité médiévale in Carcassonne:

Les albigeois étaient autrefois réunis sous ces murs, ils y tombèrent
pour la défense de leur liberté. Nous ferons comme eux! En avant
pour la défense de nos droits! Le Midi le veut, le Midi l'aura!¹¹⁷

These references to the regional past were intended to mobilise resentment of the
North and solidarity in the communal poverty of the region. By invoking such
historical references, they drew themselves closer to articulating a common regional
identity and sought to keep the Revolt grounded in an identity beyond class
boundaries. This in turn drew upon the vocabulary of the prominent cultural
guardians of the Midi, the scholarly Félibrige movement.

Despite the limited extent of links between the winegrowers and the Félibrige,
there remains strong evidence for their connection. Ferroul is reported as having
visited Frédéric Mistral, the famed champion of the Occitan language, at his home
along with the *capoulié* (Chief officer) of the Félibrige, Pierre Dévoluy and a bevy of
winegrowers. Despite Dévoluy supposedly begging Mistral on his knees, the old poet
was to disappoint his deputy. Likewise, Marcelin Albert had telegraphed Mistral,

¹¹⁷ G. Ferré, 'Le Midi viticole, rouge de colère', *Historia*, no.723 (March, 2007), p.44.

begging him (in Occitan) to join the ranks of protestors and endorse this movement in the spirit of the *pays*.

Nous venons de la terre, et nous allons à la terre, et c'est de la terre que nous, nous voulons vivre. C'est pour cela que vous qui avez chanté, avec une si grande voix, la terre-mère du Midi, vous ferez plaisir à tout notre peuple si vous venez, aux côtés de tous ceux d'Argeliers, à Montpellier le 9 juin.¹¹⁸

Mistral, however, declined to openly endorse the movement, choosing not to align himself with Albert and Ferroul's assemblies of impoverished winegrowers.¹¹⁹ Instead he attended a fête in Avignon, citing prior commitments as a reason to opt out of one of the largest social movements since the Revolution. He did have kind words for Albert, however, whom he saw as the most effective leader of the movement:

Ce qui est beau et étonnant dans ces manifestations, c'est qu'elles sont anonymes, spontanées, en dehors de tout autre prétexte que la misère du pays. Ce qui leur donne un caractère clairement, purement, hautement populaire, c'est que nous n'y voyons figurer ni personnage marquant de la politique, ni journaliste en renom, ni lettré, ni savant, ni artiste célèbre, ni personne en un mot dont le renom pourrait introduire une signification particulière ou différente; il n'y a qu'un nom, jusqu'à maintenant, qui surgit de la mêlée; c'est celui d'un paysan, d'un simple, véritable et honnête paysan.¹²⁰

Philippe Martel suggests that Mistral's squeamishness came from the competing visions of the Midi: the grand *Occitanie* of later nationalists which spanned 33 *départements* and the more realistic base of the *Languedoc viticole*. In visiting Avignon, Mistral was opting for the grand Midi of nationalist imaginations and in choosing a

¹¹⁸ P. Martel, 'Les félibres en 1907: un rendez-vous manqué?' in *La Révolte du Midi viticole cent ans après* (Perpignan: Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 2008), p.150.

¹¹⁹ Sagnes, *Le Midi Rouge*, p.256.

¹²⁰ Martel, 'Les félibres en 1907: un rendez-vous manqué?', pp.151-152.

fête over a protest, he was choosing linguistic politics over the real cultural identity of the *Midi rouge*. In *La Dépêche*, Jaurès had railed against “la ferveur mystique des croisades” in the references to the region’s Cathar past.¹²¹ Mistral refused to engage with the protests through fear that the Félibrige would be adding fuel to the flames of Revolt, hoping not to undo the cultural work of his organisation with hasty political allegiances. The elderly poet’s rejection of political involvement was a retreat into the imagined construct of *Occitanie* and a step away from its reality.

Yet Mistral was not the only prominent regionalist figure who could be approached to support the winegrowers. The head of the Fédération Régionaliste Française (FRF), Jean Charles-Brun, reflected on the events of 1907 as “un grand mouvement régionaliste, les viticulteurs se sont tournés vers l’Etat”.¹²² Yet, as Julian Wright has shown, Charles-Brun’s politics remained remarkably free of party association. With his socially-conservative Catholicism (in an anti-clerical political atmosphere) and Republican Federalism (in the face of Radical Jacobinism), Charles-Brun’s moderate beliefs are difficult to ascribe to the traditional left-right revolutionary duality of French politics and his ‘organicist’ vision placed the development of pacifistic syndicalism at the centre of any meaningful regionalist project. Indeed, although Languedocian Socialism was not carried on the back of the growing syndicalisation of the wine trade, Charles-Brun acknowledged that it was “increasingly difficult to avoid the links between regionalism and moderate syndicalism or non-Marxist socialism.”¹²³

¹²¹ *La Dépêche*, 31/05/1907.

¹²² Discours de Jean Charles-Brun, Montpellier 1915 – AJCB – Box 13.

¹²³ Wright, *Regionalism in France*, pp.227-239.

There was support for the Revolt as a regionalist symbol, with organisations declaring solidarity in Paris, Brittany and elsewhere. Jean Charles-Brun himself had started a group in Paris during the demonstrations in support of the Midi winegrowers. His Comité Parisien de Défense de la viticulture française expressed solidarity and distributed the posters of the Comité d'Argeliers around Paris.¹²⁴ Indeed, *Action Régionaliste*, the newspaper of the FRF, declared that “la crise viticole a des causes nombreuses et complexes, mais là, comme ailleurs, c’est le régime centralisateur qui est le grand coupable.”¹²⁵ The regional recognition and the tangible concessions on wine-growing which were gained from the riots had demonstrated the power of the periphery. In Brittany, *Le Réveil Breton* mused “Cette méthode vient de réussir dans le Midi, pourquoi ne réussirait-elle pas en Bretagne, si on en faisant un essai sérieux?”¹²⁶ Breton commentators described Clemenceau as a “nouveau Simon de Montfort, à la tête des Nordistes contre les modernes Albigeois!” This historical allusion showed precisely how the events of the South could be used by regionalist spokesmen in other areas. The Breton commentator Leon Le Berri described the revolt as representative of a “dégoût général pour la politique”, aligning the disgruntlement of the Midi vignerons with a wider dissatisfaction with centralised politics across the regions of France.¹²⁷ Such sentiment was anathema to Republican centralists in the Assembly, and can indeed help to explain the severity with which Clemenceau’s government met the demonstrators.

¹²⁴ ‘Le comité Parisien de défense de la viticulture française’, *La Liberté* 23/07/1907 – AJCB – Box 18.

¹²⁵ ‘La Fédération Régionaliste Française et la crise du Midi’, *Action Régionaliste* (July, 1907) – AJCB – Box 18.

¹²⁶ ‘Pensers d’un Breton’, *Le Réveil Breton* 26/05/1907 – AJCB – Box 18.

¹²⁷ ‘Carnet d’un Breton’, *Carhaix* 25/05/1907 – AJCB – Box 18.

Compounding the fears of the Radicals were supporters on the royalist and nationalist right who claimed that the Languedocian rising was the inevitable consequence of a centralised state. The royalist newspaper *Gazette de France*, gleefully reported that “les gueux du Midi deviennent les auxiliaires actifs de la Restauration royaliste!”¹²⁸ Another royalist newspaper, *Le Roussillon*, had prematurely celebrated the torching of the Prefecture in Perpignan:

Depuis Dimanche, la République est donc virtuellement abolie, déposée, dans cinq départements du joyeux Midi; le billard désaffecté d’Argeliers vengé par la force des choses et des événements, les couvents et les écoles volés, les églises profanées; le gouvernement absolu des Gueux fait l’intérim de la monarchie réparatrice et glorieuse!¹²⁹

Clearly, the *Roussillon* had got ahead of itself and Albert had no intention of restoring the monarchy, yet in their glee they made clear the hopes they held for the Revolt. Yet there were even more extreme commentators, and Édouard Drumont saw fit to link the movement to the Dreyfus Affair, calling on the protesters to continue combating the state:

Languedociens et Provençaux, ouvrez les yeux: vous subissez la croisade de Dreyfus. Le Juif, le Maçon et la Fraude ne font qu’un. En vous élevant contre la troisième, vous avez déchaîné les deux premiers. Car, si vous supprimiez la Fraude, vous supprimeriez le Maçon et le Juif... et ce serait la fin de la République.¹³⁰

The ‘inter-classisme’ and apolitical program of the 1907 Revolt allowed extreme voices to discern in it a means for challenging the Republic. Through the Revolt, we are given

¹²⁸ *Gazette du France* 14/06/1907.

¹²⁹ *Le Roussillon*, 12/06/1907 quoted in Sagnes & Séguéla, 1907: *La Révolte du Midi de A à Z*, p.163.

¹³⁰ *La Libre Parole*, 23/06/1907.

an insight into the political turbulence which faced the Third Republic, yet also the opportunism of the opponents of republicanism itself.¹³¹ This helps to explain the temporary and unlikely alliances formed in opposition to the government's approach to the Revolt, when the royalist and nationalist right had voted alongside the SFIO. Yet it also helps to explain the reluctance of the SFIO to endorse the Revolt wholeheartedly in the Assembly. Ultimately, the Socialists could not unconditionally or universally support the Revolt because of its regionalist significance and its focus on 'inter-classisme'. Both these unifying aspects also encouraged the support of partners the SFIO did not desire. Although Ferroul and Albert did not court the endorsement of Royalists or anti-Semites, their association characterised the anti-Jacobin opposition still smarting from the government's anti-clerical laws. Historical appeals to the region's past helped to mobilise protestors, yet these nods to regionalism also carried within them a fundamental ambiguity which ensured the movement could not be dominated by any one political party.

Socialism & Syndicalism

Syndicalists in the Languedoc had long reserved a strongly independent tendency, with even their most dependable political supporters like Ferroul still maintaining the Guesdist belief that strikes were of secondary importance to political

¹³¹ P. Secondy, 'Les droites et 1907: Lectures nationales et strategies locales' in J. Sagnès (ed.), *La révolte du Midi viticole cents ans après* (Perpignan: Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 2008).

control.¹³² Even after the unification of the SFIO, FTAM remained strongly opposed to associating the CGT with the newly formed Socialist party and helped to defeat the proposal at the 1906 Conference in Amiens.¹³³ 1907, then, represented an odd moment for syndicalism due to its 'inter-classisme'.¹³⁴ FTAM's focus on class struggle rather than class collaboration saw its leadership call for members not to participate in the Revolt. Most of FTAM's members, however, ignored these orders and participated in the demonstrations regardless. The sheer scale of the revolt, coupled with Albert and Ferroul's references to the Albigensian crusade, created a moment in the Languedoc where class division could feasibly be ignored.

One of the most tangible legacies of the 1907 revolts was the formation of the Confédération Générale des Vignerons du Midi (CGVM), a pressure group designed to persecute fraud and push for winegrowers' interests politically. Antonin Palazy, of the ill-fated 1905 movement, presided over the creation of the CGVM with his former foe Ferroul tasked with leading the organisation. The CGVM drew support from Jean Jaurès as an organisation designed to bring order to the otherwise chaotic marketplace. Indeed, the SFIO supported the CGVM in its electoral campaigns in the Languedoc whilst it remained an electoral asset at this time. Jaurès foreshadowed the rhetoric of post-war movements by praising the solidarity displayed in 1907 as demonstrative of a fundamental need to live in the region coming before any need to operate as a class. This focus on one's right to live and work the land would form the basis of the later

¹³² On the slowness to fully engage with agricultural syndicalism of Leftist militants, see D. Brower, *The New Jacobins: The French Communist Party and the Popular Front* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), pp.113-114.

¹³³ Frader, *Peasants and Protest*, pp.134-135.

¹³⁴ For a discussion of the development of "Socialist Agrarianism" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see J. Bulaitis, *Communism in Rural France: French Agricultural Workers and the Popular Front* (London: Tauris, 2008), pp.15-17.

appeal of the Occitan movement and also mark one of the fundamental underpinnings of their allegiance to the winegrowers' organisations. However, after the temporary alliance between classes (the union between land-owners and labourers during 1907), the formation of the CGVM marked a return to the class divisions of old.

The weakness of the CGVM, despite its inclusive rhetoric, was that it contained little specifically targeted at the landless labour-force. In reality, large landowners had the loudest voice in the organisation and this discouraged syndical organisations from whole-hearted participation as it moved away from direct action and any emphasis on class struggle. Voting share was allocated on the number of hectares held and hectolitres produced – a bulwark against the organisation being taken over by the worker's associations like FTAM.¹³⁵ FTAM criticised the CGVM as being “yellow unionists” as it favoured large proprietors in its voting systems (sometimes weighting large landowners 11 times more than landless labourers).¹³⁶ This struggle represented the symptoms of a crisis of representation, which would continue to plague the Languedoc well into the post-war period.

FTAM's representation of landless labourers was not exclusive, and small-holding transient labourers were often members of both FTAM and the CGVM despite their supposed incompatibility. The CGVM could represent them effectively as landholders (however small) whilst the unions could represent them as workers (by coordinating strikes based on wage demands, for example). In 1908, however, this changed as FTAM moved to exclude members of the CGVM. This was a fundamental

¹³⁵ Sagnes & Séguéla, *1907: La Révolte du Midi de A à Z*, p.157.

¹³⁶ MacFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.98.

misjudgement of the Languedoc's socio-economic makeup, and the precipitous departure of small-holding labourers from FTAM's ranks left it moribund. This miscalculation confined the labour unions to a minority role in the Languedoc. The incompatibility of FTAM and the CGVM led to a tussle between the two which saw membership fluctuate radically in the years after 1907; the overall story, however, was one of the declining relevance of labour syndicalism.

Indeed, enthusiasm for the CGVM was short lived, and Ferroul's role in 1907 was all but forgotten when he was attacked by both the SFIO and members of the FTAM for failing to represent labourers and colluding with the interests of large capital. At the SFIO Conference in St-Etienne in 1909, the CGVM was criticised for forcing workers to 'collaborate' with proprietors and delegations from the Hérault and Seine both lobbied to encourage workers to shun the CGVM.¹³⁷ Even Jaurès, whose support had made the formation of the CGVM possible, began to distance himself from the organisation.¹³⁸ As criticism of the CGVM built up, SFIO Deputies began to disassociate themselves from the organisation in the 1914 elections, seeking to avoid being tainted by accusations of class betrayal.¹³⁹ 1907 had demonstrated the potential of solidarity amongst the natural allies of the winegrowers of the Midi,¹⁴⁰ yet its fallout had also demonstrated the natural splits within the Midi which would fuel a crisis of representation throughout the twentieth century.

Whilst labour syndicalism had declined in importance, cooperatives began to be formed more readily. Their greater compatibility with the 'smallholder and

¹³⁷ Frader, *Peasants and Protest*, pp.146-151.

¹³⁸ Sagnes, *Jaurès*, p.170.

¹³⁹ Frader, 'Syndicalists, socialists and the peasant question in the Aude', pp.462-464.

¹⁴⁰ The Socialist Party, local Mayors and the urban population of the region amongst others.

labourer' model of the *Languedoc viticole* helped them assimilate into the CGVM. It was not overly-politicised or revolutionary *syndicats* which would proliferate in the Languedoc, rather it was organisations which offered tangible help to struggling winegrowers in a practical sense. This wave of collectivisation thus occurred amidst continuing economic challenges and in recognition of the potential for cooperatives to mitigate the worst impacts of downturns.¹⁴¹ The Fédération des Caves Coopératives (FDCC) was founded in 1924, and all the Departments of the Midi were invited to federalise their producers to defend the economic interest of winegrowers and cooperate in winemaking, storage and sales. The Gard created their own departmental equivalent in 1926 (FDCCG), the Aude in 1929 (FDCCA) and the Hérault in 1932 (FDCCH).¹⁴²

These cooperatives offered more than merely the solidarity that had been found before the war.¹⁴³ A resident wine-making expert could supervise vinification, whilst the provision of must-metres, acid-metres and hermetically sealed storage meant fewer defects in the wine and a more reliable product. The dates by which the departmental federations were formed tracked the cyclical downturns of the market, with 33% like for like price drops in the Midi during 1925 immediately preceding the formation of

¹⁴¹ For more general discussions of the development of French Agriculture during the Third Republic, see: G. Wright, *Rural Revolution in France: The Peasantry in the Twentieth Century* (Stanford University Press, 1964); A. Moulin, *Peasantry and society in France since 1789* (Cambridge University Press, 24 Oct 1991); M.C. Cleary, *Peasants, Politicians, and Producers: The Organisation of Agriculture in France since 1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1989); A. Bensa et D. Fabre (ed.s), *Une histoire a soi: figurations du passe et localites* (Paris : Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2001).

¹⁴² Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.111.

¹⁴³ The Great War disrupted wine-growing completely. Firstly, the entire rail network was requisitioned by government, meaning that any production which did emerge was unable to reach its market. National production mirrored the worst years of the Phylloxera epidemic, as supplies, manpower and transport were all diverted towards the war effort. For a narrative of this process, see: Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, pp.53-56.

the Gard's departmental organisation. As well as providing shelter from market fluctuations, cooperatives also allowed a collectivisation of representation, providing a mouthpiece for small-growers in a similar situation within a small geographic area. Villages united under the banner of a cooperative suddenly had the ability to speak collectively outside traditional political channels. The Popular Front would subsequently support the establishment of wine cooperatives in the Languedoc as a means of effectively transmitting their ideological goals to the countryside.¹⁴⁴ This support took the form of subsidies, low-interest loans and specialist teams of rural engineers who would help to construct cooperative wineries.¹⁴⁵ The FDCC provided a more specialist, less ideologically rigid and more amenable form of syndicalism with which the Socialists could engage. The schisms that FTAM created ultimately diminished its importance and the subsequent increase in cooperatives ensured that these would become the dominant structure of syndical representation.

'L'Union Sacrée': Ferroul, Barthe and the birth of 'Députés du vin'

The Legacy of 1907 rested not only in its potential as a foundation myth of the Défense movement, but also in its effects on the relationship between winegrowers and the state. The SFIO's inability to dominate the Revolt locally had diminished their ability to support it nationally. Speaking at the SFIO conference in 1909 in St-Etienne, a delegate from the Hérault lamented the party's inability to have an impact on the Revolt:

¹⁴⁴ For a broader discussion of agricultural policy during the Popular Front, see J. Kergoat, *La France du Front Populaire* (Paris: Découverte, 1986).

¹⁴⁵ Lem, *Cultivating Dissent*, pp.203-204.

A ce moment les camarades socialistes n'étaient pas préparés [...], quand ils se sont aperçus qu'on les entraînait trop loin, il était trop tard, parce qu'il n'était plus possible de se faire entendre dans ces régions [...]. Il fallait voir comme on se précipitait contre eux et, dans les rues, sur les places des Narbonne ou de Montpellier, comme on écoutait peu leurs discours faits d'un point de vue socialiste.¹⁴⁶

In Ferroul's fierce devotion to viticulture, Southern Socialists were presented with a new function which would bind them to the political landscape of the Midi. The 'Député du vin' model thrived in the Third Republic (and would continue to do so in the Fourth¹⁴⁷), where, as Julian Jackson observed, the "local responsibilities of a Third Republic politician could weigh as heavily as his national ones."¹⁴⁸ The role of 'Député du vin' was not a necessary qualification for election in the Midi. Nonetheless, it strengthened the electoral power of Deputies well into the 1980s at least. The role was "un des trophées politiques les plus convoités localement." It relied on the politician embodying the values and interests of the viticultural society they were representing whilst being bound into a normative system of viticultural action (such as endorsing protests). Likewise, in moments of crisis, the 'Député du vin' was expected "d'utiliser les registres que requiert le contexte de crise, moment essentiel d'expression de ce

¹⁴⁶ Sagnes, *Le Midi Rouge*, p.236.

¹⁴⁷ For the inter-war period, see E. Lynch, *Moissons rouges: Les Socialistes français et la société paysanne dans l'entre-deux-guerres (1918-40)* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2002). The interaction of national political parties with the viticultural south in the Fourth Republic is discussed in P. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise: Politics in the Fourth Republic* (London: Longman, 1972), pp.78-81 (for the relationship of the Communist Party with the peasantry) and p.99 (where Williams states the Socialists were, in the South "a party of administration and not of opposition."). The role of rural deputies and the development of agricultural representation on a national level is discussed in J. Rioux, *The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.387-389. The turbulent relationship between the national agricultural unions and the independent peasant parties is discussed in R. Vinen, *Bourgeois Politics in France 1945-1951* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.242-243.

¹⁴⁸ Jackson, *The Politics of Depression*, p.9.

rôle."¹⁴⁹ Socialist Deputies who fulfilled this role referred back to the Socialist programme of 1906, stripped of the *ouvriériste* tone which had left it struggling for relevancy. Rather, Deputies retained a central core of issues which sprang from 1907: resistance to fraud, belief in the potential for a living wage from wine and the conviction that the Midi had an important role to play in wine's future.

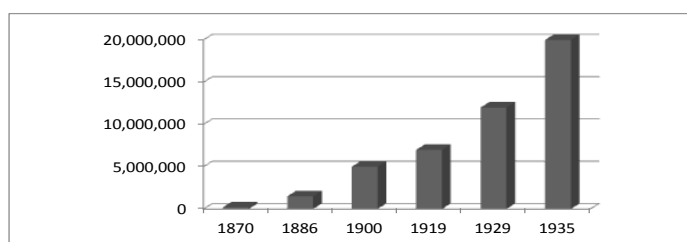
The intransigence of the Languedoc's syndicalists had prevented the 1905 movement from properly establishing itself. Likewise, in the wake of 1907, the incompatibility of Socialist party policies and the enduring convictions of Languedocian syndicalists had ensured that there was no abiding "union sacrée". Yet, as discussed, the syndicalist movement radically weakened itself at the expense of an organisation to which the Socialist party was not firmly committed (the CGVM). The use of force against demonstrators in 1907 (and subsequently in 1908 and 1910) ended the electoral alliance between the Radicals and the Socialists in the Languedoc. This allowed them to challenge the government in regional campaigns, translating the motivation of the 1907 Revolt into a new electoral strategy. The SFIO continued to increase its popularity in the Midi, more than doubling the votes received in 1906 in the subsequent legislative elections of 1910 and 1914.¹⁵⁰

These subsequent elections set the tone for the Socialists' role in the Midi, even as it developed and moved beyond direct links to 1907. Jean Sagnes suggests that if there was 'ferroulisme' in the Aude, then after the Great War there was equally 'barthisme' in the Hérault. Edouard Barthe was one of the most active Deputies in the

¹⁴⁹ O. Dedieu, "Raoul Bayou, député du vin : les logiques de constitution d'un patrimoine politique", *Pôle Sud*, no.9 (1998), p.89.

¹⁵⁰ Frader, *Peasants and Protest*, pp.158-159.

Midi, with frequent visits to the smallest villages of the region and a strong presence in the *Commission des boissons*.¹⁵¹ Throughout the 1930s Barthe spoke out for the region from his platform in the SFIO, railing against “la fortune scandaleuse des barons algériens.”¹⁵² The rapidly increasing output of Algerian wine was starting to make an impact on Languedocian prices, challenging their position at the bottom end of the market.



*Graph of the rapid increase of Algerian wine production (in HL)*¹⁵³

Barthe echoed the issues raised by Ferroul in his criticism of low quality Algerian imports and was the principal author of the majority of viticultural measures between 1930 and 1935.¹⁵⁴ The Loi Tardieu – named after the presiding Minister of Agriculture, but referred to as the Loi Barthe in the Midi due to his central role in its inception – systematically altered many accepted practices. Heavy yields were taxed to discourage over-production and programmes of uprooting and distillation provided the means to stabilize the market. The Law was not without controversy, however. It drew an increasingly stark divide between small and large growers and cracks appeared in the

¹⁵¹ Sagnes, *Le mouvement ouvrier du Languedoc*, pp.107-110.

¹⁵² R.Pech, ‘Les grands militants viticoles Languedociens au xx^e siècle’ in *Militantisme et histoire* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires de Mirail, 2000), p.237.

¹⁵³ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Vignerons*, p.94.

¹⁵⁴ Pech, ‘Les grands militants viticoles’, p.237.

CGVM over progressive taxation and the limits on irrigation. The CGVM splintered, an event which foreshadowed the later pluralist direction of the *Defense du vin* movement and increased competition between different representative groups.

Barthe organised a meeting of 2,000 winegrowers in Pézenas on 27 March 1932 to found the *Ligue des Petits et Moyens Viticulteurs*, an organisation bound to the SFIO. As we shall see, this organisation was to play an important role in the development of the later *Défense* movement. Its quickly swelling membership grew from 28,000 in 1932 to 55,000 in 1933. Barthe's credibility within the SFIO took a damaging blow, however, as he was criticised for being too focussed on the Midi. In response, he withdrew from the party, joining the newly formed *Parti Socialiste de France - Union Jean Jaurès* (often referred to as the 'Neo-Socialists').¹⁵⁵ Barthe's support for the *Ligue* was not undermined by his involvement with the Neo-Socialists, whose focus on gradual social reorganisation along syndical lines had been outlined in Marcel Déat's *Perspectives socialistes*. By attempting to unite small-holders into a more efficient power-structure rather than campaign for redistribution, Barthe's doctrinal shift towards the right-wing of socialism was unchallenged.¹⁵⁶ It was also compatible with the Languedoc's sympathy for the ideological heritage of Radicalism (if not the party itself after 1907).

Yet his focus on the union of classes rankled with the PCF, who launched a competing movement designed to outflank the rhetoric of his *Ligue*. Directly playing upon their competitors, the PCF established the *Fédération Méridionale des Petits*

¹⁵⁵ Not to be confused with Jules Guesde's earlier though different party of the same name.

¹⁵⁶ Jackson, *The Politics of Depression*, p.78 and pp.141-143.

Vignerons as a means of combatting Barthe's youthful movement.¹⁵⁷ The Communists had not previously been visible in Languedocian viticultural representation, though became increasingly so after the party began to stabilise after the long series of purges and ideological changes since their inception in 1920. In the era of the Popular Front, though concessions from the PCF had made the front possible, their continued attempts to outflank the Socialists in the *Languedoc viticole* created turbulence in the South.¹⁵⁸ As they reconciled themselves with supporting small and medium proprietors as well as agricultural labourers, the Communists followed the same pattern of development as the Socialists had done in the immediate aftermath of 1907.¹⁵⁹ This new openness allowed a fundamental starting point for their involvement in the representation of the *Languedoc viticole*.¹⁶⁰

This turbulence marked a new political dynamism in the Languedoc, which would see Socialists and Communists competing to channel the representation of winegrowers through a variety of jostling organisations in the post-war period. These organisations attempted to draw together syndical groups as a means of constructing a unified Défense movement, substituting worker's organisations for cooperatives and capitalising on the visibility of Députés du vin in the model of Edouard Barthe. 1907

¹⁵⁷ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, pp.102-105.

¹⁵⁸ J. Jackson, *The Popular Front in France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.18-36.

¹⁵⁹ For further discussion of PCF attempts to engage with agriculture, see Bulaitis, *Communism in Rural France*; J. Vigreux, 'Le Parti communiste français à la campagne, 1920-64. Bilan historiographique et perspectives de la recherche', *Ruralia*, vol.3 (1998), pp.43-66; L. Boswell, *Rural communism in France, 1920-1939* (London: Cornell University Press, 1998); M. Cadé, *Le Parti des campagnes rouges: Histoire du Parti communiste dans les Pyrénées-Orientales, 1920-49* (Vinça: Chiendent, 1988). There are also several relevant chapters focussing on agricultural labourers (see, especially those by J. Sagnes and Y. Rinaudo) in R. Hubscher, J. Farcy (eds.), *La Moisson des autres: Les salariés agricoles aux XIXème et XX siècles* (Paris: Créaphis, 1996).

¹⁶⁰ Sagnes, *Le Midi Rouge*, p.300.

established new patterns of interaction between winegrowers and the state but also between winegrowers and the Socialist party. The Revolt changed the way in which the Socialist party related to winegrowers, eschewing the previously unhelpful *ouvriériste* tone which had marked the national SFIO's attempts to dominate Albert and Ferroul's movement. In their interaction with winegrowers and engagement with regionalism and syndicalism, Southern Socialists set the tone for future developments in the Défense movement. By under-estimating the 'inter-classisme' of the Revolt they had minimised their influence on it. Yet, by altering the ways in which they interacted with the constituent bases of that 'inter-classisme' they repositioned themselves as the natural ally of the *Languedoc viticole*.

If 1907's immediate legacy was complicated, this did not prevent the events of that year assuming an increasingly mythic status. Indeed, Guy Bechtel has asserted that the memory of the events gave birth to "une série de mythes, qui ont donné au mouvement une coloration presque religieuse."¹⁶¹ As the 'Myth of 1907' shaped responses to decline, so too did it shape visions of the future. In the next chapter I will chart the post-war processes which created the independent CRAV, and the crises of representation which pitted representative bodies against each other.

¹⁶¹ G. Bechtel, 1907, *La Grande Révolte du Midi*, p.319.

Chapter 2:

Les paysans et les paroxysmes: The development of the *Défense du vin* movement (1944-1960)

The decades which followed France's Liberation witnessed rapid developments in both the Languedoc's wine industry and its structures of representation. As the post-war recovery process took place, a wave of modernisation swept across French agriculture, driven by a technocratic focus on increasing the efficiency of France's farmers. In the Languedoc, the establishment of cooperative wineries and the pooling of resources were encouraged during this febrile period. The Monnet Plan, which governed France's recovery, called for a general principle of rationalisation. In the wine industry, this meant the consolidation of 3,500,000 HA of fragmented vineyards by the end of 1950.¹⁶² This rationalisation, however, drew resistance from the traditional small-holders of the Languedoc. In one of the most impoverished regions in the post-war period, Languedocians found the burden of this modernisation excessively onerous. As a result, alongside the reconstruction of the national economy came a reconstruction of the various Languedocian *comités* and representative organisations which had sprung from the legacy of 1907.

¹⁶² Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, p.213.

Yet, the legacy of 1907 was not unchallenged, and as the Midi modernised, its representative structures witnessed profound turbulence with the resurfacing of Edouard Barthe's *Ligue des Petits et Moyens Producteurs* and other new representative groups. After the rupture of Vichy rule, the Languedoc seemed to return to a certain 'inter-classisme' rooted in the need to rebuild the fragile economy. The increasing number of cooperatives seemed destined to draw the Languedoc's traditional Radical and Socialist villages further towards the SFIO, a relationship which was only strengthened by the continuing influence of prominent Wine Deputies. Yet, as wine production began to reach pre-war levels, competing groups with allegiances to both Socialists and Communists tussled for prominence, attempting to outflank each other with recourse to increasingly strident rhetoric and direct action. Some of the debates which had been aired in 1907 resurfaced, as the Communist party attempted to court small-holders and divide the 'inter-classisme' of the *Défense du vin* movement. These continuities shaped the rhetoric which responded to the inevitable fluctuations in the wine market during this period. The first post-war wine crisis of 1953 altered the landscape of viticultural legislation, accentuating divides and creating a crisis of representation as the unified *Défense* movement splintered once more. Turbulence was both a cause and accelerant of mobilisation and radicalisation, feeding into a process which would eventually create the most extreme group in the *Languedoc viticole*, the CRAV.

Reconstruction

Although the *Barthiste* reforms of the late 1930s were some of the most enduringly popular and well remembered in the Midi, they clearly prefigured a period of extreme turbulence. France's defeat at the hands of Germany brought about direct administration in the North and the creation of a sympathetic government in the South centred on the town of Vichy under Marshal Pétain. In the midst of global conflict, wine reforms were hardly the priority of the incumbent Vichy government. Resultantly, Vichy wine legislation had an extremely short-term focus which relied little on placating winegrowers and more on ensuring the free circulation of wine. An order of January 1941 fixed a ceiling price of 19Fr85 for wine, in order to ensure the normalisation of supply and prevent price hikes during moments of uncertain production. Winegrowers predictably protested that the move was unjust. Vichy authorities were unsympathetic, however, and set about further addressing supply issues by legalising the previously banned release of second press wines (known as "piquettes"). This focus on quantity set the tone for an administrative setup which was extremely regressive in policy terms. The 1931 *Statut de la Viticulture* was repealed, replaced instead with a system of authoritarian price-fixing and compulsory distillations which tipped the scales in favour of the consumer and firmly against producers. The imposition of rationing further angered growers and encouraged a thriving black market.¹⁶³ The size of this unregulated market and the lack of real legislative engagement with winegrowers during the war had left the Midi somewhat

¹⁶³ Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, p.160-162.

dislocated from any particular strategy and led to a pressing need for better governance.¹⁶⁴

The *Languedoc viticole* had past experience of reconstruction after cataclysmic agricultural depressions. Whereas the recovery from Phylloxera had enshrined the 'productivist' mindset at the heart of Languedocian viticulture, the recovery from the Second World War encouraged a remarkable upturn in the number of cooperative wineries. The responses to these formative crises provided some of the most recognisable characteristics of the *Midi rouge* and directly influenced the ways in which winegrowers interacted with the state. The table below shows the figures for the whole of France, demonstrating the dramatic surge in the formation of wine cooperatives in the post-war decades.

| Year | No. of Co-ops | Members | Capacity (HL) | Area of vines (HL) | % of Total wine |
|------|---------------|---------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1945 | 858 | 154,672 | 14,853,176 | 229,464 | 25 |
| 1951 | 997 | 207,386 | 19,868,402 | 336,572 | 27 |
| 1959 | 1,128 | 252,565 | 27,955,800 | 395,102 | 35 |
| 1969 | 1,202 | 289,970 | 44,813,012 | 495,819 | 42 |
| 1980 | 1,158 | 263,646 | 55,042,567 | 501,722 | 49 |
| 1983 | 1,163 | 251,200 | 57,088,877 | 494,860 | 44 |
| 1985 | 1,158 | 273,711 | 56,945,414 | 486,547 | 47 |

*Table illustrating the rise of cooperative wineries in France*¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ For discussions of Vichy's agricultural policy and plans for the future, see R. Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), especially Chapter 5; Warner, *The Winegrowers of France and the Government*, pp.159-162; L. Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp.145-146; Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, pp.125-127; Christophe Lucand, 'Négoce des vins et propriété viticole en Bourgogne durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale', *Ruralia* [online], vol. 16/17 (2005) [URL : <http://ruralia.revues.org/1079>]; D Kladstrup & P. Kladstrup, *Wine and War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2001).

¹⁶⁵ Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, p.147.

This new wave of cooperatives built upon the small numbers which had been established before the Great War and the expansion of this number under the Popular Front. The pivotal role of cooperative wineries in the Languedoc was cemented during this period. Indeed, of the 880 winemaking cooperatives in France in November 1946, 680 of them were in the Midi.¹⁶⁶ As well as being responsible for some 22% of France's total output, these cooperatives were held up as a paradigm for the spirit of solidarity they showed in overcoming post-war difficulties.

Cooperatives also provided a useful gateway to modernisation and the post-war surge in their number was encouraged as a means to reform France's agricultural endeavours. The government offered subsidies to cover over 30% of the expenses incurred in expanding cooperative cellars and modernising winemaking processes. Likewise, cooperative buildings and equipment were immune from tax, and they were not required to pay the *patente* license fee for agricultural enterprises.¹⁶⁷ Unlike later modernisation programmes which would accentuate the maximisation of value, the post-war modernisation drive was founded on the need to mechanise the agricultural sector and improve vinification techniques. Cooperative wineries played an important supplementary role to the *Crédit Agricole*¹⁶⁸ in providing funds for mechanisation, allowing pooled purchase of new materials such as tractors and *cuvées*.¹⁶⁹ The availability of credit reinforced the newly preponderant cooperative structure and

¹⁶⁶ 'La coopération viticole méridionale est en progrès', *Le Républicain du Midi* 20/11/1946 – Archives Départementales de l'Aude (ADA) 31J22.

¹⁶⁷ Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, p.147.

¹⁶⁸ Crédit Agricole expanded and federalised nationally during the post-war period to help supply loans for agricultural development. Cooperative wineries helped to secure credit by pooling the resources of small-growers.

¹⁶⁹ L. Temple, J. Touzard, F. Jarrige, 'La Restructuration des coopératives vinicoles en Languedoc-Roussillon : du modèle communal à la diversité des adaptations actuelles', *REM* vol.44 no.176 (4/1996), p. 77.

allowed for a degree of mechanisation to occur from local impetus rather than outside pressure, further galvanising regional solidarity. Mechanisation meant, in turn, that work in the fields became less labour intensive, displacing agricultural labourers from traditional communities. Between 1948 and 1963 French agriculture as a whole witnessed its greatest increase in the use of tractors.¹⁷⁰ This trend diminished the role of labour unions in the representation of the Languedoc's wine industry. Increasingly, the Défense movement spoke to small-holders and growers as the most 'proletarian' unit of wine producer. With small-holders constituting the main body of cooperative members, syndical representation was effectively conducted through cooperative structures. The modernity of the post-war period, however, would not remain a monolithic quality, and efforts to encourage cooperatives were not necessarily a long-term tonic for the Midi's endemic problems.

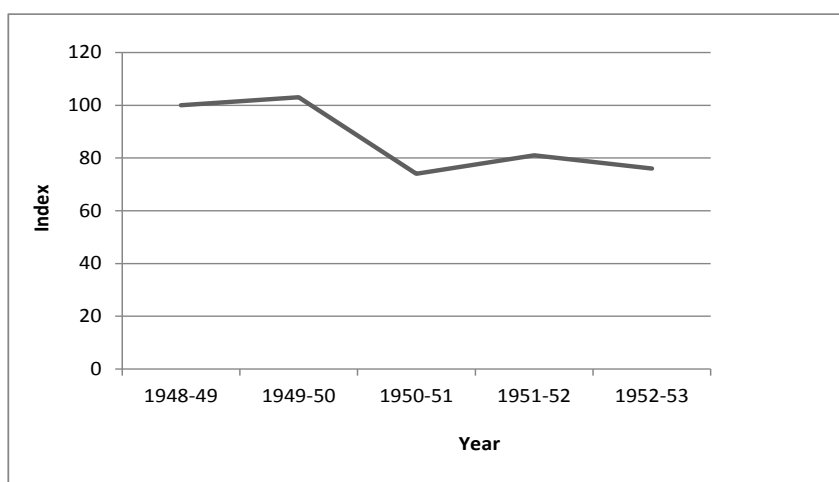
The years following the Liberation had seen low quality wine for '*consommation courante*' taxed heavily in a controlled market.¹⁷¹ This wine was the mainstay of Midi production, consisting of basic table wine unsuitable for ageing. In efforts to recover from the traumas and dislocation of war, many winegrowers had replanted their vineyards with stocks designed to produce high-yields and provide a remunerative volume of wine as a short-term palliative. The resultant fluctuation of wine prices owing to over-supply threatened the sustainability of post-war recovery.¹⁷² The prices

¹⁷⁰ G.M. Holmes; P.D. Fawcett, *The Contemporary French Economy* (London, 1983), p.73.

¹⁷¹ 'L'évolution du prix du vin au cours de la campagne 1946-1947', 21/11/1952 – Archives Départementales de l'Hérault (ADH) 2W2660.

¹⁷² For a discussion of the Monnet Plan's impact upon French agriculture see F.M.B. Lynch, 'Resolving the Paradox of the Monnet Plan: National and International Planning in French Reconstruction', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 37, No. 2. (May, 1984), p.229-243; I. M. Wall, *The United States and the Making of Postwar France* (Cambridge, 2002); R. Kuisel, *Seducing the French* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), especially Chapter 4; R. Kuisel, *Capitalism*

reached with the vintage of 1948-1949 were positive, though the ability of winegrowers to continue modernising would be curtailed, as their income remained precarious. The table below indicates the severe drop in prices which occurred over the following year, plunging the Languedoc back into crisis.



Index of the average price of wine in the Languedoc (1948 Harvest = 100%)¹⁷³

The Bonnavé plan¹⁷⁴ of 1949 was the first active attempt in a campaign by the government to alter the complexion of the Midi wine industry.¹⁷⁵ It was intended to bring greater stability to wine prices by staggering the release of that year's harvest.¹⁷⁶ Wine which had been 'blocked' from immediate release could then be held back if prices fell, or released if prices were to rise, stabilising the relationship between supply and demand. With Pierre Pfmilin at the head of the Ministry of Agriculture, the

and the State in Modern France, especially Chapter 7; M.C. MacLennan, 'Regional Planning in France', *Journal of Industrial Economics*, vol.13 (1965), pp.62-75.

¹⁷³ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.156.

¹⁷⁴ The Bonnavé Plan was introduced during Pierre Pfmilin's time as Minister of Agriculture, history does not relate the Bonnavé after whom the plan was named - presumably a civil servant in the Ministry of Agriculture.

¹⁷⁵ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Vignerons*, p.73.

¹⁷⁶ Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, p.170.

modernising zeal of the Monnet Plan had a willing Minister. Pflimlin's attempt to reform the wine market, however, was not well received in the Languedoc. The Mayor of Cessenon in the Hérault, Raoul Bayou, bemoaned the legacy of the Plan: "Au huitième mois de la campagne, leurs [vignerons] caves sont pleines, mais leurs bourses sont vides."¹⁷⁷ *Blocage* created problems for low-yield growers who had higher production costs and generated new expenses for wine storage which were to be met by the grower. These facts only helped to encourage the trend towards cooperatives and the collectivisation of resources. Membership of cooperative *caves* allowed small-holders to comply with government regulation and play an active part in stabilising the wine market.

The unity provided by such cooperative organisations offered a largely chequered significance, however. Some interviewees questioned the role of cooperative wineries in the Languedoc's development, claiming that they promoted stagnation in terms of quality wine production.¹⁷⁸ Importantly, cooperatives were founded on the goal of reducing costs and protecting members, whereas their role would later demand greater engagement with wine merchants and more market-driven strategies. Only after the 1980s would cooperative wineries fully engage with this trend, for example by securing investment stakes in wine merchants and signing longer term partnerships with them.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, post-war cooperatives served an important function in allowing small-holders, otherwise unable to afford the means of production, to operate in a financially viable manner. Such cooperatives, however, brought with them neither

¹⁷⁷ *JO, Débats, Assemblée nationale, séance du 23/04/1975, p.2002.*

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Edouard Raymond, Domaines Lacassagne, 03/08/06.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Alfredo Manuel Coelho - Associate Researcher - UMR MOISA SupAgro Montpellier - Herault - 29/07/2010. See Chapters 5 and 6.

assurances nor recommendations for producing quality wines. Modern *vignerons* tend to acknowledge the rationale behind the long standing cooperative tradition although they are cognizant of the fact that, in terms of over-production and poor quality, they represent part of the problem rather than part of the solution.¹⁸⁰

As ever, the post-war modernisation drive produced its own share of 'losers', amongst those unwilling or unable to alter their modes of production who, in turn, vocally equated this with the "sacrificing of individual independence to progress."¹⁸¹ Such sacrifices fostered a fondness for concepts of "primordiality"¹⁸² (or visions of an idealised past) and recourse to the Languedoc's tradition of mobilisation. The winegrowers' council of Argeliers, the village where the 1907 riots had been born, denounced the government's tentative attempts to reshape the wine industry as "un rude coup" to the rural economy. Instead of looking to Languedocian production, they called for an immediate halt to the import of foreign wines and the compulsory distillation of any found to have entered the country illegally. Many of these demands would become recurring themes of the *Défense* movement, as activists began to seek autonomy from the moderate professional bodies which dominated viticultural representation in the post-war period.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Edouard Raymond, Domaines Lacassagne, 03/08/06.

¹⁸¹ S. Fitzgerald, 'The Anti-Modern Rhetoric of Le Mouvement Poujade', *Review of Politics*, vol.32, no.2 (1970), p.190.

¹⁸² Lem, *Cultivating Dissent*, p.166.

Post-war Representation

France had emerged from the Liberation shrouded in the unity of Resistance, though this had not negated old political struggles nor removed recourse to historical competition. Just as 1907 had seen tumultuous competition between the left and right (and the left with itself), so too did post-war crises provoke fracture and competition. The *Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles* (FNSEA) was founded in 1946 as a national representative body which collected the views of syndicates and large professional bodies. As one of the largest agricultural organisations in France, the FNSEA included winegrowers within its broad congregation as well as farmers of other crops, thereby reducing its immediate relevancy to the Midi. Furthermore, the FNSEA's associations with conservative politics, according preference "au partis de droite",¹⁸³ distanced it from the prevailing political narrative of the *Languedoc viticole*. Accordingly, it did not franchise its Departmental subsidiaries in the Languedoc until into the 1980s as part of a process of modernisation which, as we shall see, ran counter to the ideology of viticultural unity being professed by the Défense movement.¹⁸⁴ There were less ideological bodies which winegrowers could look to, however. The Fédération des Associations Viticole (FAV) was a national body which gathered together wine-growing bodies from every region in France. Its popularity in the Midi

¹⁸³ Martin, 'Viticulture du Languedoc', p.71.

¹⁸⁴ For discussion of the changing ideology of national *paysan* syndicalism in the Fourth Republic, see Rioux, *Fourth Republic*, pp.383-389, P. Muller, 'Comment les idées deviennent-elles politiques? La naissance d'une nouvelle idéologie paysanne en France, 1945-1965', *Revue française de science politique*, vol.32, no.1 (February, 1982), pp.90-108. Also of interest is the work published by Michel Debatisse, the future leader of the FNSEA, *La Révolution silencieuse: le combat des paysans* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1963).

still tended to be low, as a result of its need to represent, for example, Bordelais and Champagne growers, who held little in common with the needs of Midi vigneron.

These national bodies had a greater profile than the CGVM, the left-leaning professional organisation (although it professed it was apolitical) which had arisen out of the dire economic climate of 1907. It served as a general council for discussing issues of importance to the Midi wine industry and a forum for convening discussion across differing classes of professional organisation (i.e. from small independents to large estate owners and cooperative wineries). Greater regional representation within the CGVM model made it more relevant to the interests of southern growers, and its heritage offered it greater validation than any subsequent creation of government. Yet it continued to be associated with large land holders and concerned itself principally with professional matters, seldom intervening in political debates. 'Syndicat des Vignerons' groups were professional bodies organised on a more local level than the FAV. This local aspect deprived them of large membership, however, and they tended to work in concert with the increasingly overarching coordinating bodies such as the CGVM.

The Confédération Générale de l'Agriculture (CGA) was an organisation founded in 1943 as a clandestine group representing Communist peasants. After the Liberation, the organisation became a legitimate means of representation, acting as a peasant-led movement which was more ostensibly political than other professional bodies. The Comité des Jeunes Agriculteurs (CJA) was an offshoot of the CGA, created in 1947 to represent the views of younger members (and with Departmental level

subsidiaries - the CDJA).¹⁸⁵ The CGA petered out in the 1950s, ceding to the *Ligue des Petits et Moyens Viticulteurs* (hereafter the Ligue) in its role as defender of small growers. The Ligue had originally been established by the Midi politician Edouard Barthe in the 1930s, only to fall into obscurity. In 1951 it was reactivated by militant *vignerons* from Béziers, and embarked on a long-term partnership with the PCF. Claiming to represent the disenfranchised masses of small growers, it echoed the influence of Ferroul in fragmenting the representation of winegrowers.

Despite the over-bearing influence of the national organisations, the post-war atmosphere of renewal and recovery encouraged the first steps of the regional 'Défense du vin' movement. The Comité Marcelin Albert (CMA) was created in 1946, emerging from protest at the inability of government to offer a cohesive plan for reconstructing the Midi wine industry. Named after the leader of the 1907 revolt, the Comité was designed to rise above the divisions of wine's various representative bodies as Albert had done. It lobbied successfully for greater regulation in the wine market, attempting to force the government to review the patchwork decrees which covered wine production after the dislocation of Vichy rule. The government's first real attempt to reshape the wine industry with the Bonnavé plan precipitated a new engagement from Languedocian *vignerons* as they reacted to externally led change. The representative groups which had helped act as a conduit to government, such as the CGVM and the CMA, were forced to adapt to ensure they retained their relevance. In large part, this meant engaging with newly formed cooperatives and appealing to their small-holding membership. Cooperatives provided repertoires of like-minded growers in similar

¹⁸⁵ J. Vercherand, *Un siècle de syndicalisme agricole* (Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, Saint-Etienne, 1994), p.208.

situations, and fed into the creation of numerous comités and new representative groups which enriched the Défense movement. At this stage in the development of the Midi wine industry, however, the Défense movement tended to be somewhat overshadowed by larger professional bodies designed to represent wine at a national level.

The CMA were victorious in forcing some change; a governmental decree of 4 September 1947 saw the market for low quality, non-classified wines completely liberalised in an attempt to curb fraud in the controlled AOC market. Superior quality AOC production had incredibly jumped from a pre-war 2-4% of total Midi production to 16% in 1946, denoting foul play and raising the spectre of fraud once more. Liberalising markets was designed to counter the persistence of the war-time black market but unfortunately also led to greater instability of prices.¹⁸⁶ Whilst allowing for a flood in the 'consommation courante' market, the government was attempting to protect value in the more exclusive and much smaller AOC market. Government reports warned of a "surge of violent opinion in the Midi" and winegrowers on the Liberation Committee of one small village spoke in hushed tones of demonstrations "as in 1907."¹⁸⁷ Having attempted to regain pre-war volumes during the investment period of the Monnet Plan, the government was now faced with an overheated market. Prices had fallen drastically amidst ballooning quantities, and after the unpopular reception of the Bonnavé plan, a program of voluntary uprooting seemed one of the only options available to government.

¹⁸⁶ 'L'évolution du prix du vin au cours de la campagne 1946-1947', 21/11/1952 – ADH 2W2660.

¹⁸⁷ Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, p.164

In February 1949, sales figures had demonstrated that Languedocian wine was being sold below cost and that existing stocks had been devalued by some 10 billion francs.¹⁸⁸ In this stormy atmosphere, the Socialist Deputy for the Aude, Georges Guille, highlighted the short-sighted nature of government-imposed requirements for uprooting vine-stock. He described a situation in which winegrowers could be asked to tear up 2 hectares of AOC quality vine-stock in the short term only to be replanted several years later, having suffered financially in the meantime, with vines fit only to produce base table wine.¹⁸⁹ Such measures were intended to ensure that post-war recovery did not overheat the Midi wine economy, causing an unsustainable growth in vine stock. This goal was laudable, but the methods imposed heavily on already needy growers.

Uprooting or *arrachage* was perennially unpopular and an open invitation was issued on 29 April 1949 by the CMA to participate in a demonstration the following day. True to its name, the Comité called for a reinstatement of the *Statut Viticole*, the measures eventually arrived at after the 1907 events but abandoned by Vichy.¹⁹⁰ Their invitation attracted an estimated crowd of 10,000 in Béziers to hear rallying speeches by the Presidents of cooperatives and George Guille.¹⁹¹ Shortly after this protest, the visit of Maurice Thorez to Carcassonne saw local vigneron stage a vast tasting to welcome the political giant. Thorez attempted to tap into the traditional rhetoric of the Défense movement and, following the tasting, he declared to a supportive audience:

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p.169.

¹⁸⁹ 'Intéressantes précisions de M. Georges Guille sur le délicat problème des plantations', *Le Républicain du Midi* 12/05/1949 – ADA 31J22.

¹⁹⁰ 'Appel du Comité Marcellin-Albert aux viticulteurs et aux Maires du Midi viticole', *Le Républicain du Midi* 29/04/1949 – ADA 31J22.

¹⁹¹ '10,000 viticulteurs ont réclamé le retour au Statut Viticole', *Le Républicain du Midi* 30/04/1949 – ADA 31J22.

“N’est-il pas vrai qu’ils peuvent y venir avec leurs vins de Grèce, du Chili ou de Californie? Nous sommes imbattables!” Indicting foreign imports in front of the Languedoc’s ‘productivist’ viticultural establishment was a considered move designed to strengthen the regional presence of the PCF. Thorez’s visit capitalised on the tension created amongst smallholders by the government’s attempts to transform the region and the resultant rising unemployment amongst viticultural labourers owing to this modernisation.¹⁹² His recent vice-premiership and popularity within the Communist Party ensured that Thorez received a warm welcome in an increasingly impoverished region. With the PCF confined to the political hinterland after their resignation from government in 1947, they were free to snipe at government policies from a position of unencumbered opposition. Their attempts to establish themselves in the politics of the *Languedoc viticole* during the late 1940s prefaced a period of far greater involvement,¹⁹³ which would see them use agricultural representation as a conduit for political power. The active presence of the PCF in the Midi required a response from the traditional representatives amongst the Socialists, as they sought to ensure that they were not outflanked in an area of historical strength. The role of the SFIO was threatened, therefore, and necessitated the strenuous mobilisation of elected officials to intercede in parliamentary debates on wine crises.

The recovery of the Midi wine industry thus increasingly depended on the influence of *Députés du vin*, who ensured that wine remained a prominent focus of the government's agricultural policy. Increasingly, the model of Edouard Barthe became

¹⁹² ‘L’Exposition des vins de l’Aude a obtenu un franc succès’, *La Patrie* 05/05/1949 – ADA 31J22.

¹⁹³ Albeit Carcassonne remained an area which retained some sympathy for the political right throughout the twentieth century, unlike its surrounding Audois towns and, indeed, the majority of the *Languedoc Viticole*.

more prominent, as they moderated the interaction of the Languedoc's small holders and the Assembly. George Guille was exemplary of the 'Wine Deputy' model as President of the Assembly's *Commission des Boissons*. This long-standing, cross-party sub-committee drew in members from across France, yet its most prominent actions were under the leadership of Southern figures like Guille, whose proximity to the interests of wine-making allowed him a greater passion in their defence. The group's influence has been somewhat derided in the historiography, however, as "little more than a façade for the alcohol lobby."¹⁹⁴ That being said, their business was popular with its audience when it achieved success. Specifically, collected winegrowers lodged their approval that the penury of the people of the Corbières had been noted officially in the Journal of the Assembly. The resurgent role of 'Wine Deputy' was one which recognised this need to ride the popularity of the Défense movement and validate their own role by endorsing it.

The Mayor of Cessenon and Counsellor of the Hérault, Raoul Bayou began, during this period of reconstruction, to build the foundations of his own legitimacy as a *Député du vin*. Bayou was of the traditional radical-socialist Languedocian background, but involved with technocratic schemes designed to drive the modernisation of the region, notably in his support of the Compagnie du Bas-Rhône.¹⁹⁵ After the crisis of 1953, Bayou became increasingly active in coordinating the political modernisation of the Défense movement, as we shall see. SFIO Deputies became

¹⁹⁴ H. Ehrmann, 'Review: The Winegrowers of France and the Government since 1875', *Journal of Economic History*, vol.21, no.3(September 1961), p.428.

¹⁹⁵ The scheme is commonly associated with Phillipe Lamour and constituted an attempt to harness the Rhône's potential for irrigation and energy generation. For an early discussion of the scheme's merit, see R. Dugrand. 'L'aménagement du bas Rhône', *Annales de Géographie*. 1953, vol.62, no.333. pp. 368-373.

important figureheads who could demonstrate the party's engagement with wine and fend off the attempts by the PCF to establish themselves. This turbulence marked a new political dynamism in the Languedoc, which would see Socialists and Communists competing to channel the representation of winegrowers through a variety of jostling organisations in the post-war period. These organisations attempted to draw together syndical groups as a means of constructing a unified Défense movement, substituting worker's organisations for cooperatives and capitalising on the visibility of *Députés du vin* in the model of Edouard Barthe.

The crisis of 1953

The most severe *crise de mévente*¹⁹⁶ during the Fourth Republic occurred in 1953. The severity of this market fluctuation was demonstrated by a fall of 20% in the real value of wine between the harvests of 1949-50 and 1953-54.¹⁹⁷ With the help of cooperative production, France's wine industry returned to pre-war production volumes by 1951. Yet, despite these advances, the consumption of wine failed to return to pre-war levels.¹⁹⁸ The ensuing crisis delivered shocks to the existing structures of post-war representation and began a process of turbulent upheaval which would characterise the Languedoc's representative groups up to and throughout the 1960s.

¹⁹⁶ J. Sagnès, 'La Gauche Politique et Syndicale dans les Campagnes Viticoles du Midi', *La Diffusion des Idées Progressistes dans le Monde Rural de la Révolution au XX^e Siècle. Actes du colloque de Châteauroux 1998* (Châteauroux, 2000), p.7.

¹⁹⁷ J. Dubos, 'Les Mutations de la Viticulture Française Contemporaine' in J. Sagnès (ed.), *La Viticulture Française aux XIX^e et XX^e Siècles* (Béziers, 1993), p.85.

¹⁹⁸ J. Bardissa, *Cent ans de guerre du vin* (Paris: Téma Éditions, 1976), p.43.

The abundant harvest of 1953 led to a drop in prices which the government sought to tackle initially by issuing a decree in December of that year that reclassified viticultural territories in an effort to reduce expected volume.¹⁹⁹ The crisis set the government reeling, with inaccurate assessment having estimated the drop in the value of wine over the preceding four years as 50%²⁰⁰ and barricades being erected all over the Midi as vigneron took to the street.²⁰¹ A period of furious protest, coinciding with a general strike, saw the government eventually arrive at a legislative review in the form of the new *Code du vin*. Little advance was made with this review however, as, despite superficial changes, 1953 saw a return to the measures introduced in the *Statut Viticole* in 1931, increasing the use of sales blockage and compulsory distillation.²⁰²

The falling price index of wine in the years running up to the “grande crise de 1953”²⁰³ had, however, seen preliminary measures introduced in an attempt to stave off further crisis. Efforts were made to reduce yields across the board, with the uprooting of vines intended to decrease the regional output and stabilise market value. These measures largely failed due to their voluntary nature, with distillation merely a palliative and the uprooting (or ‘grubbing up’) of vineyards, effectively eroding the future productive potential of vigneron and offering them only short-term financial remuneration. Likewise, for winegrowers firmly rooted in the social fabric of the region, accepting money from the government to uproot their vines carried a certain shame, as it seemed to be giving up on heritage and tradition. This uprooting, referred

¹⁹⁹ L. Loubère, *The Vine Remembers*, (New York, 1985), p.172.

²⁰⁰ *JO, Documents parlementaires de l'Assemblée nationale* (1953), p.980 (annexe 6399).

²⁰¹ Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, p.183.

²⁰² G. Galtier, *Le Vignoble du Languedoc Méditerranéen et du Roussillon* (Montpellier, 1960), vol.2, p.319.

²⁰³ O. Dedieu, ‘Les élus locaux face à la crise du vignoble Languedocien’, *Journée d'études AFSP/Groupe Local et politique, IEP de Rennes – 8 février 2002*, p.7.

to as *arrachage*, became associated with the physical uprooting of winegrowers from the region, eroding regional and occupational identity alongside the economic potential of the Languedoc. Winegrowers were recompensed for grubbing up productive vineyards and signed contracts which would prevent them replanting for a set period (often 5 to 10 years). In the mean time, they were encouraged to grow alternative crops or seek employment in a different sector. The process was tempting for winegrowers who were struggling, as it represented an immediate injection of funds, though it could remove smallholders from the wine industry entirely. *Arrachage* was employed as one of the primary measures of the governmental toolbox, as it offered an easy way to limit future productive capacity. Because of its implications, however, it remained perennially unpopular with winegrowers and every new round that was undertaken seemed to threaten the region's potential.²⁰⁴

The obvious alternative to *arrachage* was the distillation of excess unsold wine into industrial alcohol. The government funded this as a means of stabilising wine prices and reducing the overall quantity available for sale. It tended to be more popular with winegrowers as it didn't limit future potential and had much less emotive significance than the act of grubbing up vineyards. As such, a program of voluntary distillation was instituted by central government, at which wine was bought at the going rate to be distilled into industrial spirit. Between 1948 and 1952 distillation of surplus wines cost the state 9694 million Francs per year²⁰⁵, with minimal long term benefit, whilst creating a new form of overproduction in the distilled alcohol sector.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Interview with Ryan O'Connell at O'Veineyards, Moustausou, 15/07/2010.

²⁰⁵ Galtier, *Le Vignoble du Languedoc Méditerranéen et du Roussillon*, vol.2, p320.

²⁰⁶ Sagnès, 'La Gauche Politique...', pp.9-10.

Distillation was reimbursed at a “prix dissuasifs” in an attempt to further encourage growers to stick to prescribed yields.²⁰⁷

During 1952, discussion of the parlous state of the wine market centred on new solutions to the crisis and an increasingly concerted call for a new body of legislature to constitute a *Code du vin*. The FAV had led the call for a shift towards 'a policy of quality', drawing support from the Ministry of Agriculture, as consensus settled on the existence of enduring problems.²⁰⁸ Agriculture Minister Roger Houdet was not deaf to the pleas of winemakers, and the *Statut de la Viticulture* was finally replaced in 1953. On 30 September, the *Code du Vin* momentarily defused the summer of protests and discontent amongst winegrowers.²⁰⁹ It brought in a fixed percentage of blockages, which standardised what all growers could be expected to face while also raising taxes on yields and submitting all growers to a compulsory quota of distillation.²¹⁰ Within these statutes there was scope for the government to alter the percentages to cope with annual fluctuations. The *Code*, therefore, brought about extensions in both distillation and blockages whilst extending the coverage to smaller growers. The *Code* also controlled both planting areas and accepted varieties, seeking to ameliorate quality by eliminating inferior grape varieties and diminishing the most marginal yield vineyards. The tardiness of the government's legislative review had, however, contributed to widespread confusion amongst growers. A high degree of illegal plantings, both in ignorance and in spite of the new rules, had sprung up in the

²⁰⁷ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Vignerons*, p.73.

²⁰⁸ Warner, *The winegrowers of France*, pp.175-176.

²⁰⁹ Led by the CRSV and the Ligue, who will be discussed later in this chapter

²¹⁰ Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, pp.184-185.

interim.²¹¹ The legacy of the *Code* was an uncertain one in the Midi, fuelling as it did greater discontent and failing to grant the high prices for continued extraordinary distillations sought by the Défense groups. Thus, the *Code du vin* was less an unmitigated success than a stalemate, allowing the government to gamble on a short term solution and the possibility of long term benefits.²¹²

Furthermore, in 1954 it had become clear that there would be further problems within the wine industry if there was not an increase in domestic consumption (or simply a return to pre-war levels) and further development of the export market. Without altering the structural frailties of the industry, the *Code* was merely an updating of existing practice to instill some rigour in the regulations surrounding production. The government's tools for alleviating crises may have been strengthened but the underlying triggers for these cyclical crises remained unaltered. Roughly 18 per cent of the Hérault's wine faced blockage from the market according to the new *Code*,²¹³ a tangible symptom of an unhealthy industry, especially considering that 27 days of frost had greatly reduced the harvest yield.²¹⁴ Likewise, it was once again recommended that winegrowers plant better quality varieties as the stabilisation of the market remained contingent not only on regulatory control of quantity but also that of

²¹¹ Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, p.174.

²¹² The Ministry of Agriculture created a new body, the *Institut des Vins de Consommation Courante* (IVCC), which was given the responsibility for monitoring and enacting government policy amongst lower quality producers, for example managing the implementation of the *Code du vin*. This took place because of the obvious shortfalls in market regulation highlighted by the crisis of 1953. See, P. Bartoli, D. Boulet, P. Lacombe, J. Laporte, R. Lifran, E. Montagne, *L'économie viticole française* (Paris: INRA, 1987), p.19.

²¹³ Directions des Service Agricole de l'Hérault, 'Rapport sur la situation viticole dans les caves cooperatives', 18/05/1954 – ADH 2W2660.

²¹⁴ 'Une délégation de la Commission des Boissons a visité les terres deux fois sinistrées', *La Dépêche*, 18/06/1954 – ADA 31J22.

quality.²¹⁵ To this end, compulsory distillation was recommended for all prohibited varieties and blends prohibited by the *Code*. Likewise, attempts to encourage voluntary uprooting of vineyards by decree failed, with an outcome of only 4% of vines uprooted between 1954 and 1957.²¹⁶ The *Code du vin*, as a first real measure to change the complexion of the Languedocian wine industry, was not a success. Indeed, without a firm long-term vision for development, the *Code* was little more than a palliative intended to react to a pressing crisis.

The 1953 crisis would have a transformative effect on the Languedocian wine industry, drawing cooperatives towards increased production despite government inducements to improve quality. Whilst the number of cooperatives and their share of wine produced nationally increased during the 1950s (see table above detailing the 'Rise of Cooperative Wineries in France'), their capacity for volume increased at a significantly faster rate. Between 1951 and 1959 the number of cooperatives, their membership and the area of their vines all increased by between 10% to 20%. Yet their capacity for volume increased over 40%. Though cooperatives had been increasing since the Liberation as a vehicle for the government's efforts to enshrine quality at the heart of winegrowing, statistics demonstrate that the 'productivist' mentality was newly important to cooperatives. Although the Bonnavé Plan had been an attempt by the government to alter the wine industry, recovery from war-time had fundamentally altered the structure of the Languedocian wine industry. Attempts to improve quality clashed with simultaneous inducements to collectivise and the crisis of 1953 made the

²¹⁵ Directions des Service Agricole de l'Hérault, 'Rapport sur la situation viticole dans les caves coopératives', 18/05/1954 – ADH 2W2660.

²¹⁶ Galtier, *Le Vignoble du Languedoc Méditerranéen et du Roussillon*, vol.2, p322.

hardship of this contradiction plain. As the larger national syndical bodies failed to act as an acceptable interlocutor, the vigneron themselves began to organise ever more politically active groups to act as their representatives. The PCF sought to create a presence amongst these groups and the Deputies of the SFIO were thus increasingly bound to involve themselves in direct action in the Languedoc as a means of ensuring they remained relevant and visible. The direct nature of the later CRAV was incubated within this tendency towards politicisation. As the Midi responded once more to a crisis of representation, new committees emerged to voice old concerns made young.

Turbulence in the structures of representation

The 1953 crisis had generated a new momentum in the Défense movement, energising new and vocal leaders to suggest tactics for resisting exigent demands for change from above. The CMA had not suddenly become redundant, nor indeed had the CGVM, yet lingering economic problems demanded constantly renewed forms of representation. 1950 had opened a new decade with another grand public assembly on 11 January, during which the CGVM and the CGA called on winegrowers to unite behind their organisations in the pursuit of a living wage for winegrowers.²¹⁷ They condemned those who suggested there were schisms in the syndical organisations, stating simply that “la lutte ne cessera... que lorsque nous aurons eu satisfaction.”²¹⁸ Yet, the prominence of the CGVM in existing syndical representation had begun to

²¹⁷ ‘La réunion des vigneron de Carcassonne-Limoux (CGVM)’, *Midi Libre* 20/03/1950 – ADA 31J22.

²¹⁸ ‘Réunion viticole’, *Le Républicain de Midi* 13/01/1950 – ADA 31J22.

provoke disillusionment, with the renewed prominence of 'Wine Deputies' having demonstrated the benefits of direct political intervention.

The CRSV is described as "nouvellement formé" on the 6th June 1953,²¹⁹ having been established by Raoul Vidal a year earlier at the Maison du Peuple in Béziers amidst a "cacophonie" of support.²²⁰ In reality, this group had existed since January 1945 as the successor to the Comité de Défense Viticole,²²¹ and remained an "extremist" voice.²²² Yet, just as the crisis of 1953 drew new responses from government, so too did it encourage change in the Languedoc. Vidal's formalisation of the group saw it make headlines and immediately absorb the relatively minor organisation 'Groupement National des vins de consommation courante', whose head Jean Durand (the Senator for the Gironde) was promoted alongside Vidal.²²³ Although minor, Durand's organisation had gained traction during the immediate post-war years when the 'consommation courante' market was essentially flooded. Durand himself was born in 1909, only two years later than the Deputy Georges Guille, yet both formed part of a generation who moved into political prominence in the post-war period. The viticultural crisis of the immediate post-war placed their political careers alongside the early development of the Défense movement.

This newly amalgamated organisation had a stronger voice, and Durand's membership of the parliamentary *Commission des Boissons* gave it weight and

²¹⁹ Letter from E. Mazerand to Mayor of Béziers, 06/06/1953 – ADH 338W91.

²²⁰ RG, 'Meeting viticole à Béziers', 03/07/1953 - ADH 338W91.

²²¹ This group had been organised in 1930 as regional groups and individual growers organised to fight government plans to limit planting which emerged as part of the enquiry preceding the *Statut de la Viticulture* in 1931.

²²² Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, p.164.

²²³ Telegram from RG to Prefecture, 03/07/1953 – ADH 338W91.

credibility. The CRSV specifically represented the Gard, Hérault and Aude, and through the association of the Comité Beauvoisin, of which Vidal was the head, they also claimed to speak for winegrowers in the Var and Bouches-du-Rhône.²²⁴ In the Hérault, the local arm of the CRSV was headed up by the increasingly influential Raoul Bayou, who presided over a department which was one of the most amenable to direct action throughout the twentieth century. Bayou was also the head of the Mayors' Association of the Hérault, and he mobilised this organisation in support of the CRSV. Between December 1953 and August 1954, he sanctioned waves of mayoral strikes and administrative shut-downs in protest at the government's handling of the downturn. He brought at least 40 communes with him directly, exercising his personal influence in support of the Défense du vin movement. By deploying the networks of local influence he had garnered during his term as Mayor of Cessenon and regional counsellor, he brought the elites of the Department closer to viticultural radicals. The CRSV can effectively be seen as the forerunner of the organisation which would come to be known as the CRAV in the 1970s.²²⁵ This early group already displayed certain distinct characteristics of the later CRAV: wide appeal to local vigneronns of all classes, representation at the highest levels of local politics and the ability to successfully coordinate direct action across all of the viticultural departments. Likewise, the CRSV were an early demonstration of the increasingly independent streak within the *Midi viticole*.

As Joseph Laniel's newly formed conservative government of June 1953 floundered in implementing the demands of winegrowers and prices dropped

²²⁴ Poster printed by CRSV for demos on 29th June and 2nd July, (n.d.) – ADH 338W91.

²²⁵ Dedieu, 'Raoul Bayou, député du vin', pp.97-98.

severely, growers within the CRSV had sought to drive debate by stepping up their action and increasing their visibility. Having mounted a demonstration in Nîmes on 29 June,²²⁶ the CRSV were then involved in organising a large inter-departmental demonstration in Béziers for 2 July.²²⁷ Protest flyers recalled the *tocsin* of Marcelin Albert in 1907, and mentioned a modern *tocsin* being sounded by Raoul Vidal which called on 8,000 to attend the meeting.²²⁸ In the *Indépendant*, an editorial lent succour to the protestors by describing them as "fraternellement unis, non point en rebelles, en révolutionnaires, mais en travailleurs désireux de voir le fruit de leur travail préservée d'une misère qui pourrait être fatale."²²⁹ As the local press rallied behind the CRSV, they invoked the heritage of *la grande révolte*. As a natural inheritor of the 'Comités de Salut Viticole' formed during the 1907 riots, it is significant to see the CRSV espousing this regional mythology.

At the first meeting of the newly formalised CRSV, its members called for the immediate release and sale of withheld wine from the 1952 vintage and the distillation of all unsalable wine from the 1953 vintage. This would allow them to realise the value of withheld stocks whilst also clearing storage to allow an untainted market to emerge the following year. Those assembled criticised the FAV for failing to represent their profession adequately, insisting that only those that took an active stance had the right to demand concessions from the government.²³⁰ Even at this juncture, the distinction between locally led groups and national bodies lay in a rejection of the 'politics of

²²⁶ Poster printed by CRSV for demos on 29th June and 2nd July, (n.d.) – ADH 338W91.

²²⁷ Letter from Sous-Préfet of Béziers to Préfet, 12/06/1953 – ADH 338W91; Renseignements Généraux (RG), 'Meeting du 2 Juillet a Béziers', 24/06/1953 – ADH 338W91.

²²⁸ RG, 'Manifestation viticole à Béziers', 02/07/1953 - ADH 338W91.

²²⁹ 'Les vignerons du Minervoais ont revécu hier l'ambiance des journées de 1907', *L'Indépendant* 29/07/1953.

²³⁰ 'Ordre du jour', 03/07/1953 – ADH 338W91.

quality' and a willingness to endorse direct action. This focus on direct action as a legitimising quality helped establish the CRSV as an important political voice in the region. Likewise, the example of the CRSV set out a blueprint for increasing radicalisation and independence in the Midi which would see viticultural politics become a partisan arena, set apart from the large professional bodies which represented national issues. Durand derided the "scandale du dirigisme" amongst national organisations like the FAV as "le parasite qu'il faut détruire."²³¹

There was no danger of such 'dirigisme' within the CRSV, however. Dispute and division were rife at its meetings, and groups like the *Ligue des Petits et Moyens Producteurs* represented a strong current of alternative opinion within the structures of the CRSV. This was demonstrated in the immediate aftermath of the *Code*, when the government hinted that it would allow further concessions to let the *Code* fully establish itself. The Ligue agitated in favour of more direct action and the rejection of governmental overtures. At a meeting in Pezenas, however, a majority of CRSV delegates opted for conciliation, over-ruling the dissenting Ligue. Resentment of this decision lingered, and the Ligue would use this 'coup de Pézenas' as a perennial refrain to censure those favouring talks instead of barricades.²³² For the Ligue, appeasement at this moment represented a lost opportunity for the Midi.

As the CRSV was challenged, the Défense movement underwent a period of comparative democratisation. Ad-hov local committees were becoming increasingly popular, as the Défense movement gained traction amongst the viticultural base.

²³¹ RG, 'Meeting viticole à Béziers', 03/07/1953 - ADH 338W91.

²³² 'Notre volonté de poursuivre l'action empêchera que le 'coup de Pézenas' se renouvelle à Narbonne', *La Marseillaise* 07/05/1955 – ADH 506W355.

Winegrower's *syndicats* acted as local 'cells' of the CGV, participating in the CRSV as means of channelling their influence.²³³ The Ligue's role as a dissenting force at the heart of the Défense movement ensured that this development could not be stifled. The 'coup de Pézenas' was a visible moment of crisis, the appearance of which would multiply as the Ligue sought opportunities to display its radical convictions and outflank the CRSV. The Ligue proposed a day of barricades in a communiqué on 8 April 1954, encouraging vigneronns to form Comités d'action at a village level and coordinate their own demonstrations.²³⁴ This was a clear attempt to move outside the structures of the CRSV, and highlighted growing plurality in the Défense movement. By devolving action to a local level outside the incumbent structures of representation, the Ligue had laid the groundwork for later regional mobilisation under the CRAV. As the *Code du vin* put further strain on smaller growers, this dynamic of radicalisation was bound only to develop. The Ligue pursued its rhetoric as a means of differentiating itself from the CRSV and so allowed the PCF to have a guiding hand in politics on the Midi. In an area dominated by the Socialist party, the PCF found vicarious success by garnering support through their involvement in the Défense movement.

As in 1905, when Guesdistes like Ferroul had supported a message of class division, the post-war PCF continued to reject the "mythe de l'unité paysanne".²³⁵ Yet, as Ferroul had done in 1907, the PCF continued to support broader organisations when they were successful. Thus, in their attitude to the CRSV, they were playing a double

²³³ Warner, *The Winegrowers of France*, p.269.

²³⁴ 'La Ligue propose: Barrages des routes', *La Marseillaise*, 08/04/1954 – ADH 506W355.

²³⁵ Y. Tavernier, 'Le Mouvement de coordination et de défense des exploitations agricoles familiales (M.O.D.E.F.)', *Revue française de science politique*, no.3, (1968), p.545.

game, attempting to balance their resistance to 'inter-classisme' with a realistic appreciation that the CRSV was more acceptable than organisations like the FNSEA which were dominated by the right. The CRSV, in attempting to resist domination by the Ligue and the PCF by proxy, was forced to become a functionally conservative organisation in the Languedoc's representative framework. This constituted something of a crisis of representation, as the Défense organisation fought amongst itself at the same time as attempting to stand against government. The competition for different sections of growers was rather one sided, the PCF had inherited the mistakes of the Guesdistes in the old SFIO, whereas the PS had rather more influence and experience in trying to construct unified movements in the Languedoc.

It is interesting that the announcements of some of these well-attended protests were made on the headed note paper of the Syndicat des Vignerons des Pyrénées-Orientales and signed on behalf of the syndical President, Vidal.²³⁶ Direct action and mayoral support occurred in direct reference to 1907, as protests against regional difficulties were coordinated through local structures. Vidal's dual role as Syndical President and CRSV leader became exemplary of a new class of viticultural spokesmen. Raoul Bayou also became one of the important members of the fledgling CRSV, organising the mobilisation of vignerons throughout the demonstrations of 1953 and onwards.²³⁷ His multiple roles in local government (as Mayor of Cessenon, local Counsellor and newly elected President of the Association of Mayors of the Hérault) likewise helped legitimise the movement and increase the penetration of militant vignerons into the local political elites. This was strongly demonstrated in the strike

²³⁶ 'Letter to Syndicat des vignerons de Carcassonne-Limoux', 17/03/1954 – ADA 98J3.

²³⁷ Dedieu, 'Raoul Bayou, député du vin', p.98.

organised in May 1954, in which the Mayors of 262 (out of 343) communes in the Hérault walked out in support of vignerons and to protest at the breakdown of talks with government for relief packages. During cyclical crises of representation, local notables surfed the waves of innovation which encouraged the rejuvenation of the Défense groups. Despite some individual engagement with specific Défense groups, the independent status of 'Wine Deputies' allowed them to endorse the most positive aspects in an effort to bolster their own political stock.

For one of the most prominent viticultural leaders, Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé, the wave of demonstrations in 1953-1954 "fut le point de depart dans l'engagement de toute ma generation"²³⁸. Born in 1921, Maffre-Baugé was a powerful speaker with an infectious personality who "apparaît avant tout comme un tribun."²³⁹ He believed that this moment represented the most significant crystallisation of viticultural radicalism in the post-war Midi. Specifically, he relates how "le vieux réflexe hérité de 1907 intervenait"²⁴⁰, creating solidarity amongst vignerons and encouraging the intensity of the demonstrations by reference to their heritage. Maffre-Baugé himself came from an illustrious and scholarly background; his grandfather had been a poet in the circle of Mistral, and his strict upbringing in Catholic schools run by Dominicans and then Jesuits gave him a cultured, serious and intelligent outlook.²⁴¹ Despite a privileged background, his allegiance to the PCF and his romantic attachment to the vine fashioned a role for him in viticultural representation.

²³⁸ E. Maffre-Baugé, *Vendanges Amères* (J.P. Ramsay, Paris, 1976), p.39.

²³⁹ F. Nicholas, 'Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé, une figure politique polymorphe' in G. Gavignaud-Fontaine (ed.), *Vignobles du sud* (Publications de l'Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier, 2003), p.665.

²⁴⁰ Maffre-Baugé, *Vendanges Amères*, p.39.

²⁴¹ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Vignerons*, p.209.



Emmanuel Maffre-Beaugé addressing a demonstration in Montpellier²⁴²

Maffre-Beaugé, unlike his proto-Communist predecessor Ferroul, actively supported the cooperation of winegrowers across classes in service of the region as a whole, an opinion forged in this first crisis of the post-war era. The crossing of political and class boundaries at this moment was another clear indication that memories of 1907 were strong. Increasingly, the Midi was raising its head to assert a more independent political voice. The links between this developing political movement and radical direct action were complex, in that local committees tended to be more radical than the central CRSV, but this allowed the development of a genuine grassroots dynamism. The primacy of shared viticultural interests was what drove the invigorated Défense movement to develop further. Such development provoked reactions from government in the guise of increased engagement with the Midi.

²⁴² Revel, *Montredon*, p.V.

Nevertheless, as a result of this crisis of representation, local committees were becoming more independent, favouring more direct action than the established Défense movement were willing to endorse. On 9 May 1954, the CRSV attempted to rein in this tendency, asking the Comités d'action in all four departments to maintain lines of communication with the CGVM and the Association of Mayors.²⁴³ Despite having represented an extremist voice in the immediate post-war period, the CRSV was suddenly drawn into a validation of its own principles as it faced challenges, notably from the Ligue. In an illustration of what they were fighting against, reports emerged that same day of a Languedocian conference organised by the Union de la Jeunesse Républicaine de France (UJRF).²⁴⁴ This organisation was effectively a Communist youth movement, and thus shared the same strong links to the PCF as did the Ligue. The attendance of groups from Perpignan, Béziers and other viticultural areas saw the creation of young Comités d'action designed to rejuvenate the Défense movement and agitate for direct action. This was symptomatic of the increasing atomisation of the viticultural lobby, as a generational tide began to wash over the structures of the FAV and the CGVM. Again, even the formerly 'extremist' CRSV became a guardian of the limits, trying to keep viticultural representation legitimate. Nevertheless, the potential for mass action remained housed within local structures and increasingly many of these were drawn towards the Ligue as being more openly representative of smaller growers' interests. Indeed, on 2 April, Joseph Calas, the President of the Ligue, assured winegrowers that success would be theirs only if they

²⁴³ 'Que chacun fasse son devoir et les barricades seront victorieuses', *La Marseillaise*, 09/05/1954 – ADH 506W355.

²⁴⁴ 'Rassemblement de la Jeunesse du Midi Viticole', *La Marseillaise*, 09/05/1954 – ADH 506W355.

could “rester les maîtres de leurs luttes.”²⁴⁵ This control at a local level would – the Communists hoped – prevent a repeat of the ‘coup de Pezenas’ in 1953. That action coming from the UJRF had fed into strengthening the Ligue was indicative of success achieved by the PCF in manipulating the political landscape of the Midi.

The PCF actively supported direct action amongst the winegrowers, with Manuel Bernabeu, Secretary of the Hérault PCF, penning an article in which he vented his fury that “politiciens sordides ont avec eux les gros viticulteurs capitalistes”. He went on to criticise prominent deputies such as Paul Coste-Floret for claiming that the state did not have the resources to satisfy the winegrowers whilst pouring money into “le gouffre de la honteuse guerre d’Indochine”.²⁴⁶ Such vocabulary offers some clues as to the appeal of the notion of internal colonialism which came to be used in conjunction with both the wine industry and Occitan movement during the 1960s. This new dynamic built upon the rhetoric of 1907 reintroduced during the protests of the previous year and helped radicalise local committees into supporting direct action. Newly invigorated and more diffuse than ever, the Défense movement stepped up its pressure in the following months. More demonstrations took place on 14 March in Perpignan, 21 March in Carcassonne and 4 April in Béziers.²⁴⁷ Attempting to hold together the increasing fissiparous movement, the CRSV announced that it intended to remain alert to the possibility of direct action. In a direct overture to the support base

²⁴⁵ ‘La condition du succès’, *La Marseillaise*, 02/04/1954 – ADH 506W355.

²⁴⁶ ‘Les vigneron ont raison’, *La Marseillaise*, 13/05/1954 – ADH 506W355.

²⁴⁷ ‘Letter to Syndicat des vigneron de Carcassonne-Limoux from CGVM’, 29/03/1954 – ADA 98J3.

for the Ligue, it highlighted the charges levied against smaller growers to block the sale of some wines as both unfair and unacceptable.²⁴⁸

At a meeting at the Café Continental in Béziers on 7 January 1955 chaired by Joseph Calas, the Ligue issued demands for minimum pricing, a halt to imports and exemption of smallholders from government measures (*blocage*, distillation) designed to solve the wine crisis. Without such measures, they warned, winegrowers would “se tenir prêts à agir.”²⁴⁹ At a subsequent meeting on 28 January, Calas reiterated these demands.²⁵⁰ This was the beginning of a campaign of criticism which would see the Ligue increasingly stress the differences between their own adherents and those of the CRSV. The communist presence within the representative framework of the Languedoc was pushing further towards the collapse of 'inter-classisme' and increasing distinction between small and large landholders. This emphasis on the distinctions between growers fuelled a process of rejuvenation designed to radicalise the Défense movement and draw it closer to extremism. The Ligue's solution to this crisis was to simplify the means of delivering their message: action had to be direct and loud enough to be heard.

Joseph Calas was the firebrand who led the *Ligue des Petits et Moyens Viticulteurs* towards this divisive tendency. His brother Raoul Calas had been the PCF deputy for the Hérault.²⁵¹ Alongside his vice president Emilien Soulié, Jo Calas brought the belief

²⁴⁸ 'Le comité régional de salut viticole reste en état alerte', *Midi Libre*, 02/06/1954 – ADH 506W355.

²⁴⁹ RG, 'Réunion du Comité d'action viticole a Béziers', 08/01/1955 – ADH 506W355.

²⁵⁰ RG, "Réunion organisé par les Dirigeants de la Ligue des Petits et Moyens Viticulteurs", 29/01/1955 – ADH 506W355.

²⁵¹ RG, 'Complet échec d'un rassemblement des viticulteurs d'obédience communiste', 13/04/1959 – ADH 506W355.

that “toute négociation doit s’appuyer sur un solide rapport des forces.”²⁵² By challenging the CRSV to renegotiate their appeal, the Ligue brought the representation of winegrowers to a more local level by empowering local action committees as increasingly independent organisations. This was to prove one of the more potent organisational legacies of the Ligue. By so diversifying the political actors within the Midi, they furnished grass roots representative bodies with both a motive and a mandate to conduct direct action in support of their broader cause. Outside the umbrella of the CRSV, they shaped a cell structure more in line with that of a clandestine organisation. This proved to be the primary tool of the later Jeunes Vignerons movement and encouraged the gestation of the CRAV as an independent representative body during the 1960s.

On 17 February 1955, the press carried pleas for winegrowers to attend a departmental demonstration, as the Ligue stepped up its criticism of the CRSV, recalling once more the ‘coup de Pézénas’ in 1953. From this example, they drew the conclusion that “l’action paie toujours” and that only ‘days of barricades’ would evince any recognition from Paris.²⁵³ Days earlier, they had formed a Comité d’union et d’action, stealing a march on the embattled CRSV. By rallying the core support of the more numerous small-holders, they sought to encourage direct action as a more vital exercise than negotiation.²⁵⁴ Calas and Soulié of the Ligue attended the next CRSV meeting on 19 February to make their objections plain. The tone of the meeting was

²⁵² Martin, ‘Les gauches vigneronnes contestataires’, p.667.

²⁵³ ‘Le rassemblement départemental du 27 Février à Béziers répond au désir d’union et d’action des petits et moyens viticulteurs’, *La Marseillaise*, 17/02/1955 – ADH 506W355.

²⁵⁴ ‘Un comité d’union et d’action se forme à Magalas’, *La Marseillaise*, 17/02/1955 – ADH 506W355.

tense, as opposition to the policy of conciliation was palpable. A succession of delegates from the villages spoke of their misery and readiness to act, with one stating that “Je ne suis pas un révolutionnaire, mais je suis prêt à le devenir, pas demain, tout de suite.”²⁵⁵ Although deliberately stoked by the Ligue’s communist ties, these sentiments seemed to have struck a chord amongst a population increasingly exasperated by the lack of radicalism displayed by the CRSV. Smaller growers were finding it impossible to sell for the minimum price, with the market flooded by the volume of large producers who could better absorb measures like compulsory distillation than family vineyards.

March witnessed more demonstrations in the Hérault, as dissatisfaction with fluctuating prices translated into direct action. A demonstration was organized in Béziers on 6 March 1955 at the ‘Maison du Peuple’,²⁵⁶ the very place the Ligue had been formed, and on 26 March a Ligue communiqué declared that “L’heure de l’action a sonné”.²⁵⁷ The CRSV attempted to retain a role for itself – organizing a strike amongst local government officials in April. However, it abandoned plans to blockade roads on 14 April, instead sending a detachment to Paris to negotiate concessions.²⁵⁸ Accordingly, on 23 April, the CRSV issued a communiqué to the *Midi Libre*, expressing their general satisfaction with the government statement made that day.²⁵⁹ Smaller growers were outraged by this appeasement, which they saw as running counter to the

²⁵⁵ ‘Ce qui s’est passé à la réunion du Samedi du Comité régional de Salut viticole’, *La Marseillaise*, 21/02/1955 – ADH 506W355.

²⁵⁶ RG, ‘Untitled’, n.d. - ADH 506W355.

²⁵⁷ ‘La ligue appelle les petits et moyens viticulteurs à répondre en masse à l’appel du Comité Régional de Salut Viticole’, *La Marseillaise*, 26/03/1955.

²⁵⁸ ‘Les petits et moyens viticulteurs ne se laisseront décourager’, *La Marseillaise*, 05/05/1955 – ADH 506W355.

²⁵⁹ ‘Le Comité de Salut viticole a pris acte des décisions gouvernementales’, *Midi Libre*, 23/04/1955 – ADH 506W355.

notion of regional solidarity and serving only the interest of larger land-owners. The Paris negotiations were compared to the visit of Marcelin Albert to Paris in 1907, when he had been outfoxed by bureaucrats and politicians.

Emilien Soulié, vice-President of the Ligue, reported a subsequent wave of unrest within the body of the CRSV. A representative of a local Comité d'action in the Gard had described the governmental concessions as "une piqûre de morphine", whilst others pressed the need for action in the face of palliatives offered by the government.²⁶⁰ For the Ligue this was an opportunity to comprehensively outflank the CRSV and its political masters, the PCF, likewise came out against 'appeasement'.²⁶¹ These strong words rang somewhat hollow, however, suffixed as they were by a plea for votes in the upcoming election. Such an attempt to divide the syndical hierarchy of the region represented an opportunist tactic by the PCF, although it exploited pre-existing fractures within the Défense organisations. A long article by Emile Soulié highlighting the struggles of the Midi in the face of Parisian laws ended with a dramatic conclusion: "Nous sommes la masse, nous sommes la force et dans l'action unie, nous arracherons le juste droit de vivre en travaillant."²⁶² He roundly criticised the CGVM, especially their role in securing the *Code* of 1953, in which – he claimed – tax liabilities were lifted from the large growers of France and Algeria and dumped on small *vignerons*. Citing the role of larger growers in derailing the meeting at Pézenas in

²⁶⁰ 'Il faut que les viticulteurs sachent!', *La Marseillaise*, 28/04/1955 – ADH 506W355.

²⁶¹ 'Les petits et moyens viticulteurs ne se laisseront décourager', *La Marseillaise*, 05/05/1955 – ADH 506W355.

²⁶² 'Notre volonté de poursuivre l'action empêchera que le 'coup de Pézenas' se renouvelle à Narbonne', *La Marseillaise* 07/05/1955 – ADH 506W355.

1953, Soulié underlined the importance of small-scale growers acting independently to make their voices heard.

The later crisis of 1956 can be attributed to the very harsh frost of that year²⁶³ which coincided with a period of declining consumption (from 139 litres per head per annum in 1954 to 124 litres per head per annum in 1963²⁶⁴). 1954 actually represented the point from which consumption never recovered in France, facing regular diminishment thereafter.²⁶⁵ Between 1938 and 1955 sales of mineral water increased 464%, illustrating the fact that the crises of the 1950s were, above all else, crises of diminishing wine consumption.²⁶⁶ Likewise, the crisis of 1956 can be seen to have been one of the contributory factors in the rapid decline of agricultural workers, dropping from 5 million to 1.5 million 1955-1988.²⁶⁷ The government's methods in tackling the crisis focussed initially on traditional methods, such as blocking surplus wine from sale (8.5 million HL) and the distillation of surplus wine into industrial spirit (6 million HL), but going beyond earlier palliative measures by enforcing these as obligatory. Innovative methods were also introduced in an attempt to break the cyclical pattern of these market crashes, with 1.8 million Francs set aside in the 1955 budget to help encourage the exportation of Languedoc-Roussillon wines by granting massive subsidies to exporters. The recovery of the market was gradual but, as government initiatives took effect, prices returned to 1949 levels by the end of June 1957, having

²⁶³ J.M. Jeanneney, *Forces et Faiblesses de l'Économie Française*, (Paris, 1959), p.66.

²⁶⁴ Dubos, 'Les Mutations de la Viticulture Française Contemporaine', pp.85-87.

²⁶⁵ INRA, 'La consommation de vin dans les pays traditionnellement viticoles', *2^{ème} Symposium International sur la Production et la Consommation du Vin dans le Monde*, (Ljubljana, 1979), p.24.

²⁶⁶ Galtier, *Le Vignoble du Languedoc Méditerranéen et du Roussillon*, vol.2, p304

²⁶⁷ G. Gavignaud-Fontaine, *La révolution rurale dans la France contemporaine : XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Paris, 1996), p.167, n.2.

dropped as low as 74% in February 1956.²⁶⁸ The ability of the government to solve market crises was demonstrable, therefore, although it encountered difficulty in trying to address the structural causes of the crises. This second crisis of the 1950s demonstrated the underlying weaknesses of the Languedoc's wine industry.

Changing Republics

The advent of the Fifth Republic altered France's representative framework and enshrined a strong conservative executive at the heart of French politics. In the Languedoc, the continuing electoral prominence of the Socialist party set the region out of step with the national political majority. The electoral system of the Fifth Republic delivered blows to the Communists, who performed dreadfully in 1958 when they set themselves in opposition to the Socialist Party. For the SFIO, Francis Vals was elected in the Aude, Raoul Bayou in the Hérault and Paul Béchart in the Gard.²⁶⁹ Unsurprisingly, the Gaullist *Union pour une Nouvelle République* (UNR) performed well on the General's ticket (with 3 deputies across the 3 departments), and the Christian Democratic *Mouvement républicain populaire* (MRP) (rallying behind Paul Coste-

²⁶⁸ Galtier, *Le Vignoble du Languedoc Méditerranéen et du Roussillon*, vol.2, pp.319-335.

²⁶⁹ Francis Vals was a Socialist, involved in the wine industry and scored the championship winning try for *Racing club narbonnais* in 1936. As such, he embodied local visions of masculinity and enjoyed considerable cultural capital. Bayou will be mentioned later, and Béchart was less involved with the wine trade. His most notable cause involved campaigning for the nationalisation of electricity and gas distribution. For further discussion of these figures, see R. Cazals, D. Fabre (eds.), *Les Audois: Dictionnaire biographique* (Aude: Association des Amis des Archives de l'Aude, 1990)

Floret)²⁷⁰ equalled this tally. The Socialists, MRP and UNR all boasted an equal number of deputies across the Languedoc.²⁷¹ The Socialist decision to engage in 'constructive opposition' to De Gaulle's centre-right majority isolated them from government successes and, as they remained unwilling to personally attack De Gaulle whilst the Algerian crisis endured, meant that they were unable to cast themselves as strong opponents to the government.²⁷² The strength of the new Republic did create some strong opposition movements however, specifically relating to wine, where the heritage of the left was long-standing. The election of 1958 was an important moment for Raoul Bayou, whose career in the Assembly would be firmly bound to the *Languedoc viticole*, spanning some of its most turbulent moments and allowing him to actively engage with viticultural issues in the Assembly and at demonstrations in the Languedoc itself.

These governmental changes also spurred the creation of a new agricultural organisation. The *Mouvement Ouvrier de Défense des Entreprises Familiales* (MODEF) was formed in Toulouse in 1959 as a left wing rival to the politically conservative FNSEA. For the communists, MODEF represented "un relais politique dans le syndicalisme paysan."²⁷³ As their influence in the Assembly evaporated, the Communists had to find new methods for constructing valid means to oppose the government. In the midst of a

²⁷⁰ Coste-Floret was a strong spokesman for winegrowers at a national level and became a prominent figure in government as well as a 'Député du vin'. For an analysis of his political career, see D. Damamme, ' *Deux carrières : Jean Bène et Paul Coste-Floret* ', Pôle sud, vol.2 (1995), pp.151-157.

²⁷¹ 'Results of 1958 Legislative election by Department' [<http://www.politiquemaniam.com/>] [Accessed 22/12/2011].

²⁷² H. Machin & V. Wright, 'The French Left under the Fifth Republic', *Comparative Politics*, vol.10, no.1 (October, 1977), p.39.

²⁷³ Tavernier, 'Le Mouvement de coordination et de défense des exploitations agricoles familiales (M.O.D.E.F.)', p.544.

national programme of technocratic modernisation, which in the wine industry had seen the Bonnavé Plan and then the *Code* attempt to alter economic structures, the Communists saw an opportunity to capitalise on discontent in the countryside. By inculcating themselves in the realm of professional representation, they were able to challenge De Gaulle's new Republic through the proxy of agricultural syndicalism. MODEF was a means to gather organisations opposed to the FNSEA into a more cohesive and effective structure under the aegis of Communist leadership.²⁷⁴

The FNSEA had long been all but a footnote in the Midi's syndical tradition, reckoned by some to be "sans aucune influence".²⁷⁵ Whilst the FNSEA was readily criticised for representing only large scale agricultural interests, MODEF was intended to be a champion of smallholders. In this vein, it allied well with the demographics of Languedocian winegrowers, embodying the far left heritage which had called for smallholder representation since the aftermath of 1907. MODEF was the natural inheritor of the Ligue, both in terms of its attachment to the PCF and also in its personnel, with Emilien Soulié, former vice-President of the Ligue now installed as one of the founding heads of MODEF.²⁷⁶ In reality, the Ligue "s'intègre peu à peu dans le MODEF, dont elle prend le nom, dans lequel Emilien Soulié joue un rôle national."²⁷⁷ It was another indication that the representation of Languedocian vignerons had come to be dominated by increasingly radical left-wing groups. Perceived crises of representation, following the underwhelming successes in gaining concessions from

²⁷⁴ Lem, *Cultivating Dissent*, p.54.

²⁷⁵ Martin, 'Viticulture du Languedoc', p.71.

²⁷⁶ Telegram from Prefect to Interior Minister, 07/12/1979 – ADH 1182W103.

²⁷⁷ Martin, 'Les gauches vigneronnes contestataires', pp.663-664.

the government, led to further splinter-groups attempting to rejuvenate the Défense movement.

As direct action became the preferred means of mobilisation, the Défense movement began to strike an increasingly intimidating figure in the media. The photo journal *Paris-Match* published a photo-essay on the phenomenon of the mobilised Midi, photographing the peaceful demonstration which took place on 19 April 1959.²⁷⁸ This piece was designed to show the depth of feeling which motivated protest, conveying to the centre an image of the periphery which set it apart. The beginning of the 1960s was perhaps the sea change moment in the Défense du vin movement. Indeed, this is reflected in the reports of the *Renseignements Généraux* (RG), which describe a “nouvelle vague de mécontentement chez les viticulteurs”.²⁷⁹ The new representative groups formed in the 1950s would mature into more discrete and articulated bodies in the 1960s, garnering further support for their direct action. Likewise, the interpenetration of local elites with the representative bodies of the wine industry would continue, as the Défense movement capitalised on the dynamic political situation to place itself at the centre of debate. The atomisation of the sprawling Défense movement was to prove an important factor in motivating further episodes of protest, as the increasingly politicised Défense groups began to assert themselves in the turbulent climate of the 1960s.

Differing responses to the endemic problems of the Midi wine industry allowed the gradual evolution of the movement as it distanced itself from the moderate

²⁷⁸ ‘Pour le vin le Midi bouge’, *Paris Match* no.525 – ADA 98J3.

²⁷⁹ RG, ‘Nouvelle vague de mécontentement chez les viticulteurs héraultais’, 03/06/1959 – ADH 506W355.

professional bodies which governed it after the war. Building upon successive waves of rejuvenation, the movement drew closer to the elites of the region, as SFIO Deputies sought to face off the challenge of the PCF. Reflexive legitimisation saw Mayors and Deputies seek to identify themselves with the developing regional powerhouse of the Défense movement, and protesters seek validation from traditional political figureheads. Yet, as the proportional electoral lists of the Fourth Republic were succeeded by the Fifth's stable majority consensus, so the ability of 'Wine Deputies' to represent the south's interests in parliament declined. Likewise, the continuing exclusion of the PCF from the political mainstream strengthened their recourse to alternative methods of opposition, particularly in their sponsoring of agricultural syndical groups like MODEF and the Ligue. A change in Republic heralded a defining moment for the political maturity of the Défense movement by removing the volatility that had allowed 'Wine Deputies' to act as a legitimising force for the Défense groups. This fact alone evinced a change in the dynamic of debate, as the Défense groups of the South now had to work harder to get their views across and the SFIO lost some of its purchase on the movement.

Ultimately, many of these qualities would be reconciled within the CRAV, which came to represent the dynamic force in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. By combining immediacy of action, a radical message, historical lineage and a sense of grievance, the CRAV inherited and developed the ideological mantle of the 'Défense' movement's collective experience. By housing this inheritance within one organisation, the CRAV became the most articulate voice of the Midi vigneron and their most fervent champion. The CRAV was the latest manifestation of a long regional history of

mobilisation to defend the economic interests, and way of life, of Midi winegrowers. The "Défense du vin" movement had assumed various guises but always drew upon the memory, symbols and forms of action bequeathed by the momentous events of 1907.

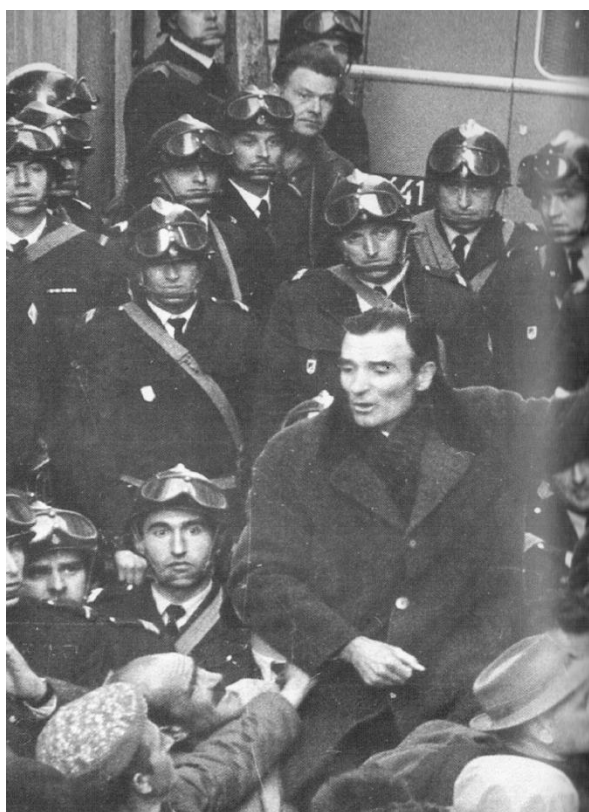
Chapter 3:

Old Wine in Nouvelles Vagues: The unified Défense movement

Even as production levels recovered, the consumption of wine was falling across France. The resultant *crises des méventes* channelled memories of 1907 through the very cooperative structures which the government had helped to create. Although they had been intended to serve as conduits of modernisation, these cooperatives soon became bastions of productivism.²⁸⁰ Yet the frailties of 1907's wine movement were also shown to be constant characteristics of Languedocian representation. Specifically, the fractious relationship between Communists and Socialists invoked the uneasy tussling between Albert and Ferroul. An opportunity had arisen for a group to capitalise on the ever more radical atmosphere which pervaded Languedocian viticulture. This group would unite the Défense movement behind the message of 1907 and emphasise the direct action and mobilisation which had come from the Défense movement's turbulent post-war experience.

²⁸⁰ In this instance, 'productivism' is used to indicate the primacy of viticultural concerns to winegrowers, superseding all other political attachment and tending towards a reliance on traditional high-volume wines.

The launch of a formalised CRAV took place in Narbonne on 27 June 1961, with André Castera presiding over the meeting.²⁸¹ Born in 1924, Castera was an Audois smallholder pressured into a career of syndical representation by the strains of supporting an invalid father on the meagre income of his vines. Lionised in the region as both a “tribune” and the “Napoléon des vignes”,²⁸² he was perhaps the defining figure of the CRAV, while being described by *France-Dimanche* as “Castéra le terrible”.²⁸³



André Castera addressing a demonstration in Carcassonne flanked by CRS ²⁸⁴

Castera, in his turn, wore the strains of life as a vigneron proudly: thin, with a gaunt face and an intimate knowledge of the region’s suffering – for Maffre-Beaugé he was

²⁸¹ R. Pech, 'Les grands militants viticoles languedociens au Xxe siècle' in M.D. Demélas (ed.), *Militantisme et histoire* (Presses Universitaires du Mirail, Toulouse, 2000), p.242.

²⁸² 'Mort d'André Castéra', *L'Indépendant* 27/12/2007.

²⁸³ Le Bris & CRAV, *La Révolte du Midi*, p.44.

²⁸⁴ Revel, *Montredon*, p.VI.

“le Christ des Corbières”.²⁸⁵ Formed as an offshoot of the CGVM, of which Castera had been secretary in 1951,²⁸⁶ the newly constituted CRAV was intended to channel the unrest of the 1950s into a more focused and directed movement which could achieve tangible goals. The sudden crystallisation of protest in the summer of 1961 relied on the ability of the CRAV to circumvent the schisms which had hampered unity in the 1950s.

The Summer of '61 and the consolidation of the Défense movement

The summer of 1961 was a compelling moment in the Languedoc's history, when the legacy of 1907 combined with the experience of post-war reconstruction. Thunder and lightning foreshadowed this turbulence as the south was battered by the same portentous summer storms that had assaulted that year's harvest. Vignerons took to the barricades, paralysing the arterial roads of the region in protest at the sharp decline of prices.²⁸⁷ The protest was not a Lear-esque railing against the elements, however, but one focussed on the lack of human compassion shown by authorities to their plight. Tractors circled the streets of Carcassonne in convoy and 2,000 vignerons invaded Limoux, whilst traffic in Béziers and Lézignan-Corbières was held up in a demonstration of region-wide dissatisfaction with institutional responses to the crisis.²⁸⁸ That this protest represented something new was demonstrated by the increasing violence involved. The government sent the CRS into Béziers, launching

²⁸⁵ Maffre-Baugeé, *Vendanges Amères*, p.63.

²⁸⁶ 'Mort d'André Castéra', *L'Indépendant* 27/12/2007.

²⁸⁷ 'Les manifestations paysannes', *Midi Libre* 28/06/1961 – ADA 31J20.

²⁸⁸ 'Les vignerons manifestent à leur tour', *L'Indépendant* 28/06/1961 – ADA 31J20.

tear-gas into crowds of vignerons in an attempt to protect the rail stations from protestors who had already suspended road traffic. The protestors seemed to come off somewhat better in the ensuing scuffle: of the 26 wounded 9 were CRS, 14 local police and only 3 were protestors.²⁸⁹ The mood of the occasion was summed up by a winegrower's placard pictured in the *Dépêche* newspaper: "Pas discours – des actes – Les vignerons veulent vivre."²⁹⁰

The scale of the summer demonstrations in the Languedoc was such that regional newspapers relegated coverage of the imminent second act of the Evian agreement to later pages, supplanting leaders on France's 'colonial problems' with pictures of *vignerons en colère*. The CAV d'Aude under Castera issued a statement condemning excessive imports, abusive 'fiscalité'²⁹¹ and demanding the formation of a body to enforce minimum prices.²⁹² Although Algerian politics had been relegated to page 2 in the Midi, Algerian wine imports remained on the front page in a reflection of the more pressing concern. These demands were summarised in a call for a "retour à l'esprit social de l'ancien Code du vin."²⁹³ The recourse to the spirit of the *Statut viticole* (the *Code's* 'ancien' predecessor) evoked the spectre of 1907 and the demonstrators who ushered in that particular government concession. Likewise, the demonstrations continued during the Festival period in Béziers, allowing the free circulation of winegrowers during a relatively quiet part of the agricultural calendar and demonstrating the social upheaval often celebrated in the practice of local Southern

²⁸⁹ 'Les incidents de Béziers ont fait 26 blessés', *L'Indépendant* 29/06/1961 – ADA 31J20.

²⁹⁰ 'L'agitation a gagné hier le Midi viticole', *La Dépêche* 28/06/1961 – ADA 31J20.

²⁹¹ 'La manifestation des vignerons Limouxins', *L'Indépendant* 28/06/1961 – ADA 31J20.

²⁹² This idea had been introduced by SFIO Deputies on the Commission des Boissons in 1952, and saw constant reiteration until its abortive introduction in 1976.

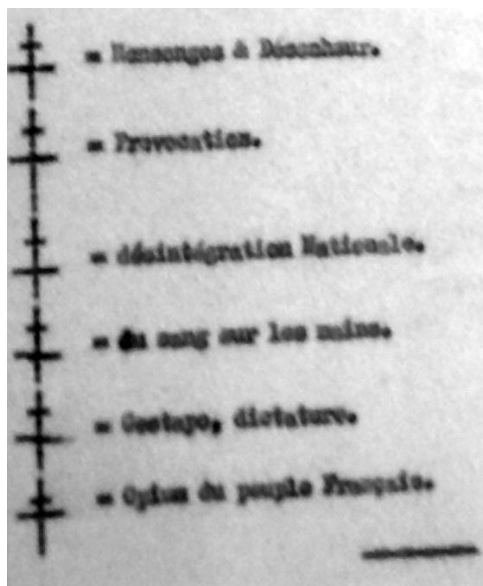
²⁹³ 'La manifestation des vignerons Limouxins', *L'Indépendant* 28/06/1961 – ADA 31J20.

festivals. This setting linked the protest to an articulation of regional identity, making plain the sheer number of like-minded winegrowers and their inherent potential for mobilisation. This was part of a national change taking place in the agricultural sector as *la France paysanne* repositioned itself in the Fifth Republic. Yet it was also conditioned by the Languedoc's specific heritage of viticultural mobilisation. The consistency of the message which winegrowers were articulating connected it with the demands of the Ligue and the CRSV and their forebears in the Comité d'Argeliers. In highlighting imports and fraud as the root cause of the Midi's problems, they were retooling the rhetoric of 1907 in a national debate and continuing an historic struggle in the peripheries of the Republic.

The summer of 1961 also saw demonstrations take place in rural Brittany, as farmers burnt ballot boxes in a symbolic show of discontent.²⁹⁴ Their grievances were broadly linked to those of the Languedocian *vignerons* and represented a turbulent period at the beginning of the Fifth Republic in which periphery groups struggled with changing power structures. Government agricultural reforms in 1960 had introduced the promise of *sociétés d'aménagement foncier et d'établissement rural* (SAFER), organisations centred on each department which would have first refusal on agricultural land sales. The intention was that they would then offer plots to younger farmers and prevent the ever greater consolidation of land in the hands of wealthy agriculturalists. This was a policy greatly desired by unions representing young growers, but which ran into trouble as the initial orientation law which would facilitate

²⁹⁴ B. Bruneteau, 'De la violence paysanne à l'organisation agricole. Les manifestations de juin 1961 en pays bigouden' *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, vol.100, no.2, (1993), pp.217-232. See also S. Quiers-Valette, 'Les causes économiques du mécontentement des agriculteurs français en 1961', *Revue française de science politique*, vol.12, no.3 (September 1962), pp. 555-598.

SAFERs passed through the Senate, being vetoed three times before the lower house intervened to pass it.²⁹⁵ Subsequent problems lay in bureaucratic dithering, as the bills to make the orientation law effective did not transpire. The promise to include younger growers (and their subsequent disappointment) was the start of a mooted “révolution silencieuse” in which younger farmers began to take a more active role in reviving peasant protest as a means of communicating with government.²⁹⁶ Indeed, RG reports on the Languedocian demonstrations again described the formation of a “nouvelle vague chez les viticulteurs” in response to the dithering of central government.²⁹⁷ That it referred to developments outside the Languedoc was made clear by anti-Gaullist propaganda seemingly produced by the Ligue and distributed by young growers at demonstrations in July. This document featured six crosses of Lorraine, with an indictment beside each one:



The text reads:

Mensonges à Déshonneur [sic. read Déshonneur].
 Provocation. Désintégration Nationale. Du sang
 sur les mains. Gestapo, dictature. Opium du
 peuple Français.

*RG reproduction of anti-Gaullist propaganda*²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ G. Wright, *Rural Revolution in France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp.165-172.

²⁹⁶ Bruneteau, 'De la violence paysanne', p.229.

²⁹⁷ RG, 'La "Nouvelle Vague" chez les Viticulteurs bitterois', 12/07/1961 - ADH 785W47.

²⁹⁸ RG, 'Propagande anti-gaulliste auprès des Vignerons de l'Hérault', 13/07/1961 - ADH 785W47.

Such strong indictments of national politics stressed the extent to which the demonstrations of 1961 were as much about De Gaulle and the Fifth Republic as they were about falling wine prices. The bungling of the SAFER initiative had, in the Languedoc, plugged into the turbulence which had radicalised the Défense movement throughout the 1950s, ensuring a youthful intake at the start of the 1960s.

Yet, amongst this "nouvelle vague", political engagement was not allied to mobilisation. Although both the Socialists and the Communists sought to court winegrowers, RG reports acknowledged that:

Afin de ne pas risquer d'être pris de court par les communistes de la Ligue des Petits et Moyens viticulteurs, ces jeunes éléments ont voulu montrer de la sorte aux hésitants qu'ils étaient capables de ne pas s'embarrasser de considérations autres que professionnelles et que le monopole de l'action n'est en aucun cas le privilège de l'extrême gauche.²⁹⁹

Thus, the newly mobilised growers who participated in the turbulent Summer demonstrations of 1961 had been radicalised both by the Languedoc's own syndical heritage and also the national debate on agricultural reform. Yet, the ability of national political parties to control this regional movement was weak and the new intake of younger growers into the radical movement helped heal the divisions of the 1950s. The protests of 1961 would help to crystallise a politically independent Défense movement in a spirit of contestatory mobilisation.

²⁹⁹ RG, 'Les jeunes viticulteurs bitterois sont passés à l'action', 24/07/1961 - ADH 785W47.

Political engagement with the protests

As the streets of Béziers filled with winegrowers, other cities came out in support. Demonstrations continued on 28 June, as 3,000 vigneronns occupied Narbonne with 15 barricades bringing the city to a standstill.³⁰⁰ This sudden wave of demonstrations highlighted once more the potential for mass mobilisation across the Languedoc and combined potently with the revival of 1907's rhetoric. Echoing the tone of Marcelin Albert's army of '*les gueux*', winegrowers accused the government of being unsympathetic to the desperate plight of vigneronns. The repeated employment of the CRS to break up demonstrations and dismantle barricades seemed to indicate to protestors that the maintenance of order ranked higher than the economic needs of the Midi. Indicative of this mood is another placard of a demonstrator, which bore the slogan: "De Gaulle contre les barrages; les vigneronns contre l'esclavage."³⁰¹ An significant demonstration in Béziers on 7 July saw around 13,000 people take to the street as protestors and CRS clashed again.³⁰² Tear gas was used and the Provençal daily *La Marseillaise* accused the CRS of going to war with vigneronns.³⁰³ This vocabulary helped establish a conceptual distance between regional protestors and their challengers. Rhetoric was not directed openly against the Republic but rather against an unsympathetic government using troops to break protests and with De

³⁰⁰ 'Venus des Corbières, du Minervoise et de la basse plaine', *L'Indépendant* 29/06/1961 – ADA 31J20.

³⁰¹ 'Nous voulons vivre en travaillant', *La Marseillaise*, 06/07/1961 – ADH 406W113.

³⁰² 'L'Extraordinaire ampleur de la manifestation de Béziers', *La Marseillaise*, 08/07/1961 – ADH 406W113.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

Gaulle at its head.³⁰⁴ Once again the suggestion of regionalism impacted upon the relationship between winegrowers and the national political parties.

The way in which parties attempted to capitalise on this regional difference was indicative of the changing relationship between the Défense movement and national politics. The 'Wine Deputies' Guille and Bayou addressed large audiences as they sought to highlight the SFIO's opposition to government, positioning themselves as strong critics of Debré and De Gaulle's achievements in developing the national economy. RG reports related Guille's address to winegrowers:

L'orateur s'étonne en ce qui concerne l'agriculture que pour la première fois dans l'Histoire le malaise soit général et simultané dans toute la France. Il s'élève contre la fiscalité de plus en plus excessive, qui ne permettra pas à nos produits d'entrer en compétition dans des conditions satisfaisantes avec les vins italiens en particulier.³⁰⁵

Once more, reference was made to the role that government could play in reducing the burden of foreign imports,³⁰⁶ with taxation forming a central grievance to winegrowers. For the SFIO, opposition to the government and criticism of the prevailing economic climate was more acceptably communicated in the language of the Republic. Since 1907, the Socialists had been unable to engage with the regional import of the Défense movement's more radical demands. Guille's focus on the context of national downturn

³⁰⁴ The links between the Défense movement and Bretons will be explored in the Chapter 4, dealing extensively with the grand social alliance of occupational and regional identity which fuelled the burgeoning success of the Défense movement during this period.

³⁰⁵ RG, 'Large audience socialiste chez les ruraux héraultais', 26/06/1961 - ADH 785W20.

³⁰⁶ As an aside, there was no CRAV equivalent within Italy. Italian winegrowers, principally in the South, had a much more conservative tradition and their leaders were less likely to encourage mass mobilisation. Loubère notes their tendency to *jacqueries* rather than coordinated protest and speculates that this may have been the reason that a comparable 'winegrower's movement' never developed. L. Loubère, *The Red and White* (New York: SUNY Press, 1978), p.310.

and attempts to diminish the singular character of the Languedoc seemed to echo the stance of Jaurès in 1907.

The Communist Party, however, was more ready to openly criticise systemic failings and distributed a wealth of leaflets to demonstrators in 1959 outlining their viticultural program. They sought once more to capitalise on existing political mobilisation. Just as in previous movements, the extreme left was attempting to divide the 'inter-classiste' platform in service of their own political interests.³⁰⁷ RG reports had observed that since the end of the 1950s, the PCF's efforts to scale up their presence in the Languedoc had been driving Socialists to defend their patch.

Dans le département de l'Hérault le PCF cherche à étendre le champ d'activité des comités locaux aux partis politiques, initiative que les dirigeants fédéraux de la SFIO ont décidé de repousser.³⁰⁸

The SFIO was forced to intensify their attempts to undercut the Communists, producing pamphlets which highlighted their engagement with Stalinism and the realities of the Terror in the Soviet Union. Challenging Jacobin centralism paled beside the excesses of Soviet brutality which had become clear towards the end of the 1950s.

³⁰⁷ 'D'un barrage a l'autre', *L'Indépendant* 29/06/1961 – ADA 31J20.

³⁰⁸ RG, 'A la CA fédérale de l'Hérault de la SFIO', 25/05/1959 – ADH 785W47.



SFIO publication highlighting the PCF's association with Stalinism³⁰⁹

As long as the PCF continued to try to involve itself in viticultural radicalism in this way, prominent figures associated with the SFIO had to ensure they remained relevant to the Défense movement. Sniping at the Communists was less effective than actually appealing to winegrowers, however. Local politicians were thus not slow to address these demonstrations, even in absentia, as Jean-Baptiste Benet - President of the Syndicat des Vignerons - telegrammed from Strasbourg to assure winegrowers of his "entière solidarité."³¹⁰ Alongside Deputies like Guille and Bayou, the support of local political elites strengthened the movement, binding it into the narrative of acceptable regional protest.

³⁰⁹ SFIO booklet, n.d. (c.1961) - ADH 785W20.

³¹⁰ 'D'un barrage a l'autre', *L'Indépendant* 29/06/1961 – ADA 31J20.

There was a creeping unease with the toxic political tussling at the heart of the Défense movement, however. The sniping between PCF and SFIO which had characterised the 1950s had begun to overshadow yet another debate, shifting the focus away from the need for reform in the wine industry. This unease was shown most plainly in the 'Comité local apolitique de défense de la viticulture' which sprang up in Capestang in the Hérault as winegrowers sought to refocus the debate away from national political parties.³¹¹ This group was formed as a direct snub to the Ligue, which had been attempting for some time to install a local representative section. This was one of the first clear rejections of the Communist agenda, and one of the first moments in which we see the *Midi vigneron*s attempting to regain some of the apolitical appeal which had characterised the success of the 1907 revolts. The CRAV, which lay close to the CGVM as a militant offshoot, was perfectly placed to capitalise and encourage this move away from national political parties. Castera's past presidency of the CGVM drew him back towards engaging with that body's long-standing, apoliticism. An emerging figure, Achille Gauch created a new group called the Jeunes Viticulteurs (JV) on the 20 July in Béziers, calling on them to forge their own direction and vowing "une étude approfondie des moyens d'action."³¹² This movement revealed a refusal by prominent members (such as the ubiquitous Maffre-Beaugé and Gauch) to allow the Ligue to become the sole dynamic element in viticultural protest.³¹³

Yet, no sooner had Gauch called for this study than the CGVM moved to adopt the JV into its ranks, seeking to appropriate a modicum of their dynamism to assist the

³¹¹ RG, 'Untitled', 28/07/1961 – ADH 785W47.

³¹² RG, 'Untitled', 20/07/1961 – ADH 785W47.

³¹³ 'Message telephone par M. Layssac, S/Prefecture de Beziers', 31/07/1961 – ADH 785W47.

“rajeunissement des cadres de son syndicat”.³¹⁴ This was no mere political shuffling, however, and represented a far more significant turn. In essence, the CGVM’s overtures showed the traditional structures of the *Midi viticole* (with the CGVM having been a direct product of 1907) regenerating themselves and finding their purpose once more. With Castera and the CRAV operating as an effective offshoot of the CGVM, the JV were drawn under their aegis, housing the most effective leaders of the Défense movement within the same structures. Castera and Gauch would remain important figures throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s. Importantly, Gauch was an independent winegrower who was not part of a cooperative. Indeed, in 1978, he would become the President of the *Confédération Nationale des Caves Particulières*. Gauch’s involvement ensured that the CRAV were representing not only cooperative wineries but also independent smallholders. They remained steadfast in their opposition to the dominance of large *domaines* and the prevalence of blending wineries which continued the demand for foreign imports. This convergence between different categories of growers helped buttress the representative legitimacy of the CRAV. Likewise, it drew towards it increasingly youthful members, driving the ‘rajeunissement’ so needed in the syndical structures of the Languedoc.

Cases and *les jeunes*

On 26 August 1961, André Cases gathered a group of young winegrowers to consider new forms of action which might solve the problems of the wine industry. The 23 year old was much younger than established figures like Castera and possessed

³¹⁴ RG, ‘Appréciation sur les ordres des Jeunes Viticulteurs et action à venir’, 03/08/1961 – ADH785W47.

a pugnacious quality which would endear him to the *masse viticole*. Cases was very much a man of the region, a rugby-playing smallholder born in 1936 and drawn to viticultural politics after working his own vines. Playing fly-half for a collection of regional rugby teams, he was well versed in leading the back line and coordinating attacks.³¹⁵ He named this newly formed offshoot of the *Jeunesse Agricole Catholique*, the *Cercle des jeunes agriculteurs*. Posing for pictures in the *Indépendant*, Cases acknowledged the creation of both the JV and the CRAV earlier that year. Crucially, he clarified that he was not setting himself up in competition with these groups, but rather seeking to collaborate with them in finding new solutions to old problems. In respect for the CGVM and the nascent CRAV, he described his role as "siéger à côté des anciens, les uns représentant, selon Castera, la pensée, les autres, l'action."³¹⁶ The direct action which had been central to the formation of the CRAV was assured a continuingly important role by these *jeunes* radicals. Whilst 1961 had seen the establishment of several different Défense groups, however, this was not an echo of the divisive politicisation of the 1950s. Whereas the CRSV, the Ligue and the CMA had jostled for position, creating a representative crisis, the CRAV operated as a central pole drawing towards it young and innovative groups like the JV and Cases' *Cercle*. Likewise, their distance from national political bodies anchored them in occupational identity and dispelled some of the old partisanship which had so disfigured previous movements.

Emmanuel Maffre-Beaugé's attempts to engage with the JV and the *Cercle* to heal traditional divides were not welcomed in some newspapers, where his desire to

³¹⁵ Revel, *Montredon*, p.10.

³¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.33.

re-energise local movements was seen as patronising. *La Marseillaise* criticised Maffre-Beaugé for himself being a large producer, with between 5,000 and 6,000 HL at his plot in Belarga, and intimated that his rich man's play at politics was unwelcome. Indeed, so critical were they that they advised him to "retournez à vos jeux de golf ou autres amusements." Their criticism was in fact levelled at his entire movement, which they characterised as "les fils de gros viticulteurs aux mains blanches", with little relevance to impoverished small producers.³¹⁷ This attitude can perhaps be partially attached to the inherent sympathy *La Marseillaise* afforded to the activities of the Ligue and a recitation of Ferroul's fractious rhetoric. The *Midi Libre*, however, afforded him somewhat more right of expression, as they printed an article in which he called for greater solidarity amongst competing and politicised representative groups. The stance of the *Midi-Libre* was important in forging a regional 'inter-classiste' movement which combined small-holders and cooperative growers with larger independent vigneron. Maffre-Beaugé's engagement with figures like Gauch, Cases and Castera at this crucial moment was inextricably tied to the unitary heritage of 1907. Whilst courting this apolitical movement, he invoked the vernacular of regionalism as he spoke of a Midi which "semble avoir été retranchée de la carte de France tant les pouvoirs publics l'ignorent."³¹⁸

The Summer of '61 was a formative moment in the evolution of the CRAV and its approach to mobilisation and direct action. In reality, the recognizable CRAV of the mid-60s onwards was a product of the course taken by the developing model of 'Défense' articulation and repeated attempts to consolidate the movement. Despite

³¹⁷ 'Nous voulons vivre en travaillant', *Le Marseillaise*, 06/07/1961 – ADH 406W113.

³¹⁸ 'Les Jeunes viticulteurs s'organisent', *Le Midi Libre*, 06/07/1961 – ADH 406W113.

beginning as an organisational expedient consolidating reservoirs of action within existing and diverse syndical groups, the CRAV emerged as an effective mantle for coordinated inter-mural action not bound to political parties. Rather than being “issue de la Ligue”, the CRSV or the CMA, it represented a generational shift embodied in leaders like Castera and Gauch. Its durability seems to be the result of ‘la permanence du crise’ as the CRAV was transformed from a problem-solving expedient into an actual structure, retaining its initial functions whilst accruing more by virtue of its unique position.

However, amidst this renewal there was destruction. On 29 July 1961, commando attacks were carried out on the railway connecting Bordeaux and Marseille.³¹⁹ Such attacks became a symptom of the decentralisation of power structures within the Défense movement. If the Ligue had successfully decoupled direct action from organisations like the CGVM, then the JV and the CRAV had brought it back to regional organisations and begun to decouple it from the national political parties. Direct action became the recourse of the disgruntled vigneron, unbidden by larger bodies. This is not to diminish the role of organisational committees in inciting these demonstrations, but to observe that new reservoirs of action were pooling around village-halls and cafés as representation increasingly centred on individuals and communities rather than cooperatives and counsellors. This was a dangerous trend for the larger bodies, who felt their relevance being eroded by this atomisation of protest. Even amongst Communists, there was a realisation that after the campaign of sabotage which had begun there was a “nécessité d’une reprise de l’action de masse préférable à celle des commandos.” Popular support was with the

³¹⁹ RG, ‘Les ‘Jeunes Viticulteurs’ se retrancherent’, 31/07/1961 – ADH 785W47.

vignerons, as RG reports judged that reactions to governmental measures were “franchement défavorables et se traduisent par de la déception et de l’amertume.” The JV in particular were keen to express ‘l’exaspération des masses paysannes’.³²⁰

Maffre-Beaugé recalls how the frost of 1963 crystallised a change in his character, as he grouped together like-minded friends on a quasi-evangelical quest to agitate for change across the region. The harsh frost which caused such damage to the harvest in February 1963 was an historic occurrence in the Midi, as temperatures dropped to between -18°C and -20°C.³²¹ Occurring so soon after the problems of the 1950s, vignerons were reminded more than ever of the insecurity of their occupation. From village to village, Maffre-Beaugé railed against the iniquities of the wine market and sought to outline basic standards for the government to set in order to ameliorate the miserable plight of the winemakers. Even in these means of representation there was a shift towards the “rajeunissement des structures syndicales”. This desire was grounded both in the atmosphere of renewal that groups like the JV and Cases' *Cercle* were creating and a sense that syndical organisations like the FAV were not pushing hard enough for direct action to communicate grievances. The legitimate syndical organisations and the CRAV served mutually reinforcing roles which often intersected yet remained functionally distinct. This reservoir of action among young vignerons would lead to a rebirth of the CRAV as a political force. As a militant movement at once part of the traditional structures but simultaneously outside of them, the incorporation of youth groups allowed it to push for greater radicalism within central

³²⁰ RG, ‘Après les mesures viticoles annoncée par le Premier Ministre’, 01/08/1961 - ADH 785W47.

³²¹ Fontvieille, *Paure Miejour, Pauvre Midi*, p.54.

structures. The CRAV could become the vanguard of viticultural syndicalism: "il ne suffisait pas de détruire le travail précédent, mais d'y participer en l'amendant."³²²

With Maffre-Beaugé and Gauch pre-eminent in both the JV and the CRAV, the two groups began to blend as distinctions blurred slightly. Maffre-Beaugé was the figure that Communists had been lacking since Ferroul, more able to operate in the political mainstream of the Languedoc than predecessors like Calas had been. Increasingly, Maffre-Beaugé's name appeared on alternate letter-heads, denoting the increasing inter-changeability of both CRAV and JV at this point. Maffre-Beaugé had managed to break the pattern of Communist 'spoiling tactics' which had plagued their engagement with viticultural activism. Whilst the CRAV conducted and directed policy at a regional level and Castera led the CAV in the Aude, the JV defended its agenda at a Departmental level, securing the Hérault as a supportive base of operations. The CRAV's agenda had become predominant as the JV laid the groundwork of later direct action. As the JV leadership became that of the CRAV, Departmental successes in the Hérault were extended across the Midi. The CRAV was becoming a mass movement and a powerful social force in the Midi.

'La permanence': Why now?

After the tumultuous summer of 1961, the CRAV was clearly on its way to becoming a prominent force in the *Languedoc viticole*. The unity which it forged in subsequent years ensured that this prominence would endure. When considering the

³²² Maffre-Baugé, *Vendanges Amères*, pp.51-52.

sudden permanence of the CRAV, however, it is insufficient merely to point to a poor wine market and the outcome of politicking in the representative organisations. This is especially true if we examine more closely the context in which the CRAV's rise to prominence took place between 1961 and 1976. The increasing popularity of peasant memoirs and rural research from the mid 1960s until the 1980s suggests that this process was repeated across France. Sarah Farmer diagnoses a certain fascination with the countryside which began in crowded urban environments and encapsulated changing visions of the countryside. These changes, in perspective, arose partly from new 'settlers' in the countryside, as environmentalism and second-homeowners began to establish themselves as fixtures in France's rural hinterlands. Between the realities of France's increasingly modern consumer society and the precarious existence of a peasantry at odds with this modernity came a certain fetishisation of "charming" and "out-dated" ways of life.³²³ In addition, those, like the sociologist Henri Mendras, who studied the countryside began to diagnose the possible disappearance of the French peasantry as a vital force in the nation.³²⁴ Yet in the Languedoc, this process remained less prominent than elsewhere and tourism rather than absentee-ownership characterised the region's interactions with the metropolitan centre. Cases accused the government of consigning *Midi vigneron*s to little more than an historical curio, disappearing except as a snapshot for touristic postcards.³²⁵ In defiance, this same period witnessed a revival in the Languedoc's celebration of its distinct character and distance from the North, as we shall see.

³²³ S. Farmer, 'Memoirs of French peasant life: progress and nostalgia in postwar France', *French History*, vol.25, no.3 (September 2011), pp.372-373.

³²⁴ H. Mendras, *La fin des paysans; suivi d'une réflexion sur la fin des paysans vingt ans après* (Paris: Poche, 1992).

³²⁵ CRAV communiqué, n.d. – ADA 98J8.

Nationally, the peasant violence of 1961 had forced the government into conceding to further reform. The orientation law which promised SAFERs was strengthened by the "Pisani Charter", named after Edgard Pisani, the Minister of Agriculture. This ensured that young growers would be given a better chance to acquire agricultural land which came onto the market. Yet this charter would not escape criticism. As G. Wright observes, it was denounced by both the right and the Communists as placing too much power in the hands of an unaccountable organ of the state.³²⁶ This in turn seemed to indicate a "neo-corporatist" turn in national policy, one which would favour the negotiation of centralised national unions over the boisterous regional organisations which had fuelled protest in the Languedoc and Brittany.³²⁷ In the Languedoc, however, the SAFERs presented an interesting pitfall, whereby young growers offered preferential sale could buy up marginal vineyards and uproot them for subsidy as part of the *arrachage* programmes. Interviewees suggested that this had been viewed by some young growers as a canny way to fund a move away from the countryside at the government's expense, though denounced by *vignerons* as demonstrating the destructive potential of *arrachage*. Again, the notion that the Languedoc's heritage was being torn up for the sake of short-term remuneration encouraged resistance to Pisani's plan.³²⁸

³²⁶ Wright, *Rural Revolution*, p.171-172.

³²⁷ For further discussion of the renewed importance of corporatism to national economic policy, described as 'neo-corporatism' in the Fifth Republic, see M. Ruffat, 'Le néo-corporatisme ruptures et continuités', *Bulletin de l'Institut d'histoire du temps présent*, no. 29 (September 1987), pp.23-52; P Pararas, 'Le retour du corporatisme en France. La crise du mandat représentatif', *Revue internationale de droit comparé*. vol. 43, no.2 (April-June 1991), pp. 427-439; B. Bruneteau, *Les paysans dans l'Etat. Le gaullisme et le syndicalisme agricole sous la Ve République* (Paris, L'Harmattan, 1994).

³²⁸ Interview with Ryan O'Connell at O'Veineyards, Moustausou, 15/07/2010.

As such, the Languedoc's revival of rural protest was rooted in its own experience of rebellious difference. The establishment of a monument to Marcelin Albert, the undoubted figurehead of 1907, was an important moment in cementing the historical relevancy of the revolt in the regional consciousness. As Maffre-Beaugé, Gauch and Castera had healed the cracks in the Défense movement, Albert's inter-classiste legacy became more important than ever. Emily McCaffrey points out that the most significant reprisal of Occitan politics in more than a century had taken place in the 1960s and 1970s, when economic pressure was at its most intense for the residents of the Midi.³²⁹ This pressure was a significant factor in binding 1907 into the collective consciousness of the region, and a telling influence on the reinterpretation of events to form a vital part of a mythical narrative. The funding for the project came from diverse local sources: private donations, syndical donations and money given by local administrations. The announcement of the monument was made in 1962, bookended by the viticultural protests of 1961 and 1963 and opened to donations at that point, seeking to capitalise on the fervour and dynamism which the protests had injected into local viticultural groups.³³⁰ The monument was announced following the 40th anniversary of Albert's death, which the CGVM and Comité Marcelin Albert, describing themselves as "les fils et les petits-fils de 'Ceux d'Argeliers'", were adamant would not pass "dans l'oubli et l'indifférence."³³¹ Indeed, the monument unveiled in honour of Albert, prefaced a reinvigoration of the Occitan movement and wrote 1907 into the story of Occitanie. The mayor of Argeliers, the town which hosted the famous

³²⁹ E. McCaffrey, 'Memory and Collective Identity in Occitanie', *History & Memory*, vol.13, no.1 (2001), p.123.

³³⁰ 'L'érection du monument à la mémoire de Marcelin Albert', *L'Indépendant* 13/03/1962 – 31J18.

³³¹ 'Un monument va être érigé à Marcelin Albert', *L'Indépendant* 17/01/1962 – 31J18.

committee which had coordinated the events of 1907, claimed that the erection of the monument meant “justice est rendue” and that “le voile de l’oubli est tombé”.³³² In this vein, regional press began to refer to the events of 1907 as an episode in which the region had “payaient dans le sang le prix de cette juste colère.”³³³

Yet, if the heritage of the Défense movement was the motor for strengthening the CRAV, then it still required fuel. The specific issue of imports had driven protest in 1961 and would continue to dominate the Défense movement's agenda. Thus, the wave of minor sabotage which had started in 1961 and continued well into 1963, can be seen as the birth of the CRAV in its mature form. The smashing of Algerian wine bottles on 18 March was a pivotal moment which characterized and influenced later discourse and methods of protest. One year after the signing of the Evian Accord, this act served as a timely reminder that France's Algerian policies were still hurting the Midi. As the leaders of the Défense movement gathered for a large meeting to discuss the threat of imported wine, they posed for the cameras and smashed bottles of foreign wine in the road outside. The only place for this wine, they felt, was the gutter. The involvement of Maffre-Beaugé, Benet and others ensured that this act would be linked with the mainstream viticultural movement. As the leaders gathered, smoking, laughing and jeering as they poured the wine down the drains, a new model for action was formed. The regional nature of the movement likewise foreshadowed greater coordinated inter-departmental action between the various Défense groups of the *Midi viticole*, by bringing together groups under the aegis of direct action.

³³² ‘Justice est rendue’, *Midi-Libre* (22/06/1964) – ADA31J18.

³³³ ‘L’hommage de la viticulture et de la municipalité aux “gueux” de 1907’, *Midi-Libre*, (29/06/1972) - ADA31J18.



*Winegrowers smash bottles of Algerian wines*³³⁴

RG reports from the period report a swell of ill-feeling growing amongst vigneron and warned that “ce mécontentement se cristallise sur l’importation des vins algériens.”³³⁵ Despite existing grievances surrounding Algerian wine, it is significant that growing disenchantment articulated by the leaders of the viticultural movement centred on a targeted rejection of the imports of a specific nation’s wine. Responding to a CRS officer’s query as to their motivations, one vigneron posed him a hypothetical situation: “Supposez qu’on vous quitte le costume et qu’on le mette à un Algérien et, en plus, qu’on lui donne votre paye. Est-ce que vous seriez content?”³³⁶ Winegrowers feared that the end of the Algerian war would neither end Algerian imports nor halt the growth of Algerian production. This new consensus agenda focussed the ire of the Midi, encouraging an increase in unified action over the following months. In particular, police warned superiors that this had unified opinion against the

³³⁴ 'Le vin algérien est vidé sur les marches du théâtre', *La Dépêche*, 18/03/1963 - ADH 785W53.

³³⁵ RG, 'État d'esprit des milieux viticoles' 27/03/1963 – ADH 785W53.

³³⁶ 'Les viticulteurs barrent la route', *Midi-Libre* 16/12/1963 – ADA 31J20.

government: "Les milieux dirigeants et les masses viticoles sont actuellement dangereusement sensibles aux importations algériens."³³⁷ Yet even as the Défense movement railed against Algerian imports, their replacement was starting to become obvious to those in power. On 14 January 1962, the Dutch born Commissioner for European Agriculture, Sicco Mansholt and the French Agriculture Minister Edgard Pisani had co-signed the documents which ended a marathon session of discussions and would begin the second step of integration leading to the European Common Market³³⁸

A Deputy of the Hérault, Paul Coste-Floret, launched a scathing attack on Pisani, citing the decision to lower the minimum price of wine without seeking advice from the wine lobby as "un bel exemple de son incompréhension, de son injustice et de sa mauvaise volonté."³³⁹ Although the CRAV was moving away from reliance on national political parties, the intervention of the MRP Deputy was welcomed. The fact that their support was coming from the centre and not from the Socialists, however, was a significant indicator that historic relationships were being tentatively renegotiated. As a result, the JV immediately reiterated Coste-Floret's criticism, declaring that any merchant who sold wine at this price would be subject to 'la colère des vignerons mécontents.'³⁴⁰ Achille Gauch also published a communiqué lamenting the "panique" which had seized the Midi wine industry, placing the blame squarely at the inundation of the market by foreign wines. Denouncing "les vins de BEN BELLA",

³³⁷ RG, 'État d'esprit des milieux viticoles' 27/03/1963 – ADH 785W53.

³³⁸ A.L. Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The making of Europe's Common Agriculture Policy* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009).

³³⁹ 'Le malaise viticole et le nouveau 'prix de campagne' (?) du vin' [sic.], *La Journée vinicole* 24/08/1963 – ADH 785W53.

³⁴⁰ 'Des décisions du Comité d'action des jeunes viticulteurs', *Midi-Libre* 09/08/1963 – ADH 785W53.

Gauch argued that the French government should respect the laws it set itself to protect French citizens and attempt to stabilise the market by halting imports.³⁴¹ Later, Achille Gauch and Maffre-Beaugé would lead a meeting on 11 May 1965 in which they advocated that all syndical organisations boycott Pisani's visit to the region, in protest at his policies as Agriculture Minister.³⁴² In a piece of wordplay, the JV condemned Pisani's reluctance to engage on equal terms with the winegrowers of the Midi by printing leaflets for distribution during his visit: "Quand Pisa Nie – Alger Rit."³⁴³ Pisani's involvement in strengthening the imports which challenged Languedocian winegrowers rendered him a perennial hate figure and a target for the new leaders of the Défense movement.

Whilst figures such as Maffre-Beaugé, Gauch and Castera formed a radical leadership which was bound to the traditions of the region, the increasingly 'jeune' and radical character of the movement was symptomatic of a developing dynamism within the Défense movement. Yet, unlike in decades previous, this dynamism served to reinforce and reinvigorate the Défense movement instead of fuelling division within it. In a direct illustration of this trend, André Cases,³⁴⁴ who would become ever more central to the CRAV, took up his first prominent leadership task. The 25 year old Audois smallholder led the hi-jacking of a tanker containing 1,000 HL of Algerian wine on 21 November 1963, near Limoux.³⁴⁵ His involvement in commando actions at such an early age would set him up as a raucous tribune for CRAVistes and, eventually, a

³⁴¹ RG, 'Activités des jeunes viticulteurs', 18/03/1964 – ADH 785W53.

³⁴² RG, 'Activités des jeunes viticulteurs', 11/05/1965 – ADH 785W53.

³⁴³ 'JV Leaflet', 05/07/1965 – ADH 785W53.

³⁴⁴ There are variations in the spelling of André Cases, which is often spelt Cazes, although both refer to the same eminent viticultural leader. I will endeavour to use Cases except in direct quotations which demand fidelity to the source.

³⁴⁵ Pech, 'Les grands militants viticoles languedociens au Xxe siècle', p.245.

worthy successor to Castera. This opposition to imports erupted as mass demonstrations shook the Midi on a larger scale than in preceding years. On 16 December 1963, some 20,000 vigneron took to the streets, barricading roads with burning carts from Nimes across to Lézignan.³⁴⁶ The CRS were again sent to meet the crowd with tear-gas grenades in an attempt to shatter the lines. 23 vigneron were arrested in the turbulent day of protest as the CRS swept the region. Imports and fraud continued to be the buzzwords of the 1960s, inflaming the passions of winegrowers who felt under siege from various external pressures. In their long meditation on the Languedoc's wine industry, *La Révolte du Midi*, Cases and Castera argued that Midi winegrowers had never protested specifically *against* Algerian wines nor against Italian imports, but rather they opposed the disproportionate impact these imports had on the Midi.³⁴⁷ Whilst recognising that France had to play a role in the economic reconstruction of Algeria, they believed that a Parisian concession had ridden roughshod over the interests of their region.³⁴⁸

In an echo of 1907, mass protests swept the Midi once more in 1967 as the “capitales de gros rouges” burned with the indignation of an estimated 60,000 viticulteurs (30,000 in Montpellier, 25,000 in Carcassonne and 8,000 in Dranguignan).³⁴⁹ The Evian Accords signed to end the Algerian war in 1962 had been revealed to contain certain clauses which provided for the continued import of low quality

³⁴⁶ '20,000 viticulteurs sur les routes', *La Dépêche* 16/12/1963 – ADA 31J20.

³⁴⁷ Le Bris & CRAV, *La Révolte du Midi*, p.41.

³⁴⁸ Algeria's post-independence wine industry enjoyed patchy success, owing to its incompatibility with Islam and the country's focus on the development of other economic sectors. These large, unprofitable vineyards became an uncomfortable colonial legacy in the Algerian countryside. See H. Isnard, 'La viticulture algérienne, colonisation et décolonisation', *Méditerranée*, vol.23, no. 23 (1975), pp. 55-66; K. Sutton, 'Algeria's vineyards. A problem of decolonisation', *Méditerranée*, vol.65, no. 65 (1988), pp. 55-66.

³⁴⁹ 'Les incidents éclatent!', *L'Indépendant* 17/03/1967 – ADA31J20.

Algerian wines for blending.³⁵⁰ These revelations caused an explosion of anger. Newspapers reported streets barred, cars burnt and dumped in the canal and the use of tear-gas by CRS.³⁵¹ Shops and restaurants were ransacked in Carcassonne as violence swept through the streets during the spring of 1967. Interestingly, the CAV d'Aude released a statement denying all responsibility for the violent protests in Carcassonne, placing the blame for the events firmly on the reticence of the 'so-called' local authority.³⁵² The decentralisation of the Défense movement had ensured that direct action was occurring without any means of controlling it. Indeed, Castera himself had spoken to an assembled mass of vigneron and appealed for calm, stating that the government "faudrait être sourd pour ne pas nous entendre."³⁵³

This calm was edged, however, with the words of defiance spoken. For every barge which sailed up the Canal du Midi laden with imported wine, or tanker full of foreign produce: "il nous faudra vider les péniches et mettre le feu aux camions!" In particular, Castera criticised the government policy of making credit increasingly available as a "cadeau empoisonné."³⁵⁴ RG reports specifically noted that Castera's popularity amongst the villages was drawing partisan support to the viticultural movement, and helping to energise dissenting voices.³⁵⁵ The autumn of 1967 effectively created the legendary persona of Castera which would come to dominate the CRAV and the wider world of the *Midi viticole*. Castera sat at the head of this movement, with

³⁵⁰ Y. Gilbert & J. Meistersheim, *Orateurs en Languedoc 1981-1986: La recomposition d'une imaginaire régionale* (Paris: UDR-EASA, 1986), p.42.

³⁵¹ 'Les incidents éclatent!', *L'Indépendant* 17/03/1967 – ADA31J20.

³⁵² 'Manifestent violemment à Carcassonne', *Midi Libre* 17/03/1967 – ADA 31J20.

³⁵³ 'Vingt-cinq mille viticulteurs en colère', *Midi Libre* 17/03/1967 – ADA 31J20.

³⁵⁴ '1,500 viticulteurs des Corbières se sont rassemblés mardi soir à Saint-Laurent-de-la-Cabrerisse', *Midi Libre* 09/03/1967 – ADA31J20.

³⁵⁵ RG, 'Etat d'esprit de viticulteurs' -10/02/1967 – ADH785W49.

the capability to call upon tens of thousands of protestors. This charisma drew fervent declarations of support at gatherings:

A la manifestation de Carcassonne il y en avait cinq milles derrière un pancarte: "Vaincre ou mourir avec Castéra".³⁵⁶

André Cases described Castera acted as a "Professeur" for a whole generation of CRAVistes, with 1967 his most obvious classroom. His first lesson began with reference to the Languedoc's history. In Narbonne, he led a large delegation of winegrowers firstly to negotiate with the Prefect and then to lay flowers at the monument to the victims of 1907. The wreath read simply "ceux de 1967 à ceux de 1907."³⁵⁷ The message was clear and Castera's association with Marcelin Albert was more than obvious to his army of 'pupils'. He urged the youth of the region to stand alongside their parents in defending the existence of their vineyards: "Si le père s'était battu, le fils ne serait pas parti."³⁵⁸ Castera was proudly aware of his roots, when asked by an interviewer, "Vous étiez propriétaire?" his expression notably darkened as he stated categorically, "Non, ouvrier." Yet, despite identifying himself as a worker, Castera was certainly more identifiable with Albert than with Ferroul. The protests of 1967 promised to take the Languedoc (according to CRAVistes) "au bord de l'insurrection."³⁵⁹ It was the issue of imports which had driven the constitution and then formalisation of the CRAV. Opposition to this was best expressed in the familiar vocabulary of the *Languedoc viticole* and in the context of the Défense movement's heritage. Yet the timing of this

³⁵⁶ Le Bris & CRAV, *La Révolte du Midi*, p.47.

³⁵⁷ Revel, *Montredon*, pp.50-64.

³⁵⁸ '1,500 viticulteurs des Corbières se sont rassemblés mardi soir à Saint-Laurent-de-la-Cabrerisse', *Midi Libre* 09/03/1967 – ADA31J20.

³⁵⁹ Le Bris & CRAV, *La Révolte du Midi*, p.42.

new upsurge of militancy remains problematic and the proximity of 1967 to the epochal year of 1968 is striking.

The 'insurrection' of 1967 and the 'events' of 1968

The demands which drove the vigneronns to demonstrate in such force were broad and levelled against the economic system as a whole. Specific grievances fitted into broader assertions that the south had been impoverished by “un système économique basé sur l’enrichissement des banques et des grands sociétés, au détriment des pauvres bougres qui cultivent la terre”³⁶⁰ and the CRS were cast as defenders of an increasingly hostile alien force. At 6.30pm, the Police Commissioner Alain Aze was given Prefectural authorisation to begin baton charges with CRS forces in Carcassonne, resulting in around 30 injuries and a liberal amount of property damage.³⁶¹ Protesters hurled abuse at the CRS in Occitan as they drew a linguistic line between themselves and their fellow Frenchmen in helmets. Denouncing the CRS as “Assassins, Nazis” was another step in introducing a dividing line exacerbated by reports that protestors sang the Marseillaise before every charge at police lines. In this way, vigneronns set themselves up as protectors of a classical republicanism, aligning themselves with the traditional reputation of the Midi as one of the guardians of French liberty. It was in Carcassonne, inextricably linked with the past by the imposing Cité médiévale, that more traditional resentment was felt and parallels from collective experience were

³⁶⁰ ‘Après la meeting des vigneronns’, *Midi Libre* 17/03/1967 – ADA 31J20.

³⁶¹ ‘Manifestent violemment à Carcassonne’, *Midi Libre* 17/03/1967 – ADA 31J20.

more easily drawn. It became the fervent desire of protestors to ensure “Que de sang soit venu rougir les vignes aura peut-être servi à quelque chose.”

The 16 March was to become even more violent, however, as injuries mounted to 73 (including 53 CRS officers) in Carcassonne.³⁶² Messages of solidarity flooded in from agricultural groups around France, with the *Fédération syndicale de Puy-de-Dôme* condemning the use of police to counter otherwise peaceful demonstrations and supporting the right of vignerons to protest.³⁶³ The response of the Prefecture was to attack both the Comité d’Action and other syndical groups for their criticisms of policing, instead highlighting that the only police on the protest route were there to signpost and not to oppress.³⁶⁴ After the demonstration in Carcassonne telephone lines were cut in Narbonne by vignerons anxious to show that they too were in full support of the disturbances in their département.³⁶⁵ The direct action coordinated by the CRAV and other groups in the cities spilled out into the activities of local committees in rural villages. The felling of telephone lines, damaging of railway tracks and blocking of roads with trees became means through which those who did not make the march into the cities could also express their *colère*.

This new vector of protest which had come with the formalisation of the CRAV owed its existence to a profoundly regional narrative which drew a red line from 1907 to 1967. Yet, as acknowledged above, it is impossible to ignore the fact that these developments took place in the larger context of the *années 68*. After the furor of 1967,

³⁶² ‘Lourd bilan de la colère vigneronne’, *La Depeche du Midi* 18/03/1967 – ADA 31J20.

³⁶³ ‘Une information ouverte après les incidents de Carcassonne’, *L’Indépendant* 18/03/1967 – ADA 31J20.

³⁶⁴ ‘Carcassonne: bilan d’un jour de colère’, *L’Indépendant* 18/03/1967 – ADA 31J20.

³⁶⁵ ‘Une information ouverte après les incidents de Carcassonne’, *L’Indépendant* 18/03/1967 – ADA 31J20.

the otherwise momentous year of 1968 was in fact almost a non-event in the Midi. Despite the radicalism of the regionalist movement alongside the Défense groups, the rhetoric of Parisian students found little foothold in the 'Languedocian desert'. Unlike the peasants who joined with students in Nantes in 1968 or those of Larzac in 1970,³⁶⁶ the Midi vigneron drew greater inspiration from the anti-imports demonstrations of the previous year. Whereas the May Events of 1968 were seen elsewhere in France to "ouvrir une séquence d'insubordination ouvrière",³⁶⁷ this same sequence had begun much earlier in the Midi, as the Défense movement edged closer to open rebellion. The challenges issued to centralism did, however, "enlarge the geographic scope beyond Paris"³⁶⁸ and provide some extra motivation and ammunition for Occitan groups seeking to distance themselves from centralist France. By strengthening these groups, albeit symbolically, the events of 1968 provided a tonic for the Défense movement.

Andre Cases wrote an open letter to the students and activists of May '68:

Nous venons de vivre les manifestations des étudiants, manifestations de plus en plus violentes jusqu'à la capitulation des autorités responsables. Pour leur action et leur détermination, ces mêmes étudiants, que l'on a qualifiés au début "d'extrémistes", sont aujourd'hui compris et ces mêmes autorités qui ont essayé de les dissuader à tout jamais de protester en employant contre eux le dialogue de la matraque et des grenades, admettent maintenant qu'il y a un problème. De même, nous vigneron, connaissons les

³⁶⁶ For a discussion of the unrest at Nantes and other regions outside the immediate lens of Paris during the *années 68*, recent collected volumes offer the most fruitful reading. See, D. Damamme, B. Gobille, F. Matonti, B. Pudal (eds.), *Mai-juin 68*. (Paris: l'Atelier, 2008); Artières, Zancarini-Fournel (eds.), *68: Une histoire collective*. For additional discussion of Larzac in particular, see A. Alland, *Le Larzac et après* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995); A. Alland, S. Alland, *Crisis and Commitment: The Life History of a French Social Movement* (London: Harwood, 2001); D. Martin, *Le Larzac: Utopies et réalités* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987).

³⁶⁷ B. Gobille, *Mai 68* (Découverte, Paris, 2008), p.58. This concept is also explored in X. Vigna, *L'insubordination ouvrière dans les années 68: Essai d'histoire politique des usines* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007).

³⁶⁸ D.A. Gordon, 'History at last? 1968-2008', *Modern & Contemporary France*, vol.17, no.3 (August, 2009), p.339.

qualificatifs d'extrémistes. Nous aussi, il nous a fallu la manifestation du 16 mars 67 à Carcassonne et ses blessés pour obtenir la limitation des importations et la réglementation du coupage...³⁶⁹

Whilst being sympathetic to the students, Cases firmly indicated that the Défense movement would choose its battles. The CRAV was no revolutionary organisation and not committed to altering political systems. Instead, as Cases affirmed, they remained bound to the pressing issues of Languedocian winegrowers: the threat of imports, the need for strict viticultural regulation and the obligation of the government to aid winegrowers in moments of crisis. At 30, Cases was perhaps just a little too old for student demos. Likewise, with Castera having left school at 13, he was perhaps too detached from the lives of students and unsympathetic to intellectual critiques of cultural alienation.³⁷⁰ The CRAV's engagement with the *années 68* was to come later, as argued by Michelle Zancarini-Fournel,³⁷¹ as it careened towards the mid 1970s in a blaze of confrontation. The regional dynamic which this represented built upon the importance of *les événements* but remained a profoundly Méridonal story.

The most immediate relevance of 1968 to the Midi vigneron was to be found in the Legislative elections which it triggered, giving Castera a chance to test his support base. He asked *vignerons* to elect him as an independently minded, centre-right wine candidate and break the Midi's long association with the Socialists. As with 1907, interaction with Parisian politics was to taint another 'Great Redeemer', as Castera succumbed to a fate similar to that of Marcelin Albert. Edgar Faure's stint as Minister

³⁶⁹ Revel, *Montredon*, p.61.

³⁷⁰ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Vignerons*, p.232.

³⁷¹ This will be addressed later in this chapter and in the subsequent chapter focussing on the interaction of regionalism and viticultural radicalism cf. Zancarini-Fournel, 'Montredon, 4 mars 1976: l'événement comme révélateur'.

for Agriculture³⁷² coincided with Castera's sudden ascendancy within the Défense movement. It also meant that the Minister, himself Héraultais, struck up something of a relationship with the viticultural firebrand.³⁷³ In a curious coincidence, Faure's father had in fact been Castera's father's school teacher, and the two sons enjoyed frank and open dialogue.³⁷⁴ Faure's directness pleased Castera and the Minister's assurances offered him hope. Relating one meeting as an example of their relationship, Castera recalled:

J'ai quelqu'un qui m'a beaucoup aidé, c'est Edgar Faure. Son grand-père avait été instituteur à Montredon. [Impersonating Faure] "Castera! Comment va-t-on à Montredon?" [Answering] "Physiquement bien, comme vous le voyez, et financièrement mal!" [As Faure] "On va y porter remède." [Laughs] Il avait réuni 5 ou 6 négociants de la capitale qui tenaient le marché en main et il avait dit: "Si vous ne mettez pas le vin à 6,000 francs l'hecto [aside] - c'est ce que j'avais demandé au lieu de 5,000 - [end aside] je vous mets les douanes et la répression des fraudes aux trousses et vous n' gagnerez rien. Début juillet, il faut que le vin s'achète dans le Midi à 6,000 francs l'hecto" Alors, tenez-vous bien, J'ai fait gagner des milliards, et ils s'en souviennent de ça.³⁷⁵

Some believed, however, that this old pedagogic link had turned out badly and that Faure had played on Castera's traditional anti-Communism to convince him to stand in the elections of 1968.³⁷⁶ Undoubtedly the fury of the previous year's riots created a worry that the extreme left could profit in elections. Castera's attempt to change the representation of winegrowers at the ballot-box, however, was as much an indictment of the prevailing '*crise du vin*' as it was a reaction against the Ligue and the PCF.

³⁷² 8 January 1966 to 10 July 1968.

³⁷³ Pech, 'Les grands militants viticoles languedociens au Xxe siècle', p.242.

³⁷⁴ Le Bris & CRAV, *La Révolte du Midi*, p.42.

³⁷⁵ *L'Héritage Sacrée*, dir. Nicolas Saurin (2005)

³⁷⁶ Le Bris & CRAV, *La Révolte du Midi*, p.56.

This election was the beginning of many of the CRAV's problems, damaging the momentum they had gained up to this point. Standing as a Gaullist *Union pour la défense de la République* (UDR) candidate against the Socialist Deputy Francis Vals, Castera divided the vote between traditional political loyalties and occupational identity. Although he garnered many votes from the villages, including Montredon itself, he failed to oust the incumbent.³⁷⁷ He may, however, have taken enough votes from the extreme left to ensure the Socialists remained in power. This was hardly a personal victory and his attempt to alter the political vocabulary of the South had failed at this juncture. Haunted by the ghosts of 1907 and a century of political precedent, the viticultural lobby remained too firmly bound by tradition to the Socialists to abandon the party wholesale. Cases describes friends in the CRAV losing sleep and appearing close to tears, torn between their loyalties to Castera and the SFIO.³⁷⁸ Setting himself against the Socialist party was Castera's fundamental mistake: it challenged his voters not only to reject tradition but also to question his public persona. Much like Marcelin Albert, his foray into politics tainted him in the eyes of the syndical organisations, and he was disbarred from holding further official functions within the various representative bodies. He graciously acknowledged his defeat in an article written after Francis Vals had taken 60% of the vote.

L'histoire est un éternel recommencement: Marcelin Albert qui sauva le Midi en 1907, faillait être perdu en sortant de prison et en rentrant chez lui. Il se retira et mourut pauvre. Trente ans après, ceux qui l'avaient condamné lui élevèrent une statue. En 1968, le monde vigneron (j'insiste sur ce point) le monde vigneron en grande partie me refuse sa confiance, et c'est son droit. Il serait ridicule de ma part de vouloir m'imposer ou, en ce moment, d'accepter les flatteries plus

³⁷⁷ Pech, 'Les grands militants viticoles languedociens au Xxe siècle', p.242.

³⁷⁸ Le Bris & CRAV, *La Révolte du Midi*, p.55.

ou moins sincère de ceux qui m'ont sali. Je me retire, heureux de pouvoir revivre en famille et de pouvoir retourner travailler mes vignes.³⁷⁹

True to his word, Castera took a back seat, retiring from the leadership of the CRAV and opting instead for a quiet life. Although he remained abreast of the Défense movement, he no longer took such a prominent role in challenging the government. This experience drove the CRAV away from centralised leadership and the "Napoléon des vignes" represented by Castera.

Instead of designating a leader in the mould of Castéra, the CRAV moved towards a rather more practical model, recognising the importance of mobilisation its identity. The role of 'Porte-parole' subtly changed the CRAV's mode of operation, meaning the new leader would claim ownership of attacks and make clear the demands of winegrowers.³⁸⁰ Amongst the younger men of the CRAV, decisions were now to be taken by committee. This was largely the case as the group moved on, although it is necessary to acknowledge that Cases was to adopt the real leadership role. Beside him, however, Jean Vialade and other younger leaders such as Georges 'Jojo' Fabre would become much more important. Vialade, born in 1925 in Lagrasse was passionately committed to both Occitan culture and winegrowing.³⁸¹ His involvement in the CRAV was conditioned by its relationship to the CGVM, which he saw as deriving legitimacy from 1907, a movement he associated with Ernest Ferroul.³⁸²

Likewise, Fabre, born in 1928 and a former paratrooper had a similarly strong bond

³⁷⁹ Revel, *Montredon*, p.63.

³⁸⁰ Roger, 'Syndicalistes et poseurs de bombes', p.58

³⁸¹ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Vignerons*, p.231.

³⁸² 'Introduction from Jean Vialade to *L'Héritage Sacrée*' [<http://heritage.sacre.free.fr/index.php?page=59>] [Accessed 21/5/2012].

with the Languedoc through his 12HA vineyard. Although this gravelly voiced winegrower from Jonquières was "un nom qui n'a pas le même résonance que celui de [...] André Cases" he would play a moderating role in the future of the Comités d'action.³⁸³ The lesson these young men³⁸⁴ collectively took from Castera's misadventure was that the CRAV needed "ni Dieu, ni César, ni tribun."³⁸⁵ Ironically, although this was not a result of 'les événements' of 1968, the decentralisation of the CRAV did owe a debt of gratitude to the protesters in the capital.

This in fact conditioned the CRAV to further radicalisation, encouraging increasingly direct action outside accepted political norms, a result also of the way in which traditional syndical groups in the viticultural South had been denied their traditional recourse to parliamentary influence since the installation of the Fifth Republic.³⁸⁶ Both the political institutions of the new Republic and greater strides towards European integration ensured that vigneronns were increasingly marginalised in national policy, and that their representative groups possessed diminishing influence.³⁸⁷ Likewise, perhaps their greatest opportunity to effect change on a national scale had been with the partnership of Castera and Faure. Having failed to endorse Castera and without any other leaders bound so closely to the Minister, the Défense movement lost a valuable opportunity and an important leader. The abandonment of this leadership model fed into the trend of atomisation which had seen local action committees become increasingly important in forcing the agenda of the Défense

³⁸³ 'Rencontre avec Georges Fabre', *Indépendant* 20/02/1983 - ADA 98J19.

³⁸⁴ Cases was 30 years old, Vialade was 43 and Fabre was 40. They remained fairly young men in the world of agricultural syndicalism.

³⁸⁵ Le Bris & CRAV, *La Révolte du Midi*, pp.53-57.

³⁸⁶ Pech, 'Les grands militants viticoles languedociens au Xxe siècle', pp.242-243.

³⁸⁷ Martin, 'Viticulture du Languedoc', p.75.

movement. The commando actions which emanated from the villages were more often than not the spur for larger demonstrations, helping to demonstrate outside the Midi that direct action could spring up unbidden across the region.

The emergence of the CRAV as an independent group excluded from the political foreground by Castera's electoral misadventures seems to have fed directly into the radicalism which it exhibited in the 1970s. Seemingly chastened by their attempt to engage with the political mainstream,³⁸⁸ the CRAV ushered in a period of near revolt. Likewise, the regional aspect of the conflict became more apparent as the Défense movement rallied behind the now powerfully influential CRAV. Embodying the sum of the Défense movement's experiences, the CRAV displayed a unifying radicalism set apart from political parties and dedicated to advancing the interests of regional vigneron. Arguably this process of decentralising regional representation was both accelerated and inflected by the May Events, relying as it did upon the elections they had triggered.³⁸⁹ Yet 1967 was only the beginning of the Languedoc's 'crisis event' which was to expand beyond the year of 1968. Rather, the established patterns of protest which were remobilised so flagrantly in 1967 were to lead to a long moment of crisis as the CRAV entered into near open revolt throughout the early 1970s.

³⁸⁸ It is important to acknowledge that whilst the Socialists may have succeeded against Castera, they fared less well nationally. After the poor showing in 1969, the SFIO was reformed in 1971 as the Parti Socialiste (PS) and tasked with restoring the fortunes of the rapidly declining Socialist party.

³⁸⁹ J. Jackson, 'The Mystery of May 1968', *French Historical Studies* no.33, vol.4 (Autumn, 2010), p.627. Also, see R. Gildea, 'Forty years on: French writing on 1968 in 2008', *French History*, vol.23 (2009), pp.108-119.

The ritualisation of protest

In August 1975, the 33 year old Michel Romain would become 'Porte-parole' of the CRAV, in a concerted attempt to keep the leadership young and radicalised. The Audois smallholder was committed to pushing the boundaries of direct action to frighten *négociants* and force the hand of government. He led a group of commandoes against Jean Doumeng, a *négociant* who was close to the Communist party and had actually participated in the formation of MODEF. His political associations had previously rendered him untouchable, yet in striking out against Doumeng, Romain had affirmed the independence of the CRAV. Subsequent confrontations with Jacques Chirac saw the CRAV warned that if they continued to strike out so violently, they would face increasing scrutiny from the CRS. Maffre-Beaugé was unwilling to concede wrongdoing, however:

Nous regrettons les excès commis, mais bien plus encore la cause qui les a provoqués! Si rien n'est fait, nous courons à l'aventure.³⁹⁰

Tensions were undeniably rising in the Midi, as confrontations with the CRS escalated. Cases described how, eight months before the drama at Montredon, they came close to just such a conflict in the village of Thézans. A group of CRS are purported to have set about four young men with clubs, one of whom had his Achilles tendon torn by the blows. Later that night, hundreds of angry vigneron gathered in their cars, determined to make the CRS pay. Cases claims this was the first time that he saw vigneron carrying rifles in anger.³⁹¹ Although that situation fizzled out, the resentment

³⁹⁰ Revel, *Montredon*, p.219.

³⁹¹ 'Nous avons évité deux cents morts', *Midi Libre* 04/03/1986 – ADA 98J8.

did not. The CRAV were unequivocal about blaming the forces of order for the escalation of conflict between the two forces, claiming deliberate attempts to target their protests were intended to dampen their appetite for further manifestations.

Sociologist Antoine Roger explains the violence of Languedocian winegrowers with reference to the theories of Ted Gurr. In his seminal *Why Men Rebel?*³⁹² Gurr posits that political violence is explained by “relative frustration”, caused by the gap between what people think they can achieve and that which they feel they ought to.³⁹³ In this case, Languedocian winegrowers raised on an inflated image of their occupation’s importance to the culture and economy of the region were met with the reality of their contemporary position. Although their ritualised protest was focussed on the defence of their industry and their culture, their ability to do this was constrained by contrasting governmental visions of the region’s future. Yet the government’s vision was about to be drastically redefined.

The elevation of the charismatic Jacques Chirac to Minister for Agriculture in June of 1972 raised hopes amongst the Midi vigneronns that political attitudes to their plight could change. In this climate of hope that the problems of the Midi were finally receiving their due attention, Chirac visited Montpellier in December, promising to “répondre aux questions angoissantes du viticulteur touchant à sa sécurité, ses débouchés, ses revenus, si l’on veut éviter à la viticulture de mourir guérie.”³⁹⁴ The realistic expectations of the winegrowers, in the vocabulary of Ted Gurr, were

³⁹² A. Roger, ‘Syndicalistes et poseurs de bombes’, p.51, n.5.

³⁹³ T. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

³⁹⁴ Fontvieille, *Paure Miejour, Pauvre Midi*, p.58.

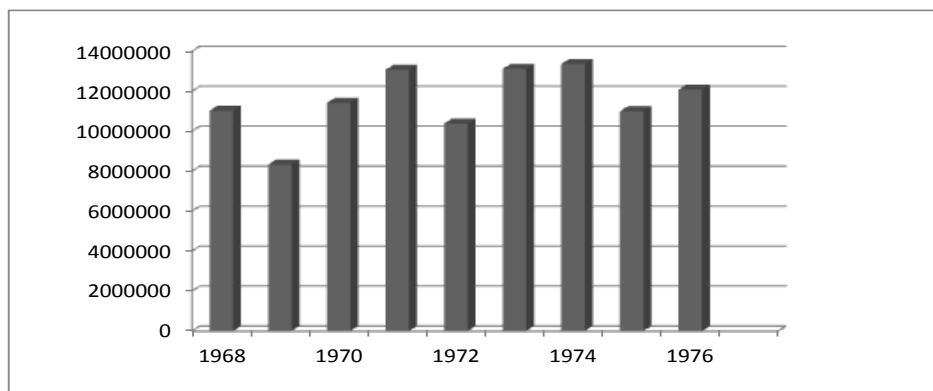
enhanced. In February of 1973 Chirac laid out his plan for the national wine industry.³⁹⁵ This blueprint for the modernisation of the wine industry centred heavily on the 'réencépagement' of vineyards to produce better varieties, the improvement of the means of production and the grouping of winegrowers into units which could more flexibly respond to government guidelines (*groupements*). The plan also introduced the 'Vin de Pays' category as a means of providing an intermediate quality platform (between *vin de table* and AOC) to encourage gradual amelioration of production. These guidelines all demanded investment, however, with the path towards modernisation representing a gamble for struggling producers, especially in the Midi. Suddenly, there was a gap between the realities of Chirac's plan and the expectations of winegrowers, eliciting a "relative frustration".

Moreover, Chirac stopped short, of laying out specific plans for either the qualitative or quantitative control of foreign imports. The CGVM entrenched their position in opposition to the liberalisation of the European market and the continued import of Italian wines.³⁹⁶ This disparity quickly condemned his plan to be viewed in the Languedoc as little different to those of his predecessors. Likewise, the minimum price established by Chirac's guidelines was insufficient to cover either the production or marketing of wine. If the level of price fixing was revised in July this was due not to a grand policy shift, but rather in old reactive fashion to the release of the poor 1971 harvest. Instead, the expectation that the volume of wine available to market would be reduced was unfulfilled. Chirac's policy had created a situation whereby a bumper

³⁹⁵ The full details of the Plan Chirac are reproduced in P. Bartoli, D. Boulet, P. Lacombe, J. Laporte, R. Liframe, F. Montaigne *L'économie viticole française* (Paris: INRA, 1987), p228.

³⁹⁶ Gilbert, Meistersheim, *Orateurs en Languedoc*, p.45.

crop, coupled with increased imports, meant that 109millionHL came onto the market in 1974, continuing to depress both prices market confidence (see table below).



*Graph of Hérault Harvest (in HL)*³⁹⁷

The disappointment with this failure was all the more intense given the real sense of hope that had characterised the end of 1972. Chirac's plan seemed to indicate that the Midi was on its own, and that expectations of the government's ability to reform the market were unrealistic. The final blow to Chirac's inglorious agricultural career in the eyes of winemakers came in December of 1974, when the exceptional distillation he had ordered to cope with that year's surplus harvest was abandoned after it was declared incompatible with the rules of the European Community.³⁹⁸ The government's attempts to reform the wine industry had manipulated the expectations of Languedocian winegrowers and created a degree of frustration. The increasingly violent nature of their protest was, thus, partly in reaction to the disappointment caused by government. Romain's nomination as 'porte-parole' was a recognition of this frustration and the increasing importance of violent protest in the CRAV's repertoire.

³⁹⁷ Direction Départementale de l'Agriculture de l'Hérault, 06/11/1977 - ADH 1182W103.

³⁹⁸ Fontvieille, *Paure Miejour, Pauvre Midi*, pp.58-59.

The appearance of rifles at protests was a clear shift in the dynamic of viticultural mobilisation. Since 1907, wine demonstrations had followed predictable patterns, although they had become more violent and destructive since the formalisation of the CRAV in 1961. Traditional protests centred around the erection of barricades, which had been a powerful but acceptable tool of the *Comités d'action* since the 1950s, commonly referred to in the press as a “*journée des barricades*”. This permitted the *paysan vigneron* to paralyse roads and regional trade, creating the same impact as a workers strike in a different economic sector. As 'Jojo' Fabre had related in an interview the *Indépendant*, unlike other workers, “Le droit de grève n'existe pas chez nous.... Le seul droit que nous ayons pour nous faire entendre c'est celui que nous octroyons en passant à l'action.”³⁹⁹ The collective nature of the ‘barrages’ was redolent of the Midi’s cooperative heritage and also allowed a degree of sociability during the protest. These “*journées des barrages*” became a sort of fête, allowing winegrowers to come together and display a collective identity in opposition to the state. They also allowed winegrowers to use tractors, carts and uprooted vines as part of the protest, strongly identifying them visually with their work. Such ritual protest formed the mainstay of the *Défense* movement’s arsenal, with the CRAV frequently endorsing and organising protests which presented a challenge to representations of central authority. This ritualised protest was a “*riposte s’inscrit d’abord dans le sillage des formes initiées en 1907 et régulièrement réactivées.*”⁴⁰⁰ The decline in these protests over time has seen increasing recourse to their other modes of operation and also a shift away from the traditional heritage of the *Défense* movement. This shift has, in part

³⁹⁹ 'Rencontre avec Georges Fabre', *Indépendant* 20/02/1983 - ADA 98J19.

⁴⁰⁰ Danielle Tartakowsky, *Les manifestations de rue en France* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1997), pp.604-605.

challenged their relevancy, by questioning the extent to which they are acting in concert with the 'rules of the game' outlined over time in 'la guerre du vin'.

Retrospectively, violence was understandably the least acceptable vector of CRAViste mobilisation, with interviewees asserting that in the Languedoc "la violence est le dernier refuge de l'incompétence."⁴⁰¹ As the shootings at Montredon would show, the use of violence against the organs of the state was ever unacceptable in public opinion and would indeed be dismissed in the press as retrograde and immoral. Likewise, when acts of sabotage threatened lives, the reaction to the CRAV was unsympathetic. Violence, intentional or otherwise, was resolutely beyond the boundaries of acceptability. Understanding the boundaries of acceptability which governed popular reactions to the CRAV's attacks relies heavily on the identity of the group. As an acceptable interlocutor, the CRAV's endorsement of direct action could dictate whether or not it was received well by the more general public. To this end, their decentralised structure and diffuse nature made the identification of attacks difficult unless it claimed responsibility directly. There were differences between actions undertaken in the name of the CRAV and constituent CAVs and there were differences in opinion. This was not viewed as something particularly troublesome, however, as they tended to coalesce eventually. Vocal leaders capitalised on the often unprompted actions of individuals and large protests which were coordinated by representative groups (such as MODEF or the CGVM) were usually endorsed and publicised by the CRAV in newspapers. Historian Winnie Lem, for example, describes CRAV attacks aimed against foreign wine being sold in French supermarkets being

⁴⁰¹ Interview with Michel Artigues - Château des Aveylans - Bellegard - Gard - 02/08/2010.

carried out by 6 men at most and revolving around the bar-room bravado of participants.⁴⁰² Hushed conspiratorial discussions of small-scale violence evoked the very Resistance tradition to which the winemakers themselves aspired. With attacks based on a spur-of-the-moment mentality revolving around valorisation in local circles, winegrowers have been able to deliver far-reaching and powerful messages prefixed on a community of common interest centred on consensus institutions of the South and not bound by association to national parties but by regional interests.

The CRAV was not directly politically affiliated although its members can be said to have been principally Socialist and Communist. Castera himself, however, had stood for the centre-right UDR, demonstrating that political plurality was broadly tolerated within the amorphous organisation. As was the case with Jean Huillet, who formed the *Mouvement d'Intervention des Viticulteurs Occitans* (MIVOC), there were also Occitanistes involved at varying points. MIVOC was critical of the wine world's financiers and drawn to 'gauchiste' themes at a time when the cultural identity of the region was beginning to be strongly asserted in such circles. This group was indicative of shifting tides in the Midi, as the young were increasingly drawn away from winegrowing by economic pulls towards Paris and the cities. MIVOC, like the JV, was composed of young vigneronns more in touch with the developing social trends of the region. The declining social relevance of their industry forced vigneronns to form alliances with other relevant groups to ensure their continued validity. The mass movements of the 1950s were considerably removed from the political reality of the 1970s, as increasingly radical political groups began to corner the debate, such as the

⁴⁰² Lem, *Cultivating Dissent*, pp.70-71.

JV, MIVOC and the CRAV itself. Maffre-Beaugé, for one, refused to view this coalition building as a negative aspect of their modern situation. He saw it instead as a regional conglomeration, in which all the best aspects of the region's identity were asserting their right to live and work their land. Referring to the developing Occitan movement as a "grande aventure sociale", he sought to form a "fraternité de combat" which could champion the region's interests against external pressures.⁴⁰³ Professions of sympathy for the winemaker's cause flooded the letters pages of newspapers as organisations sought to line up alongside the vigneron. The fledgling *Volem viure al país* (VVAP) Occitan political movement expressed its solidarity with their cause and claims to have marched alongside winegrowers on the "nuit chaude" in concert with MIVOC.⁴⁰⁴ This moment crystallised the convergence between the two grand social movements in the Midi which had been developing since the 1960s. The success of VVAP will be discussed later, although this moment represents the culmination of the 'grand social alliance' of Oc and vine.

A good example of the organisational ethic and potential for mobilisation which defined the CRAV was the *Echo des Corbières*: it is described as being the 'voice' of the CRAV despite largely being the work of one man, Henri Fabre-Colbert.⁴⁰⁵ The CRAV began to publish their own monthly newspaper in September 1970 in the village of Lézignan in the Aude.⁴⁰⁶ This newspaper provided a central voice to the group: printing communiqués from the CRAV alongside emotive editorial. The heavy use of

⁴⁰³ Martin, 'Viticulture du Languedoc: une tradition syndicale en mouvement', pp.73-77.

⁴⁰⁴ 'Vivre au pays', *Midi-Libre*, 02/08/01975 – ADA 98J8.

⁴⁰⁵ 'Conilhac-Corbières. Hommage à Fabre-Colbert', *La Dépêche* 01/06/2010

⁴⁰⁶ The Archives Départementales d'Aude hold the full run of this newspaper in series - ADA 573PER1.

Occitan in the newspaper was likewise a theme which will be analysed in later chapters.⁴⁰⁷ Littered with cartoons, humorous stories and lascivious images of pneumatic women on the back page, this was a paper of genuine interest to the working men of the region. Its political diatribes and cries of outrage at the impoverishment of vigneron were happily juxtaposed with the triumphant news of recent rugby results. Nevertheless, calls for open resistance and direct action were its common recourse and its tone was one of outrage which served to heighten the immediacy of viticultural concerns. Cases wrote of the newspaper:

C'était le journal des C.A.V., mais c'était Fabre qui le faisait en entier, à son idée, sans avoir de comptes à rendre à personne - et ça aussi c'est l'esprit "comités d'action". Quelqu'un veut faire quelque chose? Qu'il aille au bout de son idée. Ce n'est pourtant pas le n'importe quoi: si le type est honnête, pas de problème, on respecte la liberté d'opinion, s'il fait une entourloupette, s'il essaie de se servir de nous, alors attention à lui... C'est vrai nous n'avons pas le sens de centralisme, mais je prends ça comme une qualité. Je sais bien, par exemple, que les manifestations viticoles ont de quoi faire s'arracher les cheveux à n'importe quel responsable ouvrier. La marche au pas, en rang, nous ne connaissons pas. Les "services d'ordre" pour orienter, canaliser, contenir la foule, nous ne connaissons pas. Parce que cette foule n'est pas pour nous une masse de manœuvre. Quand les viticulteurs viennent, ils font un peu ce qu'ils veulent, comme ils veulent: ils sont assez intelligents pour ça. S'il vient à l'idée de quelqu'un de faire une bêtise, il y aura toujours de ses voisins pour le dissuader. Nous sommes ainsi: parfois je me dis que nous sommes les derniers libertaires.⁴⁰⁸

Cases' description of the newspaper was an excellent window into the control structures of the CRAV and also the degree to which the permissiveness of its unelected but charismatic tribunes was key to mobilisation. Tartakovsky reports Castera as having claimed in 1967 that winegrowers "me suppliant tous de recommencer. [...]"

⁴⁰⁷ See Chapter 4 for its links to *Lutte Occitane*.

⁴⁰⁸ Le Bris & CRAV, *La Révolte du Midi* p.235.

Autrefois quand on entraînait une foule devant un monument aux morts pour une manifestation, c'était fichu pour trois ans. Maintenant il faut les calmer tous les jours".⁴⁰⁹ As the armed wing of the CGVM, however, the CRAV was able to act where the legitimate organisations could not, striking forcefully to represent the wine industry's interests. Nevertheless, the CRAV were not simply the attack dogs of the syndical movement. The CGVM did try to control some demonstrations, demonstrated by advice provided to the leaders of the CRAV on specific protests. In 1967, one document discovered by Lawrence MacFalls indicates that the CGVM attempted to arrest the wider politicisation of the CRAV. Their instructions read:

En fait de drapeaux ou de chants, ne sont tolérés que le drapeau tricolore et la Marseillaise. C'est une manifestation Viticole et non politique. Des consignes seront données sur place au dernier moment. Respecter ces consignes, tout a été calculé et discuté avec les responsables des sept départements viticoles du MIDI, il faudra faire ce qui a été décidé, un point c'est tout [sic]".⁴¹⁰

The CGVM was acting to proscribe accusations of revolutionary leftism or reactionary Poujadism, which might allow authorities to dismiss their grievances as part of an externally led campaign. Such labels were both unhelpful and undesired. When accused of reviving Poujadism in 1983, CRAViste Jean Huillet reacted strongly, saying "je crois que tous les paysans du Languedoc ne sont pas encore devenus d'infâmes

⁴⁰⁹ Tartakowsky, *Les manifestations de rue en France*, p.744.

⁴¹⁰ Quoted in MacFalls, *In vino veritas* pp.123-4. MacFalls mentions the unorganized archives of the CGVM as a potential treasure trove of information, highlighting the potential for finding "documents that one is not supposed to see..." Sadly, it seems these archives have now been organised and although they are more accessible now that they have been added to the *fonds* of the ADA, it would seem that some of those more 'interesting' documents are no longer part of the collection.

fascistes, capitalistes réactionnaires..."⁴¹¹ Regardless of leadership opinions, however, the structure of the Comités themselves prevented the control of flags or songs being implemented with any real efficacy. Whilst action was often repetitive, it seems that there were attempts to ensure that it remained broadly in line with an accepted construction of the movement's image – controlled at large by local viticultural elites. Yet, with the permissive attitude of leaders like Cases, this was allowed to waver, pushing the boundaries of the relationship with the syndical organisations and with popular opinion.

Indeed, the CRAV presented increasingly diffuse direct action as an inevitable symptom of a degrading climate of discussions between winegrowers and the government, where the comité "ne se sent plus maître des réactions de la base."⁴¹² The leaders and tribunes at the head of the movement could mobilise and radicalise supporters, though they could do little to stay their hand. One protest on 17 March 1975 saw public buildings (including the Bank of France and Trésorerie Générale) attacked in Carcassonne.⁴¹³ On the same day, battles between winegrowers and the CRS spilled onto the streets and the major Route 113 was blockaded.⁴¹⁴ In Perpignan, simultaneous demonstrations were marred by uncontrolled action that saw commandos destroy large containers of Spanish apples and imported vegetables.⁴¹⁵ The next week, the cycle of intensification reached a head, as an estimated 50,000 protesters massed in Sète, blockading the town to prevent any imported wine leaving container

⁴¹¹ 'Colloque international sur l'autogestion: Jean Huillet au coeur des problèmes', *L'Indépendant*, 17/10/1983 – ADA98J15.

⁴¹² 'La commission restreinte du comité régionale d'action viticole renouvelle son inquiétude devant la dégradation de la situation', *Midi-Libre*, 11/02/1972 – ADH 1182W103.

⁴¹³ Maffre-Baugé, *Vendanges Amères*, p.228.

⁴¹⁴ Fontvieille, *Paure Miejour, Pauvre Midi*, p.59.

⁴¹⁵ Maffre-Baugé, *Vendanges Amères*, p.228.

ships. As the day progressed, the protests descended into violent skirmishes with police⁴¹⁶ despite earlier efforts to keep the CRS from the town with barricades of flaming tyres and trees felled across roads.⁴¹⁷ After these battles took place over several weeks, commandos used explosives on a pylon by a railway line, paralysing all traffic heading south to Spain at the start of August. Narbonne station resembled a refugee camp the next day, with stranded passengers bivouacked outside and completely stranded by blocked roads and rails.⁴¹⁸ After what was intended to be a cathartic ‘nuit chaude’, widespread anger at this escalating battle with police failed to dissipate. *La Dépêche* eloquently described how “Le ciel était lourd, le soleil écrasant et la colère des vigneron grondait comme un orage tourbillonnement.”⁴¹⁹

The increasing radicalism of CRAV methods during this period seems to be a useful leitmotiv in charting the progress of relations between the Défense organisations and the government, with the CRAV as interlocutor in a tense dialogue. More radical than the protest waves of 1963 or 1967, the 1970s were a period of almost total freedom of operation by the CRAV, as they bordered on open revolt in a sprawling series of intense protests and provocative skirmishes with the CRS.

The notion of “path dependence” is of specific relevance to the ritualised actions of the CRAV, whereby constant displays of action and solidarity became a self-fulfilling prophecy, following the same methods. The same resources were consistently deployed to react to the same circumstances, demanding intervention from the government in

⁴¹⁶ ‘Sète capitale des vigneron en colère’, *La Dépêche*, 27/03/1975 – ADA 98J8.

⁴¹⁷ ‘Un commando viticole tente de barrer la route aux Sète aux CRS’, *Midi Libre*, 26/03/1975 – ADA 98J8.

⁴¹⁸ ‘Le plasticage d’un pylône-caténaire a paralysé le trafic ferroviaire’, *L’Indépendant*, 02/08/1975 – ADA 98J8.

⁴¹⁹ ‘Embouteillages monstres guérilla viticulteurs – CRS’, *La Dépêche*, 02/08/1975 – ADA 98J8.

order to solve the problems of winegrowers. The threat of foreign imports, suspected fraud and external pressure unified the rambunctious Défense movement of the 1970s. Geneviève Gavignaud-Fontaine, a Southern viticultural historian, describes such coalitions of interest as “Formule magique de l’unité vigneronne au nom du ‘droit à la vie.’”⁴²⁰ The CRAV’s rhetoric speaks of a *crise perpétuelle* which has rendered them “victimes d’une crise endémique dont les causes n’ont guère changé depuis 1907”⁴²¹ As Pierson describes: “une fois établis, les modèles de mobilisation politique, les règles du jeu institutionnelles et même les façons de voir le monde politique des citoyens vont souvent autogénérer des dynamiques auto-renforçantes.”⁴²² The *Midi Rouge* has, in this sense, become its own agitator, with the structural and cyclical forces which have encouraged protest being met with the same vocabulary and action. Unlike other workers, CRAViste Jojo Fabre reasoned, “Le droit de grève n'existe pas chez nous.... Le seul droit que nous ayons pour nous faire entendre c'est celui que nous octroyons en passant à l'action.”⁴²³ Mobilisation (be it in mass protest or direct action) became a means of circumventing winegrowers' inability to strike, a political ritual which enabled them to speak openly to political power in a vocabulary which linked directly to historical experience (i.e. the Myth of 1907).

The ritualisation of viticultural protest ordered and made understandable the relationship between winegrowers and the state.⁴²⁴ In this case, it served as a constant reminder to vignerons that theirs was a long history of unequal development and that

⁴²⁰ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Vignerons*, p.73.

⁴²¹ De Sède, *700 ans de révoltes occitanes*, p.273.

⁴²² P. Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions and Social Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p.11.

⁴²³ 'Rencontre avec Georges Fabre', *Indépendant* 20/02/1983 - ADA 98J19.

⁴²⁴ S. Lukes, 'Political Ritual and Social Integration', *Sociology*, no.9 (1975), p.301.

in recent years meaningful representation had only been achieved through direct action. Such was the legacy of the tussles between different Défense groups in the 1950s, as they outflanked each other to speak most directly for the *milieu viticole*. Interestingly, Durkheim's model of political ritual (outlined in *Elementary forms*⁴²⁵) allows for the rituals of the periphery to be equally as important as those of the centre, essentially motivating the centre to proscribe such rituals lest they dilute the unitary identity of the centralised state.⁴²⁶ Such periphery rituals will form the central focus of the next chapter, though it is important to highlight the extent to which ritualised protest served as symbolic restatement of collective identity both as a region and as a profession. In a direct example of this, several RG reports commented on the CRAV Occupation of the Cathedral St-Pierre in Montpellier at the end of February in 1971: "Bien que cette occupation relève du 'folklore' et prenne parfois des allures de kermesse".⁴²⁷ Such scenes were reminiscent of 1907, when similar demonstrations began in the wide central plazas of Montpellier against a background of rising discontent.⁴²⁸ The potential for these demonstrations to represent a sort of fête of resistance to authority was pronounced and the repetition of methods ensured that the parameters of action were understood. Likewise, Danielle Tartakowsky states that the 'primitive rebels' of the viticultural South "répondent le plus souvent à des directives préétablies dont témoignent l'alignement du rythme des mouvements poujadistes sur

⁴²⁵ E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Durkheim's construction of the 'sacred' in religion is somewhat pertinent to the manner in which 1907 is referenced in the vocabulary of the Défense movement, specifically regarding its deployment in ritual.

⁴²⁶ E.W. Ruthenbuhler, 'The liminal fight: mass strikes as ritual and interpretation' in J.C. Alexander (ed.), *Durkheimian Sociology* (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles Press, 1988), p.67.

⁴²⁷ RG reports - 03/02/1971 - ADH 676W179.

⁴²⁸ Fontvieille, *Paure Miejour, Pauvre Midi*, p.59.

la stratégie définie par leur leader et, s'agissant des paysans et des commerçants, l'intégration dans des "journées".⁴²⁹ She is describing the early 1950s, when protest very much conformed to these models. 'Barrages' and mass protests were the public presence of winegrower's ritualistic ire, paralysing the towns and cities of the South in a physical embodiment of the blockages in the marketplace which impoverished winegrowers.

Yet, only a decade later, viticultural protest had become more complex, with different streams of action represented. On the one hand, the 'journées' organised by the legitimate syndical movement (often the CGVM or MODEF separately or in conjunction) mobilised swathes of winegrowers in displays of solidarity, on the other, the clandestine 'commando' attacks of the CRAV which began in the 1960s were rather more decentralised and less classifiable in Tartakowsky's traditional view of peasant mobilisation. The flexible model of mobilisation was pinned to the Myth of 1907 and its message of viticultural unity and also (according to Maffre-Beaugé) "le rêve utopique d'une action pouvant tout changer".⁴³⁰ Public opinion was, to an extent, held to ransom by ritualistic protest. André Castera had ominously warned in a communiqué that where opinion turned against them, the CRAV "poussons les viticulteurs à entrer dans la clandestinité."⁴³¹

Beyond this grand dream of Durkheimian ritualistic significance also lay the simple performative aspect of protest, which saw men like Huillet earn their stripes in stand-offs against police - "en mettant la pâtée aux CRS avec [son] équipe" - on the

⁴²⁹ Tartakowsky, *Les manifestations de rue en France*, p.624.

⁴³⁰ Maffre-Beaugé, *Vendanges amères* p.55.

⁴³¹ 'Le mot de la fin à André Castera', *Midi Libre*, 26/03/1975 – ADA 98J8.

streets of Béziers.⁴³² Violence against the forces of order was a characteristic of the CRAV as it developed, with the CRS seeing sustained confrontation throughout the late 1960s and the 1970s. Protests could take the form of a cat and mouse game with police, baiting the forces of order to sustain the demonstration. The benefit of such audacious confrontations lay in the respective coverage garnered in the local press. The importance of coverage in outlets like the *Midi-Libre*, *Dépêche* and *Indépendant* was imperative.⁴³³ These local newspapers were both more popular and more sympathetic to regional campaigns and the positive editorials which met CRAV *manifestations* were amplified by their prominence in the local media narrative.⁴³⁴ They could also be used as a means by which to conduct tussles with the police, such as when the CAV d'Aude warned police not to interfere in their operations or to provoke them when they were intercepting tankers of foreign wine.⁴³⁵ The tacit support of the newspapers was made explicit when they issued their own inducements to support the direct action of the CRAV in moments of pressure. In Narbonne, a truck driver refused the inspection at a roundabout controlled by winegrowers and had a paving stone put through his windshield for his trouble.⁴³⁶ In support of the CRAV, newspapers tactfully warned that "l'impatience des routiers est, en ce moment, mauvaise conseillère."⁴³⁷ Such accommodation of the CRAV's excesses was based on a belief in their ability to channel the mythology of 1907 and aggressively mobilise in defence of regional winegrowers.

⁴³² 'Sa vendange sera terrible', *Midi-Libre*, 18/03/2006.

⁴³³ As will be discussed later, the disapproval of the press was important in highlighting changing public tolerance of the CRAV, a barometer of their continued relevancy to the region. In the early years of the CRAV, however, they maintained broadly positive press whilst continuing to test the boundaries of public acceptability.

⁴³⁴ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.129, n.98.

⁴³⁵ 'Camions citernes 'dévies'', *La Dépêche* 30/03/1981 - ADA 98J12.

⁴³⁶ 'Les contrôles des vigneronns continuent en Narbonnais', *Midi Libre* 04/04/1981 - ADA 98J12.

⁴³⁷ 'Grogne viticole!', *La Dépêche* 04/04/1981 - ADA 98J12.

Sympathetic coverage was prevalent, with few examples of openly condemnatory articles. Bernard Revel, a former journalist for the *Indépendant*, is a useful example when looking at the press relationship with the CRAV. In his book which contextualised the gunfight at Montredon in 1976, *Montredon: Les vendanges du désespoir*, Revel's admiration for the viticultural leaders is clear. His lionisation of Cases, in particular, seems based on a deep-seated respect for the man's passion, his regional pedigree and his readiness to resort to direct action.⁴³⁸ Cases likewise attracted the admiration of Pierre Bosc, another journalist motivated to publish a book on the Midi's wine struggle. Bosc described Cases as possessing "l'intensité d'un feu dévorant qui contraste avec une allure générale plutôt calme."⁴³⁹ These were the same qualities which the press more widely admired in the CRAV of the 1960s and early 1970s.

The boundaries of acceptability which governed CRAV actions were supple and ill-defined. Yet they seemed broadly to rely on the strong identification of the perpetrator, as will be seen later when the public rejected the use of masks by CRAV activists. Likewise, it is possible to say that after 1961 and the formation of the CRAV, the acceptability of action no longer relied on strong association with a national political party. Much as in 1907, the inability of national politics to address itself discretely to Languedocian winegrowers ensured that regional particularism would continue to characterise the political engagement of the CRAV. Within this regional construct, the acceptance of divergent opinions was important, as can be seen in the accommodation of the Occitan movement and the political beliefs of Castéra, for

⁴³⁸ For example, see Revel's description of Cases ascending to the leadership of the CRAV, Revel, *Montredon*, p.77.

⁴³⁹ Bosc, *Le vin de la colère*, p.149.

example. These vectors did not need to be constrained or controlled because of the over-arching belief that the occupational identity of *vigneron*, the ideological inheritance of *la Défense* and all-pervasive regional context would see the viewpoints of CRAVistes coalesce when it mattered. This in turn was demonstrated by the relative free hand with which Fabre-Colbert edited the journal which bore the CRAV's name. Indeed, the inheritance of the Défense movement was key to the acceptability of the CRAV, binding them into a regional narrative which accentuated their representative legitimacy and bound them to historical figures like Albert, Ferroul and Edouard Barthe. Their continuing redeployment of the vocabulary of 1907 was testament to the extent to which this was a powerful validating force. Yet these boundaries of acceptability, defined by a process of experimentation which took place over seventy years, would be strained by the violence and unpredictability of the *fusillade* which took place near the winegrowing village of Montredon, near Narbonne.⁴⁴⁰

Montredon: La Fusillade

André Castera, long referred to as the “homme du Montredon”⁴⁴¹, was forced to live up to the realities of this nickname in the aftermath of the fatal shooting of a CRS officer and vigneron at a gun-fight outside the eponymous village. On 4 March 1976 at

⁴⁴⁰ In addition to the works already cited, for further discussion of the processes of viticultural violence in the Languedoc, see Roger, ‘Syndicalistes et poseurs de bombes’; J. Martin ‘Le Sang de la vigne. La violence dans les manifestations des vigneron du Midi au XXe siècle’, in F. Chauvaud, J. Mayaud (eds.), *Les violences rurales au quotidien* (Paris: Boutique de l’Histoire, 2005), pp.307-322; P. Mann, *L’activité tactique des manifestants et des forces mobiles lors des crises viticoles du Midi (1950-1990). Contribution à l’étude de la dynamique du répertoires d’actions collectives* (Unpublished thesis, 1991).

⁴⁴¹ ‘1,500 viticulteurs des Corbières se sont rassemblés mardi soir à Saint-Laurent-de-la-Cabrerisse’, *Midi Libre* 09/03/1967 – ADA31J20.

Montredon-des-Corbières, close to Narbonne, winegrower Emile Pouytès and CRS officer Commander Joel Le Goff were shot and killed, during the course of a demonstration which turned into a violent stand-off.⁴⁴² Another 17 people were hospitalised with injuries from the disastrous fire-fight. The confluence of blood and wine evinced a significant reaction from the French political mainstream, which vilified the terroristic acts of regional extremists. Words such as “tragédie”, “tache de sang”, “d’éméute”, “d’insurrection” and “révolte” peppered the headlines of the national press.⁴⁴³ Amongst winegrowers, however, the fallen were martyrs of a struggle which was over a century old and part of a regional inheritance of resistance to ‘internal colonialism’. The *Echo des Corbières*, newspaper of the CRAV, lamented that blood had been spilt because the government felt a need “d’utiliser la police comme ultime argument.”⁴⁴⁴

This eventuality was an unfortunate product of the increasing rancour which had been festering openly between vigneronns and forces of order. The gathering on the bridge at Montredon which precipitated the gunfight had been arranged in order to plan the next course of action in support of incarcerated comrades. Two vigneronns had been arrested on the 3 March for a raid carried out against M. Ramel, a négociant they felt was fraudulently importing and blending Italian wines.⁴⁴⁵ Regardless of accusations of fraud, Ramel was responsible for some 30% of the entire French import

⁴⁴² De Sède, *700 ans de révoltes occitanes*, p.274.

⁴⁴³ M. Zancarini-Fournel, ‘Montredon, 4 mars 1976: l’événement comme révélateur’, [http://irice.univ-paris1.fr/IMG/pdf/Lettre_d_info_68_no27_24-11-97.pdf] [Accessed 22/07/09], p.4.

⁴⁴⁴ ‘Tués par qui? Tués pourquoi?’, *L’Echo des Corbieres* 04/03/1976 – ADA573PER1.

⁴⁴⁵ Le Bris & CRAV, *La Révolte du Midi*, p.15.

of Italian wines.⁴⁴⁶ That police arrested these two men outraged members of the CRAV, who felt that the merchant was the criminal. Moreover, that these two men were then to be summarily 'extradited' out of the Département to face trial in Lyons was perceived as a miscarriage of justice. Accordingly, protesters blocked roads, train lines and set fire to cargo vehicles between Toulouse and Narbonne, gathering at Montredon to show a unified presence.⁴⁴⁷ When this demonstration was challenged by CRS, winegrowers reacted furiously to what they saw as a further betrayal by the forces of order. Wielding hunting rifles, some winegrowers opened fire on the company of CRS who were training weapons on the group of protestors. Exactly who shot first seems to have been lost in the search for culprits afterwards.

Pierre Lavelle, in chronicling a long history of Occitan culture cites 1976 as "le début du reflux de l'après-mai Occitan"⁴⁴⁸ The deaths at Montredon-les-Corbières, however, were a tragic reinforcement of exactly the regional issues which owed little to the experience of Parisians in 1968 and more to the troubled relationship between vigneronns and the forces of public order throughout that decade. As Michelle Zancarini-Founel had observed, such post-Mai movements are not merely a result of 'the Events', but rather occupy a shared space in which subsequent social movements fed off the "aspirations écloses en 1968".⁴⁴⁹ Interestingly, as in Boris Gobille's reading of 1968, the CRAV's new activism was not marked by changes to their 'horizontal' relationships. Their identity as winegrowers and their contestatory role was not a

⁴⁴⁶ 'Montredon, trois ans apres', *Midi-Libre*, 06/03/1979 – ADA 98J9.

⁴⁴⁷ Transcription of Criminal Court Proceedings 25/06/1985, p.5 – ADA 98J11.

⁴⁴⁸ P. Lavelle, *Occitanie: Histoire politique et culturelle* (Institut d'Estudis Occitans, Toulouse, 2004), p.535.

⁴⁴⁹ M. Zancarini-Founel, *Le Moment 68* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), p.258.

rupture, but rather a continuity forged in the heritage of the Défense movement.

Gobille quotes Michel De Certeau in referring to the 'wave effect' of 1968 as:

une crise du fonctionnalisme: les étudiants cessèrent de fonctionner comme des étudiants, les travailleurs comme des travailleurs et les paysans comme des paysans. Le mouvement prit politiquement la forme de tentatives de déclassification et de bouleversement dans la détermination sociale des statuts.⁴⁵⁰

In this reading, the CRAV were not contributing to a '68-style upheaval, but operating simply in a similar time frame. The long 'crisis moment' which spanned the *années 68* related to a national climate of upheaval, but was not a result of it.

In the same way that Andre Cases compared the winegrowers' protests of 1967 to the student demonstrations of 1968, the violence of 1976 was significant in both a national and regional context. The symbolism of these ritualistic mobilisations, however, was firmly bound into the narrative of viticultural representation which had been developing since 1907. The context of 1968's regionalist inference and the echo of the challenges it had delivered to central authority may have conditioned police reactions or heightened the gall of protestors. Yet this violence and gunplay was inalterably bound into the processes of viticultural representation and only contextualised by a national trend of unrest. It is interesting that whilst interviewees tended to view 'les années 68' as having opened up new avenues for representation (e.g. allowing winegrowers to "organiser syndicalement pour la défense de notre

⁴⁵⁰ B. Gobille, 'Affaire de profanes ou affaire de spécialistes ? Les avantgardes littéraires et la question de l'écriture en mai-juin 1968 en France' in T. Arppe (et al.) (ed.), *Writing in Context: French Literature, Theory and the Avant Gardes*, vol.5 (Helsinki: COLLEGIUM (sic.), 2009), p.82.

profession"⁴⁵¹; giving vignerons "additional motivation to fight for their rights like other employees in the French society"⁴⁵²) the reality is that the subsequent years saw a disaggregation of traditional structures of representation (the 'union sacrée') and severe challenges delivered to the most long-standing regional organisation (the CGVM), as the developmental agenda within the region changed. Some interviewees identified the legacy of 1968 as one which has become one of the main threats to today's wine industry, hampering the expression of 'la défense viticole' and fostering "le manque de concertation entre les vignerons et leurs structures économique-syndicales."⁴⁵³ Xavier Vigna's reappraisal of working class activism during the *années 68* highlights a period of normalisation towards the late 1970s, when the violence and political immediacy of 'l'insubordination ouvrière' was weakened by national economic downturn.⁴⁵⁴ Pascal Ory in turn paints a situation where during '*L'entre-deux-mai*' of 1968-1981 an era of disappointment and economic stagnation gave way to the hope generated by a Socialist victory.⁴⁵⁵ Although his cultural thesis is a broad statement, one can view this very era of disappointment as the high point of the CRAV, despite falling numbers towards the end of it. Whilst contestation remained an important issue, the CRAV's status remained prominent.

This contestation was not limited to the Languedoc, however, and its impact was amplified by the fact it was an echo of unrest elsewhere. In Aleria on the east coast

⁴⁵¹ Interview with Henri Cabanel - Conseiller Général, délégué à la Viticulture - Servian - Hérault - 28/07/2010.

⁴⁵² Interview with Alfredo Manuel Coelho - Associate Researcher - UMR MOISA SupAgro Montpellier - Hérault - 29/07/2010 (Response given in English).

⁴⁵³ Interview with Bernard Auge - Directeur du syndicat des vins IGP de l'Hérault - Caux - Hérault - 09/09/2010.

⁴⁵⁴ Vigna, *L'insubordination ouvrière dans les années 68*, pp.313-314.

⁴⁵⁵ P. Ory, *L'Entre-deux-Mai* (Paris: Seuil, 1983), p.243.

of Corsica, 50 members of *Action pour la Renaissance de la Corse* (ARC)⁴⁵⁶ occupied a wine cellar on 21 August 1975. They were protesting against speculation in the wine markets which was driving up land prices on the island. When confronted by police, they came out firing. Two CRS officers were killed in the confrontation and one of the separatists wounded.⁴⁵⁷ The strong association of wine, regionalism and the killing of policemen ensured that the events would be linked, especially by the forces of order, who stated that "Nous voulons que soit brisée l'escalade infernale qui va d'Aléria à Montredon."⁴⁵⁸ Michelle Zancarini-Fournel analyses the two movements as examples of 'après-Mai' events which bookended the *années 68*. Although the two moments share some characteristics, however, they are distinguished by the fundamental differences between the CRAV and the ARC. Specifically, their relationships with regionalism and ethnic nationalism were radically different. The CRAV's involvement with the Occitan movement was the result of a convergence of causes during an extended period of regional crisis, as we shall see. For the ARC, however, separatism was their primary motivation. Likewise, the ARC was only five years old, its name change but two years earlier demonstrative of a shift in their methodology and demands. The ARC lacked the republican heritage which the CRAV possessed as the ultimate embodiment of the Défense movement's collective experience.

The permutations which created the nucleus of the CRAV were forged in the post-war period and the floundering reaction of the French government to the problems of the viticultural South. It is fair to say that the abortive introduction of the

⁴⁵⁶ The group, founded in 1970 as *Action Régionaliste Corse* by Edmond Simeoni, was renamed in 1973 as *Action pour la Renaissance de la Corse*.

⁴⁵⁷ Revel, *Montredon*, p.203.

⁴⁵⁸ M. Zancarini-Fournel, 'Montredon, 4 mars 1976: l'événement comme révélateur', p.9.

Code du vin in 1953 was one of the principal determinants of the later movement. The resentment and disappointment which stemmed from the government's reticence to engage with the South spawned a movement which would develop throughout the 1950s into the articulate CRAV of the 1960s. Changing demographic trends within the Midi likewise led the Défense movement to create broad social alliances to ensure their continued relevancy, absorbing aspects of Occitan rhetoric to augment their developing regionalist ethic. Increasingly radical and increasingly aloof from mainstream political representation, the CRAV passed into direct action with a vigour which shocked authorities into action. Constant rebukes in the political arena and continued use of the CRS became the defining terms of debate during the development of the CRAV. It can come of little surprise, therefore, that their ultimate realisation was born in a bloody rejection of both politicians and the forces of order. Despite repeated attempts at engagement by both sides, it would seem that the ultimate tragedy at Montredon was symbolic of a profound alienation.

The CRAV, alienated from both mainstream politics and the professional bodies which were its predecessors, represented the Midi vigneron, sidelined by the under-development of their region and a lack of direct professional representation in Paris. The ensuing 'psychodrame' which claimed the lives of two men was a tragic catharsis from which both parties emerged chastened, yet it was also the ineluctable consequence of the CRAV's formative experiences inherited from the post-war Défense movement. If one of 1968's most potent slogans had been "Soyez réalistes, demandez l'impossible"⁴⁵⁹, then it is telling that the CRAV had maintained this attitude since its

⁴⁵⁹ A. Delale, G. Ragache, *La France de 68* (Paris: Seuil, 1978), p.208.

inception, demanding often unrealistic concessions from an unsympathetic government convinced the problems were of their own creation. Yet European integration continued and imports would not let up, despite the demands of CRAVistes. The Prefect of the Aude would warn government that "ce problème des importations est et demeurera le problème majeur."⁴⁶⁰ When challenged by changing political and demographic trends with fingers singed with gunshot, the CRAV found itself struggling to remain at the forefront of the agenda, especially when confronted by 'l'offensive moderniste', as we shall see.

The next chapter will analyse the theses of Lavalle and Zancarini-Fournel in the context of Languedocian regionalism. Specifically, the interaction of Oc and Vine will be used to illustrate the regional narrative which developed throughout the twentieth century, covering the Occitan awakening of the 1960s, the 'Events' of 1968 and the wine battles of the 1970s. If the CRAV is to be situated in a '68 narrative', then it is through the conduit of the Occitan movement and its shared bonds with viticultural activism. Understanding the precise ways in which the groups interacted allows us to position the CRAV in relation to the cause of regionalism and Occitan nationalism alongside occupational identity.

⁴⁶⁰ Telegram from Audois Prefect to Ministers for the Economy, 14/02/1977 - ADH 1182W103.

Chapter 4:

Crossing the Streams: Oc & Vine

The potential for the Défense movement to interact with regionalism had been demonstrated in 1907, when both Albert and Ferroul had invoked the region's Cathar heritage and Occitan identity. Yet, in the context of *les années 68*, this regionalism assumed a different importance, as it merged with challenges to centralism and the renewal of the Left's engagement with such issues. The makeup of *la nouvelle gauche* was reflected in the Languedoc's viticultural heritage, where regionalism had spoken directly to occupational identity, minority nationalism and a strong association with both Socialist and Communist parties. These characteristics seem to be associated with the CRAV as a conduit for this '68 dynamic. Yet, when Michelle Zancarini-Fournel juxtaposed Montredon with the uprising in Aleria, in Corsica, she drew a more potent parallel that moved beyond awareness of ethnic or minority nationalism and towards the articulation of it by violent political means.⁴⁶¹ Her distinction lay in the Languedoc's republican heritage, binding the development of the Défense movement from the debates of 1907 straight into the narrative of *les années 68*.

⁴⁶¹ M. Zancarini-Fournel, 'Montredon, 4 mars 1976: l'événement comme révélateur', pp.9-10.

This chapter will analyse the development of the Occitan movement in the 1960s and 1970s, charting its evolution from the cultural preoccupations of an obscure group of intellectuals into a more politically self-conscious reflection of a number of Southern sociologists before developing into a popular, working class regional movement. These moments of diversification, in which the Occitan movement courted mass appeal, saw it mesh with other regional pressure groups. This interaction with militant winegrowers was both an interesting demonstration of the values they shared and illustrative of the limits of the winegrowers' appeal. The changing significance of the Occitan Cross was a particularly revealing indicator of this relationship.

A subtle shift distinguishes the viticultural demonstrations of the 1950s from those of the 1960s and after. Namely, we see the Occitan cross begin to appear in newspaper photographs of the gatherings.⁴⁶² While it is not possible to account for every banner flown at any given demonstration, the memoirs of CRAV luminaries and newspaper reports reveal an increasing association with the Occitan movement developing in the mid 1960s, around the same time as the highly visible strike at the Decazeville pit. The first Occitan flag visible in winegrowers' protest photos appears at the Béziers Festival in 1961,⁴⁶³ and it had already served as a logo in the regional union of winegrowers' cooperatives in 1959.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶² The Occitan Cross (*Croix Occitane*) is the distinctive twelve pointed yellow cross set against a red background which constituted the heraldry of the twelfth century Counts of Toulouse and represents an early emblem of Occitan nationhood.

⁴⁶³ Interestingly, the picture also displays support for the regionalist disturbances in Brittany occurring at the same time.

⁴⁶⁴ *Letter from Union Régionale des Coopératives Agricoles du Midi*, 11/05/1959 - ADH 406W113.



*Protest in Béziers, 1961*⁴⁶⁵

The newly politicized Occitaniste movement became grafted on to major moments of protest such as the Miner's Strike at Decazeville in 1962 and the later peasant camp at Larzac after 1970. By radicalizing their support and drawing comparisons with France's role in the Third World, it was able to increase their impact. This visible presence attracted support from the winegrower's movement, whose demonstrations (as charted in the previous chapter) fitted into an Occitan revival which was being advanced throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This new regionalism challenged Jacobin Republicanism by breaking with the old reactionary or royalist right with which it had been associated at the turn of the century. Likewise, after the Vichy government's flirtation with regional themes, regionalism had acquired yet more undesirable supporters.⁴⁶⁶ The Occitan movement, however, had managed to maintain

⁴⁶⁵ Protest photos - ADH - 785W47

⁴⁶⁶ The interaction of Vichy and regionalism is well examined in the collected volume C. Bougeard (ed.), *Bretagne et identités régionales pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Brest: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2002). The volume unites a broad variety of studies which focus on the role of Vichy in articulating regional policy (M. Baruch, 'L'État français et la création des régions', pp.31-46, J. Harbulot, 'La région de Nancy: en zone interdite', pp.63-75) and the ways

its distance from the extreme right in the twentieth century unlike other movements.⁴⁶⁷ Thus, in the febrile period of the 1960s, there was an existing heritage of modern, left-wing, political Occitanisme on which to draw. The 1970s saw the cross adopted not only by the 'Défense du vin' movement but also the Larzac protesters, using it as a means of articulating dissatisfaction with the disparity of regional development.⁴⁶⁸ Suddenly it embodied not only notions of regional cultural and economic difference but also of ethnic particularism - the CRAV could now claim the inheritance of a notional 'civilization of the vine' as well as the inheritance of 1907.

Regionalism, Separatism and a Cross to bear

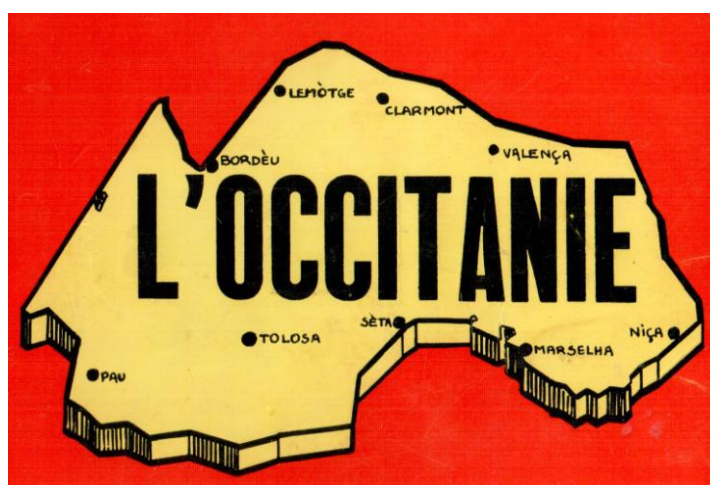
At times, it can be difficult to reconcile the Occitan cross with the winegrowers of the Midi, as their aims appear often distanced from the demands of regionalist groups: the initial guardians of this symbol. Although the Défense movement professed an attachment to regional culture, it frequently requested greater protection of its economic interests by the central state. This was anathema to the decentralising and fundamentally federalist zeal of the Occitan movement. If we are to find a credible

in which different regionalist movements capitalised on these opportunities (H. Chaubin, 'La Corse des années 1930 à la Seconde Guerre mondiale : la passion de l'identité', pp.135-150, J. Guillon, 'Résistance et identité régionale en Provence', pp.223-237).

⁴⁶⁷ Perhaps most prominent is the role of Breton nationalist collaborators, see, K. Hamon, *Les nationalistes bretons sous l'occupation* (Kergleuz: An Here, 2001), G. Cadiou, *L'Hermine et la croix gaminée* (Paris: Mango, 2001), B. Frelaut, *Les nationalistes bretons de 1939 à 1945*, (Brasparts: Beltan, 1985). For a discussion of Breton regionalism and its impact on resistance, see J. Monnier, *Résistance et conscience bretonne, 1940-1945, l'hermine contre la croix gammée* (Fouesnant: Éditions Yorann Embanner, 2007). Also, for a discussion of Breton identity and regional culture, see M. Ozouf, *Composition française: retour sur une enfance bretonne* (Paris: Gallimard, 2009).

⁴⁶⁸ For a discussion of the fusion of industry and regionalism, see Porhel, *Ouvriers bretons*; M. Keating, *New Regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial Restructuring and Political Change* (Cheltenham: Elgar, 1998).

link between Oc and Vine the most natural intersection seems to be in the prevailing references to 1907. In this case the articulation of a strong tendency towards regional autonomy was ideologically validated by this long standing historical inheritance. 1907 could be read as perhaps the popularly successful manifestation of regional independence: a moment when a particular and highly politicised viticultural constituency became acutely aware of its own mobilisation potential. The projected areas of both 'Occitania' and the Midi are contentious issues, and there are distinct difficulties in pinning down the physical geography. In viticultural terms, when vigneronns speak of the 'Midi viticole' they imply principally the departments of Aude and Hérault with the Gard and Pyrenees-Orientâles supplementing this group. The Midi has been considered by some of its foremost champions to constitute as many as 27 or even 33 different departments, however; in a rough sketch, this grand Midi can be depicted as spanning from Pau in the Southwest to Limoges at its northernmost, then across to Tournon and Valence in the east and down to Nice.⁴⁶⁹



Map of the borders of Occitania according to the COEA⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁹ Comité Général Louis Deffès, List of events to commemorate Deffès across the Midi, 1936 - ADA10M22.

⁴⁷⁰ COEA, *Le Petit Livre de l'Occitania* (Nimes, 4 Vertats, 1971))

Yet the Occitan movement of the 1960s was not simply a continuation of the cultural movement that had sought to preserve the language of the region throughout the twentieth century through the Félibrige and other apolitical groups.⁴⁷¹ The Institut d'Education Occitan (IEO) was formed in 1945 as a successor to the Societat d'Estudis Occitans (SEO), an organisation that had been drawn to the right under the influence of the Vichy government.⁴⁷² The SEO had been formed by an ambitious group of young writers with a strong connection to the Catalan movement in 1935, publishing two periodicals (*Oc* and *Occitania*) and at least one monograph reflecting on the political situation of the day.⁴⁷³ One of the leading lights in this movement, and editor of both periodicals, was Charles Camproux, a figure who fits poorly with the accepted narrative of French regionalism as an inherently right wing phenomenon. Camproux was “pacifiste, antifasciste, anticapitaliste” and symbolic of a politically aware “militantisme post-mistralien”⁴⁷⁴ which flared in the 1930s.⁴⁷⁵ In essence, he became the inheritor of Ferroul’s regionalist mantle, albeit without the same Guesdiste slant.

Camproux was, like the motto of his journal *Occitania*, “Ni blanc, ni rouge.”⁴⁷⁶ He was at the centre of a new “jeunesse occitane”, along with Paul Ricard and Jorgi Reboul, who founded numerous organisations during this period which were directed

⁴⁷¹ For further discussion of the history of the Félibrige movement and their cultural significance, see P. Martel, *Les felibres et leur temps : renaissance d’oc et opinion, 1850-1914* (Pessac: Presses universitaires de Bordeaux, 2010); S. Calamel, D. Javel, *La langue d’oc pour etendard: les felibres (1854- 2002)* (Toulouse: Privat, 2002). An internal history of the Félibrige was written by its *capoué* (leader), see R. Jouveau, *Histoire du Félibrige* (Nîmes: Bené, 1977).

⁴⁷² COEA, *Le Petit Livre de l’Occitanie* (Nimes, 4 Vertats, 1971), pp.160.

⁴⁷³ C. Camproux, *Per lo Camp occitan* (Narbonne: Lombard, 1935).

⁴⁷⁴ R. Lafont, *Clefs pour l’Occitanie* (Paris: Seghers, 1971), pp.201-204.

⁴⁷⁵ For a more in-depth study of French regionalism during this period (including discussion of the 1937 ‘Exposition Universelle’), see A. Thiesse, *Écrire la France* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990).

⁴⁷⁶ ‘Le nom de Charles Camproux pour la maison des Etudiants’, *Le Dit de l’Université Paul-Valéry*, no.70 (November, 2003) p.3 [http://www.univ-montp3.fr/filemanager/le_dit/dit70.pdf]

at raising the profile of Occitanism and separating it from the politically conservative, aesthetic engagement of its cultural guardians in the Félibrige. Camproux, in particular, was both a Proudhonian and a Federalist,⁴⁷⁷ building upon a Languedocian heritage that combined non-Marxist socialism with regionalism.

As a militant Occitaniste, Camproux was at the forefront of the emerging organisation that reinvigorated regionalism in the Universities of Montpellier and Toulouse, Ricard and Reboul formed the *Parti Provençal* in 1935, which, later that year, was to transform into the *Partie Occitaniste*. Reboul and Ricard were close to the extreme-left, whilst Camproux remained more difficult to pin down. In *Per lo Camp Occitan*, Camproux outlined the programme of the *Partie Occitaniste*. He denounced the toxic effect which centralism was having on the industrial development of the South, highlighting the potential for autonomy. As had been the case in 1907, however, such regionalism was unacceptable to national political parties and small movements like the *Partie Occitaniste* remained isolated. The ability of these young regionalists to appeal politically was limited, as noted by Phillippe Martin: “le viticulteur se sentira mieux défendu par un député radical ou socialiste susceptible de devenir un jour ministre que par des jeunes intellectuels sans pouvoir, fussent-ils ‘du pays’.”⁴⁷⁸ The failure of Occitanistes to connect meaningfully with the region’s dominant profession limited their political potential, although constituted an important developmental step in the modernisation of political Occitanisme.

⁴⁷⁷ It is worth noting that Phillippe Martin (*Charles Camproux*, pp.47-49) takes issue with the term ‘Proudhonian’ in reference to Camproux, citing its later usage by Maurras as an indication of an ideological malleability which renders it useless as a descriptive term. Nonetheless, the term still seems apt and serves to communicate the broad political ideals of regionalist federalism stemming from non-Marxist socialism.

⁴⁷⁸ P. Martin, ‘Charles Camproux: un non-conformiste des années 30 en Occitan?’, *Lengas*, no.53 (2003), pp.33-56.

Although the regionalist movement was overshadowed by figures like Maurras during the war,⁴⁷⁹ the political engagement of the “jeunesse Occitane” survived the challenge of fascism in a manner which Breton, Alsacien and Corse regionalists did not. Camproux himself was captured in 1939 and interned in Germany, before being released in 1941 and entering into active resistance. This resistant background preserved his work, allowing it to be revitalised in the 1960s by a new “jeunesse Occitan” who would rediscover the writing of the IEO and the *Parti Occitaniste*.⁴⁸⁰ After the war, he continued to teach philology at the Université Paul-Valéry in Montpellier and worked to promote Occitan culture through radio specials and regular discussion shows.⁴⁸¹ He wrote in 1971:

Un fait paraît l’assurer: les lettres d’oc ne sont plus désormais une sorte d’épiphénomène purement esthétique ou folklorique. Elles s’intègrent de plus en plus dans la conscience sociale, économique et politique des pays d’oc.⁴⁸²

Yet, his continued adherence to neither reactionary right nor revolutionary left made him a significant figure in binding the heritage of regionalism in the Languedoc to modern political Occitanisme. Likewise, his unwillingness to conform to the traditional left-right division of French politics further reinforces Julian Wright’s emphasis on the political eclecticism of the regionalist cause.⁴⁸³ Indeed, in his tireless promotion of

⁴⁷⁹ R. Lafont, *Sur la France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), p.231.

⁴⁸⁰ Martin, ‘Charles Camproux’, pp.56. For a broader summary of the post-war Occitan movement, see X. Crettiez, I. Sommier (eds.), *La France Rebelle* (Paris: Michalon, 2006), pp.111-116.

⁴⁸¹ ‘Le nom de Charles Camproux pour la maison des Etudiants’, *Le Dit de l’Université Paul-Valéry*, no.70 (November, 2003) p.3. [http://www.univ-montp3.fr/filemanager/le_dit/dit70.pdf].

⁴⁸² C. Camproux, *Histoire de la Littérature Occitan* (Paris: Payot, 1971), p.248.

⁴⁸³ Wright, *Regionalism in France*.

Occitan culture and defence of moderate politics, Camproux conformed to the “distinctive and original” strand of regionalism that Wright uncovers.

The rupture of the war years, therefore, did not sever the Languedoc’s connection to its Proudhonian and federalist regional heritage.⁴⁸⁴ The IEO, formed in the days after the Liberation, professed a nationalist and republican stance after the taint of Occupation had stained the regionalist movement and especially the Félibrige. They chose not to emphasise the disparity between Occitan and French cultures but instead to promote “les deux cultures en un service du rayonnement de la France.”⁴⁸⁵ Specifically, the IEO highlighted that “rien ne sert sauver la langue d’oc si le pays doit crever.”⁴⁸⁶ In attempting to reinvigorate Occitan identity as a facet of French culture, these post-war Occitanistes began producing copious studies of Occitan and Provençal linguistics and literature.⁴⁸⁷ Within the IEO, it was believed that this linguistic work could “se double d’une inspiration sociale, d’une poésie de combat.”⁴⁸⁸ The *Parti de la Nation Occitan* (PNO) was founded in 1959 in an attempt to push for greater regional autonomy.⁴⁸⁹ As the first Occitan political party, its primary function was to ensure that

⁴⁸⁴ The Félibrige elected Charles Maurras unanimously as its leader on 1 June 1941. This saw it endorse the “National Revolution” of the Vichy regime and, come the Liberation, unable to claim any association with resistance. This helps explain the relative silence of the Occitan movement in the post-war years and also the subsequent desire to re-establish links with the Republican heritage of Occitanie. For a longer discussion of the Félibrige during Vichy, see J. Guillon, ‘Résistance et identité régionale en Provence’, in Bougeard (ed.), *Bretagne et identités régionales pendant la seconde guerre mondiale*, pp.223-237.

⁴⁸⁵ Lafont, *Clefs pour l’Occitanie*, p.211.

⁴⁸⁶ COEA, *Le Petit Livre de l’Occitanie*, pp.160.

⁴⁸⁷ For example: *Phonétique et graphie du Provençal. Essai d’adaptation de la réforme linguistique occitane aux parlers de Provence* (Toulouse: Institut d’Études Occitanes, 1951) part of a series entitled *Du parler à la langue* which focussed on codifying the linguistics of the Midi’s regional languages.

⁴⁸⁸ M. Le Bris, *Les Fous du Larzac* (Paris: Presses d’Aujourd’hui, 1975), p. 154.

⁴⁸⁹ A. Judge, ‘France: One state, one nation, one language?’ in Stephen Barbour (ed.) *Language and Nationalism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.64.

the concept of nationhood was revived in the region. Its founder François Fontan was a left-wing activist of wavering ideological attachment, best known for his book *Ethnisme* in 1961. Having meandered from monarchism in his youth towards anarchism and later facing prosecution by the Niçois courts for offering support to the FLN, Fontan found himself in the Provençal speaking valleys of Italy and rather isolated from currents of political relevance in the Midi.⁴⁹⁰ Rather, it was behind the IEO that the main force of Occitanisme's renaissance was to gather.

Following the work of Serge Mallet⁴⁹¹ and a reawakening of regionalist sentiment, Southern sociologists attached themselves to the IEO in a new way. Although better known for his commentaries on the evolution of *La nouvelle classe ouvrière*, Mallet's engagement with the realities of agricultural identity in the "régions déshéritées" of France provoked a reinterpretation of regionalism and precipitated a fundamental shift in the strategy of the Occitan cause, with a move towards political engagement and an understanding of class struggle. Importantly, he highlighted the role of a modern peasantry as being equivalent to that of an agricultural proletariat: "le paysan de 1960 est autant un "proletaire" que l'ouvrier".⁴⁹² Specifically, Mallet used the term 'Occitanie' to refer to this emerging constituency of disadvantaged rural producers in the Languedoc, as distinct from the cultural conservatism of the Félibrige. Instead, Mallet's concept of a working class 'Occitanie' was to become the figurehead of

⁴⁹⁰ G. Grande, 'François FONTAN aux origines du Parti de la Nation Occitane (PNO)', *Lo Gai Saber*, N° 514 . Estiu de 2009 [<http://lo.lugarn-pno.over-blog.org/article-fontan-origines-du-parti-de-la-nation-occitane-pno-42191507.html> Accessed 19/11/2010].

⁴⁹¹ The Gardois sociologist and writer who had helped found the *Parti Socialiste Unifié* in 1956 and wrote *La Nouvelle Classe Ouvrière* in 1963.

⁴⁹² S. Mallet, *Les Paysans contre le Passé* (Paris: Seuil, 1962), pp.196-224.

a political movement, inflected with the language of decolonisation and was adopted by an increasingly strident group of Occitan sociologists.⁴⁹³

The dramatic miners' strike at Decazeville was an important moment in this process. Those convinced of the need to speak simultaneously of Socialism, class struggle and regional culture converged to form the Comité Occitan d'Études et d'Action (COEA) in 1962.⁴⁹⁴ This organisation was designed to channel the research of the IEO into more direct action to foster Occitan identity. The COEA criticised the slim membership figures of "le Parti de Fontan" and its preference for defining linguistic borders over mobilising a vibrant Occitaniste movement. They therefore deployed a litany of new slogans as banners and graffiti: "Occitanie socialiste"; "Descolonizem Occitania"; in the town of Cajarc, "La langue d'oc n'est pas une langue morte"; in Rodez, "La terre au peuple!"; on a poster of De Gaulle "Vai-t'en cagar"; and, at La Grande Motte, "Point zéro de la culture".⁴⁹⁵ These slogans highlighted the links between Occitan culture, the survival of the language and leftist critiques of government. Other intellectuals emerged to champion the cause of regionalism in the 1960s, drawing the tired constituency of the Felibrée into a new era of relevance. Robert Lafont, a long time member of the COEA was emblematic of this shift, moving from linguistic analysis to political theory, as southern intellectuals took on a new role as social activists. Lafont published *La Révolution Régionaliste* in 1967 in which he called for a new federalism as a solution to the increasingly alienating and "autarcique"

⁴⁹³ Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home: France in the Global Age*, p.17.

⁴⁹⁴ Lafont, *Clefs pour l'Occitanie*, p.219.

⁴⁹⁵ COEA, *Le Petit Livre de l'Occitanie*, p.162.

character of the French Republic.⁴⁹⁶ In recognising the challenges of European integration and regional economic disparity, Lafont sought to construct a federalism that liberated through the representation of regional interests at a European level.

Even within the Languedoc, however, regional interests remained fractured at times. Fontan set up a new group in 1967 that sought to bridge the divide between the differing linguistic heritages of Occitan and Piedmontais identity, *Mouvement Autonomiste Occitan*.⁴⁹⁷ Fontan's groupuscules in exile in Italy had little electoral impact back in France and were successful primarily in ensuring that the notion of Occitan nationhood remained in the political foreground of the region. Southern regionalists took strength from "les années 68" and the reservoirs of support filled by the actions of Fontan and those in the COEA would fuel an increasingly active Occitan movement. Although the impact of the *années 68* will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, it is worth noting that an increased national appetite developed for discussing the role of the regions in the centralised state. The same national processes that fed into the formalisation of the CRAV likewise fuelled the development of political Occitanisme. Lafont's reflection on the consolidation of the French nation throughout its history was released in this same year. His very first line warns that the book "peut choquer le lecteur français" and Lafont proceeds to tell the story of France's triumph over the regions throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries until the modern period, characterising internal and external colonialism as merely different facets of "le

⁴⁹⁶ R. Lafont, *La révolution régionaliste* (Paris:Gallimard, 1967), p.14.

⁴⁹⁷ In a typically divisive manner, the bridge between Languedocien and Provençal nationalist groups would not be resolved until 1980 with the formation of *L'union deû poble d'Oc*.

chauvinisme officiel français.”⁴⁹⁸ Burgeoning opposition to this chauvinism saw fracturing in the months after May 1968, as various groupuscules formed to translate the legacy of that Parisian spring into Occitan.

Lutte Occitane was formed to push a specifically Socialist vision of Occitan independence in 1970 and drew together the many Comités d'Action Occitans that had formed in the wake of 1968 to form a socialist political federation and push for national liberation.⁴⁹⁹ Their eponymous publication is a particularly interesting source for accessing the extreme opinions that characterised Occitan militancy during the period, such as support for the IRA.⁵⁰⁰ This radicalisation drew parallels with France's decolonisation of her overseas empire and the future role of regions like the Languedoc in a 'post-imperial' world. Robert Lafont published another book in 1971, specifically comparing this revival of regionalism to France's decolonisation struggle and juxtaposing the challenges of “le tiers monde” with “l'hypocrisie nationaliste” of the French state.⁵⁰¹ Despite Mallet's death in 1973, Occitanie had now taken off as a concept, and writers like Lafont had popularised the idea whilst radicalising supporters with an increasing focus on internal colonialism. One of the slogans of the period, "Volem viure al país" became the name of a new political party in 1976. Their specific focus on pushing for economic policies that would allow people a sustainable life in their region was based on the problems affecting not only the wine industry but also the continuing struggle at Larzac, which will be addressed later in this chapter.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁸ Lafont, *Sur la France*, p.25 and p.221.

⁴⁹⁹ R. Rawlinson, *Larzac* (York: Ebor Press, 1996), p.6.

⁵⁰⁰ This journal will be discussed in the context of events later in this chapter.

⁵⁰¹ R. Lafont, *Décoloniser en France: les régions face à l'Europe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), pp.281-282.

⁵⁰² Judge, 'France: One state, one nation, one language?', p.64.

This new wave of regionalists challenged the centralising project of the state in ways that the purely cultural focus of the Felibrée had not done. Mallet's ideological inheritors sought to ensure that the representation of regional culture was politically engaged.⁵⁰³ Acknowledging the often-difficult relationship of regionalism with national politics, COEA militants targeted meetings of the dissenting Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU), hoping to find support for the concept of regional autonomy.⁵⁰⁴ They succeeded in 1966, when Michel Rocard affirmed the principle at a meeting in Marseille.⁵⁰⁵ The PSU moved away from the nationalism professed by the Communists and the centralising beliefs of Debré, with the word 'Occitan' appearing on their posters for the first time in 1966.⁵⁰⁶ Indeed, these new regionalist organisations of the 1960s and 1970s allied to the left were not "new departures" but prefigured by a long association of French regionalism with the left and centre left.⁵⁰⁷ The influence of Camproux proved to Occitanistes like Lafont that "si certains occitanistes pensent à droite, lui dessine une

⁵⁰³ Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home: France in the Global Age*, p.17.

⁵⁰⁴ For broader discussion of the PSU and its politics, see T. Kernageleann, F. Prigent, G. Richard and J. Sainclivier (eds.), *Le PSU vu d'en bas. Réseaux sociaux, mouvement politique, laboratoire d'idées (années 1950–années 1980)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes 2009); R. Barralis and J. Gillet (eds.), *Au coeur des luttes des années soixante. Les étudiants du PSU. Une utopie porteuse d'avenir?* (Paris: Publisud, 2010); C. Hauss, *The New Left in France: The Unified Socialist Party* (Westport: Greenwood, 1978); V. Fisera, 'The Unified Socialist Party (PSU) since 1968', in D. Bell (ed.), *Contemporary French Political Parties* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), pp. 108–119; V. Fisera, 'The French New Left and the Left-Wing Regime', in S. Williams (ed.), *Socialism in France: From Jaurès to Mitterrand* (London: Frances Pinter, 1983), pp. 155–164; R.W. Johnston, *The Long March of the French Left* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp.260-264. Also, for a description of the Breton regionalist movement likewise attempting to integrate with the PSU, see Alistair Cole, Gino Raymond, *Redefining the French Republic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p.56. In an interesting parallel, Cole and Raymond note that the Breton regionalists were moving away from the Breton Democratic Union which had become involved with an armed movement modelled on the IRA.

⁵⁰⁵ There were links between the PSU and the Défense movement through Bernard Lambert, who will be mentioned again in the Epilogue. See D.A. Gordon, 'A 'Mediterranean New Left'? Comparing and Contrasting the French PSU and the Italian PSIUP', *Contemporary European History*, vol.19, no.4 (2010), pp. 309-330.

⁵⁰⁶ COEA, *Le Petit Livre de l'Occitanie*, pp.162.

⁵⁰⁷ Wright, *The Regionalist Movement in France*, p.11.

ouverture à gauche.”⁵⁰⁸ A new brand of Occitaniste sociologists and activists could trace their heritage via Charles Camproux back to the moderate politics of Jean Charles-Brun and the influence of the Proudhonian lobby within the FRF of the early twentieth century,⁵⁰⁹ disavowing the “false but enduring impression that regionalism's discourse in turn-of-the-century France was necessarily ultra-conservative.”⁵¹⁰ For Julian Wright, this developmental path of regionalist political development cast Jean Charles-Brun and the FRF as “the obvious precursors of Mitterrand and Defferre” with Camproux and then the Occitanistes of the 1960s and 1970s as important conduits. Indeed, Lafont himself actively coveted this inheritance, claiming in 1968 to “nous réclamer à notre tour du proudhonisme et prendre un parti tardif dans la querelle de Proudhon et de Marx.”⁵¹¹ The aim of this chapter will be to analyse the developing role and evolving rhetoric of this new Occitan movement through the activities of the COEA and Lutte Occitane during moments of regional crisis.

Decazeville: Patois and the Pit

Since the Second World War, southern regional solidarity has been largely bound to the image of south-western France as an economic hinterland abandoned after a concerted period of asset-stripping conducted by the centralised state. This regional disparity was a motor of political radicalisation. Indeed, this was precisely the vocabulary in which the miners of Decazeville expressed their grievances during the

⁵⁰⁸ Lafont, *Clefs pour l'Occitanie*, p.204.

⁵⁰⁹ Wright, *The Regionalist Movement in France*, p.11.

⁵¹⁰ S. Peer, *France on Display* (New York: SUNY Press, 1998) pp.61-62

⁵¹¹ Lafont, *Sur la France*, p.259.

1961-1962 strike, which saw men spend nearly a month occupying cold, damp underground mines isolated from their families and sleeping on piles of straw to protest a round of lay-offs.⁵¹² That the intensification of action involved 20 miners hunger-striking was intended to instruct the French public of the extent to which Parisian technocrats were wreaking havoc on the peripheries of the state, presenting broken, starving labourers as evidence of a barren and damaging industrial policy. Particularly relevant in this strike, however, was the extent to which it solidified Occitanisme as the new language of resistance to the centralised state, rehabilitating a concept, which it was commonly thought, had previously been the reserve of perceived intellectual dandies like the literary movement of the Félibrige. Mistral's poesy had become the patois of the pit as the Occitan movement's intellectual project was underwritten by the struggle of industrial workers. Many regionalist commentators highlight Decazeville as a turning point for the Occitan movement; for Michel Le Bris, "de culturel, le mouvement occitan devient, dès 1962, politique."⁵¹³ Using the language of the region, the miners conveyed that damage wrought on the culture of their community and their economy was in fact representative of damage done by the French state to the regions more broadly.⁵¹⁴

In 1962 this strike became a hallmark in the development of post-war radicalism in the region. Donald Reid describes the importance of the 'long durée' in understanding the development of this political radicalism amongst miners, focussing on the interaction of labour, capital and the state throughout. That the occupation of

⁵¹² D. Reid, *The Miners of Decazeville* (Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1985), p204.

⁵¹³ Le Bris, *Les Fous du Larzac*, p.31.

⁵¹⁴ Reid, *The Miners of Decazeville*, p206.

the Decazeville pit evoked the vocabulary of Occitanie was a considered ploy to highlight long standing uneven development and the status of Aubin labourers as “second-class Frenchmen.”⁵¹⁵ This had been a long-standing grievance rooted in the personalisation of labour demands in the post-war period, with greater demands for productivity inevitably meaning increased physical stress for individual workers and greater economic stress for their community.⁵¹⁶ The phrase 'personalisation of labour' implies that the top-down demands for greater efficiency literally came to rest across the shoulders of miners, much as they did with winegrowers. This physical work provided little job security and was subject to the feast or famine demand in regional industry. Initiatives such as labour exchange programs in 1955 - in which southern pit-workers were motivated by the Coal authorities (Le Charbonnage) to travel to Lorraine and utilise their labour in an area of labour scarcity - merely highlighted their status as a problem sector. Far from home and working alongside German speaking workers, southern miners drew comparison to Vichy's *Service du Travail Obligatoire* and found solidarity in their own regional identity. Years later, during the strike of 1962, this same tendency set the miners against the technocrats of Paris, with their Occitan patois a stark contrast to the Parisian accents of their persecutors. So too was the icon of the Occitan cross a useful tool in communicating the distinct character of this industrial dispute, with the red flag synonymous with pit strikes and also communicative of regional difference. The intersection of direct action, labour relations and the cause of Occitanie, served as a strong precedent across the region, regardless of economic

⁵¹⁵ I. McKay, 'Coal Miners and the Longue Durée: Learning from Decazeville', *Journal of Canadian Labour Studies*, vol.20 (1987), pp.223-226.

⁵¹⁶ Reid, *The Miners of Decazeville*, p189.

groupings. The engineers at Decazeville had stood in solidarity with miners, proudly declaiming that “when the shed burns, we don’t have to know who wears a tie.”⁵¹⁷

Alliès likewise paints the Decazeville strike as an important moment in the development of the Occitan movement; it united regionalist intellectuals in the university towns of the Midi with the reality of direct political action. In particular, the theme of ‘colonialisme intérieur’ deployed by striking union officials lent a new string to the old bow of Occitanisme.⁵¹⁸ Within this framework, articulate elites were able “à parler de l’aliénation de la région exactement comme l’on parle de l’aliénation prolétarienne.”⁵¹⁹ Such a direct and simple conceptual link was a powerful tool in mobilising support for what had been a marginal movement. Strikes broke out across the Languedoc in support of the Decazeville miners in their “défense du bassin et, au-delà, de toute la région.”⁵²⁰ Gérard de Sède⁵²¹, somewhat humorously, points out that concern was such that southerners went as far as to cancel all scheduled rugby matches in ferociously devoted cities like Toulouse and Perpignan as a mark of respect.⁵²² These measures of support began to symbolise a meshing of movements as the political maturity of the Occitanistes allowed them to address problems of class and speak coherently to the region's economic interests. In voicing concern and support for the miners of Decazeville, the COEA also enabled themselves to begin to appeal to the winegrowers and their grievances in similar political terms.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., pp.197-210.

⁵¹⁸ P. Alliès, *L’Occitanie et la lutte des classes* (La Découverte, Montpellier, 1972), p.10.

⁵¹⁹ Reid, *The Miners of Decazeville*, p10.

⁵²⁰ G. De Sède, *700 ans de révoltes occitanes* (Plon, Paris, 1982), p.267.

⁵²¹ De Sède (1921-2004) was a Parisian writer and journalist with an interest in the surreal and the occult. His interest in Templars and the Cathar legacy of the Midi led him to write about the Occitan cause with fondness. Also, like Ferroul, he shared a strong belief in spiritualism which accentuated his fascination with the mysticism of the Cathar past.

⁵²² De Sède, *700 ans de révoltes occitanes*, p.267.

Interaction with more tangible political causes and a greater recognition of the strength of the region's working class identity were the benchmarks for the success of the new Occitaniste movement. That these considerations could speak to winegrowers on an economic basis merely helped to encourage the meshing of these movements and the coalescing of protest movements against the central state. Indeed, in 1972, an interview with Jean Vialade of the CRAV stressed that, as in 1907, it was cross-class action which held the most promise for achieving results in the Midi: "d'être toujours unis pour nous défendre".⁵²³ The class-consciousness of the COEA allowed the Occitan movement to approach other regional pressure groups in the hope of providing a united front. The strike at Decazeville was not the Revolt of 1907, yet it shared certain key traits, in particular: "une profession sacrifiée par l'alliance du capitalisme et de l'Etat centralisé (par la loi de rentabilité de l'extraction minière)." The increasing politicisation of the Occitan movement had seen it emerge as a valid electoral force within the region, and the progenitor of a multitude of political tracts delineating the potential for a federalised Occitan nation within a French state, demonstrated in the work of Lafont and Fontan. Yet the political success of the Occitan movement in this sense was a cipher for broader discontent with the French state, prefixed on the economic hardship exacerbated by unequal development. The modernisation of the post-war period was also responsible for the partial atrophy of its traditional industries. The extent to which a modern industrial problem unleashed a storm of cultural significance made Decazeville exemplary of the nexus of issues that directed and shaped modern regional responses to external pressure. When these pressures endangered the livelihood of the Languedocian winegrowers, the events of 1907

⁵²³ 'La parole à Vialade', *Lutte Occitane* (November, 1972) - ADG JR1008.

provided a revolutionary handbook for the conduct of such a protest – with direct action at its heart. In the words of Robert Lafont, after the challenges of Decazeville: “les révoltes du passé, dont 1907, deviennent exemplaires.”⁵²⁴

1968: Le Mai du Midi

In chronicling the development of regional identity and the meshing of social and industrial activism, May 1968 would curiously seem to be of lesser importance than events in the 1960s. The strike at Decazeville, the documented wine activism of the Défense movement and the reactivation of a coherent regionalist movement saw the Midi well set to echo the turbulence of *les années 68*. Whilst the riots of Paris were not mirrored in the Midi, the social pressures that triggered such a widespread movement across Europe were certainly brought to bear and the ramifications of challenges to central government were felt. If 1968 did not *create* the forces that encouraged expressions of Occitan identity and spurred viticultural radicalism, then the *années 68* arguably magnified their influence. Yet, it is striking how little memorial legacy '68 has left in the region. Most interviewees showed little appreciation of 1968's direct impact on the *Languedoc viticole*, denigrating its importance as "un mouvement urbain et non rural."⁵²⁵ Some, however, were willing to concede at least that a general wave of discontent and structural change had washed over the region, causing a tangible shift in societal attitudes to family and sexuality.⁵²⁶ Yet, these generalised

⁵²⁴ Lafont, *Clefs pour l'Occitanie*, pp.218-223.

⁵²⁵ Interview with Pierre Bonafé - Domaine de Larzac - Pezenas- Herault - 17-08-2010.

⁵²⁶ Interview with Jean-Noel Bousquet - Chateau Grand Moulin - Lezignan-Corbieres Aude - 19-07-2010.

responses may well be interpreted as subsequent revisions, incorporating the predominant narrative of May '68 on to personal reflections. Where 68's legacy was acknowledged, interviewees in high-status positions within the wine world discerned a new organisational zeal amongst the Languedoc's syndical organisations. Henri Cabanel, Conseiller Général, délégué à la Viticulture, suggested that "Cela a permis à la filière de se conformer aux revendications de l'époque et de pouvoir nous organiser syndicalement par la défense de notre profession."⁵²⁷ In this sense, the open protests of Paris alongside the strikes of Sud-Aviation and various Renault factories, demonstrated the combative potential for industrial organisations, even outside their national federations. Likewise, Alfredo Manuel Coelho, an associate researcher at UMR MOISA SupAgro (an agricultural chemical supply company) in Montpellier conceded that 1968 provided additional motivation for wine producers to "fight for their rights like other employees in the French society."⁵²⁸

Within the cities of the Languedoc there was some solidarity with the students of Paris, yet far from the same epochal level of protest. Large-scale riots are not documented and nor do we see waves of sympathetic strikes reflected in the literature. Yet, in an area with such a high predominance of cooperatives, politics was "vraiment à gauche" and opposition to the government was often tacit if not articulated.⁵²⁹ As mentioned in the previous chapter, Cases' open letter to the students of the Languedoc in 1968 expressed solidarity with the label of "extrémistes", yet indicated that

⁵²⁷ Interview with Henri Cabanel - Conseiller Général, délégué à la Viticulture - Servian - Herault - 28-07-2010.

⁵²⁸ Interview with Alfredo Manuel Coelho - Associate Researcher - UMR MOISA SupAgro Montpellier - Herault - 29-07-2010 (Response given in English).

⁵²⁹ Interview with Beatrice de Chabert - Syndicat AOC Coteaux de Languedoc - Montpellier Herault - 27-07-2010.

winegrowers would pick their battles.⁵³⁰ Nevertheless, schools closed in Montpellier as complementary disturbances brought the use of tear gas by police. One interviewee described how at the age of 10 she encountered tear gas grenades in her stairwell in the centre of town.⁵³¹ Although there were "grèves pour les salaires"⁵³², the ripples emanating from the Latin Quarter failed to destabilise the Languedoc comprehensively. Indeed, as mentioned previously, 1967 had been a much more significant year of protest for winegrowers in the Midi. The vectors that whipped up the pervasive revolutionary air of the 1968 years were similar but different in the Languedoc. The economic alienation and frustration with the centralised state expressed by Occitanistes and winegrowers may have mirrored the slogans of Parisian demonstrators, yet they related to a very different set of experiences in the Languedoc that had developed throughout the 1960s. Indeed, pre-eminent winegrower Emmanuel Maffre-Beaugé dismissed the Parisian experience and poured scorn on the cause of the students, deriding "ces intellectuels morbides affichant leurs phantasmes et prônant la licence. Nos valeurs sont différentes, le travail manuel en est le pivot."⁵³³

If winegrowers like Maffre-Beaugé were unsympathetic to the message of the protesting students, they found perhaps a more willing audience in the Occitan movement. There was, however, some interaction between winegrowers and Occitanistes that saw 1968's presumed message bleed across the Midi. The formation of 'Comités d'Action Occitans' after May 1968 denoted a radicalisation in the forms of

⁵³⁰ Revel, *Montredon*, p.61.

⁵³¹ Interview with Beatrice de Chabert - Syndicat AOC Coteaux de Languedoc - Montpellier Herault - 27-07-2010.

⁵³² Interview with Cathy Do - Domaine Campaucels - Montagnac - Herault - 27-07-2010.

⁵³³ E. Maffre-Baugeé, *Vendanges Amères* (J.P. Ramsay, Paris, 1976), p.66.

political intervention, which drew from the example of Paris. The linguistic heritage of these Comités is clear and articulated 1968's influence through the vocabulary of the COEA. In the late 1960s, these organisations flared up and disappeared in a moment of exuberant expression, stating their presence without any particular action. These Comités d'Action would eventually consolidate into the aforementioned socialist political federation of Lutte Occitane, demonstrating the growing representative strength of socialism amongst those who sought decisively to further regionalism and the Occitan cause. This amalgamation was demonstrative of the developing links between left-wing activists, the radical sociologists of the COEA and a minority of those who considered themselves peasants from viticultural organisations.

In studying this period, the mobilisation of the CRAV invites comparison with other left wing activist groups, especially with the involvement of the PCF through Maffre-Beaugé and MODEF. The Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) bears some comparison by virtue of its politics and its theories of direct action. Emerging from the ashes of the 1968 demonstrations in Paris and forming an important conduit of the *années 68*, their formation in 1973 represented a rejection of Giscard's vision of modernising liberalism. Their strong recruitment amongst students was indicative of a youthful exuberance for the politics of the extreme left in the wake of the 1968 demonstrations. They reached their peak in 1976, boasting some 3,800 activists, although by 1979 schisms in the party saw them lose around 20% of their membership.⁵³⁴ During their most active period, however, they attempted to engage

⁵³⁴ J. Salles, *La Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005), p.343.

with the issues of the Défense movement, attracted by the radicalism and organisational structure of the CRAV.

The LCR journal *Rouge* commented upon the radicalisation of the CNJA and the emergence of a *Paysan-travailleur* mentality which promised some attachment to their cause. The hope that such movements could be encouraged in the countryside was perhaps strongest in the Languedoc-Roussillon, long labeled the *Midi rouge*. Tentative and short lived groups were formed in both Montpellier and Nîmes to promote revolutionary communism, although both the *Commission paysan* and the *Comité rouge paysan* enjoyed slender membership figures. Leaders of agricultural unions were increasingly treated to long interviews in *Rouge* including Jean Huillet on 11 April 1975. In highlighting and celebrating these emergent *ouvriériste* movements in the countryside, the hope of the LCR was that “un syndicat de classe de la paysannerie” would emerge as a natural ally of the urban working class. Likewise, members of the LCR were also attached to Occitan movements, providing a tangible link to the *paysan* identity they coveted. Two local publications of tiny circulation (*Cahiers Occitanie Rouge* and *Petit Rouge du Périgord*) promoted the LCR’s links to the Occitan cause. *Cahiers’* finest moment came when they secured an interview with Maffre-Beaugé who outlined the difficulties of Languedocian vigneronns and extolled the need for Communists to remain active in the region. Although these moments were of little impact in constructing a national structure for the LCR, they constituted an important and rare foray into the rural world for a Trotskyist group.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁵ Salles, *La Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire*, pp.173-174.

The involvement in the Occitan movement of wine producers saw political Occitanisme shaped by the proximity of radical peasantry, adding a flavour of anti-capitalism to traditional politics. By setting issues of class alongside criticisms of capitalism, the Occitan movement displayed a form of leftism which has been described as 'Nationalisme de gauche', effectively drawing in pre-Marxist ideals of mutualism and cooperativism combined with a pronounced desire for independent sovereignty and cultural recognition. Indeed, the COEA portrayed its Occitan nationalism as more closely allied to theories of national minorities developed by Proudhon.⁵³⁶ Proudhon's strict preference for federalism in the face of centralised states was attuned to the beliefs of Occitan militants, specifically in relation to the region's right to *auto-gestion*: "Solicit men's view in the mass, and they will return stupid, fickle and violent answers; solicit their views as members of definite groups with real solidarity and a distinctive character, and their answers will be responsible and wise."⁵³⁷ In claiming that "Occitanie est essentiellement agricole"⁵³⁸, the COEA sought to distinguish the Midi as not only culturally distinct from the North but also economically. Proudhon's distinct groups could be dreamed up with the use of invented tradition and a focus on the region's turbulent past, allowing the Occitan movement to shape its own heritage by taking ownership of regional *patrimoine*. The lop-sided development of the past that had seen the Midi miss the profitable industrialisation of other regions had changed the very character of Occitanie's future.

⁵³⁶ Alliès, *L'Occitanie et la lutte des classes*, pp.12-15.

⁵³⁷ P. Proudhon (trans. Richard Vernon), *The Principle of Federation* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1979), p.xxx (sic. - Introduction).

⁵³⁸ COEA, *Le Petit Livre de l'Occitanie*, p.81.

In the search for greater acknowledgement of their cultural autonomy, the COEA and the various strands of the Occitan movement changed both their tactics and the tone of their appeal from those of the intellectual Félibrige. Social and political relevancy could be manipulated by both focussing on the regional heritage of workers in threatened sectors and internationalising the conflict. Indeed, the Occitan movement's broadly cast net fell far beyond France. Militants lamented the plight of Ireland, "état né des souffrances d'un peuple colonisé et de ses luttes"; Spain, where "le gouvernement espagnol refuse la liberté aux peuples basque, catalan et galicien et réprime l'usage de leur langue"; and Israel, "exemple de colonisation par l'argent de terres dont on expulse d'abord par achat, puis par les tracasseries administratives les habitants (ici les Palestiniens)."⁵³⁹ Subsequently, the 1970s witnessed the *Paysans Larzac* entertaining a delegation of Hopi tribesmen from America as well as Japanese farmers opposed to similar expropriation in service of Tokyo airport.⁵⁴⁰ Locating the oppressed and latching on to their cause helped to expand the relevancy of the Occitan movement.

Trying to pin down exactly how effective or attractive the rhetoric of the Occitan movement was represents a difficult task in isolation. Indeed, other groups that meet Proudhon's federalist criteria were interested in interacting with Occitanistes. One of the Midi's strongest associations for historians and analysts has traditionally been with the Breton region, by virtue of their regionalist movements. Both regions share a perception of being historically marginalized by a Parisian centre whilst also standing for a more traditional way of life in opposition to a modern, industrial and

⁵³⁹ COEA, *Le Petit Livre de l'Occitanie*, pp.224-228.

⁵⁴⁰ Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*, p.38.

capitalist mode de vie. Vincent Porhel describes a Breton 'mythology' mirroring that of the traditional resentment of the Cathar crusade in the Midi: "les mémoires des acteurs marquent la prégnance d'un certain mythe breton d'un retard, tant économique que culturel, reposant sur les manques de l'industrialisation."⁵⁴¹ This lack of industrialisation could fuel resentment but it could also foster a fondness for the region's past, suggesting a closer relationship with traditional ways of life. This form of mythology became extremely important during the 1970s, with regionalists deploying *patrimoine* as a validating political force to help radicalise support for their cause. Yet the Breton movement has encountered similar difficulties to the Occitan movement in its struggle to create a mandate of sufficiently broad regional interests to present a cohesive whole.

For Breton protestors, the issue of the Plogoff nuclear reactor served to characterise and sometimes dominate the regionalist movement at the expense of genuinely regionalist sentiment.⁵⁴² In the Midi, the political Occitan movement's desire for a form of Proudhonian federalism based around centuries-old legitimisation offered little for winegrowers in need of subsidy and access to markets. The task of the COEA was to drag regionalism from the fringes of political relevancy and attempt to impress themselves in the political foreground by addressing the relationship between Occitanisme and the realities of the regional economy. This was shown in their reaction to Decazeville. Their role was to overcome these internal conflicts and provide a figurehead for the Occitan movement. As Vincent Porhel stated, the Breton movement following 1968 "soulignent l'ambivalence des représentations sociales et culturelles:

⁵⁴¹ Porhel, *Ouvriers Bretons*, p.277.

⁵⁴² Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*, p.38.

entre recherche de l'isolement et ouverture sur l'espace des possibles, les acteurs régionaux peinent à trouver leur voies."⁵⁴³ If 1968 had failed to spark the sudden resurgence of regionalist sentiment that many had predicted, it nevertheless shook the foundations of a state and encouraged further activism amongst the myriad groupuscules formed in the heady days of May. The issues that had solicited similarly strong expressions of discontent with the centralised state and the health of the regional economy were strengthened by the demonstrations of 1968 but not caused by them. The radicalisation and alienation of the Défense movement throughout the 1960s met with a reinvigorated Occitan lobby characterised by the politically engaged sociologists of the COEA and saw these movements mesh in the first tentative moments of a regional protest movement.

Patrimoine and possession: Lessons from Larzac

Although the developments of the 1960s had increased support for the Occitan movement, the conflict at Larzac helped entrench this support. When the French government (and specifically then Minister of Defence Michel Debré) sought to extend a military base which had been in place since 1899 from 30km² to 170km², infringing on agricultural land on the Larzac plateau, locals began a long-standing struggle to prevent the annexation of regional land. Tractors and sheep-farmers inundated the proposed expansion area, setting up protest camps and allowing the free circulation of a new regional radicalism. The theme of 'Occitanie' entered demonstrations at an early point and helped bring disparate causes together: "le mot d'ordre 'vivre et travailler au

⁵⁴³ Porhel, *Ouvriers Bretons*, p.280.

pays' permet à cet égard de coaliser les éleveurs du Larzac et les ouvriers."⁵⁴⁴ The gathered crowds at Larzac almost directly embodied the spirit of anti-establishment politics and 'New Left' ideology that had emerged from the '1968 years'. The multi-cultural protest camp threw up odd combinations of freedom fighters; suddenly Kanak militants protesting the extension of army bases in New Caledonia⁵⁴⁵ appeared alongside Languedocian activists to express the solidarity of anti-Parisian minorities. By broadening their national and international appeal, the defenders of Larzac cultivated a potent authenticity that validated their non-violent actions and held them up as an oppressed group.

The specific introduction of the military brought along with them a new vocabulary of resistance. Suddenly, the presence of soldiers solidarised Occitan protesters and encouraged them to draw allusions to groups outside of the Midi. Indeed, there were demonstrable interactions between the Occitan movement and nationalist militants elsewhere in Europe. In particular, Occitan extremists sought to form connections with the IRA in an effort to show solidarity and draw a comparison between the Occitan nation under French control and Ireland under British rule. The 'Long Kesh Ramblers' - an Irish republican band formed as a fundraising group for the families of interned political prisoners - were welcomed at a series of concerts in the South of France and happily posed for photos during "L'échange du drapeau occitan et du drapeau de l'I.R.A."⁵⁴⁶ (See below – the flags exchanged are the Croix Occitane and

⁵⁴⁴ Xavier Vigna, 'Lip et Larzac: conflits locaux et mobilisations nationales' in P. Artières; M. Zancarini-Fournel, *68, une histoire collective* (Découverte, Paris, 2007), p.493.

⁵⁴⁵ The Kanak were the indigenous Melanesian people of New Caledonia.

⁵⁴⁶ 'Un salut du peuple irlandais', *Lutte Occitane* (July - August 1973) - ADG JR1008.

the Starry Plough.⁵⁴⁷) The tour which they undertook was an interesting enumeration of the regions within France where regionalist sentiment simmered - Lyons, Angers, Grenoble, Annamasse, Avignon, Montpellier, Larzac and finally to the centre for a concert in Paris. Omitting the Breton region was a glaring mistake, although rectified by a tour dedicated to the 'celtic region' in 1974.⁵⁴⁸ The group's political engagement played well in the Midi, where following a concert, debate raged about violent struggle and the road to 'national' liberation. Protestors found common ground in their mutual hatred of occupying soldiers - also stationed at Larzac - who had massacred "nos frères, les travailleurs d'Irlande." Likewise, the two groups professed "la solidarité des peuples pauvres à la périphérie de l'Europe capitaliste".⁵⁴⁹ The 'colonialisme intérieure' described by both both the Occitan movement and the IRA allowed common ground to be found despite disparities in their actual situation. The professed non-violence of the Larzac movement allowed it to cultivate a support base that it would have been unattainable had it mirrored the violent action of some Breton protestors, for example. The death of a policeman in 1976 was a tragic outcome of a confused situation and not representative of a strategy of violence as practised in Ireland.

⁵⁴⁷ The Starry Plough is associated with the 1916 Easter Rising and the Socialist wing of Irish Republicanism.

⁵⁴⁸ 'Irish Republican Music: The Long Kesh Ramblers' [http://www.theballadeers.com/irm_longk_1974_sotip.htm] [Accessed:31/08/2010].

⁵⁴⁹ 'Un salut du peuple irlandais', *Lutte Occitane* (July - August 1973) - ADG JR1008.



*Occitanistes exchange the flag of Occitanie with the Irish Republican 'Starry Plough'*⁵⁵⁰

Analysing the most extreme Occitan radicals, however, provides us with an interesting insight into the conceptual bonds they shared with other 'national liberation' struggles. The newspaper *Lutte Occitane* declared itself an "Organe d'information et de combat" and communicated an extreme line of Occitan political views to a largely sympathetic audience. As mentioned earlier, it was published by the socialist political party of the same name, formed in 1970. The journal began to publish in 1972, in the midst of a turbulent period in the Midi as viticultural activism reached new heights and the decentralist legacy of 1968 was felt strongly in the Occitan cultural revival. Likewise, with the memory of Decazeville fresh and Larzac an open wound, the journal remained politically relevant. With a strident tone and a militant stance towards the Occitan political cause, 'Lutte Occitane' sought to denounce the sneering attitudes of Parisians and highlight the inequality occurring in the Midi as a result of lop-sided development. When referring to Northern opinion, *Lutte Occitane* railed

⁵⁵⁰ *Lutttes Viticoles* (Jul-Aug 1973) - ADG JR1008.

against the condescending attitude of a feature writer in *Le Monde* who dismissed the Occitan claim "C'est au mieux un aimable mythe, au PIRE une bonne plaisanterie". This Parisian 'attack' was seen by Occitanistes in the Midi to be a backhanded compliment for their strengthened movement - "On n'attaque pas ce qui n'existe pas, et, en tout cas, ce qui n'existe pas ne saurait répliquer." This image of tenaciously maintaining a presence despite the ill will of the state helped to motivate supporters with a siege mentality. The journal argued that the 'Langue d'Oc' was far from being dead, despite the best efforts of the French schooling system to kill it.⁵⁵¹ This deliberate policy of exclusion from the school system was of particular irritation to the COEA, who quoted a UNESCO directive from 1967 which classified "exclusion de l'école d'une langue parlée par une collectivité" as "génocide culturel".⁵⁵²

This struggle arose as a profound regional rejection of Debré's seeming contempt for the Larzac farmers. Speaking to a TV audience on 28 October 1971 he dismissed "a few peasants there, not many, still living more or less as they had done in the Middle Ages, who pass their time [vaguement] raising a few sheep, and whom, therefore, it will be necessary to expropriate." As Herman Lebovics suggests, perhaps the most striking transgression in this attack was the breach of what E.P. Thompson called the "moral economy", provoking outrage and widespread support amongst the local population.⁵⁵³ The protesters at Larzac gathered as sheep-farmers and producers of Roquefort in the winter of 1970, before being joined by a motley crowd of supporters from Paris, Montpellier and elsewhere in the thaw of 1971. Despite some local

⁵⁵¹ 'Occitanie aux Mythes?', *Lutte Occitane* No.16 (July 1974) - ADG JR1008.

⁵⁵² COEA, *Le Petit Livre de l'Occitanie*, p.225.

⁵⁵³ Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*, pp.32-56.

resistance to the assortment of newly arrived, long-haired radicals, the political left, industrial unions and the local clergy formed the Comité Millavois de Défense du Larzac. The breadth of the Larzac Défense group dwarfed the comparative insularity of the winegrowers and the CRAV, drawing support from organisations like the FNSEA, CDJA, PSU and Lutte Occitane.⁵⁵⁴ After meandering political adventures that attracted the support of Jean-Marie Le Pen, swathes of priests and even the European disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, the Larzac encampment endured as a jumbled alliance of ideologies and personalities fixed on a single cause.

The leadership of the Larzac 'commune' controlled this movement by the careful guardianship of authenticity, regulating the 'brand' of the protest and ensuring that if the camp grew beyond its original imagining, it did so as a beacon of solidarity for the sheep-farmers of Millau.⁵⁵⁵ This was of particular importance in that it channelled support not through a national organisation like the FNSEA or CDJA, but rather through the independent and specific 'Association pour la promotion de l'agriculture sur le Larzac'.⁵⁵⁶ Nevertheless, they retained the support of these national groups, who organised regional protests in support of the Larzac peasants.⁵⁵⁷ Publishing their newspaper, *Gardarem Lo Larzac*, guaranteed national attention and even saw sympathetic protest break out in New York, whilst ensuring that the output of the commune could be controlled and directed by its leadership.⁵⁵⁸ In 1976, the Larzac camp gained perhaps its most famous proponent, José Bové, and he emerged as

⁵⁵⁴ Rawlinson, *Larzac*, p.15.

⁵⁵⁵ Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*, p.37

⁵⁵⁶ Vigna, 'Lip et Larzac: conflits locaux et mobilisations nationales', p.491.

⁵⁵⁷ Martin, *Le Larzac: Utopies et réalités*, p.37.

⁵⁵⁸ Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*, p.55.

a bombastic spokesman for the cause who would develop enduring and iconic status. Harnessing the tractor charges already utilised by protesters (and mirroring the viticultural protests of the late 1950s and early 1960s) along with his contacts in the academic world, Bové ensured that the protest remained relevant and imaginative.

The recent violence which had marred other demonstrations in Europe, with “plasticages, les jets de cocktails molotov” demonstrated that care had to be taken to unite the organisations of the left and extreme left within the Larzac central committee to ensure the maintenance of a pacifist program. In particular, they hoped that the pacifism of the Larzac movement could offer a positive example to disaffected youth and draw them closer to regional identity: “ces jeunes militants rompent avec l’image de casseurs et l’identité occitane est bien séduisante pour ces individus à la recherche d’une ‘identité collective’.” Controlling the appeal of their movement was important in the manner which it could attract support of regional youths. By focussing on creating a vibrant movement in opposition to the powers of the French state, Occitanistes could motivate political action in a manner that had been impossible for the Félibrige:

Eux qui se sont toujours sentis diminués par rapport aux gens des villes, aux Parisiens... se retrouvent occitans, c’est-à-dire riches d’un pays, d’une culture, d’une langue et d’une histoire spécifique qui les touchent dans leur esprit et dans leur corps.⁵⁵⁹

Unifying support in opposition to the powers-that-be allowed the Défense du vin movement, the Occitanistes of the COEA and Lutte Occitane and also the committee of Larzac to present themselves as attractive resistant forces which could curry the favour of regional youth. Controlling regional *patrimoine* and harnessing and cultivating

⁵⁵⁹ Martin, *Le Larzac: Utopies et réalités*, pp.36-37.

authenticity ensured that the Larzac Défense groups fed on a sense of moral transgression by the French state. In addition, the Larzac protestors drew in urban support internationalised their struggle and railed against an 'occupying' military. An association with the Third World was perhaps the defining characteristic of the Larzac resisters. Suddenly, the dormant Occitan nation was granted a similar cache to those resisting oppression all over the globe.

Tangled lines between Oc & Vine

The CRAV's ties to the Occitan movement at the time of Larzac were diffuse and difficult to define, although their leaders used the vocabulary of regionalism to motivate support for what were increasingly seen as the analogous struggles of "la race vigneronne" and "la race d'oc".⁵⁶⁰ This association was bound up into the climate of increasing intensity over the late 1960s and early 1970s that produced a remarkable convergence of causes in the Midi. Claude Marti, the famous Occitan singer, released a song in 1972 entitled 'La guerre du vin', for example, which celebrated the struggle facing winegrowers and the touristic exploitation of the Languedoc by "Metropolitan France".⁵⁶¹ This song was part of a wave of Occitan cultural produce which flooded the Languedoc-Roussillon during this period, as the area underwent something of a cultural renaissance inspired by the regional assertion of local militants. After 1972, the Occitan cultural movement made its mark on the Festival in Carcassonne, with plays and performances impressing an overtly Occitan character on a region already

⁵⁶⁰ Zancarini-Fournel, 'Montredon, 4 mars 1976: l'événement comme révélateur', p.8.

⁵⁶¹ P. Martin, 'Viticulture du Languedoc : une tradition syndicale en mouvement', *Pôle sud*, vol.9, no.9 (1998), p.77.

asserting its independence from outside pressure. In identifying this new torrent of potentially subversive regional patrimony, Zancarini-Fournel detects a significant upturn in the fortunes of Occitan cultural production after 1968, with an explosion in the popularity of theatrical and lyrical works glorifying the toil of the winemaker in an unfavourable climate.⁵⁶² Whilst acknowledging the different narrative trajectories of the Midi and Paris, it is necessary to stress that 1968 helped to develop a wider national audience for regional products. In the Occitan music of Marti, for example, one writer noted that the “‘jeune contestataire’ manifeste un évident désir de rentrer en contact avec la population réelle, avec cette ‘France sauvage’ que l’on n’enseigne pas dans les facultés”.⁵⁶³

Such a vogueish trend helped produce a cultural association between winegrowing as a profession and Occitan nationalism that coalesced on the defence of communities vulnerable to contemporary social developments. When Occitan militants met with Jean Vialade in 1974, they agreed that “Nous menons le même combat.”⁵⁶⁴ In a sense, the two forces of Oc and Vine (as defined by their loudest proponents in the Midi) can be seen as having been characterised by a clash between 'Old left' and 'New left'. Whilst the 'Défense du vin' movement conducted industrial activism which touched on socio-cultural issues, the Occitan movement essentially pursued socio-cultural activism which touched on industrial issues. The Midi vigneronns were cast as the victims of modernisation as the government pursued what seemed to be hardheaded structural reforms designed to offer the brightest future to those in tune

⁵⁶² Zancarini-Fournel, 'Récit: Le début de la fin', p.652.

⁵⁶³ Le Bris, *Les Fous du Larzac*, p.154.

⁵⁶⁴ Revel, *Montredon*, p.136.

with the institutional vision. As such, protest became characterised by the refusal of these actors to integrate fully with a system that they railed against, promoting a vein of collective action that occurred outside of political due process.⁵⁶⁵ Internal colonialism and narratives of Occitan resistance became the political currency of those wishing to pursue their grievances against the state, as movements increasingly converged to offer a regional response to what was in fact a national phenomenon. Michel Le Bris recounts a winegrowers' demonstration in 1971, which saw the mayor of Carcassonne address a raucous crowd and lament their status as "le désert languedocien ou encore la dernière colonie française."⁵⁶⁶

When vigneronns occupied Montpellier Cathedral early in 1971, police diagnosed a new vivacity and different tone in their protest movement. RG reports noted that "cette occupation relève du 'folklore' et prenner parfois des allures de kermesse".⁵⁶⁷ The notion of an Occitan revival had become bound to the concept of regional resistance in the eyes of the forces of order. The significance of the highly visible and symbolic acts of the winegrowers was in creating new touchstones of regional identity. These demonstrations, bearing the Occitan cross at their head, served as a new form of cultural fête, in which the symbols of Occitanie and the region's occupational identity could be communicated. The cross became a potent and communicative symbol, a tradition which had been reclaimed or reinvented to serve modern needs. Hobsbawm states that 'Invented tradition' is utilised to serve three main aims: establishing or symbolising social cohesion; legitimising authority and the

⁵⁶⁵ Lem, *Cultivating Dissent*, pp.48-49.

⁵⁶⁶ M. Le Bris, *Occitanie: Volem viure!* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p.37.

⁵⁶⁷ RG reports - 03/02/1971 - ADH 676W179.

socialisation and inculcation of beliefs.⁵⁶⁸ This theory does not suggest one conscious font for tradition, but rather that communities can subtly, and at times unconsciously, shape their own traditions as reflective of their aspirations and preoccupations. In this sense, the alignment of Occitan and viticultural groups is understandable during a period of social and political radicalism as they were mutually validating. In the same manner as 'Wine Deputies' set themselves up as ideal representations of the region's interests, so too did radical groups find validation in appeals to regional identity.

Likewise, the legitimacy of the winegrowers and the Occitan revival brought in other regional pressure groups. Reports on winegrowers' demonstrations lamented that "Comme à l'accoutumée, des éléments non viticulteurs se sont mêlés aux manifestants et se sont rapidement trouvés au premier rang lors des contacts avec le service d'ordre." In particular, the extreme left were seen by police to be playing an active role in disrupting winegrowers' demonstrations. The strict monitoring and knowledge of the CRAV's role suggests that the forces of order understood the difference between this organisation and some of the more raucous 'fellow travellers' seeking to communicate grievances against the state. RG reports lament that "les éléments gauchistes ne manqueront pas de profiler de la circonstance pour jouer les éléments provocateurs." This unwelcome involvement predicted at the Cathedral's occupation did indeed materialise and saw the arrest of 10 young men aged between 18 and 24. Their backgrounds (3 from Algeria, 1 from La Réunion, 1 from Syria and the others from Poitiers, Gironde, Pézenas, Nîmes and Alès) and their ages suggested they were not winegrowers (as in fact the report confirms) and also that they were not

⁵⁶⁸ E. Hobsbawm, 'Inventing traditions' in E. Hobsbawm; T. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983), p.9.

colluding in some organised violence. Rather they seem to have been simply joining in with a widespread communication of dissatisfaction. Reports did comment that "aucun d'eux connu du service pour une activité gauchiste antérieure, mais il n'est pas exclu qu'ils appartiennent à une organisation révolutionnaire."⁵⁶⁹ The fact that the youths were not from heartlands of Occitanie nor attached to winegrowers suggests merely a desire to be involved in a scuffle with police. Further reports suggested that "beaucoup de viticulteurs, âgés surtout, redoutent les excès qui risquent de voir le jour et désapprouvent les violence passées ou prévisibles."⁵⁷⁰ Indeed, this raises an interesting question relating to the CRAV but also to the more radical proponents of the Occitan movement. In interviews, many modern winegrowers expressed uneasiness with violence carried out by CRAV members whilst others were quicker to support what they saw as the "bras armée du syndicalisme".⁵⁷¹

Violent protests that pitted the forces of order against a clearly defined group claiming to speak for a region were of clear concern to government. When the identity of this group was obscured by clandestine action, however, support could waver and the forces of order were quick to suspect the involvement of some 'organisation révolutionnaire'. They were not too far from the truth, however. The fury of the CRAV fooled some into believing that the group were actively waging war against the French government in favour of separatist goals. Some reports have claimed that Colonel Gaddafi attempted to fund the CRAV as an instrument designed to topple the Republic. Libyan envoys are purported to have offered great sums of money to CRAV

⁵⁶⁹ RG reports - 05/05/1971 - ADH676W179.

⁵⁷⁰ RG reports - 16/02/1971 - ADH676W179.

⁵⁷¹ Interview with M. Coutellier - Chais des Vignerons - Lezignan-Corbieres Aude - 19-07-2010.

activists between 1973 and 1974 in a series of meetings in which hushed chatter turned to whispers of sedition. Common cause was not found, however, with the ever-garrulous Jean Vialade relating the outcome:

Je leur ai expliqué que nous ne menions pas le même combat. Nous, on se battait contre la politique d'un gouvernement qui nous asphyxiait, mais pas pour renverser la République.⁵⁷²

His rebuttal is far from patriotic, yet stresses that the conflict of the CRAV remained bound by economic concerns and was not driven by Occitan nationalism or the involvement of some revolutionary group. The alignment of the Occitan movement with the Défense movement was a worrying development for the forces of order, yet in both instances the Languedoc's republican inheritance prevented them tipping into revolutionary violence.

Part of the difficulty, then, in constructing an acceptable and unified identity for both movements was the exclusion of 'fellow travellers' tempted by more radical violence. This demonstrates again the boundaries of acceptability within in which both the Occitan and Défense movements operated. There was little support for the use of violence in defence of political, social and economic causes. By collating the changing opinions of interviewees⁵⁷³ with those expressed in the local and national media,⁵⁷⁴ we can discern other issues that challenged acceptance of CRAV actions. Namely, these were the visibility of leadership and the identification of a cause. Behind Cases and

⁵⁷² 'Quand Kadhafi voulait financer les actions du Comité d'action viticole', *Le Nouvel Observateur* 22/06/2008.

⁵⁷³ As will be analysed in later chapters, many interviewees expressed the opinion that the increasing use of Balaclavas influenced public opinion negatively by obscuring the objectives and leadership of the CRAV.

⁵⁷⁴ The sheer amount of newspapers willing to carry CRAV communiqués presented a snapshot of tacit if not open approval.

Castera, the CRAV of the 1960s and 1970s could act with near impunity as the charismatic orators turned heads at widely attended demonstrations. In later years when the group slunk to the shadows, the lack of an identifiable leadership saw public opinion waver. This theme will be explored in more detail in the following chapter, charting the history of the CRAV after Montredon and throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Yet this was, importantly, another strong bond to the legacy of 1907. Although the CRAV had attempted to divest itself of leaders after Castera's electoral defeat and instituted the 'porte-parole' model, Cases' prominence ensured that he was widely viewed as leader. In the tradition of Albert and Ferroul, Cases and Castera provided figureheads who could broadly control the movement, even if they tended to exercise this control loosely. Nonetheless, prominent leadership allowed the CRAV to resist the overtures of groups like the Libyans and maintain their republican rhetoric.

Fighting for the Past

Abandoning the modern phrase 'Agriculteurs' in favour of the rather out-dated label of 'paysans' was another of the principal unifying concepts which drew the sheepfarmers of Larzac, the miners of Decazeville and the winegrowers of the Midi under the aegis of one movement. This label allowed all three movements to connect themselves to the past and fostered an understanding of *patrimoine* that emerged in opposition to the central project of the Parisian powers-that-be. Indeed, such imagery was key to the movement's seeming potency. By uniting as 'paysans' fighting for a regional 'patrimoine' under threat from a predatory coloniser, the conceptual battle for

legitimacy was won. These sweeping terms allowed the co-option of historical precedents that might reinforce their resistant claim. So too did the vocabulary of the Albigensian crusade and 1907 re-enter common circulation.

In Claude Marti's 1973 album *Un país que vol viure*, the popular poet and singer explicitly sang about Montsegur and the city of Carcassonne as a stronghold of Occitan values.⁵⁷⁵ The singer's rise in popularity can perhaps be attributed to an 'après-Mai' surge in fondness for rural products amongst city-dwellers⁵⁷⁶ and the legacy of *la Nouvelle gauche*. In particular, their focus on Marcusean social alienation had pushed "les groupes marginalisés de la société", and in particular the young, record-buying public, towards varied and often contradictory forms of *anti-étatique*, anti-authoritarian and neo-Marxist political expression.⁵⁷⁷ Such eclectic political engagement encouraged support for movements that purported to represent the peripheries and especially those that did so in the imaginative rhetoric of Larzac. There, the presence of people like Marti helped make the cause accessible and attractive. The young, bearded Marti, from the marginalised South and recalling past revolts against authority, offered an attractive prospect for young record-buyers in Paris as much as young Occitanistes in the south. His association with the Larzac campaign helped expand the visibility of the Occitan movement and, by extension, that of Languedocian winegrowers. In the same album, Marti invoked 1907 as a *lieu de mémoire* of the Occitan movement in the song

⁵⁷⁵ Claude Marti, *Un país que vol viure* (Le Chant du Monde, 1973).

⁵⁷⁶ As discussed in Farmer, 'Memoirs of French peasant life', pp.362-379.

⁵⁷⁷ I. Gilcher-Holtey, 'La contribution des intellectuels de la Nouvelle Gauche à la définition du sens de Mai 68' in G. Dreyfus-Armand (et al.) (ed.), *Les Années 68: Le temps de la contestation* (Paris: Complexe, 2000), pp.96-98.

Lengadoc roge (Languedoc rouge), in which an oppressed regional working class found themselves in conflict with a repressive state.

Lengadoc roge
(Occitan)

Era l'an 1907
Los paures manifestavan
E volguèran pas tirar
Poble e soldats èran fraires
E volguèran pas tirar
Los soldats lengadocians
Governament te vengaràs
Amb una guèrra als Alemands
Era l'an 1907
Per Besièrs manifestavan
E volguèron pas tirar
Tu que voliàs pas morir
Entre flors desconegudas
T'an enterrat dins un lençol
De freda tèrra del Nord
Aquel an 1917
T'escrivia ta maire :
« Torna lèu per la vinha .
Plori quand la regardi »
S'es pirida la flor roja
S'es poirida la flor
L'an enterrada dins un lençol
Amargant de messorgas
S'es poirida la flor

Languedoc Rouge
(French)

C'était l'an 1907
Les pauvres manifestaient
Et ils n'ont pas voulu tirer
Peuple et soldats étaient frères
Ils n'ont pas voulu tirer
Les soldats languedociens
Gouvernement tu te vengeras '
Avec une guerre aux Allemands
C'était l'an 1907
Dans Béziers on manifestait
Et ils n'ont pas voulu tirer.
Toi qui ne voulais pas mourir
Parmi des fleurs inconnues
Ils t'ont enterré dans un drap
De terre froide du Nord.
Cette année 1917 r,
T'écrivait ta mère :
« Reviens vite, pour la vigne.
« Je pleure si je la regarde.»
Elle est pourrie la fleur rouge
Elle est pourrie la fleur
On l'a enterrée dans un drap
Amer de mensonges
Elle est pourrie la fleur rouge.

Marti's reference to the 'guerre aux Allemands' indicts the callousness of a government ready to send troops to the Great War whilst also raising the spectre of Occupation. Specifically, he is referring to the redeployment of the mutinous 17th regiment celebrated in the literature of 1907. The red flower symbolising the Occitan nation wilts over the grave of the lost Languedocian soldiers, sacrificed by a nation that had no need for them. In this song, the blanket of lies in which the flower is buried becomes a sad parody of the Occitan flag, subsumed by the pressure of the French state. Imbued with this imagery, the Occitan flag became supple enough to accommodate a variety of identities, narratives and causes under the banner of rural, regionalist resistance.

Relating 1907 to the struggles of the 1960s and 1970s saw the contemporary Occitaniste revival contextualised alongside a long history of protests in the wine industry. When the *Marseillaise des vigneron*s was recirculated in 1972, the concept of traditional regional republicanism blended with Occitan identity and a spirit of the agricultural. The winegrower's *Marseillaise* is indicative of the central conflicts that had survived the historicisation of 1907 – regionalism and uneven development.

Marseillaise des viticulteurs (*Auguste Rouquet*)

Pour affirmer nos droits de vivre,
Fils du Midi, assemblons-nous ;
Les fraudeurs à la mort nous livrent,
Qu'ils redoutent notre courroux ! (bis)
Entendez-vous dans nos campagnes,
Retentir nos cris et nos pleurs ?
Depuis trop longtemps les fraudeurs
Affament nos fils, nos compagnes.

Debout ! Viticulteurs !
C'est trop, trop de malheurs !
Luttons ! luttons !
Pour que la faim déserte nos maisons !

Quoi! ces fraudeurs dans leurs richesses
Riraient de nos pauvres foyers !
Eux qui vivent de nos détresses
Devant eux nous verraient ployer (bis)
Quoi ! nous dépeuplerions nos terres
Des vignes aux pampres juteux!
Là où vécut nos aïeux
Nous ne trouverions que misère !

Debout ! Viticulteurs !
C'est trop, trop de malheurs !
Luttons ! luttons !
Et, sans faiblir, ensemble nous vaincrons !

De notre vin nous voulons vivre.
Qu'on écoute enfin notre voix;
Que des fraudeurs on nous délivre,
Qu'on nous donne ce qu'on nous doit. (bis)
Accourez ceux de Carcassonne,
De Béziers et de Lézignan,
D'Argeliers, Nîmes, Perpignan,
Coursan, Montpellier et Narbonne !

Fils du Midi, Debout !
Nous irons jusqu'au bout!
Luttons ! luttons !
Et, sans faiblir, ensemble nous vaincrons !

The *Marseillaise des viticulteurs* reinvigorated the issues of 1907 to relate them to a specific moment in the resurgence of the Occitan identity that coincided with widespread viticultural unrest. Highlighting issues of fraud helped to demonstrate the long-standing nature of the Midi's grievances. Indeed, interviewees equated the lessons of 1907 with contemporary challenges to vignerons, with several stating that lessons could still be learned and one emphasising that they faced "les mêmes questions".⁵⁷⁸ The line "De notre vin nous voulons vivre" is echoed in the frequent reuse of that phrase in support of the winegrowers' movement. Likewise, the notion that riches do exist in the North and that others are profiting from the misfortune of the Midi remained a primary motivation for the CRAV, who frequently spoke out against 'fiscalité'. Bechtel astutely points out that the story of 1907, whilst "oublié à Paris, est resté comme une blessure profonde dans le Languedoc rural."⁵⁷⁹ In this sense, 1907 has retained a certain mythology, which casts it as a revolt characterised by "fierté d'identitaire"⁵⁸⁰ alongside economic and political motivations.

Contemporary manipulation of 1907 was aimed at exacerbating the tensions between Paris and the regions in an effort to advance the agenda of regionalist political parties. By appropriating the national anthem to support a regionalist agenda, the Midi vignerons clearly distinguished themselves from the Metropolitan centre of France.

⁵⁷⁸ Interview with M. Coutellier - Chais des Vignerons - Lezignan-Corbieres Aude - 19-07-2010.

⁵⁷⁹ G. Bechtel, 1907, *La Grande Révolte du Midi* (Paris, Laffont, 1976), p.325.

⁵⁸⁰ Interview with Jean-Noel Bousquet - Chateau Grand Moulin - Lezignan-Corbieres Aude - 19-07-2010.

Their Marseillaise speaks of blood and triumph over despotism but far removed from the traditional Revolutionary import. Such fondness for concepts of “primordially”⁵⁸¹ and traditional values encouraged the proliferation of ‘ethno-history’ and regional myth making, in which aspects of regional heritage were extrapolated into myths of more contemporary relevance.⁵⁸²

One of the principal bonds that linked the ‘Myth of 1907’ to the Occitan revival was its tendency to encourage a search for villains from without the region. In this case, other regions and other countries have loomed like predators threatening the Midi's fragile stability. Thus, as Jean-Phillippe Martin eloquently states, "Négociants du Nord de la France, producteurs et surtout négociants étrangers, gouvernements français et d'Algérie ou d'Italie sont unis aux yeux des producteurs dans un étrange complot extérieur."⁵⁸³ It was this suspicion that drove the adoption of a siege mentality and encouraged recourse to historical moments of conflict. Under this siege, dissenting groups within the Midi were driven together in a fragile alliance, with a temporary convergence of cause during the 1970s. 'Lutte Occitane' highlighted the links between Oc and Vine as it spoke to CRAV adherent Jean Vialade, whose interview in 1972 highlighted the economic plight of winegrowers and railed against the detrimental role of centralised government in choking regional development:

Je dis que c'est le Midi qui soutient l'industrie du Nord. Nous sommes exploités par le Nord d'une façon détournée. Autrefois c'est

⁵⁸¹ Lem, *Cultivating Dissent*, p.166.

⁵⁸² A.D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Polity, Cambridge, 1995), pp.62-63.

⁵⁸³ J-P Martin, 'Les gauches contestaires en Languedoc, singularités, différenciations et évolutions, 1945-2000' in G. Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Vignobles du Sud XVIe-XXe siècles* (Montpellier, Publications Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2003), pp.665-6.

l'exploitation par les hommes, aujourd'hui c'est l'exploitation par l'économie c'est encore pire.⁵⁸⁴

The roundabout way in which the exploitation of the Midi was achieved mirrored the roundabout way in which the two regional movements meshed. Vialade's citation of economic exploitation helped to demonstrate the unifying rhetoric of the movements. Likewise, his reference to 'autrefois' conjures up the images of historical repression associated with the Midi and Occitanisme. Yet further links between the movement were demonstrated when 'Lutte Occitane' reprinted material from 'Echo des Corbières', the organ of the CRAV. The two publications shared some common issues, especially relating to the conservation of the Languedocian countryside and the strong links between traditional industries and Occitan culture. Indeed, the sign-off on the article could well describe the editorial team behind both publications - "Un group d'occitans indignes".⁵⁸⁵ The causes that promoted interaction between winegrowers and the Occitan movement held strong associations with a traditional regional identity and the agricultural, binding both movements in their resistance to certain tropes of centralised modernisation.

As described in the last chapter, the formation of MIVOC in 1975 by a winegrower long involved with the CRAV forged a tangible example of the cooperation between winegrowers and the regionalist movement. Jean Huillet, in his trademark cowboy boots, blue jeans, earring, and handlebar moustache became involved with Occitanisme in the early 1970s through *Lutte Occitane*, the avowedly

⁵⁸⁴ 'La parole à Vialade', *Lutte Occitane* (November 1972) - ADG JR1008.

⁵⁸⁵ 'Scandale à Minerve', *Lutte Occitane* (December 1972 - January 1973) - ADG JR1008.

socialist Occitan party, and carried their message into his participation in the CRAV.

The ideology of MIVOC was fairly simply defined:

chaque viticulture méridional 'cultivent son pétassou de vigne' doit pouvoir percevoir un salaire directement lié à son travail (la culture d'une surface de référence devant donner droit à un salaire minimum garanti) et ce, quasi indépendamment des conditions du marché.⁵⁸⁶

In 1975, MIVOC named the enemies of Languedocian viticulture as "le négoce... le pouvoir politique... et 'les grandes propriétaires fonciers'.⁵⁸⁷ These enemies were characterised as external, Parisian, centralising and of the political right. The CRAV had little cause to argue.

Moreover, Huillet published an article in the *Paysan du Midi* on 13 February 1975 that specifically utilised the vocabulary of the Occitan movement in defence of winegrowers. In this article, he linked the wine industry to the regional economy, highlighting the extent to which their fortunes were interlinked:

A travers le viticulture c'est l'économie de la région qui est atteinte, l'industrie, déjà, a fait les frais de l'opération. Pour que dans les villages on ne lise pas: 'Ici chômeurs naturels' à la place de 'Ici vin naturel', il nous faut rester mobilisés et organiser dans chaque canton les forces qui feront aboutir nos revendications. Volem viure al país!

Huillet associated regional identity strongly with regional viticulture as the predominant economic activity of a Languedocian working class. His attachment to the Occitan movement, the CRAV and also to Socialism linked class, region and

⁵⁸⁶ Y. Gilbert & J. Meistersheim, *Orateurs en Languedoc 1981-1986: La recomposition d'une imaginaire régionale* (Paris: UDR-EASA, 1986), p.45.

⁵⁸⁷ J. Martin, *Histoire de la nouvelle gauche paysanne* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005), pp.137-142.

regionalism. For Huillet, 'l'économie' was viticulture, 'la région' was the Languedoc viticole and the 'pâis' was Occitanie.⁵⁸⁸ Their interaction was seen as intuitive and their inter-dependency was reiterated as a political certainty deployed in opposition to the political and geographical "extérieur".⁵⁸⁹ That Huillet signed off this published article in the name of the CRAV, bound the organisation to the Occitan movement in the struggle against regional redundancy.

This direct association marked a tangible interaction of the 'civilisation of the vine' as both groups took an active stance in claiming the authenticity of their own regional *patrimoine*. This adapted *patrimoine* was the potent force that brought the broader regional movement closer to the winegrower's widespread economic grievances in the post-war period: a heady mix of emotive ethno-politicking and enthusiastic class entreaties. The contemporary political relevance of regional economic imperatives papered over the gap between the conceptual 'primordialism' of Occitan nationalism and its modern significance as a regionalist movement. Likewise the cyclical structure of the Languedoc's wine crises ensured reference to tradition and inherited memory, like the 'foundation myth' of 1907. In this manner it becomes possible to understand the conflation of the militant viticultural movement into the broader church of Occitanisme. This emotive narrative carried within it the very determinants of direct action by harbouring a sense of historical injustice and highlighting breaches in the 'moral economy'. The personalisation of labour in the vineyards served only to bring these injustices to the hearth. When the region – and the

⁵⁸⁸ 'Volem viure al pâis', *Paysan du Midi* 13/02/1975 - ADG JR438-26.

⁵⁸⁹ Martin, *Histoire de la nouvelle gauche paysanne*, p.142.

dominant regional industry of wine – lost out in the stakes of modernisation it could be presented as an attack against the proud population of a region.

The subsequent period of intense radicalisation which culminated in the shooting at Montredon created a new vocabulary of Southern protest. Montredon arose as a result of the impunity with which the CRAV had conducted itself in the preceding year, now loosely allied with a group of Occitan nationalists railing against the internal colonialism of the north. These factors were considerable motivations towards violence, and explain how protest turned bloody so quickly. Importantly, the *Défense* movement remained republican in its focus and never fully integrated with any of the radical groups with which it flirted. Likewise, although the Occitan movement exchanged flags with other separatist groups, they never engaged in the same violence. Instead of a natural corollary of the 1968 hangover, the violence of 1976 can be seen as a natural development of a very different dialectic, distinguishing Southern protest from its contemporary milieu. The relevance of 1968 to the drama at Montredon is as a contextual example of the effects of radicalising opposition groups, and the catastrophe which the convergence of ‘antiétatique’ feeling can constitute when political dialogue fails. Indeed, although commemoration of 1976 may have failed at an official level, it is important to remember that whilst 1968 may still sell posters: “Le vignoble est toujours en crise et il n'oublie pas.”⁵⁹⁰

Three weeks after the Montredon *fusillade*, a winegrower called Albert Teisseyre was arrested and charged with “tentative d’homicide volontaire”,⁵⁹¹ a charge which

⁵⁹⁰ ‘Il y a 30 ans, deux tués à Montredon’, *La Dépêche*, 06/03/2006.

⁵⁹¹ ‘Albert Teisseyre renvoyé devant les assises de l’Aude’, *L’Indépendant*, 24/11/1980 – ADA 98J8.

was serious, but not such as to threaten his freedom. Four years after the events, Teisseyre was arrested again, with sketchy photographic evidence suggesting that it was he that fired the fatal shot. There was outrage that the prosecution had taken so long to arrive in court, with the PCF describing it as a “nouvelle provocation contre les viticulteurs et la viticulture.”⁵⁹² Maffre-Beaugé promised the support “de toutes les organisations viticoles.”⁵⁹³ The court case spanned the 5th anniversary of the shootings as legal changes complicated proceedings.⁵⁹⁴ The difficulty lay in determining whether Teisseyre was involved in a political act or a criminal one, with the Peyreffite law of 1981 allowing him to be tried for a criminal charge despite his predated conviction in 1976. This in turn posed serious questions about the CRAV and their role. The case encountered a series of delays, with an original judgement date of November 1983 postponed into 1984.⁵⁹⁵ Finally, on the 2nd February 1984 Teisseyre was pardoned under the Amnesty law brought in by Mitterrand’s government in 1981.⁵⁹⁶ Cases described the amnesty as a victory that was essential to maintain “la paix sociale”, congratulating the courts on reaching a sensible verdict.⁵⁹⁷ Inevitably challenged in the Appeals court by the prosecutors, the case rumbled on before Teisseyre was fully acquitted in July 1985, a verdict his lawyer described as “historique”.⁵⁹⁸ This protracted trial revealed the scars that Montredon had left. The amnesty allowed the Midi to come to terms with the

⁵⁹² ‘Affaire Teisseyre’, *La Dépêche*, 25/11/1980 – ADA 98J8.

⁵⁹³ ‘Teisseyre aura l’appui de toute la viticulture’, *L’Indépendant*, 29/11/1980 – ADA 98J8.

⁵⁹⁴ ‘Montredon: on replaide’, *L’Indépendant*, 02/05/1981 – ADA 98J8.

⁵⁹⁵ ‘Et un délai plus!’, *Midi-Libre*, 30/11/1983 – 98J8.

⁵⁹⁶ ‘Pas de procès’, *Midi-Libre*, 08/02/1984.

⁵⁹⁷ ‘L’amnistie pour Teisseyre’, *Midi-Libre*, 08/02/1984.

⁵⁹⁸ ‘Teisseyre: Suite et fin’, *L’Indépendant* 05/07/1985.

human cost of the events, with monuments erected in memory of the fallen.⁵⁹⁹ The failures of political representation that had driven the Défense movement into a cycle of radicalisation had created monsters and martyrs of ordinary winegrowers. When the dust settled, however, the gaunt Castera surmised that all that remained was “une honte partagée.”⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁹ Granite *stèles* were erected for both victims by the site of the gunfight, only around a hundred metres apart.

⁶⁰⁰ ‘Montredon: le récit’, *Midi Libre*, 04/03/1996 – ADA 98J8.

Chapter 5:

Montredon to Mitterrand: Socialism, syndicalism and the South (1976-1984)

The bullets that cut down Emile Pouytès and Commander Le Goff at Montredon were a blow to the fragile unity of the Défense movement, challenging the CRAV's legitimacy and its modes of operation. In the decade after 1976, the compact between winegrowers, local elites and the Socialist Party in the Midi slowly disintegrated as a new development strategy supplanted the Défense movement's rebellious appeal.⁶⁰¹ The government and local officials set out to push the Midi into improving harvest quality and reducing the volume of production by encouraging uprooting (*arrachage*) and incentivising the amelioration of wine. The nature of government reform meant that there was a necessary delay before the changes in legislation began to have a genuinely transformative effect upon the Languedoc. As such, frustration rankled as it appeared that the government was inactive. Delays in perceiving the impact of Chirac's plan led to a consensus that it had failed.

As such, the appointment, in 1975, of Yves Bentegeac to the post of *Commissaire à la rénovation du vignoble méridional*, was an attempt to build upon the Chirac plan of

⁶⁰¹ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.239.

1973.⁶⁰² After Chirac's term as Minister of Agriculture, he was nominated as Prime Minister under Giscard. Chirac's national plan to reinvigorate the stagnating French economy – which had until 1973 enjoyed a smooth period of growth – was the basis of the Seventh Plan, covering 1975-1980. Yet, in 1976, President Giscard replaced Chirac as Prime Minister with Raymond Barre, whose drive to modernise the French economy eschewed interventionist methods or the use of budget deficits as a stimulus. Taking the German economy as his model, Barre set out to encourage efficiency measures and help France's industry modernise.⁶⁰³ The Bentegeac report adapted this modernisation drive to the Languedoc *viticole* and was completed in 1976, although withheld until the *Midi Libre* published it in 1977. Even as Bentegeac set to work on the Languedoc's wine industry, he was criticised for his failure to engage openly in dialogue with the regional press.⁶⁰⁴

Bentegeac's plan did not represent a break with what had been outlined in Chirac's vision, but rather the wider deployment of subtler methods to push the Midi towards modernisation at a more rapid pace. The cornerstone of Bentegeac's findings was the acknowledgement that although speculation was having an impact on the Midi's wine industry, the root problem was that too much bad wine was being produced. The creation of *groupements de producteurs* in the Chirac Plan placed the onus

⁶⁰² This new post acknowledged the structural problems facing the region and the failure of previous attempts to reform them. Bentegeac was a prefect in Corsica between 1977 and 1979, before becoming Prefect for the Hérault between 1986 and 1990.

⁶⁰³ Peter Holmes, 'Broken dreams: Economic policy in Mitterrand's France', in S. Mazey, *Mitterrand's France* (London: Crook Helm, 1987), pp.33-34. For greater discussion of Giscard's approach to governance and formulation of economic policy alongside advisors like Barre, see S. Berstein, R. Rémond, J. Sirinelli (eds.), *Les années Giscard: la politique économique 1974-1981* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2009); S. Berstein, R. Rémond, J. Sirinelli (eds.), *Les années Giscard: institutions et pratiques politiques 1974-1978* (Paris: Fayard, 2003).

⁶⁰⁴ 'Commissaire à la renovation du vignoble', *Midi-Libre* 10/09/1975 - ADA 98J8.

for meeting government targets on individual producers, ensuring they were available to receive subsidies and funding.⁶⁰⁵ Across the Midi, uptake had been slow, and the establishment of *groupements* would only take off considerably after 1978.⁶⁰⁶ Bentegeac sought to encourage adhesion as a means of stressing the politics of quality, accentuating the national focus on increased efficiency and modernisation. Each *groupement* was required to detail the greatest determinants of harvest yield (planting techniques, grape varieties and the size of vine holding). The attraction for growers was increased subsidy and - at Bentegeac's request - a simplification of the registration requirements. Yet Bentegeac was not a popular figure and suspicion lingered about his reforms. The *Midi Libre* confronted the bemused Minister with an ugly nickname he had earned from winegrowers: "Belphégor", one of the seven princes of Hell, who coaxed sinners to ruin with inventive schemes and outlandish promises.⁶⁰⁷ He duly protested:

Alors "Belphégor", je veux bien, c'est drôle et cela prouve que les Languedociens ne manquent pas d'humour, mais j'ai été poussé bien malgré moi à jouer ce rôle.

Yet there was devilry afoot. The reform presaged seismic shifts in the landscape of viticultural representation. By putting winegrowers in charge of improving their own quality - linking subsidy and sales - the government embarked on a policy of "responsibilisation" of producers. Placing different cooperatives in these *groupements* moved the locus of decision-making away from the village and towards an extra-local

⁶⁰⁵ P. Muller, *Le technocrate et le paysan* (Paris: Edition ouvrières, 1984), pp.43-48.

⁶⁰⁶ J. Martin, 'Le syndicalisme viticole en Languedoc sous la Ve République', *Économie rurale*, no.237 (1997), p. 47.

⁶⁰⁷ 'Commissaire à la renovation du vignoble', *Midi-Libre* 10/09/1975 - ADA 98J8.

administrative unit. Likewise, the *groupements* changed traditional marketing relationships, encouraging winegrowers to bypass the intermediaries of the *négoce* and sell direct to wholesalers and distributors (with around 43% of wine sold directly like this by 1987).⁶⁰⁸ By disengaging the *grands négoce* (the merchants consistently vilified for their 'fiscalité' since the Revolt of 1907) from their traditional role as primary movers in the wine market, the government removed much that had generated opposition from the *Défense* movement. The villainous role of the *négoce* was in some sense forced upon the very men who had organised protests against them in the past. Likewise, by channeling government support through these new structures, they linked the politics of quality directly to the availability of subsidies. "Belphégor's" scheme was slowly but certainly coaxing the Midi's traditional *Défense* movement to ruin.

Another sweetener designed to drive adhesion to the modernisation agenda was the introduction of an *Office du vin*, which had long been a policy reserved for the Socialists. The Office National Interprofessionnel des Vins de Table (ONIVIT) was formed in 1976 with the express purpose of improving the quality of wine flowing from the Midi, guiding the market in the long term towards a more sustainable and production.⁶⁰⁹ The formation of ONIVIT from the ashes of the old *Institut des Vins de Consommation Courante* (IVCC), added the new politics of quality to the old duties of the IVCC.⁶¹⁰ Indeed, the cornerstone of this amelioration was "contrats de qualité"

⁶⁰⁸ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, pp.232-234.

⁶⁰⁹ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.371.

⁶¹⁰ The IVCC having been formed in the aftermath of viticultural demonstrations in 1953 (see Chapter 2).

which were signed by adherents and endorsed "sous l'égide des Pouvoirs Publics."⁶¹¹ The innovation did bring with it some tangible improvements in the nature of the wine market. The Office ensured that the largest wine merchants signed up to agreements to decrease the amount of wine they imported, especially from Italy, whilst also negotiating prices at the start of the season.⁶¹² As a national body, the benefit of restricting imports was clear, whilst early and binding negotiations reduced the amount of wine withheld from the market speculatively and helped remove some of the volatility from wine prices. ONIVIT's creation, however, failed to silence traditionalist pressure groups in the Midi viticole.⁶¹³

Feeling that the government was doing little more than attempting to appease the developing furore in the South, syndical groups were open in their criticism of ONIVIT's ability to effect change. With the focus on improving quality and not defending price, the patience of some winegrowers was short-lived. Even the Minister of Agriculture Christian Bonnet admitted in the Assembly that "Il ne répond sans doute pas à toutes les ambitions de ceux qui en prônaient la création depuis longtemps."⁶¹⁴ The *Office du vin* sat representatives from the wine world face to face with state functionaries in an attempt to shake up the staid representative structures of the Midi which had failed to offer new solutions outside state interventionism. On the winegrowers' side, Jean-Baptiste Benet (the long-standing President of the CGVM) and Emmanuel Maffre-Beaugé were reluctant participants in the compromise of the Office

⁶¹¹Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.372

⁶¹² 'Montredon, trois ans apres...', *Le Midi-Libre*, 10/03/1979 – ADA 98J9

⁶¹³ J. Martin, 'Viticulture du Languedoc: une tradition syndicale en mouvement', *Pôle Sud*, vol.9, no.1 (November, 1998), p78.

⁶¹⁴ JO Débats Parlementaires, Assemblée Nationale, 4/11/1976, p.7638.

du vin. Indeed, as early as May 1976, Benet was already criticising the "inertité de l'office" and its inability to properly control imports and both men eventually withdrew in protest.⁶¹⁵

This shift towards 'responsibilisation' was a slow and uneven process. In part, changing attitudes amongst the winegrowers of the Midi can be seen through the arrival of the FNSEA as a political force in the region, representing something of the success of Giscard's modernising liberalism in changing modes of production across France. Yet, as mentioned in Chapter 3, the 'neo-corporatist' role of the FNSEA produced conflicts with regional unions, especially whilst the FNSEA's vision of agricultural modernisation remained different to its regional counterparts. The FNSEA's attraction lay in its long-standing presence on the national syndical scene and its access to government. The national farmers union's stance on imports, fraud and speculation was much the same as the most ardent interventionists amongst the CRAV, yet the difference lay in the notion that such external pressures could be overcome by changing structures and modernising production methods. Whilst the CRAV had come to define the ideology of 'la Défense', the FNSEA came to embody 'l'offensive moderniste' in the Languedoc. These were not mutually exclusive, though belief in the future required both heavy investment and the sacrifice of some traditions on the behalf of already struggling winegrowers, a short-term sacrifice that many CRAV activists felt was altogether too onerous.

MODEF had remained the dominant 'national' syndical organisation in the South ever since its split from the more politically conservative FNSEA in 1959.⁶¹⁶ The

⁶¹⁵ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.372.

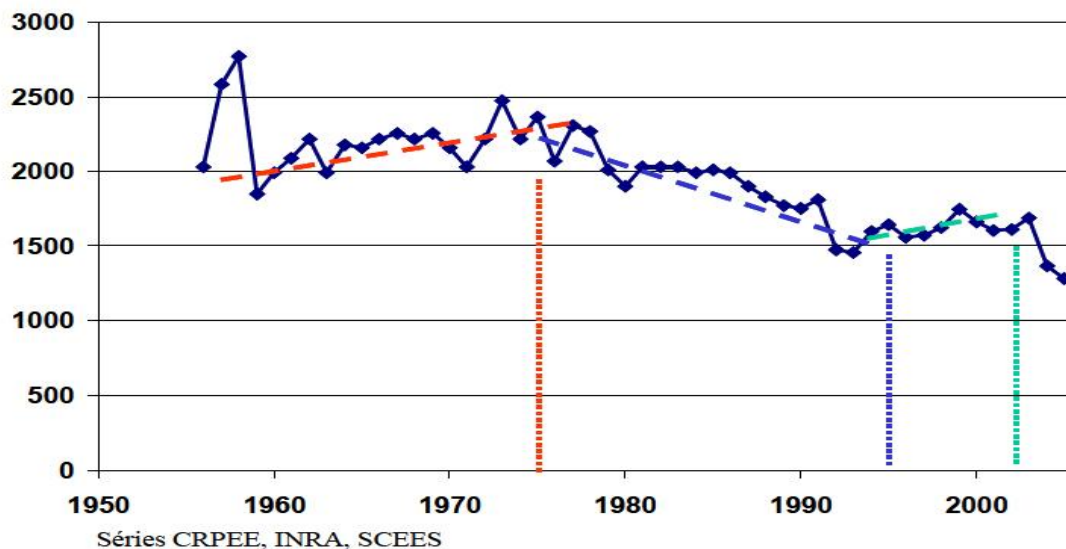
CGVM remained the principal mouthpiece of the Languedoc's syndical heritage, whilst MODEF represented a satellite of the CGVM (with overlapping members and shared priorities). The modernisation of the national economy necessitated liberalisation, yet in the vineyards of the South the CRAV continued to campaign against imports and call for government intervention in the regulation of wine prices. The *groupements* were weapons designed to undermine these causes by gradually shifting production away from the low quality wine coming out of high-yield vineyards (often from the plains of the Languedoc) and towards better quality, lower yield production (typically stemming from the coasts and hills).⁶¹⁷ The more temperate climates of the coast and hills traditionally allowed for lower yields and more concentrated must (unfermented grape juice), usually permitting finer winemaking whilst the searing heat of the Languedocian plains contributed to a 'thin' must brought on by high-yields from grapes grown for quality and not quantity.⁶¹⁸ Such plains wine had constituted much of the 'vin de la bibine' that had marred the Midi's reputation. Encouraging better quality production and challenging growers to gamble on modernisation was an ambitious policy aimed at developing the region and removing it from a long cycle of established

⁶¹⁶ See Chapter 2.

⁶¹⁷ This is not intended to dismiss the quality or potential of wine production from the plains. The coastal plain constitutes much of the modern *AOC Coteaux de Languedoc* which now produces many fine wines as a result of accentuating natural qualities instead of driving quantity. North of Narbonne towards the foot of the Larzac steppe, *Clairette du Languedoc* (classified 1948), *Faugères* and *St Chinian* (both classified in 1982 as part of the quality drive) have long represented prestige Languedocien production. East of Montpellier at the foot of the Pic St Loup mountain is *Pic St Loup* (a sub-region of the *Coteaux*) one of the region's most prominent poles of growth. Likewise, west of Narbonne on the limestone 'island' of Massif de La Clape lies *La Clape* (another sub-region of the *Coteaux*), which contains many of the Languedoc's most prominent vineyards.

⁶¹⁸ The Midi's traditionally successful *Fitou* (from the Occitan 'fita' indicating the old southern border of France) successfully demonstrates this dynamic, with two distinct areas of *Maritime* and *Hautes-Corbières* marking the coast and the hills (classified 1980). It sandwiches *Corbières* (classified 1985) which thrives on the stony soil between *Fitou*'s islands of sea and slopes.

production. Increasingly, the CRAV came to speak for the losers in this modernisation struggle, not so much 'dinosaurs' as traditional producers who suddenly found themselves out of tune with the institutional vision for their region.



Changes in adjusted value of Languedocian agriculture over time (in Euros per hectare, 2003)⁶¹⁹

The table above highlights three distinct periods (marked with vertical lines) which show strong statistical characteristics. The plotted points indicate the adjusted value of Languedocian agriculture since 1950, with a dotted line representing a best-fit trend that follows the varying values. The first period, from 1950-1975, corresponds to Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis, in which the growth of volume instituted a 'productivist' mindset which developed a complementary system of representation. Whilst this period saw the CMA, the Ligue and the CRSV jostle to speak for the mass producers of the *Languedoc viticole*, the most enduring product of this period was the CRAV. The second period, from 1975 to 1995, corresponds largely to this and the next chapter, highlighting a sustained period during which both the surface area of vines

⁶¹⁹ J. Touzard, N. Klajman, *Développement régional Agriculture et IAA en Languedoc-Roussillon* (Montpellier: INRA, 2006), p.12.

and the average price for wine decreased.⁶²⁰ It is certainly no coincidence that, after Chirac's attempt to modernise the *Languedoc viticole* in 1973 and then Bentegeac's supplementary upheavals, the surface area of vines decreased. The encouragement of better quality, lower-yield production squeezed out the many small growers who had replanted or increased production during the first period.⁶²¹ Between 1976 and 2006, some 2 out of 3 small agricultural businesses have disappeared, whilst land used for agriculture decreased only 3%.⁶²² These were fluctuating figures (especially during the period after 1995 when an upturn in regional fortunes led to replanting) yet demonstrate the trend towards larger consolidated plots producing less voluminous but more expensive wines.

The table below illustrates some of the changes that were the backdrop to disillusionment with government reform. High levels of ownership amongst the soon-to-be retired meant that many vineyards were sold on, often to be consolidated within larger plots held by wealthy growers and leading to a decline in the number of smallholders. Likewise, a shrinking coverage of vines meant that winegrowing was no longer as central to the regional economy as during the early post-war years. These smallholding growers connected with the region's past were the natural constituency of the CRAV. Whilst the Midi's birth rate rose during this period, the role of agriculture in the region diminished. Between 1962 and 1990 the number of those

⁶²⁰ The price of wine continued to fall as the impacts of reform lagged slightly. Quality had not yet improved as planned.

⁶²¹ The third period, although not strictly relevant at this juncture, runs from 1995 to 2002, covering a period in which the politics of quality began to pay off and in which growth in value resumed.

⁶²² Touzard, Klajman, *Développement régional*, p.15.

employed in agriculture in the Languedoc-Roussillon fell from 31% to 9%.⁶²³ A compact of viticultural unity had defined the evolution of the CRAV and constituted perhaps its greatest strength. The gradual loss of this consensus undermined the CRAV's relevance. Its irrevocable alteration was not simply the result of regional economic and social changes, but also stemmed from national political developments that exacerbated these causes.⁶²⁴ As these trends robbed it of this mandate, destructive acts against the state disguised the CRAV's frailty. In reality, the CRAV's core support was shrinking and this placed more pressure on those they continued to speak for. Their supporters were not disappearing, simply becoming less central than it had been, a problematic concept in a region where identity had become so embroiled with occupation.

| | 1970 | 1979 | 1988 | 2000 | 2005 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Number of plots | 105,900 | 83,700 | 68,800 | 43,800 | 35,800 |
| Area under agricultural use (HA) | 1,119,100 | 1,065,300 | 1,012,200 | 965,300 | 958,600 |
| Plots under 20HA (%) | 87.8 | 84.5 | 81.8 | 73.7 | 68.7 |
| Proprietor over 55 years old (%) | 52.0 | 49.0 | 50.8 | 41.5 | 41.3 |

*Key facts about the agricultural sector in the Languedoc-Roussillon*⁶²⁵

The Midi was not allergic to change and neither were its winegrowers unwilling to improve quality. The gamble constituted by investing in improving quality, however, may well have seemed a risky one alongside still rising foreign imports from countries that certified quality wine without the same stringent legislation as France. Neither were the CRAV innately against improving the quality of

⁶²³ Rouzier, *Le Languedoc-Roussillon 1950-2001*, p.31.

⁶²⁴ This is the central thesis of McFalls, *In vino veritas*.

⁶²⁵ Touzard, Klajman, *Développement régional*, p.16.

Languedocian wine, rather they were protesting against both rapid modernisation and the blunt economic tools (such as *arrachage*) which threatened to shake up the regional economy.⁶²⁶ Nevertheless, the work of regulating and encouraging quality wines in France was an ongoing project, which ran alongside efforts to curb imports. Yet their impact was often slow in being felt, leading to public criticism and a sense that the government was insensitive to their problems. To some extent, this has led to a perception that winegrowers' grievances have historically been "linked with short term difficulties."⁶²⁷ There was, here, a problem of perspective which governed the sympathy of politicians to the cause of winegrowers who were often unwilling, or unable, to wait patiently for the long-term impacts of reform to be felt.

Even in the Languedoc, some growers who had been supportive CRAVistes were amongst the first to step away from the philosophy of productivism. In these 'ameliorative' plans of the government, some growers saw a new opportunity for progress and regionally accented development. In 1976, Charles Ramirès, an Audois winegrower, was the creator of the first *Fédération Départementale des Caves Particulières*. This group sought to unite the independent growers of higher quality wines, although importantly the focus still lay on small and medium landholders.⁶²⁸ By 29 June 1978, the *Confédération Nationale des Caves Particulières* (CNCP) comprised 8 Departmental

⁶²⁶ *Arrachage* remained a part of the Bentegeac plan's arsenal for regulating market fluctuations, as it had done and would continue to do for all top-down attempts to stabilise the wine market. For further details of Bentegeac's use of *arrachage*, see JO Compte Rendu, Assemblée Nationale, 16/12/1976, p.9190.

⁶²⁷ Interview with Alfredo Manuel Coelho - Associate Researcher - UMR MOISA SupAgro Montpellier - Herault - 29-07-2010 (Response given in English).

⁶²⁸ Retrieved from *Vignerons Indépendants de France* website [<http://www.vignerons-independent.com/pro.php?menu=32>][Accessed: 03/10/2011].

franchises, with the former JV leader Achille Gauch as its first President.⁶²⁹ Gauch's involvement in the CRAV had brought independent winegrowers together with cooperative members in a semblance of the 'inter-classisme' of 1907. In this new climate of modernisation, the discrepancy between these two categories of growers would once again become an issue in the Languedoc. The modernisation agenda that Bentegeac's Plan pursued in earnest was responsible for the re-emergence of divisions amongst the *milieu viticole*. The shocks of Montredon may have shaken the unity of the Défense movement. However, it was the impact of government efforts to rationalise the *Languedoc viticole* that isolated and divided the CRAV.

The creation of *groupements* had been a means of moving towards modernisation and ensuring that government subsidies were maximised for struggling growers. 'Responsibilisation' was the bitter medicine disguised by attractive subsidy. Bentegeac's plan favoured large producers and different areas within the region (the broadly quality-producing coast and hills over the quantity producing plains - a divide somewhat represented by Gauch's CNCP). In later years, the model for Bentegeac's style of modernisation came to be termed the 'Bordeaux model' (low yields and high-value production based on strict geographic delimitations). Yet, as it was forced upon the *Languedoc viticole*, it chafed against centuries of tradition that bound occupation with identity and lifestyle. The CRAV's role as the armed wing of the Défense movement charged it with resisting these 'external' challenges - essentially becoming the voice of the 'losers' in this modernisation drive. Their focus on representing the producers of the plains whilst simultaneously calling for unity offered nothing to those

⁶²⁹ This group would remain an important aspect for the Midi's development and, eventually, would be renamed as *Vignerons Indépendants de France*, in April 2003.

successful and adaptive growers whose attempts to invest in modernisation worked well over time. Essentially the voice of the plains drowned out the coast and hills as they had greater need of concessions and more reason to succumb to the short-term expedient of *arrachage*. It would take some 20 years for a competing model to take the place of Bentegeac's 'Bordeaux' inspired plan.⁶³⁰

The CRAV after Montredon: Imports and Action

Regional defence was sacrificed at the altar of regional development and transformed the traditional character of the Languedoc and its viticultural heritage. Just as regional patrimoine had lost its radical edge and become institutionalised, so too did the mainstream of viticultural representation move away from the defiant mass movement of the 1970s. Yet the CRAV remained active. The threat of European integration delayed the impact of modernisation on the base of CRAV operations, bolstering their faltering relevancy to the contemporary Languedeocien wine industry. Indeed, against this bleak background, opposition to European integration encouraged something of a rejuvenation, albeit temporarily.

A programme of voluntary *arrachage* in 1976 granted compensation to winegrowers who uprooted their vine stock and agreed not to replant within 6 years. The European Community continued this policy for three consecutive seasons, with

⁶³⁰ In the late 1990s the 'New World model' was more widely applied to the Midi. This saw the encouragement of technological investment to ameliorate high-yield wineries, mirroring the experience of Australia and the USA.

some 14,000 HA across the Languedoc-Roussillon being torn up.⁶³¹ Opposition to *arrachage* was as entrenched as ever, with the Défense movement continuing to view it as the uprooting of regional culture and economy. Further revelations in the press in 1977 that 150,000 HL of subsidised Italian wine were pouring into France every week shocked winegrowers. RG reports identified a new activism from the CRAV, as they channelled frustration with European imports into further demonstrations. The juxtaposition of *arrachage* with imports made for an ugly comparison. In an ominous and symbolic reply to these revelations, the CRAV organised a commemorative procession to the bridge at Montredon on 4 March.⁶³² Yet the symbolic commemoration of violence was not the limit of the winegrowers' repertoire, even after Montredon. On 9 December 1977, an anonymous call to police had warned that "la nuit allait être chaude", and the six explosions that followed were estimated to have caused thousands of Francs worth of damage. Explosives were detonated across the Aude in a coordinated series of attacks that left few clues as to the perpetrators.⁶³³ Newspapers, however, were in little doubt: "On sait trop, depuis Montredon, qu'il ne faut grand chose parfois pour mettre le feu aux poudres".⁶³⁴ The CRAV, however, denied having coordinated the bombing of the Crédit Agricole, saying that the perpetrators had not consulted the "milieux viticoles" and had almost certainly "trompés de cible".⁶³⁵ Nevertheless, the suspected involvement of winegrowers raised questions about the CRAV's role in these recent moments of violence. The *Dépêche* asked "Après des mois

⁶³¹ Rouzier, *Le Languedoc-Roussillon 1950-2001*, p.79.

⁶³² RG, 'Situation Viticole', 14/02/1977 – ADH 1182W103.

⁶³³ In Narbonne, Sigean, Tuchan, Fleury d'Aude, Rieux-Minervois and Peyriac-Minervois.

⁶³⁴ 'Six explosions déchirent la nuit audoise: le feu au poudres ou un coup de semonce?', *La Dépêche* 10/12/1977 - ADA 98J12.

⁶³⁵ 'Le Comité d'action viticole: 'une erreur de cible'', *La Dépêche* 10/12/1977 - ADA 98J12.

de calme, est-ce le retour du bruit et de la violence sur la scène viticole?"⁶³⁶ The spectre of Montredon hung over these violent acts and the suspicion of anonymous violence raised concerns even amongst traditional supporters in the press.

The CRAV would find a new voice in its opposition to Europe, no longer opposing only Paris but also Brussels. André Cases stated that in this new climate "notre combat pour la survie recommencera. Nous n'accepterons pas une concurrence illégale."⁶³⁷ He made this statement during an interview for a German television segment focussing on opposition to EEC expansion. His complaints focussed on the regulation of Italian produce and warned that the addition of Spain would see the market flooded. This exposure was significant and demonstrated that the CRAV could still flex its muscles even after the excesses of the *fusillade*. The CRAV warned that organised mass protests were unlikely to continue and Commando reprisals might take their place as imports continued unabated.⁶³⁸ With this seeming license, some of the wilder elements came out in force protesting against Italian wines: on 26 June, six tollbooths were destroyed with explosives by suspected vignerons near Carcassonne.⁶³⁹ Later still that night, traffic signs around Montpellier were doused with white paint, and suspicion for the anonymous acts fell firmly on the CRAV.⁶⁴⁰ As with the bombings that had taken place in 1977, the CRAV had not specifically organised these attacks, but refused to openly condemn them. Their mood remained sour with Italian wine continuing to pour into the country, 492,313HL in the first half of 1979 alone.

⁶³⁶ 'Six explosions déchirent la nuit audoise: le feu au poudres ou un coup de semonce?', *La Dépêche* 10/12/1977 - ADA 98J12.

⁶³⁷ 'M. Cazes à la T.V. allemande: "L'égalité ou... nous repredrons le combat', *Midi Libre* 27/05/1979 - ADA 98J15.

⁶³⁸ RG, 'Viticulture Hérault', 29/06/1979 – ADH 1182W103.

⁶³⁹ RG, 'Untitled', 29/06/1979 – ADH 1182W103.

⁶⁴⁰ RG, 'Acte de malvéance' [sic.], 30/06/1979 – ADH 1182W103.

Languedocien officials warned Paris that whilst *vignerons* remained calm for the moment, protests and violence would continue whilst imports remained so considerable.⁶⁴¹

In December 1979, *vignerons*, fishermen and dockworkers gathered together in opposition to the enlargement of the EEC and the abiding threat of increased imports. In the same manner as Cases' appearance on German television had suggested, the CRAV were engaging with politics outside of the regional and viticultural context. A group of around one hundred boarded and then occupied a merchant ship in the port of Sète in order to stop it unloading imported Italian wine. Amongst those that boarded the ship were Maffre-Beaugé and his fellow member of the European Parliament Maurice Martin, accompanied by the Mayor of Sète and the President of the FDCC.⁶⁴² This symbolic occupation was followed by a large protest at Narbonne that saw 4,000 winegrowers heed the call of the CAV de l'Aude. Cases, rallying winegrowers in front of CRS, warned that unhappiness was "aussi profond qu'en 1976." The spectre of imports was of sufficient threat to rouse winegrowers from complacency.⁶⁴³ The battleground had shifted from Paris to Brussels and "le Languedoc est à nouveau en première ligne sur le front de la guerre du vin."⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴¹ Telegram from Prefect to Prime Minister, 10/08/1979 – ADH 1182W103.

⁶⁴² Telegram from Prefect to Interior Minister, 07/12/1979 – ADH 1182W103.

⁶⁴³ 'Importations: Les comités d'action réagissent', *La Dépêche*, 05/06/1979 - ADA 98J15.

⁶⁴⁴ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.381.



*André Cases confronting the CRS at Narbonne*⁶⁴⁵

European integration motivated winegrowers to act as a political pressure group, breaking with traditionally reactive protests that dealt with bad harvests and market fluctuations. Achille Gauch and other notables warned that the Midi “ne serait en aucun cas sacrifiée sur l’autel de la communauté.”⁶⁴⁶ Indeed, Gavignaud-Fontaine casts this issue as the principle reason for the resurrection of a mass movement only years after the stuffing had seemingly been knocked out of the Défense movement: “Les liens se resserrent entre vigneron, journalistes, syndicats de salariés, universitaires”. Significantly, the reappearance of this phenomenon gave a platform to the CRAV from which its leaders could ensure their voices carried once more.

⁶⁴⁵ 'La colère paysan à Narbonne', La Dépêche, 14/05/1980 - ADA 98J12.

⁶⁴⁶ Telegram from Prefect to Prime Minister, 03/07/1978 – ADH 1182W103.

'L'Offensive moderniste': Political responses

The late 1970s marked a period of profound change in France, from the surprising defeat of the Left in the legislative elections of 1978 up until the Socialist victory of 1981. The anticipated success of the PS in the legislative elections of 1978 had motivated the Défense movement to believe in the possibility of a strong *Office du vin* which might solve their problems after the previous disappointment of ONIVIT. The dream of an Office charged solely with moderating the price fluctuations of wine had long been a dream of Languedocian winegrowers.⁶⁴⁷ An *Office du vin* had been part of the Socialist programme since the 1950s, constituting one of their most tangible inducements to winegrowers. Championed in the SFIO by Jules Milhau of the Hérault in 1945 and then Robert Gourdon of the Gard in 1954, the idea was one of the strongest bonds to the Socialist support base in the cooperatives of the *Midi viticole*.⁶⁴⁸ Indeed, the roots of the idea's inception lay in the *loi Barthe* of the 1930s, which, despite contemporary criticism, was subsequently viewed as a regulatory golden age. Once again the "esprit social" of 1930s legislation had cast a rosy glow over the ideas of that period. Its survival in the Socialist programme indicated both a connection to the past and a desire to pander to the Défense movement as a key supporter in the Languedoc.

The traditional predominance of the Socialists in the Languedoc had drawn the Défense movement close to Socialist politicians, yet the CRAV remained a body that acted outside of due process and was not exclusively attached to any party of the Left or Right. After the electoral disappointment of 1978, Europe provided a new platform for representation. 1979 saw the first elections of Deputies to the European Parliament,

⁶⁴⁷ Martin, 'Le syndicalisme viticole', p.46.

⁶⁴⁸ Dedieu, 'Raoul Bayou', p.94.

facilitating the rise of Emmanuel Maffre-Beaugé and a new form of 'Wine deputy' forged in the tumultuous years of the 1970s, with ample experience of conducting direct protest and speaking to the *masses viticoles* of the Midi.

In the Languedoc hostility to the Common Agricultural Policy was as prevalent as ever amongst the traditionally critical *vignerons du Midi*. With agricultural revenues falling across France from 1978 and bottoming out in 1980, the Midi had reason to grumble. As a result, the PCF stole a march on its rivals by opening its list to Emmanuel Maffre-Beaugé, a long-time tribune of the viticultural masses and pre-eminent CRAV activist. Maffre-Beaugé was returned amidst an excellent electoral outing for the PCF that saw it improve on the result of 1978, which had been marred by factionalism on the Left, taking 14% of the agricultural vote in comparison to 9% in 1978.⁶⁴⁹ The former leader of the FNSEA, Michel Debatisse, ran on Giscard's UDF ticket. In a straight choice between CRAV and FNSEA, Maffre-Beaugé had both the political skill and the notoriety to win out in the South. Yet this victory for 'la Défense' over 'l'offensive moderniste' was not definitive.

In the Spring of 1980, the Giscardian government announced the updating of its agricultural policies which had been developed in *concertation* with the FNSEA. As a close, almost corporatist, client of the government, the centre-right FNSEA served as a means for moderating and interpreting the demands of the agricultural sector as well as a cheerleader for mobilising support for policies in which it had been involved. The Bentegeac Plan had been a forerunner of this top-led initiative to modernise the agricultural sector, turning agriculture into (in the words of Giscard) "the oil of

⁶⁴⁹ D.B. Goldey & A.F. Knapp, 'Time for a Change: The French Elections of 1981:1. the Presidency', *Electoral Studies*, vol.1, no.1 (1982), p.12.

France” and “correcting the handicaps” of France’s less successful regions.⁶⁵⁰ Giscard and Barre sought to offset the rising commercial imbalances brought about by the costs of oil imports during this period by increasing the volume and value of agricultural exports. Although wine was not the most valuable export by volume, it represented a desirable product that could have further value added by a focus on improving quality. The *vin de table* being produced in the Midi was less relevant to this aim than the less voluminous but more valuable AOC wines being promoted by government policy and subsidy.

Another symptom of this policy was the implantation of the FNSEA in the Midi. In 1980 the first Fédération Départementale (FDSEA) was established in the Hérault.⁶⁵¹ Indeed, despite standing against Debatisse, by 1980 Maffre-Beaugé himself had reconciled himself with the FNSEA, seeing it an opportunity to unite agricultural syndicalism and counteract the division and disillusionment in the Languedoc which had followed the gun-fight at Montredon. Jean-Phillipe Martin described the process by which the FNSEA gained itself an audience in the South:

Sous la houlette d'E. Maffre-Baugé, homme de gauche et régionaliste, la FDSEA qui se développe dans l'Hérault de 1976 à 1979 regroupe aussi bien contestataires de gauche que "modernisateurs" qui en prennent rapidement le contrôle.⁶⁵²

A locally managed FDSEA could connect with the debates of the FNSEA as a whole without having to slavishly follow its pronouncements, much as with the role of the

⁶⁵⁰ John Keeler, 'Agricultural Reform in Mitterrand's France' in J. Ambler (ed.), *The French Socialist Experiment* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1985), p.63.

⁶⁵¹ Gilbert *Le Languedoc et ses images*, p.51.

⁶⁵² Martin, 'Le syndicalisme viticole en Languedoc', p.47.

Ligue within the structures of the CRSV, as described in Chapter 2. That it was the Communist Maffre-Beaugé who led this was again significant, binding it to the same methods and ideology as the *Ligue* had displayed in the mid 1950s. As well as having stood against Debatisse, he remained an active figure in the CRAV as well as a European Deputy; building onto these roles a qualified engagement with the forces of modernisation was not a surrender but something more tactical. Importantly, the Hérault had taken a different stance from the Aude, who so far staunchly refused to engage with the FNSEA. Sociologist Andy Smith quotes an unidentified union leader in 1998, who reflected that the 1980s were:

[A] period of mental acrobatics. In the morning we experimented new methods on our farms, in the afternoon we demonstrated against any change outside the prefecture, and in the evening we debated the pros and cons of both actions.⁶⁵³

The Languedoc's tempered engagement with the FNSEA saw it remain the furthest behind the national narrative, where the growth of the FNSEA had been considerable. The Giscardian focus on productivity and modernisation yielded some success on a national agricultural scale, yet was criticised by the opposition Socialists for ignoring the obvious losers in their drive towards modernisation, a theme that was raised during the 1981 electoral campaign. The PS highlighted that the lowest two thirds of the agricultural sector received only one fourth of the total income, with large enterprises dominating sectoral growth and fuelling regional inequality in economic development. Mitterrand's '110 Propositions' aimed to reduce Barre's dependency on

⁶⁵³ A. Smith, 'Beyond 'Connections in Brussels': The Multi-level Representation of Agriculture in Two French Regions', *European Union Studies Association Conference*, 2-5 June, 1999 [<http://aei.pitt.edu/2389/>][Accessed: 14/04/2009].

the international markets to subsidise domestic budgetary austerity. Mitterrand referred back to the 'Common Programme' between the PS and the PCF of 1972 in advocating a "recapture of the home market" which would arrest import penetration.⁶⁵⁴ Yet Mitterrand argued that this could be achieved within the framework of Europe. Proposition 41 stated:

41 - Le gouvernement proposera aux partenaires de la CEE, afin de revenir à l'esprit du Traité de Rome, une réforme de la Politique agricole commune. [...] Des mesures particulières seront prises pour l'élevage, la viticulture, les fruits et légumes, jusqu'ici défavorisés. Les marchés seront organisés par des Offices par produits ou groupes de produits, chargés de mettre en œuvre des prix garantis, tenant compte des coûts de production, dans la limite de quantum par travailleur. [...]

As such, France's relationship to Europe would form the starting point for any attempts to reform winegrowing, tempering the hopes of CRAVistes who hoped for an import ban. Yet, the focus on guaranteed pricing related to the costs of production was a profoundly positive proposal. Proposition 11 specifically called for the "application stricte du traité de Rome" – a regulatory stance which would have further appealed to vignerons keen for regulation to temper the perceived fraud being perpetrated by Italian growers.⁶⁵⁵ Focussing on domestic production, however, went contrary to Giscard's development agenda and the PS specifically committed itself to promoting small-scale agriculture and family farming. In combating fears of a decline in incomes, growing inequalities and rural migration as a result of Giscard and Barre's

⁶⁵⁴ Holmes, 'Broken Dreams', p.35.

⁶⁵⁵ '110 propositions pour la France, Élections présidentielles, avril-mai 1981', Text from l'office universitaire de recherche socialiste [<http://www.lours.org/default.asp?pid=307>] [Accessed: 10/01/12].

modernisation, the PS attached itself to a policy of “no longer losing a single farmer.”⁶⁵⁶ The opposition PS thus supported modernisation but, crucially, claimed that it could smooth the impact of this process.

The Socialist party Convention in February 1981 outlined the specific policies that would constitute the opposition’s response to governmental agricultural policy. Socialist reform was targeted at reversing inequalities of income and ensuring the survival of smallholders whilst encouraging the modernisation of the sector. This feat was to be achieved by changing the structural basis of the agricultural sector as included in propositions 10 and 11 of Mitterrand’s ‘110 propositions’: “la création d’offices fonciers ruraux; la création d’offices par produits pour en garantir le prix”.⁶⁵⁷

The traditional land management agencies - sociétés d’aménagement foncier et d’établissement rural (SAFERs)⁶⁵⁸ - were operated at a regional level and run by leaders appointed by recognised professional organisations (such as the FNSEA in most of France or the CGVM in the Languedoc). These were to be replaced with *offices fonciers* operating at a departmental level and drawing their leadership from elections held at the same level.⁶⁵⁹ The PS cast this as rural *autogestion*, pressuring the bodies at a more local level, whilst critics feared the politicisation of the office.⁶⁶⁰ The other central reform proposed was the introduction of *offices par produits* designed to replace the

⁶⁵⁶ *Le Monde*, 03/03/1981.

⁶⁵⁷ B. Goury, ‘Les premiers pas de la politique agricole’ [<http://www.mitterrand.org/Les-premiers-pas-de-la-politique,215.html>][Accessed: 28/04/1981].

⁶⁵⁸ See Chapter 3.

⁶⁵⁹ For a discussion of the role of SAFERs in the Languedoc viticole, see A. Jones, ‘The role of the SAFER in agricultural restructuring in the Languedoc’, *Land Use Policy*, 6 (1989), pp. 249–62.

⁶⁶⁰ Keeler, ‘Agricultural Reform in Mitterrand’s France’, pp.66-67.

*interprofessions*⁶⁶¹ which had traditionally governed interests. These *offices* would guarantee a fixed price for a fixed portion (*quantum*) of agricultural produce, whilst allowing for the rest to be sold freely (*hors quantum*). Although these *offices* seemed to flout EEC regulations, the PS promised to fight for them at European level, pleasing winegrowers whose impression of such external pressures was overwhelmingly negative.

A CRAV statement read by Jean Huillet intimated that European legislators must make allowances for French wine including minimum pricing and controlled foreign imports from other member states. These policies, it seems, came straight from the platform announced by the PS in February. Failing this, Huillet counselled demonstrations and action to express the difficulties they faced - quoting statistics that claimed a 144% increase in the costs of production between 1973 and 1981.⁶⁶² A meeting of the CRAV in Béziers on 13 March saw Huillet announce that measures would be taken "sur toutes les formes" against Italian wine to demonstrate the continuing menace that it presented to Midi winegrowers.⁶⁶³

Falling wine prices, enfeebled earnings and the continuing stream of wine imports from overseas brought some 5,000 winegrowers from across the region together in Sète,⁶⁶⁴ as winegrowers set up roadblocks and controlled the circulation of traffic to the ports.⁶⁶⁵ The CAV d'Aude, however, announced that in such pressing

⁶⁶¹ Organisations which were both controlled and financed privately by groups of producers and intended to organize fellow producers, promote public consumption of their products and regulate deliveries and releases of produce to the market.

⁶⁶² 'Comité d'action viticole', *Midi-Libre*, 11/03/1981 – ADA 98J12.

⁶⁶³ 'Le CRAV veut frapper plus fort', *L'Indépendant* 14/03/1981 – ADA98J12.

⁶⁶⁴ 'Sète: colère contenue, mais...', *Midi-Libre*, 02/04/1981 – ADA 98J12.

⁶⁶⁵ 'Sète: le blocu commence', *La Dépêche*, 02/04/1981 - ADA 98J12.

circumstances "ils préféraient des actions 'commando'" to protests and mass mobilisation.⁶⁶⁶ They highlighted the truck stops they had made on 1 April, when they destroyed some 800HL of Italian and Algerian wine as signifying the fact that although the winegrowers of the Midi controlled Sète, "le commerce persiste dans son offensive anti-Midi."⁶⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the blockade grew as winegrowers set up roadblocks and checkpoints.⁶⁶⁸ Action continued on the roads as another tanker of Italian wine was hijacked during the night of 1 May 1981 by a group of CRAV commandoes. After seizing control of the vehicle, they drove it to the Prefecture in Carcassonne and piped the contents (270HL of Italian wine) directly into the Prefectural gardens.⁶⁶⁹ These repeated demonstrations and increasingly radical actions only demonstrated the extent to which the CRAV felt fundamentally challenged; struggling against prevailing imports, market fluctuations, declining consumption and the state policy to decrease the volume of production.

Interceptions and the destruction of imported wine were strong and provocative measures that raised the profile of problems in the area. They also, however, mired the image of Midi vigneronns in a combative and traditionalist rut. Whilst Huillet's statement may have found an audience in Paris, it was unlikely to do so quite as easily in Brussels. The Midi faced the problem of peripherisation anew, one which only encouraged further recourse to the vocabulary of regional identity which had characterised the Défense movement of the 1970s. Whilst the government and the

⁶⁶⁶ 'Montredon: 'on ne passe plus!', *La Dépêche*, 03/04/1981 - ADA 98J12.

⁶⁶⁷ 'Le C.A.V: Italie + Algérie au fossé et poursuite des contrôles', *L'Indépendant*, 1/04/1981 – ADA 98J12.

⁶⁶⁸ 'Montredon: 'on ne passe plus!', *La Dépêche*, 03/04/1981 - ADA 98J12.

⁶⁶⁹ 'La Préfecture 'arrosée!', *La Dépêche*, 02/05/1981 - ADA 98J12.

FNSEA were speaking about the politics of quality and modernisation, the CRAV spoke only of concessions, intervention and disparity. Regional defence was a hard sell when it clashed with regional development.

If the political relationships had shifted, so too had the syndical networks of the Languedoc. Since the arrival of the FNSEA, the CRAV, linked to the CGVM and MODEF, could no longer claim a monopoly on syndical representation in the region. The government's attempts to promote quality as a central tenet of the Midi's production had threatened the traditional Défense movement. Likewise, Maffre-Beaugé's involvement with the Héraultais FDSEA had shown the potential for a rapprochement between Défense and modernisation. Disaggregated by the creeping appeal of Bentegeac's retooled *groupements* and bought off with short-term reimbursements for distillation and *arrachage*, the winegrowers of the Languedoc faced increasing inducements to abandon their traditional livelihoods. Distillation was a tonic for poor sales, a problem largely allied to declining consumption within France (from 136 litres per head annually in 1956 to 87 litres in 1982).⁶⁷⁰

The presidential election of 1981, however, offered hope that this dip in the fortunes of the wine industry might be arrested, and that the traditional faith of the Midi in the Socialist party would presage a new era. After all, the ideology of the Défense movement had been founded on the 'union sacrée' of Albert and the Socialist model of Ferroul and Barthe. The 70 year history which the Socialist party shared with the Défense movement seemingly assured that they would recognise growers' interests and perpetuate state interventionism to control imports and discourage fraud.

⁶⁷⁰ 'Production et consommation des vins', *Paysan du Midi*, 01/11/1984 - ADG JR438 33/34.

The Presidential Election of 1981

By 1981, the Left had reconstituted itself behind Mitterrand on the national political scene, with the PCF encouraging its supporters to endorse him in the second round⁶⁷¹ of the Presidential election.⁶⁷² The Socialist party had traditionally held a prominent position in the *Midi viticole*; their support came from the cooperative structures and the prominent role of local Socialist elected officials in mediating dialogue between winegrowers and the state.⁶⁷³ Mitterrand garnered Méridional support with his promise that he would create an Office du Vin to "définir et défendre la politique de la qualité, garantir un revenu minimum aux viticulteurs." This seemed to combine his stated predilection for 'autogestion' alongside responsible planning with his desire to stimulate domestic production. Importantly, he focussed on modernising agriculture whilst guaranteeing present circumstances would be ameliorated for producers.

Combining short and long-term visions of viticultural prosperity presented the vigneron of the South with a tantalising promise of change. The inability of Chirac and Giscard to present a united front in the last days of the incumbent Presidency with agricultural credit had convinced many that the time was right for change. Indeed, support for Mitterrand in the Languedoc had been high (63.7% in the second round) and the announcement of his victory on 10 May was met with enthusiasm: "La victoire de la gauche, nul n'en doutait en terre d'Oc, serait celle du Midi viticole."⁶⁷⁴ The Aude, for its part in the parliamentary election of June 1981, was "the most Mitterrandiste

⁶⁷¹ 92% of which did, according to polls.

⁶⁷² Ehrmann, *Politics in France* p.256.

⁶⁷³ McFalls, *In vino veritas* p.244.

⁶⁷⁴ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.388.

département of France".⁶⁷⁵ In the broader Languedoc, a meagre return of 5 seats for Socialist Deputies in 1978 had been doubled, meaning the PS held 10 out of 17 seats. In Provence, this was even more pronounced, moving from a low of 4 seats in 1974 to 16 out of 28 in 1981.⁶⁷⁶ The PS had rebuilt itself in these traditional heartlands, translating lingering sympathy into electoral success.

When Mitterrand announced his first cabinet, he named Edith Cresson as Minister for Agriculture. The 47 year old was not only the first female French minister, but also a brashly Parisian figure whose extravagant outfits earned her an uneasy relationship with the press and the agricultural sector (many of whom nicknamed her "la parfumée").⁶⁷⁷ She held the position for 22 months, taking up a pugnacious attitude towards with the FNSEA, whose cosy relationship with power during the last government she criticised in one of her first speeches.⁶⁷⁸ She immediately ended the FNSEA's monopoly as "le syndicalisme officiel" by recognising 3 other agricultural unions: MODEF, Fédération Française de l'Agriculture (FFA) and Confédération Nationale Syndicale des Travailleurs Paysans (CNSTP). The FFA was an ultra-conservative union representing only around 5% of the farming community and virtually unknown in the Midi, the CNSTP was an amalgamation of six Socialist unions formed in the aftermath of the Socialist victory and MODEF, the Communist dominated smallholders union, claimed support from some 15 to 20% of farmers.⁶⁷⁹ Membership of MODEF was common amongst the smallholders who constituted the

⁶⁷⁵ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.284.

⁶⁷⁶ Goldey, Knapp, 'Time for a Change: The French Elections of 1981:1. The National Assembly', p.188.

⁶⁷⁷ Keeler, 'Agricultural Reform in Mitterrand's France', p.68.

⁶⁷⁸ *Le Monde*, 05/06/1981.

⁶⁷⁹ Keeler, 'Agricultural Reform in Mitterrand's France', p.70.

base of the CRAV. As such, in the Midi, the recognition of MODEF was significant and promised greater involvement for the region's interests on the national stage. Elsewhere, the FNSEA criticised Cresson's recognition of both the splinter group MODEF and the newly formed CNSTP, branding them as an attempt to divide union representation. By shaking up the national syndical scene, the PS sought to carve out a Socialist presence in the agricultural sector that was nationally coordinated. The specific nature of Languedocian representation made it intrinsically suspicious of Parisian influence and not necessarily useful to the government for transmitting their policies in the manner the FNSEA had done for Giscard.

The change promised by Mitterrand's victory was not immediate, however, and the summer of 1981 was to prove one of the most raucous in years. During the night of 7 - 8 July, four explosions rocked storehouses in Sète and thousands of hectolitres of wine were destroyed. This represented a warning to the incoming administration that the CRAV - "casseurs par nécessité"⁶⁸⁰ – remained a formidable force. Mitterrand reiterated his commitment to the agricultural sector, reaffirming the Giscardian belief that agriculture could constitute a central pillar of French exports in a speech made in Nevers in front of international ambassadors.⁶⁸¹ Sensing that the temperature in the Midi was rising, the minister of state for Agriculture, André Cellard, set about trying to tackle the sheer volume of imports distorting the market. The Moroccan-born Andre Cellard was the Socialist Deputy for Gers and minister of state for Agriculture between May 1981 and March 1983 during the first two Mauroy governments. As Cresson wrestled with the national unions, Cellard sought to respond to the problems

⁶⁸⁰ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.391.

⁶⁸¹ Keeler, 'Agricultural Reform in Mitterrand's France', p.72.

sweeping the South. Attacks on tankers on 19 July between Nîmes and Montpellier pre-empted the reaction from government as Cellard created a *cellule de crise* to look into the Midi wine industry's endemic problems. In the minds of the Midi's staunchest *guerriers du vin*, Cellard's *cellule* would fulfil the promise of the Socialists to democratise local involvement and strengthen state interventionism in market stabilisation and price controls. The reality, however, was one of disappointment for the CRAV and the traditional Défense movement.

Cellard declined to invite the CGVM to form part of the consultative group, circumventing the oldest and most symbolic of the Midi's traditional professional bodies. The existence of a Socialist government out of step with their traditional vocabulary challenged the long-standing role of the Socialist party's local elected officials in the representation of the *milieu viticole*. Because of the snub of the CGVM Jean-Baptiste Benet, the long-standing President of the CGVM, resigned. It has been suggested that this may have been a move by Cellard designed to weaken the Méridional character of Southern wine representation and push it towards a more avowedly neutral footing.⁶⁸² This representation had, in turn, been the product of the long-standing agitation that had seen Southern wine aggressively represented both within the National Assembly and in local politics - the 'union sacrée' that had held since the days of Albert and Ferroul. A near century of militant syndicalism led by the CGVM had led to wide representation of the wine industry in Southern politics, with winemaking cooperatives and representative bodies providing personnel for incorporation into the apparatus of local government. Indeed, cooperatives

⁶⁸² McFalls, *In vino veritas*, pp.252-262.

represented not only greater security, sheltering adherents from market forces⁶⁸³ but also "constituent la base d'un lobby régional capable de négocier une politique favorable à la stabilisation du marché national de vin de table."⁶⁸⁴

In opposition to this snub, cooperatives met their syndical representatives alongside local mayors to express their solidarity at an enormous meeting of viticultural representatives on 28 July that was cast as an "États Généraux de la viticulture militante".⁶⁸⁵ The heads of cooperatives, local notables (such as the Mayor of Puichéric, in the Aude) and representatives from the CGVM attended a regular meeting of the Syndicat Régional des Vignerons de Carcassonne-Limoux to discuss the conflict threatening to shatter the compact of viticultural unity. The CGVM called for a renewed spirit of solidarity and combat: "Nous devons conserver à tout prix l'unité du syndicalisme C.G.V. et de son complément naturel le C.A.V. qui doit rester le fer de lance de l'action viticole." The meeting concluded: "Notre politique est simple: sauver notre vignoble, nos exploitations, nos vignerons et leurs salariés, dans l'union totale des forces méridionales."⁶⁸⁶ Stressing viticultural unity even as the PS wavered enabled the CGVM and the CRAV to use the rhetoric of tradition to disguise their increasing vulnerability. The snub of the CGVM suggested an end to the cosy relationship between the Socialist party, local elites and the wider Défense movement represented by the CGVM and CRAV. Within the Languedoc itself the government's attempts to

⁶⁸³ L. Temple, J. Touzard, F. Jarrige, 'La Restructuration des coopératives vinicoles en Languedoc-Roussillon : du modèle communal à la diversité des adaptations actuelles', *REM*, vol.44, no.176 (April, 1996), p.77.

⁶⁸⁴ Y. Chiffolleau et al., 'Qualité et Solidarité dans les Coopératives Viticoles' in J. Touzard (ed.), *Les coopératives entre territoires et mondialisation*, (Harmattan, Paris, 2003), p.293.

⁶⁸⁵ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.392.

⁶⁸⁶ Report on meeting of Syndicat Régional des Vignerons de Carcassonne-Limoux, 30/07/1981 - ADA98J12.

change representation was not indicative of a lurch to the right (that would come later between 1982 and 1983) but rather a desire to change approaches to modernisation in the region. The abandonment of this traditional ally of the Socialists was unusual, although seemingly designed to separate the ideology and inheritance of 1907 from the notion of monoculturalism and a reliance on intervention.⁶⁸⁷ If the area was to develop and overcome the *crise*, the new Socialist government surmised that it would only do so in a progressive manner by changing the landscape of the viticultural movement.

This was also true of the government's pre-election promises regarding an *Office du vin*. The Socialist victory had raised hopes that the construction of a strong *Office* might become a reality; however, that too would lead to disappointment for winegrowers. The government did indeed create a new institution, called the Office national interprofessionnel des vins (ONIVINS) to address the structural weaknesses that had prevented the pre-existing ONIVIT from exercising any real control of the markets. Instead of merely controlling *vins de tables*, the remit of ONIVINS included all wines, removing the administrative distinction between these categories in the eyes of the French government. Like its predecessors (IVCC & ONIVIT), however, it did not set out to guarantee a minimum price for vignerons or overtly control imports, but rather to guide production and increase awareness of the market amongst growers.⁶⁸⁸ Thus, ONIVINS was not the organisation winegrowers had imagined when they had invested in the Socialist vision: it was neither reflective of the "esprit sociale" of the 1930s, nor of the Common Programme of 1972.

⁶⁸⁷ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.262.

⁶⁸⁸ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.398; Martin, 'Le syndicalisme viticole', p.46.

The rebranding of the largely ineffectual ONIVIT as ONIVINS was scant solace to those Languedocian winegrowers for whom progress was still far off. Indeed, Cases claimed that ONIVINS "se révèle aussi peu efficace que l'ancien," calling for new solutions other than distillation or bans on chaptalisation which might impose stricter regulation whilst allowing winegrowers a living wage.⁶⁸⁹ As the Socialist victory began to give way to disappointment and disillusionment, Languedocian winegrowers were forced to question their allegiances. The *masse viticole* which had always shown support for the Défense movement (although this had diminished since the 1970s), was faced with the reality that they were running out of allies. This in turn made the comparatively vibrant FNSEA seem increasingly attractive as a representative organisation. What the CGVM could not achieve by virtue of its exclusion from the top table of government, the FNSEA would seem to dictate from its position at the government's right hand.

Describing the early 1980s, historian Yves Gilbert highlighted some of the roadblocks to modernisation that the government sought to overcome by casting aside the CGVM:

Comment concilier par exemple le maintien d'un réseau de très petites exploitations (dont la survie n'est rendue possible que par la coopération – support technique et concentrateur des aides et subventions) et la mise en application des progrès techniques? Comment faire collaborer un négoce de plus en plus concentré, engagé dans un processus de modernisation et soumis aux règles du marché (national et international) et des producteurs très encadrés par des mesures de protection qui tendent à figer leurs comportements face aux évolutions du commerce?⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁹ 'André Cases, port-parole du C.a.v.', *La Dépêche*, 17/01/1984 - ADA98J15.

⁶⁹⁰ Gilbert, *Le Languedoc et ses images*, pp.18-19.

Gilbert outlines the central contradictions of the Midi wine industry at a potent turning point. As the economic and social predominance of the industry declined both regionally and nationally, the repetition of ritualised protest stymied the potential for positive change in the region. Yet, it also allowed for these traditional support groups to hark back to an imaginary era of viticultural unity while voicing the concerns of the less well off areas of the *Languedoc viticole*. If 'unity' stressed the plains over the coast or the hills then it was because this was the support base of vulnerable winegrowers whose interests both the CGVM and the CRAV represented. Projecting unity and tradition stressed the heavy costs of planned modernisation work and attempted to remind Parisian legislators that the Midi should not be sacrificed in the name of the markets.

L'Europe comme révélateur

In many ways European integration presented a strong challenge to the traditional mores of the *Languedoc viticole*, yet it also served simply to cast familiar themes in a new form. The promises of the PS that it would fight Brussels on several key issues relating to agriculture were heartening to the population of the *Languedoc viticole*, yet they proved illusory. Suddenly Paris and Brussels were a twin-headed beast for the Défense movement to oppose and, in their eyes, fraud was as likely to come from Italy as it ever had been from Algeria. Yet Europe also changed the dynamics of protest. Paris could no longer bow to the demands of active and vocal pressure groups when bound by supra-national treaties. Likewise, calls for the government to ban imports were more unrealistic than they had ever been.

Nevertheless, the CRAV continued to tilt at windmills. European integration acted as a revelatory process, wherein the government's antipathy for Languedocian resistance shone through the hopeful rhetoric of Mitterrand's early years. The principle of European integration defined the Socialists' relationship with Southern syndicalism almost from the start, although the PS would not openly retreat to the centre until several years later. As Europe cast a pall over the Languedoc, the CRAV sought to test the government's resolve immediately. Building on the momentum gathered in demonstrations a month earlier, Jean Huillet and a group of Commandos took control of a boat called *L'Ampelos* anchored at Sète on the 10th August 1981.⁶⁹¹ Having seized control of the vessel, they destroyed the shipment of Italian wine which it contained using the engine-oil from the boat.⁶⁹² At the train station in Sète, CRAVistes intercepted 25 wine tankers carrying Algerian wine and emptied them onto the platforms, with a loss of some 15, 000HL of wine.⁶⁹³ The government response to the Sètois attacks was swift as they sought to introduce measures “de nature à apaiser les esprits”.⁶⁹⁴ Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy tabled discussions with officials in Brussels to control and disclose imports, ensure the robustness of their documentation and tax their blending in France much more heavily.

Although these promises contravened the policies of the European Union (and specifically the CAP), the government pressed on and refused to release 500,000HL of wine from customs in Sète. Legality won out, however, and the French government reluctantly capitulated to European pressure, releasing the wines 2 months later.

⁶⁹¹ J. Juge, *Chronologie Occitane* (Loubatières, Portet-sur-Garonne, 2001), p.164.

⁶⁹² Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.394.

⁶⁹³ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.253.

⁶⁹⁴ 'Viticulture', *Paysan du Midi*, 24/12/1981 - ADG JR438-30-31.

Sensing a betrayal, the CRAV remobilised, and commandos again seized tankers on 24 October. Some 2,000 protestors gathered in Béziers on 29 January 1982 to protest against the perceived tyranny of Brussels and foreign imports. On the 11 March, further demonstrations took place in Mireval and Béziers and CRAV commandos at Sète intercepted yet more imported wine. Several weeks later, a regional march took place through the streets of Montpellier consisting of 15,000 demonstrators with Maffre-Beaugé at their head.⁶⁹⁵ The slogan of this march was "la force tranquille de la viticulture", deliberately echoing Mitterrand's campaigning motto of 1981.⁶⁹⁶ The march was the largest since Montredon,⁶⁹⁷ and it was significant that the government's commitment to the liberalisation of the European market had mobilised winegrowers.

Even as European trade issues dominated the Languedoc, the rest of France was criticising the performance of the bumbling Cresson as Minister for Agriculture. Mitterrand's promise not to lose another farmer looked increasingly strained as reforms stalled and European regulations hampered national policy. The FNSEA led large-scale farmers' protests across France that characterised the winter of 1981-1982 as "un hiver chaud". An enormous farmers' demonstration in Paris of some 60,000-100,000 made worldwide news and Cresson came under sustained criticism and faced volleys of insults on her tours of farms across France.⁶⁹⁸ Plans for the ambitious reform of the SAFERs ultimately failed. The bills for the implementation of the *offices fonciers* bounced around the mechanisms of government throughout Cresson's ministry and were eventually dubbed "les grands absents" as their lengthy delay implied a

⁶⁹⁵ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.396.

⁶⁹⁶ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.254.

⁶⁹⁷ Gilbert *Le Languedoc et ses images*, p.43.

⁶⁹⁸ Keeler, 'Agricultural Reform in Mitterrand's France', p.62.

reluctance to tackle reform.⁶⁹⁹ Sure enough, they were eventually abandoned when they proved problematic to implement and were deemed “peu réalistes dans le contexte agricole de l’époque”.⁷⁰⁰ Instead, her successors in the Ministry for Agriculture, Michel Rocard and Henri Nallet, progressively yet slowly reformed existing structures in subsequent ministries.⁷⁰¹

Both these central projects witnessed a degree of retreat, with the government stepping back from yet more commitments made before the election. An adoption of realism over doctrine brought about by popular resistance to planned reforms and an extremely poor economic outlook marked the end of Mitterrand’s *état de grâce*. Likewise, MODEF and the CNSTP complained that the government had not done enough to dilute the influence of the FNSEA and, after the “hiver chaud” had actually backtracked on some measures to avoid alienating the union.⁷⁰² They declared the level of subsidies granted to the FNSEA to be incommensurate and criticised the continued

⁶⁹⁹ *Le Monde*, 23/03/1983.

⁷⁰⁰ Bernard Goury, ‘Les premiers pas de la politique agricole’ [<http://www.mitterrand.org/Les-premiers-pas-de-la-politique,215.html>][Accessed: 28/04/1981].

⁷⁰¹ Cresson did establish *offices par produits* during her tenure, albeit in a compromised form which did not contravene the legislation of the EEC and failed to supplant the role of the *interprofessions*. Nevertheless, they were significant in the Midi, where these additional agencies were able to coordinate more effectively the low-grade wine sector.

⁷⁰² For further discussion of the prominent role of the FNSEA in forming national agricultural policy, see Keeler, *The politics of neocorporatism in France*. Keeler argues that the FNSEA was able to resist Socialist attempts to ‘decorporate’ after 1981 as it was embedded in so many different aspects of the state. This reading is challenged by Pepper Culpepper, who contends that competition between agricultural unions often produced independent policy from the FNSEA, although this further diluted the potential influence of independent interest groups. See, P. Culpepper, ‘Organisational competition and the neo-corporatist fallacy in French agriculture’, *West European Politics*, vol.16 (1993), pp.295-315. At issue is the ability of the FNSEA to direct national consensus, which we see challenged by the independence of the Languedoc’s representation. Yet, as will be shown, the durable nature of the FNSEA eventually drew Languedocien viticultural groups towards it, capitalising on its close ‘neo-corporatist’ position in terms of both visibility and influence. The dispute between Culpepper and Keeler is relevant to the role of the FNSEA more broadly, although ultimately Keeler’s analysis is borne out in the Languedocien situation.

proximity of the union to government (e.g. addresses from the President and Minister of Agriculture at their national conferences). Elections held to the Chamber of Agriculture in January 1983 demonstrated that the PS had failed to circumscribe the influence of the FNSEA as its national vote share rose from 65% to 70%, with the leftist unions (MODEF, CNSTP and the newly formed splinter the Fédération Nationale des Syndicats Paysans) receiving only 23% combined.⁷⁰³ Even in the Languedoc, where the performance of the FNSEA lagged behind the rest of the country, they were beginning to gain a foothold. In the Hérault they claimed 36% of the vote in the Chambre d'Agriculture elections of 1983, as they set themselves in opposition to government policy. Jean-Phillipe Martin describes the construction of their appeal:

L'arrivée de la gauche au pouvoir offre à la FNSEA l'opportunité de déployer son offensive. Alors que ses alliés locaux diffusent les thèmes de la qualité, de l'organisation des producteurs et critiquent l'activisme des CAV, François Guillaume adopte (avant 1986) un ton véhément et protestataire contre le gouvernement de gauche et l'élargissement de la CEE à de nouveaux États méditerranéens.⁷⁰⁴

Continuing economic problems had brought about a package of austerity measures in June 1982. These comprised wage and price controls, expenditure cuts and the raising of interest rates (which tightened the availability of credit). This round of austerity would presage the devaluation of March 1983, eschewing the temptation to turn inwards in a search for recovery and instead relying on European structures as a springboard to growth. Mitterrand's Industry Minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, proposed an alternative to the cuts that amounted to autarky and included withdrawal

⁷⁰³ Keeler, 'Agricultural Reform in Mitterrand's France', pp.83-85.

⁷⁰⁴J. Martin, 'Le syndicalisme viticole en Languedoc sous la Ve République', *Économie rurale*, no.237 (1997), p. 47.

from the EEC and European Monetary System. The policy's prospects were uncertain but its potential cost was severe and the government rejected it in favour of a European commitment.⁷⁰⁵ A report prepared by the Socialist Euro-parliamentarian Georges Sutra outlined the basis for the region as a developmental structure for Europe, an early version of a 'Europe of the regions.'⁷⁰⁶ In November 1982, Maffre-Beaugé challenged the Sutra Report, declaring it excessively preferential to the interests of proponents of European integration.⁷⁰⁷ This criticism was emblematic of a growing disenchantment, as the Socialist party's residual goodwill in the Midi gradually eroded. Sutra, as the highest-ranking Languedocian Socialist in European government, was not immune from Maffre-Beaugé's stinging rebukes. As the government scaled back reflationary policies under international pressure, Michel Rocard replaced Edith Cresson as Agriculture Minister, on 22 March 1983.

During this period, Spain's proposed entry to the EEC was plaguing the thoughts of winegrowers already feeling inundated by low quality Italian imports, which threatened domestic table wine sales. Spain, it was feared, would only exacerbate this trend. Spanish entry into the EEC had never been credible whilst Franco remained Dictator, though economic cooperation from 1970 eased the formalisation of

⁷⁰⁵ For further discussion of the Socialists' economic retrenchment in 1983 and 1984, see G. Ross, J. Jenson, 'Political pluralism and Economic policy', in J. Ambler (ed.), *The French Socialist Experiment* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1985); A. Bergounioux, G. Grunberg, *L'ambition et le remords: les socialistes français et le pouvoir* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), pp.327-361; M. Beaud, *Le mirage de la croissance, la politique économique de la gauche* (Paris: Syros, 1985); A. Fonteneau, P. Muet, *La Gauche face à la crise* (Paris: Presses de la FNSP, 1985); J. Friend, *The Long Presidency* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998) pp.186-187; E. Cohen, 'La gauche et l'économie dans les expériences du pouvoir', in M. Lazar (ed.), *La Gauche en Europe depuis 1945* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1996); E. Cohen, 'Les socialistes et l'économie: de l'âge des mythes au déminage', in E. Dupoirier, G. Grunberg (eds.), *La Drôle de défaite de la gauche* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1986).

⁷⁰⁶ Gilbert, *Le Languedoc et ses images*, p.155.

⁷⁰⁷ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.397.

this relationship later in the decade as the country moved towards democratisation. As such, Spanish entry into the EEC was presented as a test of the democratic credentials that the election of Spanish Socialists in 1982 had seemed to confirm. The specific issue of the Common Agricultural Policy was widely viewed as a negative aspect of membership by the Spanish press, although economic and social modernisation presented potential boons.⁷⁰⁸ Rocard declared himself in favour of Spain's accession to the EEC and reinforced to protesting winegrowers that the government could not flout the restrictions of the Common Agricultural Policy, as demonstrated by Cresson's abortive introduction of the *offices par produits*.⁷⁰⁹ Rocard's presence as Minister ensured that modernisation would be a primary issue in the agricultural sector. His rivalry with Mitterrand in the run up to 1981 had seen him first marginalised and then brought in to government⁷¹⁰ Rocard's endorsement of the proposed entry of Spain into the Common Market set an already volatile situation aflame.

On the roads, winegrowers burnt tollbooths and national representatives from the FNSEA and the Fédération nationale des vins de table acknowledged "qu'ils ont perdu tout contrôle de la situation."⁷¹¹ What made matters even worse was the secondment of the Deputy Mayor of Narbonne, Pierre Guidoni, to Madrid in order to negotiate the terms of Spanish entry. His involvement as a Languedocian Socialist shocked some in the region, leading to cries that he was "l'assassin du Midi" and that "il

⁷⁰⁸ J. Medrano, P. Gutiérrez, 'Nested identities: national and European identity in Spain', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 24, no. 5 (2010), pp.763-767.

⁷⁰⁹ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.255.

⁷¹⁰ Holmes, 'Broken Dreams', p.47.

⁷¹¹ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.397.

nous a vendu".⁷¹² Rocard's commitment to the liberalisation of the European market would show the Défense movement that they did not have a natural ally in government. The rift between the Socialists and the Midi was becoming ever clearer. With this realisation would come an intensification of the CRAV's methods, a radicalisation born of increasing desperation.

Radicalisation of methods

The intervention of Brussels had heightened viticultural extremism and the *Midi Libre* described the CRAV as "plus nombreux, plus mobilisés, plus offensifs".⁷¹³ On 4 February 1983, vignerons met in Béziers to protest⁷¹⁴ against a round of measures mandated by Brussels, which diversely imposed a distillation of excess Vin de Table and required AOC wine to be declassified (i.e. stripped of its AOC status) and sold at a lower price (as basic table wine).⁷¹⁵ This was entirely in tune with the top-down promotion of quality produce, through incompatible with the interests of producers who lost out in the bargain. This was clearly unpopular in the Midi and the fact that the decision came from Brussels only served to deepen the sense of injustice that external pressures were threatening the area's livelihood. As a result, the CRAV seized and emptied a tanker near Carcassonne, staining the white of the Southern snow

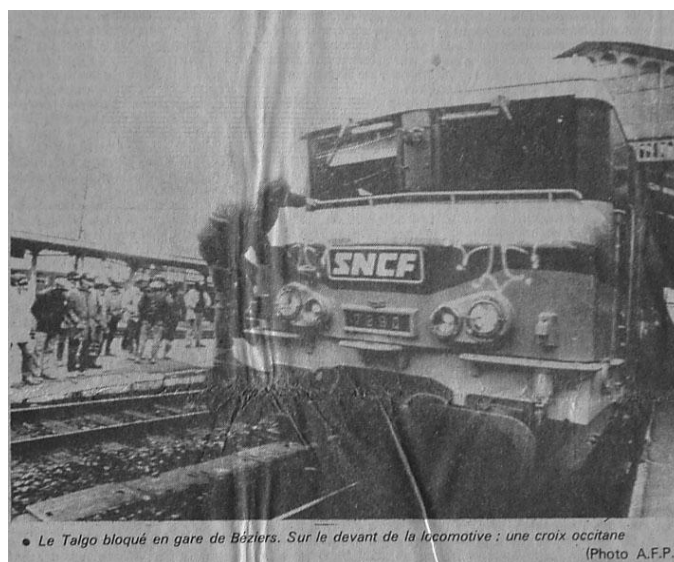
⁷¹² McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.255.

⁷¹³ 'Du vin sur la neige', *Midi Libre*, 15/02/1983 - ADA98J19.

⁷¹⁴ CRS Report, 04/02/1983 – ADH 1719W144. Guidoni was well rooted in the region and had himself written an excellent historical study of Ferroul and Narbonne's Socialists, *La cité rouge: le socialisme à Narbonne, 1871-1921* (Toulouse: Privat, 1979).

⁷¹⁵ CRS Radio Message Transcript, 15/02/1983 – ADH 1719W144.

with 145HL of red wine.⁷¹⁶ Vignerons then attacked several stores in Béziers - the Mammouth supermarket and a Géant Casino - and broke vast numbers of bottles of foreign and principally Italian wine with bats and clubs.⁷¹⁷ Later, around 200 vigneronns stopped the 'Talgo' train, which travelled between Barcelona and Geneva.⁷¹⁸ They sprayed it with slogans protesting against the EEC: "C'est n'est pas par hasard si nous avons bloqué un train international. C'est un avertissement contre toute entrée de l'Espagne dans le Marché Commun". Interestingly, this symbol was also sprayed with the Occitan cross (pictured below), combining a rejection of European expansion with an articulation of regional identity.⁷¹⁹



Winegrowers spray-painting the Croix Occitane on the halted Talgo train⁷²⁰

That summer, Cases would restate in the press that "Le CAV intervient quand la situation est bloquée."⁷²¹ With the regionalist outcry represented by the Talgo operation and continuing problems in the national economy the situation was indeed

⁷¹⁶ 'Du rouge sur la neige', *La Dépêche*, 15/02/1983 - ADA98J19.

⁷¹⁷ CRS Radio Message Transcript, 15/02/1983 – ADH 1719W144.

⁷¹⁸ CRS Radio Message Transcript, 15/02/1983 – ADH 1719W144.

⁷¹⁹ 'Vignerons: Opération Talgo', *Indépendant*, 16/02/1983 - ADA98J19.

⁷²⁰ 'Vignerons: Opération Talgo', *Indépendant*, 16/02/1983 - ADA98J19.

⁷²¹ 'Comité d'action viticole: 'Il faut plus que des promesses'', *La Dépêche*, 20/06/1983 – ADA98J15.

blocked and the lines of communication between winegrowers and the state strained to breaking point. An anonymous nighttime tip from the *Comité* alerted authorities that a bomb had been placed on the railway between Narbonne and Carcassonne.⁷²² Explosions near Lézignan destroyed signalling equipment, as burning tyres blocked the railway. In response to this action, the head of the SNCF wrote an open letter to winegrowers in the *Indépendant*. He questioned the thinking behind their tactics, highlighting the 18 million francs worth of damage inflicted upon railway equipment over the last 8 years. Tellingly, he commented on the extent to which the Défense movement was alienating support amongst the wider public with its increasingly radical actions:

Pour être défendable, une cause doit s'appuyer sur une opinion publique favorable; les viticulteurs peuvent-ils croire que tous ceux qui sont touchés par les actions destructrices se feront les défenseurs de la causes viticole?⁷²³

The CRAV's increasingly provocative and desperate actions threatened to alienate the tacit support they had previously relied on. Economic and demographic shifts threw the compact of viticultural unity that had governed the Midi into disarray amidst the political upheaval represented by the Socialist party's attempts to distance itself from the CGVM and wider Défense movement.

Expensive damages arising from CRAV actions occurred against the backdrop of a devaluation of the Franc in March 1983. Following frantic planning at the Ministry of Finance in the wake of then Budget Minister Laurent Fabius' overly optimistic 1982

⁷²² 'La nuit bleue du rail', *Indépendant* 20/02/1983 - ADA 98J19.

⁷²³ 'Lettre ouverte à tous ceux qui s'attaquent à l'outil ferroviaire', *Indépendant*, 22/02/1983 - ADA98J19.

budget, France was forced to petition its European Monetary System partner West Germany for permission to devalue her currency.⁷²⁴ The economic outlook was poor both regionally and nationally. Austerity measures focussed on remedying the balance of payments deficit, immediate deflationary policies and continuing to drive economic modernisation. Wage controls and spending cuts were felt across public and private sector as subsidy and intervention were casualties of the government's bid to get the balance of payments back into the black.⁷²⁵ Against a background of continuing 'rigueur' in the public sector, redundancies in the private sector and national insecurity, the demands for price controls and import tariffs emanating from the viticultural South must have appeared naive at best and selfish at worst.

If the CRAV could no longer mobilise tens of thousands of vigneron to support their message, then it could still use its vocal leaders as combative tribunes and direct smaller mobilisations to communicate specific grievances. After a statement from Brussels signalled that the EEC "ne pas vouloir subventionner indéfiniment la viticulture française"⁷²⁶, the atmosphere in the Midi worsened. André Cases issued a series of stinging rejections of European plans to include Spain in the EEC, criticising Spain's lack of sales tax, low employment costs and links to South America described as akin to a "Commonwealth".⁷²⁷ Protesting vigneron embarked on a graffiti raid in Narbonne on 27 June, spray-painting "Non à l'Espagne", "CEE = ruine du Midi

⁷²⁴ Friend, *The Long Presidency*, p.186.

⁷²⁵ Holmes, 'Broken Dreams', p.47. Also, see previously cited works on the economic retrenchment of the Socialists and S. Bernstein, P. Milza, J. Bianco, *François Mitterrand, les années du changement (1981-1984)* (Paris: Perrin, 2001), especially 'L'impératif économique', pp.329-521.

⁷²⁶ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.397.

⁷²⁷ 'Le C.A.V. audois: non à l'Espagne', *Indépendant*, 17/06/1983 - ADA 98J15.

viticole"⁷²⁸ along the railway and on local buildings, an action which was noted in the national press. Numerous communiqués followed these exhortations to protest, drawing hard-line supporters to the streets. Three simultaneous protests were organised in Lézignan-Corbières, Narbonne and Alzonne to oppose the entry of Spain into the Common Market.⁷²⁹ These actions escalated with the dynamiting of a 600-metre high-tension electricity pylon in Talairan in the Hautes Corbières, ⁷³⁰ a particularly destructive act, in which the CAV d'Aude denied involvement, although some newspapers strongly suspected their involvement. André Cases denied responsibility, stating that "Il ne s'agit absolument pas d'un acte décidé par le C.A.V. Aucun mot d'ordre n'a été donné en ce sens."⁷³¹

After an inflammatory call to action only a few days earlier, however, his retraction rang hollow. This demonstrated willingness for extreme action at the base of the viticultural community as well as a degree of local autonomy in the organisation of protests. The suspicion of direct CAV involvement motivated Cases to insert a communiqué in newspapers the next day, condemning those "actes criminels, mettant en jeu la vie des personnes".⁷³² The autonomy of attacks was alarming for the authorities, but what worried the Défense movement was the threat of spilt blood. The memory of 1976 remained vivid, and with wavering syndical and political support, the CRAV could not afford any repetition of Montredon nor to forfeit the support of the

⁷²⁸ 'Les viticulteurs de l'Aude manifestent leur hostilité a l'élargissement du marché commun', *Le Monde*, 29/06/1983 - ADA98J19.

⁷²⁹ 'CRAV communiqué', 22/06/1983 - ADA98J15.

⁷³⁰ 'Un pylône plastiqué', *Indépendant*, 30/06/1983 - ADA98J15.

⁷³¹ 'Mystérieux attentat dans l'Aude', *Midi Libre*, 30/06/1983 - ADA98J15.

⁷³² 'CAV de l'Aude communiqué', 01/07/1983 - ADA98J15.

press. Without such support, the ability of the CRAV to communicate with the *milieu viticole* was vastly diminished.

The CRAV's Alternatives

Part of the problem with the CRAV's role was that it remained a reactive group. Maffre-Beaugé's engagement with the FNSEA had created rifts within the CRAV, as some activists, such as Jean Huillet, sought jealously to guard their independence from national unions. Amongst this constituency, the vocabulary of 1907 endured because credible alternatives to government policy were absent. As such, calling for the repression of fraud or the banning of imports were the only real solutions the CRAV could offer. Its prominent leaders did not produce manifestoes for change but rather led protests against it.

CRAVistes rarely involved themselves with these debates at length, preferring the appeal of pugnacious rhetoric delivered to a supportive audience. It is significant that Jean Huillet was one of the few CRAVistes who made some effort to correct this. Huillet's broader political involvement perhaps conditioned him better than most to fulfil this role, yet even he stopped short of articulating coherent CRAV alternatives. During a conference on "autogestion" in October 1983, Huillet made a speech that touched upon many of the issues surrounding the activities of the CRAV and sought to answer critics.⁷³³ As one of the principal planks of the political platform erected by the PS under Mitterrand, the success of 'autogestion' was something of a barometer for the

⁷³³ 'Colloque international sur l'autogestion: Jean Huillet au coeur des problèmes', *L'Indépendant*, 17/10/1983 – ADA98J15.

government's success. The conference, organised by the Gaullist *Centre d'études et de recherches Égalité et Liberté* (CEREL),⁷³⁴ allowed a reflection on the record of the PS in driving growth through Keynesian economic stimuli alongside a participatory approach.⁷³⁵ Yet it was precisely this participatory approach which was resented by CRAVistes. The attempt to institutionalise representation elicited a strongly independent reaction from Huillet, who recalled the Languedoc's heritage by way of comparison.

Reflecting on the history of *autogestion* in the *Languedoc viticole*, Huillet spoke about the ways in which cooperatives had changed from their roots in 1901 - "déviation d'une expérience autogestionnaire". He worried that the increasing appeal of national unions was depriving regional institutions of their ability to represent regional problems. The continuing influence of "neo-corporatist" policy was, according to some CRAVistes, disenfranchising smaller growers in favour of the FNSEA, which was still popularly associated with large growers (as it had been since its inception). Huillet's belief in the heritage of the CGVM was absolute, yet he criticised it for having "tué tout le côté positif de la lutte de 1907". For him, the way in which the CGVM had failed to stand up to the FNSEA represented a surrender. Whilst the CRAV had always been an

⁷³⁴ This think-tank was founded by Jacques Chaban-Delmas in 1974, though it came to be dominated by the Gaullist left youth movement *Union des jeunes pour le progrès*. For a discussion of the UJP, see F. Audigier 'La présidentielle de 1974', *Parlement[s], Revue d'histoire politique*, vol.2, no.8 (2007), p. 69-84. Prominent figures in CEREL were former cabinet minister Rolan Nungesser and the UDR deputy Dr Claude Peyret. The concept of autogestion remained one of debate amongst Gaullist youth movements, following the publication of a pamphlet called *La participation vers l'autogestion: les gaullistes de gauche et la réforme de l'entreprise* by the *Front des jeunes progressistes* in 1975.

⁷³⁵ D. Hanley, 'The Parti Socialiste Français: Socialist synthesis or ambiguous compromise?' in S. Mazey (ed.) *Mitterand's France* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p.13.

offshoot of the CGVM, he now advocated that it should take a primary role in leading resistance to government led modernisation and defending growers' interests:

Gardons-nous de faire la course pour devenir un syndicat de masse. On serait bouffé et on perdrait les réalités du terrain. Notre rôle est de développer des dynamiques avec une analyse précise.⁷³⁶

Huillet remained convinced that the CRAV could build on its historical role to avoid domination by the national unions. Despite claiming that the CRAV had a role to play in developing analyses, they offered little of constructive value. Instead, this was substituted with broad criticisms of the government and appeals to regional identity. Importantly, this harked back to the rhetoric of 1907 and, in particular, deputy Justin Augé's appeal to the Assembly, "Vous êtes le médecin qui devez guérir la malade."⁷³⁷ As before, the government's responses to such appeals were unsympathetic. If the Midi could offer no solutions, then it would be subject to reform.

Yet, in discussion, Huillet rejected new solutions that were put to him which hinted at changing crops or scaling down the importance of winegrowing to the region. By way of example, he railed against the nascent trend towards producing "bio" or organic wines, labelling it the domain of bourgeois growers who could afford to meddle and stating "la biologie ça me fait cager". Such truculence led to questions about Poujadisme, and what the CRAV truly represented. When accused of reviving Poujadisme, Huillet reacted strongly, saying "je crois que tous les paysans du Languedoc ne sont pas encore devenus d'infâmes fascistes, capitalistes

⁷³⁶ 'Colloque international sur l'autogestion: Jean Huillet au coeur des problèmes', *L'Indépendant*, 17/10/1983 – ADA98J15.

⁷³⁷ Jo, débats, *Assemblée nationale*, séance du 28/06/1907, p.1574.

réactionnaires..." Instead, he chose to refocus the conversation onto more familiar territory, addressing issues of peasant and Occitan identity. In defence of this focus he asserted that "chaque fois qu'on a entubé un paysan du tiers monde, on a entubé un paysan de chez nous!"⁷³⁸ Broad social criticisms of capitalism and global markets were fine, though without any clear strategy for improving Languedocian viticulture, they were something of an indulgence.

Without a clear economic vision, neither Huillet nor the CRAV were likely to solve the problems of the Languedoc. Indeed, the lack of any positive or transformative vision confined the CRAV to reactive mobilisation. Maffre-Beaugé's decision to engage with the central bodies championing modernisation suggested that he could play a role in directing development, rather than rejecting it wholesale. Yet Huillet's annoyance at the presence of the FNSEA in the Hérault would put him more in line with the Audois CRAVistes who had, as of yet, rejected their influence. These ruptures would cause tension, highlighting splits between the two main departments of the *Languedoc viticole* and deploying violence in an attempt to secure consensus. Mobilising the base was difficult, but it was even harder to control them.

"Un échec indentique à celui de ses prédécesseurs"

On the one hand, Europe provided an obvious figurehead against which to mobilise protests, on the other the often-complex nature of European negotiations led to further cracks in the already damaged concept of viticultural unity. Nonetheless, the

⁷³⁸ 'Colloque international sur l'autogestion: Jean Huillet au coeur des problèmes', *L'Indépendant*, 17/10/1983 – ADA98J15.

traditional vocabulary of the CRAV (railing against imports, fraud and speculation in the name of viticultural unity) served to ensure that they remained a vocal if more isolated pressure group. The government's preference for continuing European integration and inability to deliver on specific election promises further distanced Languedocian PS Deputies from their traditional role as the 'Députés du vin'. Instead they were forced to play the role of transmission belt for government policy. This led to the Socialists distancing themselves from the radicals of the region, pushing the vocal and disenchanted minority within the CRAV to harden their stance against the government.⁷³⁹

In December 1983, 3,000 winegrowers from nine Departments set off by train to take their protest to the doors of the EEC.⁷⁴⁰ Whilst Huillet in Strasbourg communicated the *Midi viticole's* refusal to see unregulated expansion, the FNSEA back south was unsurprisingly reputed to be "plutôt réticents à l'égard de l'expédition alsacienne." By withholding its support for the mission, the FNSEA made clear that it did not support the CRAV's demands, placing a wedge between themselves and the CGVM as opposing representative organisations. The radical actions of the CRAV had shock value, but the FNSEA's closeness to government seemed to offer a more effective route to improving regional fortunes. This was especially true in the Hérault, where the Communist Maffre-Beaugé had shown that forming an FDSEA did not represent unqualified engagement with the centre-right FNSEA. The CAV de l'Aude attempted

⁷³⁹ For a sociological discussion of the PS attempt to renegotiate its appeal in the Aude, see A. Roger, 'Faire parler les viticulteurs: La construction d'un 'électorat' dans le département de l'Aude', in V. Anquetin, A. Freyermouth, *La figure de l'Habitant* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008), pp.95-114.

⁷⁴⁰ 'CAV: objectif Strasbourg', *L'Indépendant*, 09/12/1983 – ADA98J19.

to paper over these cracks, stating that "la profession est une et indivisible".⁷⁴¹ Yet, the CAV de l'Aude was also about to engage in an attempt to relaunch the CRAV, demonstrating its independence and its strength.

One way of reinvigorating unity was decisive and significant action. On the night of 10 to 11 January 1984, explosions tore through the Tax Office in Narbonne. Whilst circumstantial evidence implicated the CRAV, Andre Cases preferred to focus on the economic violence done to the region and their profession. "Il faut que les pouvoirs publics se gardent d'une faute qui serait de jeter une étincelle sur de l'essence... L'effet est toujours explosif."⁷⁴² Nonetheless, he declared that the CRAV had not ordered the attack and that "il y a des éléments incontrôlés qui acceptent mal les provocations de toutes sortes."⁷⁴³ These were the members who would be responsible for any relaunch, and the attempt to remobilise relied on setting loose the CRAV's most extreme elements. Action continued, as winegrowers from the CAV de l'Aude intercepted trucks and tankers on 12 January and 17 January.⁷⁴⁴ More sensational was the fact that when the suspected CAV commandos had broken into the rail station at Carcassonne to intercept the tankers, they had stumbled across a police car, which they swiftly upended and rolled down the hill.⁷⁴⁵ Attacking police vehicles raised the spectre of 1976.

Vanguard action from the CAV de l'Aude seemed to be working. By the end of the month, Jean Huillet was promising "une action spectaculaire et originale" from the

⁷⁴¹ 'Le CAV', *L'Indépendant*, 10/11/1983 – ADA98J15.

⁷⁴² 'Explosif aux impôts' *La Dépêche*, 11/01/1984 - ADA 98J15.

⁷⁴³ 'L'attentat de Narbonne', *Midi Libre*, 11/01/1984 - ADA 98J15.

⁷⁴⁴ 'Une citerne vidée', *Indépendant*, 13/01/1984 - ADA 98J15; 'Retour à la colère', *Indépendant*, 18/01/1984 - ADA 98J15.

⁷⁴⁵ 'Voiture de police renversée et vins italiens au fossé', *Indépendant* - 18/01/1984 - ADA 98J15.

CAV de l'Hérault to grab the attention of Prime Minister Mauroy and Agriculture Minister Rocard and shake the region from its torpor.⁷⁴⁶ Andre Cases was once again dragged into the role of tribune, stating that "la violence des CAV est le seul moyen d'être écouté" and that "les pouvoirs publics n'ont qu'une réponse, la répression, ils sont censés prendre position pour les importateurs." By highlighting the primacy of the CRAV, Cases sent a message to those wavering in their support. Michel Rocard condemned the commandos: "toute cause perd de sa crédibilité dès lors que des individus, qui disent la défendre, se livrent à de telles exactions." Andre Cases immediately replied, condemning the Socialist government: "Je dis au gouvernement que sa politique, en matière viti-vinicole, est encore un échec identique à celui de ses prédécesseurs, avec, en plus, un immense espoir déçu."⁷⁴⁷

As controls on the road continued and the CRAV targeted trucks, the wilder elements who had reconstituted the CAV de l'Hérault and Aude were determined to display their resolute stance. They hijacked 8,000HL of Italian wine destined for merchants and emptied it into a nearby stream.⁷⁴⁸ Jojo Fabre then led subsequent marches in Narbonne where, speaking for the CRAV, he promised that until regulation was properly applied "nous continuerons ce genre d'action". As mobile police squadrons closed down the demonstration, Fabre led his troupe to a new location - the bridge at Montredon. Travelling to this point - "un lieu chargé de symbole" - was a response to supposed provocation by police.⁷⁴⁹ Tension between the CRS and CRAV

⁷⁴⁶ 'Tranche d'histoire', *Le Paysan du Midi*, 26/01/1984 - ADG JR438-33.

⁷⁴⁷ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.400.

⁷⁴⁸ 'Manifestation... et concertation', *Le Paysan du Midi*, 16/02/1984 - ADG JR438-33.

⁷⁴⁹ 'Les feux de la colère des vigneron, hier soir sous le pont de Montredon', *Midi Libre*, 13/02/1984 - ADA9 8J15.

escalated: whilst winegrowers condemned 'provocation', the state backed the CRS by condemning violence on the part of protestors. This volatile situation temporarily disguised the problems of the Défense movement as André Cases addressed an audience of 8,000 winegrowers in Narbonne in bullish fashion:

Je dis à tous ces jeunes que nous avons régulièrement intégrés au C.A.V. qu'ils doivent prendre la relève [...] En attendant, je continue jusqu'à la relève, mais cette relève, je l'attends... Ceci dit, plus que jamais, le C.A.V. est une institution indispensable.⁷⁵⁰

Again, Cases was attempting to rally the traditional support base of the CRAV whilst also seeking to address young winegrowers possibly more inclined to fatalism or disinclined to old-style syndicalism. These were the FNSEA's target audience in the Languedoc and the constituency which the CRAV needed to engage with. His insistence on the role of the CRAV was contingent not simply on his desire for it to retain prominence, but on his belief in direct action as a necessary means of communicating the immediate grievances of the Languedoc. Such rhetoric was designed to stress the lot of the most vulnerable producers, deliberately ignoring growers who were more successful and pushing the CRAV ever more towards becoming the mouthpiece of the plains. With an ageing core marginalised by the focus of modernisation programs, the CRAV needed continually to strike out to ensure they did not seem passé. Stressing viticultural unity and the challenges of imports, fraud and speculation allowed them to use age-old vocabulary to stress modern problems, highlighting their longevity in the face of the growing regional influence of the FNSEA. An FDSEA was established in the Aude in February 1984 by the national leader

⁷⁵⁰ 'Le C.A.V.: une institution indispensable', *Le Paysan du Midi*, 23/02/1984 - ADG JR438-33.

Guillaume. In the eyes of the CRAV, such organisations would never adequately mobilise in support of the Midi's recurring cycle of immediate problems and there remained a telling need for locally organised and often extra-legal action groups.

Likewise, Jean Huillet's subsequent address lamented the arrest of winegrowers at the start of the month and promised a reaction: "chaque fois qu'un viticulteur en service commandé sera inculpé, un autre se lèvera et prendra sa place pour continuer la combat."⁷⁵¹ Their arrest and subsequent sentencing was, needless to say, unpopular and a swathe of attacks followed, creating almost 3.5 million Francs worth of damage in response to the fines handed down. The ransacking of the Trésorerie-Général in Carcassonne, the torching of a Tax office in Lézignan, the destruction of railway points and attacks on the Mayor's office in Capendu were the immediate response of furious vignerons.⁷⁵² Huillet called on winegrowers from all over the region to gather at the Palais de Congrès in Béziers on 19 March to protest against Rocard's impending negotiations with the British and others in Brussels.⁷⁵³ 8,000 marched in Béziers on 19 March under the watchful eye of 5 companies of CRS and 4 squadrons of mobile police.⁷⁵⁴ As the protest gathered - among them Claude Alranc from the Mouvement Culturel Occitan and Georges Fontès the Mayor of Béziers - Jean Huillet addressed a largely peaceful crowd. Outlining his objections to the renegotiation of the CAP he said that "nous sommes, sur le plan humaniste, totalement d'accord sur l'élargissement, c'est une tâche noble. Mais nous ne pouvons accepter d'être poignardé dans le dos."⁷⁵⁵ The

⁷⁵¹ 'Le C.A.V.: une institution indispensable', *Le Paysan du Midi*, 23/02/1984 - ADG JR438-33.

⁷⁵² Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.400.

⁷⁵³ 'L'appel', *Le Paysan du Midi*, 08/03/1984 - ADG JR438-33.

⁷⁵⁴ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.401.

⁷⁵⁵ 'Bons Béziers du Midi', *Le Paysan du Midi*, 22/03/1984 - ADG JR438-33.

protests would continue against these discussions, with the CRAV shifting next to the Gard, where 8,000 - 10,000⁷⁵⁶ gathered in Nîmes on 9 April to lament the fact that despite 4 Presidents "la crise du monde viticole [qui] dure et perdure".⁷⁵⁷



*Protests in Narbonne*⁷⁵⁸

Gavignaud-Fontaine comments on the disparity between this 10,000 and the 100,000 in 1976, or the 600,000 in 1907; she ruminates on the means by which "bon nombre d'élus et de professionnels de la viticulture se sont désolidarisés des actions violentes."⁷⁵⁹ More stringent policing coupled with a broader acceptance of market liberalisation and modernisation was beginning to marginalise the CRAV. The creeping advance of the FNSEA was likewise undermining the authority of the CGVM to act as the principal interlocutor for vignerons and the CRAV, its 'bras armée', faced similar challenges. On 14 April, the protests moved from Nîmes to Perpignan,⁷⁶⁰ but what became apparent was that the fallout of 1976 was still jeopardising the future of

⁷⁵⁶ 'De Charles à François', *Le Paysan du Midi*, 05/04/1984 - ADG JR438-33; Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole, la méditerranée et l'Europe au siècle dernier*, p.401. The higher figure comes from Genevieve Gavignaud-Fontaine and the lower estimate from the *Paysan du Midi*.

⁷⁵⁷ 'De Charles à François', *Le Paysan du Midi*, 05/04/1984 - ADG JR438-33.

⁷⁵⁸ 'De Charles à François', *Le Paysan du Midi*, 05/04/1984 - ADG JR438-33

⁷⁵⁹ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.401.

⁷⁶⁰ 'CRAV communique', 06/04/1984 - ADA 98J15.

viticultural defence well into the 1980s. By 1984, with declining attendances at protests and increasingly violent means of communicating the grievances of the *milieu viticole*, the CRAV represented, in reality, a shrinking segment of the population despite attempts to relaunch its appeal.

The disaggregation of the Midi's 'union sacrée' fundamentally altered the landscape of the *Midi viticole*, yet in the persistence of the CRAV's recourse to direct action, we can identify a continuity. Path dependency helps to rationalise and account for the responses of Midi vigneronns to evolving phenomena in a consistent vocabulary founded in the riots of 1907. The processes that had shaped the CRAV ensured that they remained an expression of consistent and reliable resistance to the central project of modernisation. The struggle between 'l'offensive moderniste' and the traditional bastions of 'la Défense' highlighted that this central message, with its recurring vocabulary and actions, persisted even when the tension was inter-mural. Despite attempts from above to foster a desire to improve quality amongst winegrowers, certain responses have consistently stressed the regional, rooted character of an industry that represents an exceptional aspect of culture and identity and as such claims immunity from any need for alteration. Such claims help to ensure that ritualised protest was a recurring means of communicating with the state. Yet when dialogue seemed unprofitable, as it would when the 'union sacrée' collapsed, ritualised protest could yield to more radical forms of action permitted by the patterns of mobilisation practiced by the CRAV. Within this model, the debate with 'l'offensive moderniste' could not be won and the cause of 'la Défense' was diminished by violence.

The next chapter will explore the means by which the Défense movement's old mandate weakened, with the CRAV still striving to make itself heard in a world lurching towards globalisation. The tragedy of Montredon and the victory of Mitterrand challenged the aspirations of the Défense movement, forcing it to adapt. Yet, as the 1980s continued to prove formative for the wine industry, the vocabulary and ideology of 1907 would continue to frame regional responses despite dwindling numbers in the *milieu viticole* and changing attitudes to progress.

Chapter 6:

"Enterrement ou résurrection": Modernisation and marginalisation (1984-1992)

Just outside Carcassonne at 10pm on 20 April 1984, around 100 viticultural commandos gathered in a Leclerc supermarket car park.⁷⁶¹ Concerned by the appearance of such a crowd, the store's night watchman challenged the men. With balaclavas and weapons in hand, their response was a gruff warning that the guard should disappear and lock up his guard dogs. No sooner had he done this than the hooded men duly advanced on the empty store.⁷⁶² They smashed windows with iron bars before others launched a volley of Molotov cocktails through the shattered frames.⁷⁶³ Quickly, fire took hold of the building and billowed out to destroy 3,500 square metres of retail space, with damage estimated at 30 million Francs.⁷⁶⁴ The next morning, as the blackened shell of the building still smouldered, politicians and police mobilised to condemn the culprits and dampen the potential for further action. Raymond Chésa, the Mayor of Carcassonne since 1983 stated:

⁷⁶¹ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.402.

⁷⁶² Revel, *Montredon*, p.319.

⁷⁶³ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, pp.249-250.

⁷⁶⁴ Gilbert *Le Languedoc et ses images*, p.45.

Après les événements qu'a connus cette ville, je dis que le climat d'insécurité qui règne est le prélude à une guerre civile, Non seulement la réprobation de nos concitoyens est générale, mais on sent que s'enclenche un processus d'exacerbation dont on ne sait où il peut conduire. Il ne faudrait pas arriver dans l'Aude à la même situation qu'en Corse ou au Pays Basque. Hier, les édifices publics étaient visés. Aujourd'hui, ce sont les particuliers. Jusqu'où ira cette escalade de violence?⁷⁶⁵

His response was no doubt heightened by its immediacy to events, even if the mention of civil war seems alarmist. Clearly, he believed the winegrowers had breached their usual boundaries of protest and moved closer to outright rebellion. Of particular interest is the mention of Corsica in the context of Michelle Zancarini-Fournel's 'après-Mai' analysis of the Montredon shootings. Her reference to Corsica bound the narrative of regionalism into the CRAV's political expression. As mentioned, these movements may have complemented each other at specific moments, yet they remained distinct. As Zancarini-Fournel points out, however, the cases of Aleria and Montredon were different, a difference she attributes to the Aude's republican heritage. Regarding Montredon, she notes:

La présence constante dans les manifestations, et même lors d'actions violentes et minoritaires, de maires des villages des Corbières a maintenu le lien avec les représentants politiques du département⁷⁶⁶

The burning of the Leclerc store symbolised a breaking point, however, when the methods of the CRAV broke with traditionally accepted modes of protest. Chésa's denunciation of the winegrowers demonstrated that in such a case they were unable to rely on the support of local *notables*. The *Dépêche* highlighted that the act had been

⁷⁶⁵ Revel, *Montredon*, p.320.

⁷⁶⁶ Zancarini-Fournel, 'Montredon, 4 mars 1976: l'événement comme révélateur', p.9.

criminal and "condamné avec force par l'opinion publique mais aussi par une large frange agricole et viticole audoise."

Likewise, in the capital, the Agriculture Minister, Michel Rocard, appeared on television to condemn what he called "actions scandaleuses moralement, et imbéciles économiquement. [...] Des gangsters viennent ainsi d'affaiblir la cause de la viticulture française."⁷⁶⁷ As in previous attacks which had crossed frontiers of acceptability, this act caused both massive property damage and a threat to the safety of bystanders. Attacks on tax offices and telephone lines were intended to strike out against emblems of the state in a dramatic manner. Yet, as had been the case with dynamiting pylons and railways, these actions drew criticism from the usually supportive press and also from unions representing workers employed by these institutions. The Leclerc affair was the most openly destructive act so far undertaken and subsequent mobilisations would take place under "l'ombre de l'incendie du centre Leclerc de Carcassonne."⁷⁶⁸ Unlike other attacks which took place during the dead of night or in open countryside, this was an urban shopping centre attacked at 10pm, with 90 staff facing redundancy as a result of the attack.⁷⁶⁹ Despite Andre Cases assuring the winegrowers detained by police of his support, the event generated wide condemnation. Even Jean Huillet admitted that he was troubled, though remained committed to the solidarity of the Défense movement, "Je continue à être sur le terrain, mais je suis très ennuyé pour réagir. [...] Je reste toujours aux côtés de mes amis audois."⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁷ 'Carcassonne: Les 'casseurs' de Leclerc arrêtés aujourd'hui?', *La Dépêche*, 25/04/1984 - ADA 98J21.

⁷⁶⁸ 'Les vigneronns aujourd'hui dans la rue', *Midi-Libre*, 24/04/1984 - ADA 98J21.

⁷⁶⁹ 'Le centre Leclerc de Carcassonne sera reconstruit', *Midi Libre*, 25/04/1984 - ADA 98J21.

⁷⁷⁰ 'La 'manif' des inquiétudes', *Midi-Libre*, 25/04/1984 - ADA 98J21.

Yves Gilbert identifies multiple streams of reaction to the arson attack which indicated a shift in the public's willingness to sanction the activities of the CRAV:

La rupture se consomme entre, d'une part, un nombre de plus en plus important de viticulteurs modérés, une opinion public locale qui se scandalise devant les exactions des derniers temps, des élus qui ne cautionnent plus la violence et, d'autre part, un noyau de plus en plus réduit et de plus en plus marginalisé de militants des Comités d'Action Viticoles. 'Viticulteurs: isolés et divisés.'⁷⁷¹

Gilbert depicts an industry changed by the process of economic reform which was undermining the political importance of the Défense movement and casting it as a backwards looking reaction against progress. In reality, continuing programmes of *arrachage* had undermined the predominance of winegrowers in the region, whilst the inability of the Socialist government to tackle the FNSEA's dominance on a national level had pushed a large number of Languedocians towards supporting it in the face of regional malaise. Likewise, the policy of the FNSEA had become ever closer to that of the government, owing to its close relationship with power. Amidst continued demonstrations and acts of violence it seems that support for the CRAV had started to wear thin amongst the public. Although it retained a core of ever more embattled *petit vigneron*s amongst the *milieu viticole*, their faltering relevance on a wider scale could not be disguised by increasingly strident action.

If the marginalisation of the CRAV had been progressively underway since the Socialist victory, the month of April 1984 witnessed a rapid acceleration of the process. This one act of destructive folly came to symbolise the CRAV's position in the Midi in much the same way as Montredon had highlighted their extremism 8 years earlier. By

⁷⁷¹ Gilbert *Le Languedoc et ses images*, p.45.

striking out violently against targets which offered little threat to Languedocian winegrowers, the CRAV forfeited public sympathy. Hijacking tankers of Italian wine or spray painting the local prefecture had clear links to the cause of 'la Défense'. When the CRAV targeted private companies actively engaged in promoting their product, however, many were outraged if not simply confused. As politicians failed to spring to the defence of the viticultural commandoes and the scale of damages frightened off their traditional supporters, the Leclerc fires seemed destined to mark a turning point for the CRAV and the Languedoc more widely.

The reaction from Edouard Leclerc – the proprietor of the supermarket chain – was equally damaging. He pointed out that in all their 450 stores around France, 25% of wine sold came from the Aude, whilst only 0.1% of wine came from outside France. In destroying the Carcassonnais store, the CRAV had cut off one of the principal distributors of Audois wine, a fact which would only be exacerbated as the chain boycotted Audois wine for a month following the attack.⁷⁷² The choice of target and the scale of damages impacted on the CRAV's credibility as an acceptable interlocutor. Likewise, it was Chésa and Jacques Talmier who led the way in setting up conciliatory meetings with Edouard Leclerc, bringing along with them François Guillaume. He declared that he was "certain d'obtenir que M. Leclerc lève interdit."⁷⁷³ Furthermore, Guillaume declared that if sales recommenced, Leclerc should only allow the wine of "producteurs et coopérateurs qui se réclament de la F.N.S.E.A." to ensure that

⁷⁷² 'Carcassonne: Les 'casseurs' de Leclerc arrêtés aujourd'hui?', *La Dépêche*, 25/04/1984 - ADA 98J21.

⁷⁷³ Talmier was the head of the local Chamber of Commerce and President of the Carcassonnais rugby union team. He showed himself a firm ally of modernisers both in business and sport.

"Groupuscules de casseurs" were punished for their actions.⁷⁷⁴ Suddenly, some of the figureheads of the modernisation movement were publicly shown to be cleaning up the mess of the Défense movement's wildest elements.

This arson attack was indicative of the increasing antagonism between the objectives of regional development and regional defence. As described in the previous chapter, the foundations of the *Languedoc viticole* had been undercut by demographic shifts in the regional economy and political developments which altered the framework for interaction between winegrowers and elites. This process would continue as the Défense movement became increasingly divided over approaches to development. As traditionalists and defenders of the most vulnerable smallholders, the CRAV originally emerged as the stalwarts of 'la Défense'. The creeping influence of 'l'offensive moderniste', however, would win converts amongst some winegrowers, especially as it had managed to acquire the endorsement of the PS. This changing political climate called into question established modes of protest and undermined the popular tolerance of violent CRAV attacks. Indeed, during the latter half of the 1980s, the frontiers of acceptability would be breached with ever greater regularity. Changing public attitudes to the CRAV illustrated both an evolution in the group's methods and a decline in the importance of the traditional Défense movement to regional politics. The modernisation of Languedocian viticulture partially mirrored the development of regional *patrimoine* as a form of cultural capital which could be directed towards improving relations between the French state and regional peripheries.

⁷⁷⁴ 'François Guillaume: 'Groupuscules de casseurs''. *Midi-Libre*, 25/04/1984 - ADA 98J21.

The Midi transformed? Falling consumption and changing production patterns

This Leclerc attack came against a background of steadily worsening news for the smallholders and mass producers of the Languedoc who were the mainstay of the Défense movement and the foot soldiers of the CRAV. Declining consumption and shrinking vine coverage both in France and across Europe was acutely felt in the Languedoc. The influence of Brussels had ensured that member states were pushed ever more towards increasing the quality and decreasing the quantity of wine produced. The table below denotes the shifting patterns of wine consumption within Europe and the marked transformation of those levels. Clearly, consumption in traditionally wine-producing countries has fallen considerably across the 40 year period surveyed. In France, Italy and Portugal consumption has almost halved. The other evident trend is the growth of consumption in markets which produce little or no wine, such as the UK and the Netherlands. This pattern of increased trade amongst European countries kept the overall level of consumption across Europe from collapsing during this period. Despite 50% declines in some countries, the overall consumption level fell only 9.4%. Nonetheless, this marks a considerable downturn in European wine consumption over the period.⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷⁵ A. Smith. J. Maillard; O. Costa, *Vin et politique* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Po, 2007), p.95.

| | 1961 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2001 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| France | 126.1 | 109.1 | 91 | 72.7 | 63.9 |
| Italy | 108.2 | 113.7 | 92.9 | 62.5 | 50 |
| Portugal | 99.3 | 99 | 68.7 | 63.3 | 50 |
| Switzerland | 36.7 | 41.9 | 47.4 | 49.4 | 43.1 |
| Spain | 52.5 | 61.5 | 64.7 | 37.4 | 36.2 |
| Greece | 41 | 40 | 44.9 | 32.8 | 34 |
| Denmark | 3.3 | 5.9 | 14 | 21.3 | 31.2 |
| Austria | 20.8 | 34.6 | 35.8 | 35 | 31 |
| Germany | 12.2 | 16 | 25.5 | 26.1 | 23.9 |
| Netherlands | 2.3 | 5.2 | 12.9 | 14.5 | 18.9 |
| Belgium | 8.6 | 14.2 | 20.6 | 24.9 | 18.7 |
| UK | 1.8 | 2.9 | 7.1 | 11.5 | 17.5 |

*Consumption trends in Europe (litres of wine per inhabitant per year)*⁷⁷⁶

Amidst a climate of gradually falling consumption within Europe between 1984 and 2003, the other important factor was the changing ratio between geographically limited wine (such as AOC in France, for example) and *vin de table*. In 1984, roughly 35,000,000HL of geographically limited wines were consumed, in comparison to roughly 95,000,000HL of non-geographically limited wine. By 2003, this ratio saw a steady convergence at around 55,000,000HL each. The Midi's continued reliance on *vin de table* over AOC wine heightened the implications of this trend. The stalwart cooperatives producing wine which had always been intended for *consommation courante* struggled in the face of higher value production governed by the appellation system. The logic behind the qualitative revolution enshrined at the heart of French winegrowing since the Plan Chirac of 1973 and reiterated by Mitterrand during the election of 1981 had been borne out. This trend also helps to display the Midi's complicated relationship with European expansion. Although organisations like the

⁷⁷⁶ These figures come from the work of Jean Clavel, a former syndicalist involved with the restructuring of Languedocien viticulture. He continues to play an active role in documenting the changes and challenges facing the Languedoc, with an optimistic belief in the region's potential. I will rely on his work for many of these figures. CF. J. Clavel, *Mondialisation des vins* (Bordeaux: Féret, 2008), especially pp.43-64.

CRAV vilified Italian imports as the primary menace to their industry, falling consumption in Italy was augmented by falling production. After the worst of the Italian wine scandals in the 1980s, Italy's production stood at 61.7 million HL, yet in only 5 years it fell to 41.4 million HL. Likewise, though 88% of its production was *vin de table* in 1986, this had shrunk to 44% in 2005. The viticultural legislation of the European Community remained principally a threat to those producing *vin de table*, with regions such as the Midi more affected than relatively affluent producers in regions such as Bordeaux. Whilst the politics of over-production and minimum price guarantees dogged the activities of low value producers, the *grands marques* of longstanding AOCs were somewhat immune from supra-national reform and, instead, lobbied at a national level for regulation and brand protection.⁷⁷⁷ During this period the motivation of those pursuing 'l'offensive moderniste' was to reduce the coverage and yield of vines whilst also trying to increase their requisite value, a strategy often referred to as the Bordeaux model.

Continued focus on *arrachage* by European policy-makers ensured that the Midi's vine acreage was ever shrinking in service of reduced yields and better grape varieties.⁷⁷⁸ It remained, as mentioned earlier, an unpopular option for winegrowers who felt that regional identity was being torn up alongside productive vines. By 1989, uprooting was 'menacing' roughly 100,000HA of vines in the Languedoc-Roussillon, threatening to undermine the centrality of the Midi's wine industry to its regional

⁷⁷⁷ Smith, Maillard, Costa, *Vin et politique*, pp.87-97.

⁷⁷⁸ For a fuller discussion of *arrachage* and its uptake patterns throughout the Languedoc see the forensically in-depth Pierre Bartoli, *La Régression Viticole en Languedoc* (Montpellier: INRA-ENSA, 1985).

economy.⁷⁷⁹ 'Arrachage' had a telling impact on France between 1968 and 1988, but most specifically in the Languedoc. The French national vineyard dropped from 1.2 million HA in 1968 to 960,000HA in 1988 (a decline of a fifth) and in the Languedoc the drop was from 450,000HA to 300,000HA (a decline of a third).⁷⁸⁰ Between 1976 and 1984, *arrachage* occurred mainly in the marginal vineyards of the Languedoc, though between 1984 and 1990, productive vineyards at the heart of the *Languedoc viticole* began to disappear. Economic pressures and the temptation to take the immediate reimbursement for uprooting impacted upon small vineyards most of all. As a result, the trend from the 1970s was of a disappearance of the smallest vine plots, as vineyards were either sold, amalgamated or torn up. The 'rationalisation' of the Midi's patchwork vine coverage reduced the number of smallholders depending on the CRAV, CGVM or MODEF to represent them. Whilst, in 1970 the average vineyard size in the Aude was 10.1HA, in 1979 it was 13.2HA and by 1988 it was 16.4HA.⁷⁸¹ Between 1976 and 2006, some 2/3 of small agricultural businesses had disappeared in the Languedoc, whilst the acreage devoted to agriculture had decreased only by 3%.⁷⁸² Likewise, this process served to weaken the area's traditional co-operatives, instead strengthening the more flexible winemakers who could produce higher value wine more in tune with the institutional vision for development. The number of cooperatives had decreased, as many fused together in the face of economic difficulties: of the 550 cooperatives in 1980, only 380 remained by 1998. As a result, between 1984 and 2004 wine as a percentage of total regional agricultural produce dropped 10% (from 55% to 45%).

⁷⁷⁹ 'Des ceps qui pourraient s'enflammer', *La Dépêche*, 19/01/1989 – ADA98J20.

⁷⁸⁰ O. Torres, *The Wine Wars* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), p.58.

⁷⁸¹ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, pp.419-424.

⁷⁸² Touzard, Klajman, *Développement régional Agriculture et IAA en Languedoc-Roussillon*, pp.12-15.

Indeed, by 1989, almost 1/3 of the region's vines had been uprooted in response to European directives and Parisian development strategies.

| Years | Aude | Gard | Hérault | Languedoc |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1970 | 118,104 | 90,897 | 162,172 | 371,173 |
| 1979 | 115,758 | 86,734 | 147,933 | 350, 425 |
| 1988 | 102,759 | 77,647 | 127,813 | 308,279 |
| 1994 | 88,836 | 64,961 | 111,426 | 265,223 |
| Reduction | 29,268 | 25,936 | 50,746 | 105,950 |
| % | -24.8% | -28.5% | -31,3% | -29% |

Changes in the Surface of vines (HA)⁷⁸³

Further European directives in 1988 modified the rules on *arrachage* to allow for the replanting of better quality varieties (such as Cabernet and Merlot) in place of high-yield and low-quality varieties (such as Aramon and Alicante). The extension of this decree saw immediate impact, with 21,000 HA replanted over the course of the 1988-1989 season. Between 1976 and 1989 “près de la moitié du vignoble languedocien est arraché définitivement ou renouvelé en cépages qualitatifs en l’espace de vingt ans.”⁷⁸⁴ The structural changes implied by this amelioration were considerable and the traditional grape varieties of the Languedoc occupied ever less area. The table below highlights the outcomes of this amelioration over the course of 30 years.

⁷⁸³ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.420.

⁷⁸⁴ Rouzier, *Le Languedoc-Roussillon 1950-2001*, p.79-82.

| | 1968 harvest | 1999 harvest |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Alicante Bouschet | 11,164 | 7,415 |
| Aramon noir | 107,273 | 9,797 |
| High yield varieties | 118, 437 | 17,212 |
| Cinsault | 7,943 | 20,980 |
| Carignan | 175,666 | 82,783 |
| Regional varieties | 183,609 | 103,763 |
| Mourvèdre | ? (100HA planted) | 3,600 |
| Syrah | 82 | 27,853 |
| Grenache noir | 23,841 | 41,375 |
| Quality regional varieties | 23,923 | 69,228 |
| Cabernet | - | 13,591 |
| Merlot | - | 23,380 |
| Sauvignon | - | 4,349 |
| Cépages extérieurs | - | 41,320 |
| Total | 431,239 | 291,400 |

Changes in varieties by HA (1968-1990)

Aramon, a stalwart of the Midi 'de la bibine', had virtually disappeared by 1990, falling from an area of 130,000HA in 1958 to less than 10,000HA and representing only 3% of the regional harvest. Carignan, although often a high-yield variety, forms the basis of many of the Midi's AOCs, such as *Fitou* and *Corbières*. As such, its use has been refined and has shrunk some 45% between 1958 and 1990. Cinsault, which was not generally seen as a positive grape for quality reds, became increasingly used in the production of marketable Rosé wine. Alicante Bouschet retained its role as a high-yield seldom planted vine with little attraction for serious growers. The most important varieties have been Grenache, Cinsault, Syrah and Mourvèdre, the most important grapes in many of the Languedoc's premier appellations. Although Syrah and Mourvèdre were almost non-existent in 1958, they constituted 27,800HA and 3,600HA by 1999. These trends of amelioration represented a substantial shift in the character of the Languedoc's wine industry. The old image of the Midi as a bulk producer of poor wine was being challenged by the reality of better varieties and better quality production.

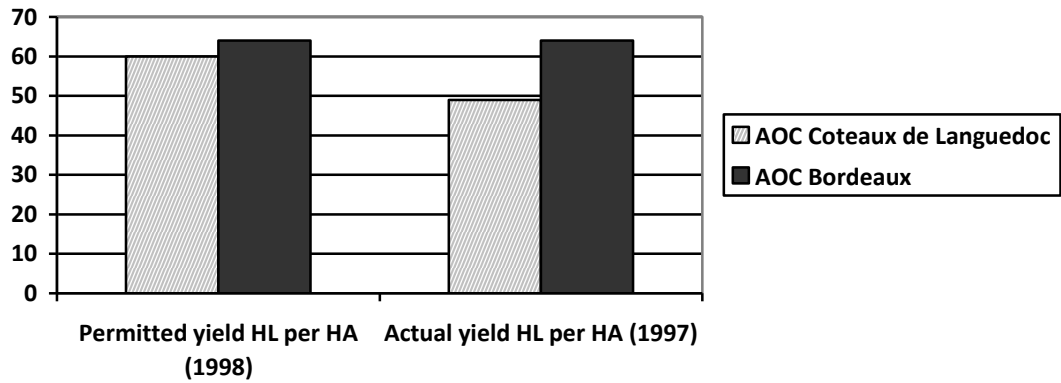
The CRAV's role as spokesman of the smallholding producer was becoming untenable in the face of these shifts.

The politics of quality did play a part in improving the fortunes of some growers, however. AOC *Coteaux de Languedoc* was introduced in December 1985, drawing together 168 communes and 15,600 HA of vineyards along the Mediterranean coast from Narbonne in the west to Nîmes in the east.⁷⁸⁵ The AOC *Coteaux de Languedoc* came from a proposal originally floated in the Hérault from 1977 by a former CDJA member Jean-Claude Bousquet.⁷⁸⁶ It is significant that these proposals for renewal and modernisation originated in the Hérault, where a greater willingness to engage with changes to traditional production methods was evident. Federalising these diverse areas under one appellation allowed the collective regulation and marketing of wine. As such, limits on the yield per hectare and on the varieties of grape permitted in blends were established and enforced. Jean Clavel highlights that demands on yield (one of the strongest indicators of a commitment to quality) were actually stricter in AOC *Coteaux de Languedoc* than it was in AOC *Bordeaux*, as shown in the table below.⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸⁵ The sub-regions included in AOC *Coteaux de Languedoc* are Saint Chinian, Faugères, Clairette du Languedoc, Clape, Quatourze, Picpoul de Pinet, Grés de Montpellier, Terrasses du Larzac, Pic Saint Loup, Terrasses de Béziers, Pézenas, Cabrières, and Sommières.

⁷⁸⁶ Bousquet remains President of the *Syndicat des Coteaux de Languedoc*. The *Directrice* of that organisation, Mme. Béatrice de Chabert was interviewed in relation to this thesis.

⁷⁸⁷ J. Clavel, *Le 21e siècle des vins du Languedoc* (St Georges d'Orque: Causse, 1999), p.129 and p.172.



Comparison of AOC yield restrictions

Subsequently, the *Vin de Pays d'Oc* appellation was created in 1987 under the leadership of Jacques Gravegeal, a former luminary of the FNSEA. This measure was popular in that it circumscribed the often expensive process of obtaining an individual AOC for a small area outside existing boundaries. Instead it provided for some freedom of blend and method – in the loosely regulated *Vin de Pays* category established in the Chirac Plan – whilst accentuating the regional brand of Occitan heritage. This measure combined pride in regional identity with a tangible means of ameliorating production, raising the possibility of rehabilitating the *Midi viticole's* reputation within the wine world. An initial 200,000HL of wine was produced under this appellation, although this increased to over 3.5 million HL within 15 years, a useful indication of its popularity.⁷⁸⁸ The politics of quality had seen marked success against the declining centrality of the wine trade to the regional economy.

In 1990, the estimated population of those involved in winegrowing in the Languedoc was 39,000 where it had been 75,000 in 1975. The continuing success of the

⁷⁸⁸ Torres, *The Wine Wars*, p.57.

Coteaux du Languedoc appellation marked "le vent tourner à temps." Jean Clavel - the President of the appellation's support organisation - acknowledged both its success and its growing influence: "Au début, nous étions des marginaux, mais tout le monde se rend compte aujourd'hui que nous étions dans le vrai."⁷⁸⁹ Indeed, this image of improving quality and greater stability was an impressive and progressive step, constructed as it was on costly investment in quality and the tempting if painful *arrachage* programs promulgated by the Dublin Accords. The Dublin Accords of December 1984 singled out the Midi as one of the key targets for change if European agriculture was to avoid constant over-production and continued poor sales.⁷⁹⁰ This image of progress stood in stark contrast to the contestatory image being trumpeted defiantly by the CRAV. These trends in the Midi's development help explain the FNSEA's growing attractiveness. Its increasing role in the Languedoc was not simply due to political manoeuvring but because the vision which they presented meshed with government policy.

The Role of Europe

The changing economic climate of the 1980s in the Languedoc was largely a product of two differing aspects of European integration: the desire to usher in a programme of structural agricultural reform and to widen the European Economic Community. Two key moments on the European stage altered the CRAV's field of

⁷⁸⁹ 'La piquette n'est plus ce qu'elle était', *Le Monde*, 03/06/1990 - ADA 98J15.

⁷⁹⁰ For further discussion of the Dublin Accords, see Martin, 'Le syndicalisme viticole en Languedoc', p.46; Y. Chiffolleau, 'La "Révolution qualité" en milieu coopératif viticole languedocien', *Pôle Sud*, no.9 (1998), pp. 111-124.

operation during this period and solidified their resistance to both aspects. Firstly, the Dublin Accords and secondly, the accession of Spain and Portugal into the European Union in 1985, which ensured that the provisions of the Dublin Accords would become reality. The Socialist Party's willingness to engage with European expansion on both these occasions signified another step away from its previously close relationship with Languedocian winegrowers.⁷⁹¹ In pursuing further European commitment, the PS prioritised an improvement in the quality of France's wine production as the only development path worth considering. In 1985 Minister for Agriculture Nallet summed up his approach to European negotiations in a metaphor which would strike a chord in the Midi:

Au rugby on ne botte pas en touche lorsqu'on a la possibilité de marquer un essai en coin, sous prétexte qu'après la remise en jeu de la touche, on pourrait le marquer entre les poteaux. J'ai pris mes responsabilités...⁷⁹²

The government's attitude to viticulture in Europe was remarkably consistent with the tenets of the Chirac Plan in 1973 and the subsequent Bentegeac Plan. The FNSEA and their subsidiaries were also consistently in line with these policies of creating *groupements de producteurs*, replanting vineyards with better quality grapes (*restructuration*), reducing yields and the improvement of commercial structures. Their

⁷⁹¹ For further discussion of Mitterrand's engagement with Europe, see Bergounioux, Grunberg, *L'ambition et le remords*; P. Moreau-Defarges, 'La France et l'Europe, l'inévitable débat', *Politique étrangère*, vol.67, no.4 (2002), pp. 951-966. Also of note is the work of Jean-Pierre Chevènement, the former government Minister who resigned his post after a conflict with Mitterrand over policies to keep France in the European Monetary System. Chevènement describes how Mitterrand substituted the social policies abandoned after the conservative turn in 1983-1984 with an increasing focus on European integration. He casts this as a "pari pascalien" which offered respite from France's economic problems by changing the terms of debate. See, J. Chevènement, *La France est-elle finie ?*, (Paris: Fayard, 2011).

⁷⁹² *Midi Libre*, 28/02/1985

ability to survive the challenge of Cresson had seen them become the dominant agricultural union in France, which in turn served to increase their support in a mutually reinforcing process. As government policies converged with the strengthening of the dominant union, the government's ability to satisfy a greater proportion of the agricultural sector increasingly depended on 'cogestion' with the FNSEA, especially over smaller interests such as the Midi vigneron. Thus, when approaching agricultural negotiations, ministers like Nallet could take the "try in the corner" and sacrifice the interests of winegrowers at the expense of the FNSEA and the wider agricultural sector (drawing in milk, cheese, grain production etc).

The EU held its Dublin Summit between 4 and 11 December 1984, referred to in the Languedoc as "les accords de Dublin". It made the limiting of all types of agricultural overproduction a priority.⁷⁹³ Specifically, the production of European wine was to be reduced in advance of the entry of Spanish and Portuguese wines into the Common Market, with "la production méridionale" the prime target for making good this commitment.⁷⁹⁴ Each member country was assigned a production quota, beyond which wine would be distilled at near production cost. Likewise, an adjustment of the reimbursements for *arrachage* induced many more vigneron to uproot their stocks with the promise not to replant. Over the next three seasons 20,000HA would disappear from the Languedoc-Roussillon, in addition to the 34,000HA already

⁷⁹³ For a detailed discussion of the Dublin Accords, see Smith, 'Beyond 'Connections in Brussels''; Y. Le Pape, A. Smith, 'Décentralisations et agriculture: analyse comparée de deux régions français', *Politiques et management politiques*, vol.16, no.4 (December 1998); M. Berriet, A. Faure, W. Genieys, A. Smith, *Le Languedoc-Roussillon et les politiques communautaires agricoles et rurales*, (FAIR/DGVI research report, December 1998). A. Smith, 'Le Midi et le vin', *Pôle Sud*, no.9 (November, 1998), pp.125-135.

⁷⁹⁴ Y. Gilbert *Le Languedoc et ses images* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989), p.40.

uprooted between 1976 and 1985.⁷⁹⁵ Gavignaud-Fontaine remarks that the outcome of the votes in Dublin must have sounded like “les notes d’une marche funèbre” to the winegrowers of the Midi, with widespread uprooting alongside regular compulsory distillation now a reality.⁷⁹⁶ The Socialist government which had in 1981 promised to present new hope to the winegrowers of the Midi had progressively reverted to the policy of its predecessor.

The CRAV's reaction to the Dublin Accords was predictably negative, although also somewhat revelatory of the health of the organisation. A massive regional demonstration against the outcome of the Summit was planned on 14 January 1985,⁷⁹⁷ but cancelled after a forecast for heavy snow. In its place, MODEF, the Fédération des Caves Coopératives de l'Aude (FDCCA) and the Occitan group País Nostre held round-table talks to discuss their opposition to Spanish entry. Such talks, however, were a disappointment when compared to the potential impact of loud and visible mass protest. Newspapers began to speculate whether the snow had not been a pretext used to disguise the muzzling of the CRAV by leaders of the regional PS wishing to avoid direct protests against the Socialist Conseil Régional, also in favour of modernisation.⁷⁹⁸ The CRAV issued another call to protest 'against Dublin' on 30 January at Montpellier. As Jean Huillet arrived at the Hôtel de Région, Maffre-Beaugé led 8,000 protestors outside in a collective denunciation of Michel Rocard and the failure of Socialist deputies to prevent the Dublin agreements. After scuffles broke out,

⁷⁹⁵ Rouzier, *Le Languedoc-Roussillon 1950-2001*, p.79.

⁷⁹⁶ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole, la méditerranée et l'Europe au siècle dernier*, p.406.

⁷⁹⁷ 'L'après Dublin', *Le Paysan du Midi* 13/10/1984 - ADG JR438-33.

⁷⁹⁸ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, pp.258-259.

the CRS intervened and isolated incidents continued through the night, with tollbooths vandalised on the autoroute to Béziers. Despite disappointing attendances and cancelled protests, the actions of a core of viticultural radicals made clear that the CRAV, the CGVM and MODEF all stood strongly against European expansion in direct contrast to the government.

Michel Rocard refused to compromise, declaring:

nous n'avons aucun droit, historique ou politique, de rejeter l'adhésion de l'Espagne. [...] L'Europe n'a pas le droit qu'on insulte ou qu'on lui ferme la porte au nez.⁷⁹⁹

True to his word, the ineluctable process became a reality. The accession of Spain and Portugal to the European Union on 28 March 1985 exacerbated traditional concerns of foreign imports and the potential fraud for vigneronns.⁸⁰⁰ After years of discussion which had seen lobbying against expansion from the CRAV, MODEF and individual PS Deputies, the reality of a larger Europe was unavoidable. The seeming 'betrayal' which had seen Pierre Guidoni (a former favourite in the Languedoc) help to negotiate Spanish entry was indicative of the disappointment felt by vigneronns.⁸⁰¹ The actual opening of the borders was scheduled for 1 January 1986 in a phased roll-out which was designed to mitigate the shock that any immediate action might cause. Nonetheless, the technocrat Phillipe Lamour⁸⁰² declared the decision “une erreur

⁷⁹⁹ *Midi Libre*, 03/02/1984.

⁸⁰⁰ Smith, Maillard, Costa, *Vin et politique*, p.85.

⁸⁰¹ See Chapter 5, p.273.

⁸⁰² Phillipe Lamour was a PCF functionary and leading figure in Languedocien land management. In particular, he played a key role in the construction of the Canal du Bas-Rhône Languedoc. He was the subject of a recent study: Jean-Robert Pitte, *Philippe Lamour: Père de l'aménagement du territoire* (Paris: Fayard, 2002).

historique”, whilst Maffre-Beaugé condemned “une trahison des intérêts de notre région”.⁸⁰³

The National Scene

The modernising agenda of Mitterrand's government remained consistent, even as it moved into cohabitation. Indeed, as the Right was given a route back into government, the policies championed by the FNSEA were ever more likely to inform France's relationship with Europe regarding agriculture. Mitterrand's reintroduction of proportional representation for the legislative elections of 1986 provoked accusations that he was gambling with the nation's political future by strengthening the FN to spite Chirac's centre-right coalition of RPR and UDF. Results saw the Socialist government move into a period of co-habitation, with Mitterrand remaining and appointing Chirac as Prime Minister. François Guillaume, the combative head of the FNSEA in the Midi and now an active member of the RPR, was named Minister for Agriculture.⁸⁰⁴ This promotion, it seemed, came as a reward for the FNSEA's consistent opposition to the Socialist government's attempt to direct agricultural representation.⁸⁰⁵ Jacques Blanc, of the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMR), was elected President of the Conseil Régional of the Languedoc in the first direct election to the council.⁸⁰⁶ Coming from the centre-right, he set out to combat the dominance of the left in the Languedoc. Born in Toulouse, Blanc had been a member of the second Barre government and Secretary of

⁸⁰³ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, pp.403-408.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid., p.410.

⁸⁰⁵ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.265.

⁸⁰⁶ Gilbert *Le Languedoc et ses images*, p.219.

State for Agriculture under Pierre Méhaignerie⁸⁰⁷ and was returned as a deputy in 1978. As a centre-right politician in the traditionally Socialist Midi, Blanc's association with Barre's modernising cabinet was an indication that 'l'offensive moderniste' would find a welcome audience amongst regional *élus*.

The shifting landscape of the Midi had changed the nature of traditional representation. As the wine industry fell under the sway of the FNSEA and the push to modernise, improve quality and uproot old vines, the CRAV's core support among regional political elites was undermined and it moved towards political marginality. McFalls collates the first round of the Presidential election of 1981 with the European Parliamentary elections of 1984 and the 1986 National Assembly elections to construct a picture of continued Languedocian support for the Socialist party despite their changing rhetoric regarding viticultural defence. Whilst there was a wobble in 1984, as the Socialist party moved away from the "ideology of political unity", the resurgence in their vote in the Midi in 1986 at least partly indicated a wider acceptance of the "nouvelle politique de qualité".⁸⁰⁸

Abandonnés par leur parti, les viticulteurs se trouvèrent devant un choix. Ou ils pouvaient se rallier autour du vieux mouvement de défense professionnelle - le Parti Communiste, avec Maffre-Baugé à son sein, et tenant le vieux discours unitaire, était toujours là comme alternative possible - ou ils pouvaient rester fidèles au Parti Socialiste et s'adapter à la nouvelle idéologie socialiste libérale et européenne.⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁷ The Giscardian Agriculture Minister who had served from 1977-1981 under Raymond Barre's premiership.

⁸⁰⁸ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, pp.285-316.

⁸⁰⁹ L. McFalls, 'Effets discursifs, politiques et pratiques de la révolte de 1907, ou Grandeur et misère du socialisme viticole dans l'Aude' (author's copy), p.13-14.

McFalls highlighted the novelty of the Socialist party's ideology, yet the developments were also attributable to the shifting realities of the wine market. Despite the developing professional distance between viticultural syndicalism and the Socialist party, many individual voters maintained their personal loyalty to the party. In part, such a result is indicative of changes in identity. Attachment to the Socialist party proved to be more resilient than identification with their role in the "union sacrée" and the long history of the *Midi viticole*. At the same time, however, a turn away from localised and regional organisations like the CGVM which had sprung from 1907 meant that the traditional bond between the PS and the area was diminished. Instead, many winegrowers who were traditional supporters of the PS found themselves involved politically with the FNSEA, a union which could not hide its associations with the political right. The PS was forced, therefore, to walk something of a tightrope in order to balance the traditional centre-left expectations of the South as well as the modernising tendencies of the centre-right union to which many Languedocians now belonged.

It is significant that although the PS was increasingly predisposed to follow the policies of the FNSEA as regarded modernisation of the wine industry in the Midi, they did not seek to do so unquestioningly, as Yves Gilbert outlines:

Mais, ce qui peut paraître une volonté de la part du gouvernement de briser la forme violente du mouvement viticole (et peut-être même le mouvement viticole traditionnel - cf. l'éviction de la CGVM, dès 81, des instances de concertation), ne l'empêche pas d'adopter une attitude tout à fait conciliante au regard de la résolution des problèmes économiques qui se posent pour la viticulture régionale.⁸¹⁰

⁸¹⁰ Gilbert, Meistersheim, *Orateurs en Languedoc 1981-1986*, p.81.

Whilst attempts to address the economic issues of the Midi were underway, their success was constantly limited by the resistance of 'la Défense' to radical change. There remained sticking points which the CRAV refused to concede, for example its stigmatisation of fraud. The CRAV continually equated European integration with fraud, highlighting Italy and Spain as the most likely source of fraudulent wines. Speaking in 1981, Jean Huillet had openly descried the threat presented by Italian imports:

L'Italie exporte sa crise chez nous... Il faut lutter contre les importateurs apatrides et la fraude organisée à l'échelon international. Le souvenir de Montredon reste effectivement dans la mémoire de chaque viticulteur.⁸¹¹

The references to Montredon indicted the merchants who committed fraud by blending foreign imports as Ramel had been accused of in 1976. As the enlargement of the European Economic Community in the 1980s promoted new liberalisation of the wine market, there was a resurgence in the rhetorical value of 'fraud' to the Midi vignerons. The relaxing of trade tariffs and barriers was starkly juxtaposed with the tight regulation which warded off most fraud in the region and which vignerons had repeatedly demanded. The 'scandale du vin', in which Italian wines fraudulently cut with ethanol poisoned 21 people, was a clarion call to the Défense movement. Newspapers amplified the outrage by reprinting anti-fraud posters from the *Tocsin* of 1907, echoing continuity with the struggle near 80 years earlier.⁸¹² As signs read 'MORT AUX FRAUDEURS' the parallels with earlier condemnations were clear. The CRAV

⁸¹¹ *Midi Libre*, 05/08/1981.

⁸¹² 'En 1907 déjà', *Midi-Libre*, 22/04/1986 – ADA98J19; 'La nature exclusivement!', *L'Indépendant* 22/04/1986 – ADA98J19.

likewise saw this as a moment to reinforce their role as the inheritors of 1907 and Huillet accused the EEC of being complicit in the murder of those 21 people due to laxity in the regulation of Italian produce.⁸¹³

Memory of the Italian wine scandal of 1986 remained pertinent as long as Italian imports remained high. In 1988, Italian police detained 8 winemakers and questioned 3 other people associated with the company Saco-Vins for tampering with wines. Suspicion that some wines from this company may have entered Sète aroused angry condemnations of the cheap Italian imports which were supposedly forcing "les viticulteurs méridionaux à arracher pour faire la place à la 'bibine'".⁸¹⁴ The interaction of fraudulent Italian wineries and Sètois merchants caused many to call for a complete ban on Italian imports as a viable, if essentially illegal, solution to continued problems.⁸¹⁵ Maffre-Beaugé denounced Italian wine as dangerous to one's health and to the economy of France. He pointed to "la tendance à frauder de l'Italie" and spoke of his years of resisting this influence, pointing out that "chaque année qui passe nous laisse la preuve de ces trafics."⁸¹⁶

Heightened import figures during the autumn of 1988 provoked action in the early months of 1989. Responding to the pressure, the Minister of Agriculture Henri Nallet convened a consultative meeting of the wine industry, drawing together producers, merchants and importers.⁸¹⁷ At this meeting on 13 January, suspicions of

⁸¹³ 'Les vins du scandale', *L'Indépendant*, 18/04/1986 – ADA98J19.

⁸¹⁴ 'Les vins italiens se mouillent', *Paysan du Midi*, 24/07/1988 - ADA98J19.

⁸¹⁵ 'Maffre-Beaugé et l'affaire des vins frelatés', *L'Indépendant*, 27/07/1988 - ADA 98J19.

⁸¹⁶ 'Maffre-Beaugé accuse 'des vins poisons aux vins frelatés', *La Dépêche*, 04/08/1988 – ADA98J19.

⁸¹⁷ 'Importations de vins: le ministre s'inquiète', *La Dépêche*, 06/01/1989 – ADA98J20.

fraud amongst unscrupulous merchants and importers were once again aired.⁸¹⁸ The Minister of Agriculture was keen, however, to stress that although anger was mounting, there was no desire for protests to escalate and "revenir à la guerre du vin... Sur certains points vous [producers] dansez sur un volcan." Escalation was inevitable, however, as figures emerged which alleged Italian imports had increased by 70% between 1987 and 1988. Trucks continued to be hijacked and wine continued to be pumped out onto the road in a strategy which had become a reliable staple for disenchanted winegrowers.⁸¹⁹ These actions were a declaration of faith in alternatives to EEC led growth. The fact that there remained both a voice championing this cause and an audience showed that the Défense movement's rhetoric had not yet been entirely marginalised.

In addition, the Communist led MODEF remained a staunch supporter of 'la Défense'. In 1989 it came out in force to demonstrate against uprooting, displaying their belief in alternatives to modernisation and the defence of small family farmers. In a striking show of defiance, activists collected uprooted vines and trucked them en masse to be dumped outside the sous-préfecture in Narbonne. This image of destruction was intended to be "symbole d'une Espace européen auquel le MODEF s'oppose 'farouchement'". Such events, demonstrated that some life remained in the official structures of the Défense movement and that the CRAV did not possess a monopoly on activism. Marching at the head of the demonstration, Emilien Soulié linked the protest with long-standing opposition to the perceived enemies of Midi winegrowing: "ces souches que nous avons amenées, c'est la résultat d'une politique

⁸¹⁸ 'Y a-t-il fraude sur les étiquettes?', *Midi-Libre*, 14/01/1989 – ADA98J20.

⁸¹⁹ 'Le moût italien coule à Capendu', *La Dépêche*, 17/01/1989 – ADA98J20.

agricole menée par Bruxelles avec la caution de Paris, prônant la jachère, la friche comme solution. Alors que notre vocation c'est de produire, la vocation de Bruxelles et de Paris, c'est de détruire."⁸²⁰ Whilst such action reflected a degree of shared discontent, it plastered over developing cracks in the unity of the different departmental CAVs and the larger Défense movement.



Protest against arrachage in Narbonne⁸²¹

Mitterrand's approach to the Midi vigneronns had been admirably consistent, however, with his focus on the politics of quality separating the defence of winegrowing from the emotional ties which bound it to regional identity. The President expressed the belief that "la qualité devrait, un jour ou l'autre, permettre à nos viticulteurs de surmonter leurs difficultés."⁸²² By consistently pushing for greater professionalization and modernisation of the wine industry in the Midi, the government had effectively compartmentalised the Défense movement, stripping it of its regionalist aura and forcing it to resort to increasingly damaging attacks to make

⁸²⁰ 'La réplique du MODEF à Narbonne', *L'Indépendant*, 19/01/1989 - ADA 98J20.

⁸²¹ 'La réplique du MODEF à Narbonne', *L'Indépendant*, 19/01/1989 - ADA 98J20

⁸²² 'Raymond Courrière chez le Président', *Midi Libre*, 22/01/1992 - ADAJ912.

itself heard. Whenever these attacks were condemned in the public sphere it damaged the credibility of the Défense movement (and specifically the CRAV) and their claim to speak for a majority in the region. By replacing regional defence with regional development as the primary policy goal, the government portrayed the Défense movement as no longer fighting for the past but against the future.

New Leaders, new moderation? Co-option and fragmentation

Despite overtures, the Midi had as yet steered clear of domination by the FNSEA, which had enjoyed a privileged position as an interlocutor of government throughout the centralist Fifth Republic. The CGVM remained up until 1981 the central anchor of professional representation in the region, with organisations like MODEF existing as complementary satellites in the crowded syndical scene. The FNSEA as a modernising, politically conservative organisation remained tainted in the Languedoc as a "tool of the 'betteraviers du Nord'".⁸²³ Yet, as mentioned, the FNSEA began to scale up its presence in the Midi from 1983 and embark upon a 'charm offensive', firstly in the Hérault where it claimed a third of the vote in the Chambre d'Agriculture elections of that year. Its resilience in the face of Socialist attempts to "decorporatise" its role had shown it to be durable, effective and powerful, creating an attractive prospect for Languedocian growers disenchanted with the perpetual ritualised contestation of the Défense movement. Guillaume himself had begun to appear at growers' demonstrations despite his lack of any viticultural background. Throughout this

⁸²³ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, pp.263-264.

period, the FNSEA loudly reiterated its opposition to Spanish entry into the EEC and gained some traction amongst sympathetic winegrowers for this concession.

Georges Hérail, the President of the CGVM, resigned his post in 1984, essentially relenting in the face of increasing difficulties facing the traditional bastions of la Défense. He highlighted the uncertain atmosphere which hung over the Languedoc viticole as one of the primary motivations for his retirement, when he declared that he was determined:

à renoncer personnellement à cette entreprise et surtout à participer à une polémique stérile qui ne ferait qu'aggraver les dissensions.⁸²⁴

Increasing fragmentation had seen the establishment of an FDSEA in the Hérault in 1980 and the CGVM snubbed by the Socialist Party in 1981, as described in the last chapter. After years working with the opposition in a relationship which had been born in 1907, the inability of the CGVM to speak effectively to the Socialist government was disastrous. As the realities of the Chirac and Bentegeac plans continued to see the Languedoc subject to *arrachage* and *restructuration*, the traditional core of small-holders and growers allied to the cooperative movement and the CGVM was being eroded. At this point the CGVM lost its role as the emblematic figurehead of la Défense. Henri Fabre-Colbert, the editor of *Echo des Corbières*, wrote of the Défense movement's plight upon finally seeing the Socialists in power and the problems of the Midi remain in place:

Ils ont encouragés, soutenus, glorifiés par l'opposition durant ces vingt ans au point de s'identifier avec cette opposition. Tellement que

⁸²⁴ *Midi Libre*, 04/07/1984.

l'alternance du pouvoir les a pris de court, et que les liens de complicité avec la gauche (disons le mot) ont été tellement forts que, confrontés aujourd'hui aux mêmes problèmes d'abandon par Paris et ses énarques, ils se trouvent déchirés et moralement paralysés. Le voilà le drame... Le conflit fratricide pour certains!⁸²⁵

The awkward position of the CGVM, tied as it was to the PS and yet still cast aside, ensured that internal contradictions would stifle its ability to act decisively. As the departmental organisations floundered, their membership moved ever closer to the newly inaugurated FDSEA⁸²⁶ in the Aude and the more established one in the Hérault. The disintegration of the CGVM as a meaningful and unitary body swung the momentum massively towards "syndicalisme à vocation générale" as opposed to the specifically regional focus of the CGVM. In March 1985 the FNSEA stepped up its campaign significantly by staging its national Annual Congress in Narbonne, a symbolic move which made clear the transfer of power in the very city which had given birth to the CGVM during the epochal riots of 1907. The FNSEA's attempt to drag viticultural representation out of the sole grip of the Left mirrored the attempts of Cresson to drag agricultural representation out of the hands of the Right. As the opposition moved into power, however, in 1986 the reality of the Midi's problems forced the painful realisation that the 'union sacrée' between the Défense movement and the Socialist Party was broken. Guillaume, at the Narbonne Congress, announced "La confusion entre le débat politique et professionnel n'avait pas permis aux viticulteurs de se défendre véritablement."⁸²⁷ Essentially, he was echoing the comments of Hérial on his retirement, reinforcing the strength which the FNSEA could boast as a

⁸²⁵ *Midi Libre*, 02/02/1985.

⁸²⁶ Founded in February 1984 by the leader of the FNSEA François Guillaume.

⁸²⁷ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.267.

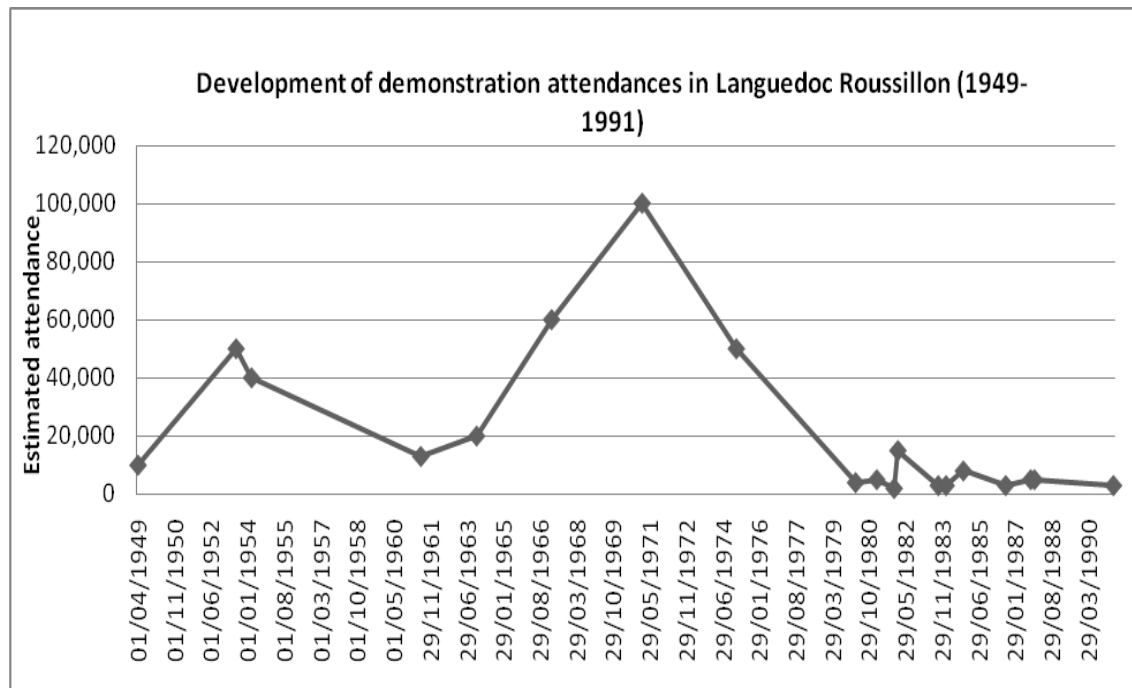
result of its position at the right hand of government, whilst encouraging winegrowers to abandon partisan political attachment in their own best interest.

In the midst of this turmoil, Antoine Verdale, the influential President of the Fédération Audoise des Caves Coopératives (FDCCA), spectacularly announced his intention to join the FNSEA, carrying his supporters in the syndical organisations of the Aude with him. He is reported to have announced to the organisations under his presidency: "Qui m'aime me suive!"⁸²⁸ His influence in the legitimate syndical organisations was impressive (although he was not openly involved in the direct action of the CRAV) and his personality was evocative of regional identity.⁸²⁹ Verdale mobilised "un dense réseau de relations économiques, sociales et organisationnelles qui, en fin de compte, a servi de courroie de transmission pour l'imposition d'un nouveau discours viticole."⁸³⁰ Conspiracy theorists in the *milieu viticole* suspected that in order to "demobilise the Languedoc", Verdale may have been bought off by the government, with the lucrative presidency of an agricultural export organisation (SOPEXA) as the price of his cooperation. Nevertheless, the decline of the CGVM and the binding of the FDCCA to the FDSEA meant that the Aude was now firmly sworn to the modernisation project, along with the Hérault.

⁸²⁸ McFalls, ' Effets discursifs, politiques et pratiques de la révolte de 1907', p.14.

⁸²⁹ By his own admission his defining characteristics were that "je suis socialiste et quinziste." - Gilbert *Le Languedoc et ses images*, p.238.

⁸³⁰ McFalls, ' Effets discursifs, politiques et pratiques de la révolte de 1907', p.13-14.



This table highlights the marked fall in numbers present at viticultural demonstrations in the 1980s. The post-war years of recovery had been marked by competition to represent the Midi vigneron, provoking large demonstrations when the future of the wine industry seemed to be at stake. When the 1960s brought the CRAV to predominance in the Défense movement demonstrations were effectively coordinated and direct action increased. During the wild years of the late 1960s and 1970s, protests occurred in a climate of almost open sedition. The enormous numbers of protestors during that period marked the apex of the CRAV's influence. Yet, the economic pressures of those years and the tragedy of Montredon led to changes in the Midi's representative structures. As the state sought to address the Midi's underlying problems with the Chirac and then Bontegat plans, the modernisation of the industry became an inescapable fact. The region's demography shifted and growers became less united behind the old bastions of 'la Défense' and the 'union sacrée'. The promise of 1981, which mobilised the South in expectation at a Socialist victory, failed to prove as

propitious as had been imagined. Attendance at demonstrations tailed off as the reality of the Défense movement's fragmentation became more obvious amidst the cooption and retirement of prominent leaders.

Throughout the later 1980s the CRAV would lose many of the leaders who had driven it through the tumultuous 1970s and attempted to maintain the movement's profile after the Socialist victory. In July 1984 newspapers reported that André Cases was stepping back from his role "à la tête du C.A.V." and speculated that the less experienced Jean Ramond might take over in his place.⁸³¹ A day later, the *Midi Libre* confirmed that Ramond, a young smallholder from Sallèles in the Aude, would be taking over.⁸³² Cases left his successor a difficult legacy, which Yves Gilbert describes as "une sorte de testament militant au travers duquel on sent poindre en sentiment du demi-échec."⁸³³ Likewise, Ramond was less visible in the media, a fact which was seen to make the CRAV's presence more sporadic and less sympathetic to the public.⁸³⁴ As Ramond commenced his leadership of the CRAV, so too did Laurent Fabius that of the French government. Amidst a crisis caused by school reforms which precipitated Pierre Mauroy's departure, Mitterrand appointed Fabius as Prime Minister on 17 July 1984. With the country facing a political and economic crisis, the choice of Fabius marked the end of the expansionary economic policies of Mitterrand's first years in power. Although Cases had been more moderate than Huillet, he still represented a militant tendency of the 1970s that had seen the CRAV embroiled in the Montredon

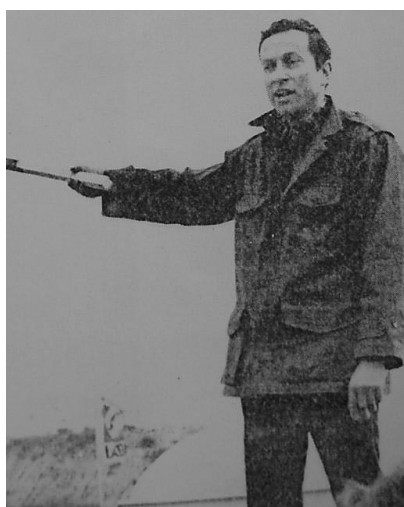
⁸³¹ 'C.A.V. Aude: des décisions inadmissibles', *Indépendant*, 04/07/1984 - ADA 98J15.

⁸³² 'Succédant à André Cases', *Midi Libre*, 05/07/1984 - ADA 98J15.

⁸³³ Gilbert, Meistersheim, *Orateurs en Languedoc 1981-1986*, p.77.

⁸³⁴ A. Roger, 'Syndicalistes et poseurs de bombes', *Cultures & Conflits*, vol. 1, no. 81-82 (2011), p. 59.

shootings. Ramond, like Fabius to some extent, signified a clear repudiation of radical activism. The appointment of Fabius to Prime Minister was something which "il n'a été possible qu'à la faveur d'une modification structurelle du PS disqualifiant les valeurs militante, populaire et idéologique qui a pu faire apparaître L. Fabius comme "l'homme de la situation".⁸³⁵ So too was the appointment of Ramond indicative of a changing atmosphere in the Languedoc, in which commando actions had become increasingly violent and increasingly unacceptable in the eyes of the public.



*Jean Ramond addressing winegrowers*⁸³⁶

Unlike the promotion of Romain in 1975, this reversion to singular leadership in the Aude limited the radicalism of the *Comités d'action*. Ramond's moderation was demonstrated by his campaigning for concessions which saw some satisfaction during his leadership. Subsequent reactions to these hard-won concessions illustrated the differing leadership styles of both Ramond and Huillet. Discussions in Brussels on 24 July settled some immediate grievances of the CRAV regarding insecurity during an enforced period of national economic *rigueur*. After Socialist Deputies, including the

⁸³⁵ F. Sawicki, 'Laurent Fabius : du 'Giscard de gauche' au 'socialiste moderne'', *Pôle Sud*, no.1 (1994), p.53.

⁸³⁶ 'Succédant à André Cases', *Midi Libre*, 05/07/1984 - ADA 98J15

Minister of Agriculture Michel Rocard, petitioned the European Community for emergency intervention, they returned home with the welcome news that performance bonds would indemnify 18% of a winegrower's income. A PS statement read:

Cela vient donc confirmer, une fois de plus si c'est nécessaire, que les élus socialistes réussissent dans leur entreprise et savent défendre l'intérêt de nos concitoyens. Nous ne doutons pas que nos viticulteurs sauront, comme par le passé, leur garder toute leur confiance.⁸³⁷

The Languedocian PS was attempting to paint national gains as responses to regional pressure, helping to bridge the rupture between the Défense movement and the Socialist party over approaches to European development. The 18% indemnity guarantee was relatively positive amidst a climate of national economic woe. Ramond stated that although they had got satisfaction "Ce n'est pas une victoire: ça nous était dû." Nevertheless, the threat of action was momentarily withdrawn, despite Huillet pointing out that "Nous restons mobilisés."⁸³⁸ Ramond remained cautious compared to Huillet's radicalism and his willingness to accept the concessions represented a more realistic approach to negotiation with government. Previously, he had been quoted as stating that "'84 est pour nous un bien mauvais cru"⁸³⁹, yet in managing to gain the guarantee of an 18% indemnity, he had got the immediate measures demanded by the CRAV to address pressing problems across the Languedoc. Ramond accepted the concession as 'a good deal', showing moderation in his willingness to engage rationally with government debate.

⁸³⁷ 'Mobilisations et apaisements', *La Dépêche*, 25/04/1984 - ADA 98J15.

⁸³⁸ 'Calme mais vigilance', *Indépendant*, 28/07/1984 - ADA 98J15.

⁸³⁹ 'L'heure de vérité', *Indépendant*, 19/07/1984 - ADA 98J15.

Jean Huillet, however, characterised the combative air of the old Défense movement, rejecting the moderate and conciliatory tone of Ramond. He declared that "ce compromis est un coup de poignard pour la viticulture méridionale."⁸⁴⁰ Ramond's voice was noticeably quiet, having achieved the primary goal the CRAV sought - the 18% indemnity. Despite fragmentation in the ranks of the CRAV and an ever strengthening opponent in the FNSEA, the radicals who identified with Huillet waited for a chance to protest. Gavignaud-Fontaine describes the cooperatives as the home of this partisan remnant, where they "rongent leurs freins dans l'ombre."⁸⁴¹

The 18% bond was, essentially, a *prime de restructuration*, little more than a palliative designed to help winegrowers take some of the risk out of modernisation and encourage the planting of better quality grape varieties. In this way, it was consistent with the modernisation agenda while serving to mitigate short-term concerns. This represented a rare moment of success, in which threats of CRAV action seems to have pushed through positive change at a supra-national level. In essence, however, it represented a changed leadership style. Huillet's insistence that the concessions were not sufficient characterised the attitude which had always governed the CRAV. Ramond's acceptance of 'a good deal' was reflective of a more rational moderation which angered some of the core keen to maintain an air of 'contestation' in service of future demands. The success of the indemnity was not a vindication of violence (there was none) nor did it buck the trend of modernisation (as a *prime de restructuration*), rather it represented a sympathetic attempt by the government to push modernisation whilst mindful of its immediate impact, as Mitterrand had promised in

⁸⁴⁰ 'L'après vendange du C.A.V.', *Le Paysan du Midi*, 11/10/1984 - ADG JR438-33.

⁸⁴¹ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.456.

1981. Instead of Cresson's grandstanding, Rocard's conciliatory attempt to reconcile the will of the Midi vigneron with Brussels had yielded tangible results; in Nallet's terminology, he'd scored between the posts.

The differing styles of Ramond and Huillet revealed divides opening up in the Défense movement. As modernisation gathered pace in the Languedoc and the FNSEA moved closer to government, the temptation to support modernisation increased. The CRAV's claim to be champions of the *Languedoc viticole* was challenged by the reality that, in the face of economic changes, continuing European integration and the collapse of the 'union sacrée', more and more winegrowers were being co-opted by the FNSEA. Huillet, attempting to continue the fight against the insurgent FNSEA, condemned their "politique du coucou" in trumpeting their opposition to European enlargement:

Je suis un tenant du pluralisme syndicale mais contre le clientélisme, contre l'utilisation d'une force syndicale qui ne soit pas au service des vigneron, contre son exploitation politicienne. L'important c'est de bosser sur le terrain. Quand le FNSEA fait de l'élargissement son cheval de bataille, je trouve cela abusif et curieux.⁸⁴²

Yet Huillet's opposition was important in the face of the FNSEA's growing popularity in the Midi and their 'clientélisme' with the Socialist Party.

After Cases' retirement from the front lines of the CRAV, Huillet signalled in March 1985 that he was set to resign as head of the CAV de l'Hérault.⁸⁴³ The relatively poor attendance at the 30 January protest seems to have convinced him that something

⁸⁴² *Midi Libre*, 04/01/1985.

⁸⁴³ 'C.A.V.: Huillet démissionne', *Indépendant*, 02/03/1985 - ADA 98J15.

in the region had changed.⁸⁴⁴ This created a succession problem after Huillet's parting shots at the 'careerists' in the ranks of the syndical organisations:

Je suis un militant, un combattant qui considère que le pouvoir doit être attaché à une cause et non pas à des intérêts personnels. Ceux qui font le procès de Jean Huillet voulant le pouvoir pour le pouvoir en sont pour leur compte; mais je resterai un bon soldat.⁸⁴⁵

Huillet was addressing a multitude of targets, from those like Verdale who had been co-opted to the moderates such as Ramond. As the founder of the Occitan winegrower's movement (MIVOC), he incorporated loyalty to the values of occupational and regional identity in the face of external pressures (the FNSEA and the EEC). Yet, his statement also highlighted the fissiparous tendencies in the Défense movement (already latent throughout the 1950s as representative groups like the Ligue, CMA, CRSV etc. jostled to outflank each other) which had for two decades been papered over by the ideology of viticultural unity expressed in the language of 1907.

Although the CRAV had developed from (and represented the ultimate distillation of) the Défense du vin movement, they now found themselves threatened as some producers broke rank. The *Indépendant* printed a CRAV communiqué which showed an awareness of this threat:

Le Comité d'action viticole de l'Aude est un phénomène que des sociologues ne manqueront pas, un jour d'analyser, d'étudier. Sa présence dans l'action syndicale a été fondamentale dans la survie de la viticulture méridionale. Certains aujourd'hui posent la question de la représentativité du C.A.V. Une connaissance, même simpliste, du monde et des problèmes viticoles leur aurait évité une telle position.

⁸⁴⁴ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.259.

⁸⁴⁵ 'Succession difficile ac C.A.V. régional', *La Dépêche*, 02/03/1985 - ADA 98J15.

Face aux attaques dont il est l'objet de la part certains, le C.A.V. qui n'a comme seul but que la défense du revenu du viticulteur, se pose la question de la vocation syndicale de ces mêmes personnes puisque pour certaines d'entre elles, le syndicalisme constitue une fort belle promotion socio-financière. Exemple: quel est le montant des indemnités (exonérées s'impôts), que perçoit un conseiller économique et social?

Dans ces conditions l'on comprend mieux que le C.A.V. gêne ces mêmes personnes: est-ce l'altruisme qui caractérise? Est-ce son action?

Face à l'évolution des problèmes économiques, le C.A.V. estime que les hommes doivent tout faire pour que l'économique prime sur le politique.

S'il en est autrement, le C.A.V. doit impérativement cesser toute action sans toutefois oublier certaines affaires qui sont encore de son ressort.⁸⁴⁶

By responding to challenges issued to their legitimacy, the Comités d'action sought to stress the primacy of 'la Défense' over plans for regional development. In reality, this was the CRAV hitting out against the FNSEA, maintaining the message that Huillet had put out on his retirement and attempting to ensure they remained the primary voice of 'la Défense'.⁸⁴⁷ In turn, the recently retired Cases gave an interview to the *Midi Libre*, in which he acknowledged that "le Comité d'action avait une main-mise moins évidente qu'autrefois en matière de défense professionnelle" and warned of "dispersion" being the greatest threat to winegrowers.⁸⁴⁸

Huillet's retirement and the signing of the Dublin Accords had demotivated many in the region, reflecting a creeping 'growers' disunity'. When the Conseil Municipal of Ferrals-des-Corbières (in the Aude near Lézignan) came out in support of

⁸⁴⁶ 'Le C.A.V. pourquoi?', *Indépendant*, 04/04/1985 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁴⁷ 'René Condouret au C.A.V.', *Midi Libre*, 05/04/1985 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁴⁸ 'André Cases dans sa traversée du désert', *Midi Libre*, 02/09/1985 - ADA 98J15.

the Dublin Accords and refused to sign a CRAV petition, this disunity was starkly revealed.⁸⁴⁹

Le conseil municipal, après lecture de la pétition du CAV régional, et après avoir pris connaissance du contenu des accords de Dublin, refuse à la majorité des membres présents de signer la pétition présentée. [...]

Le conseil municipal réaffirme sa solidarité et son soutien aux viticulteurs de Ferrals-de-Corbières, producteurs de bons vins à petits rendement; mais ne comprend qu'ils puissent donner leur accord à une pétition qui va à l'encontre de leur intérêt, en défendant les producteurs à gros rendements dont les excédents sont responsables de l'encombrement du marché et de la mévente du vin.⁸⁵⁰

Although Ferrals was a small town, speaking against the CRAV was a significant event and suggested that invoking the heritage of 1907 was beginning to wear thin as a means of attacking the FNSEA. Winegrowers were being co-opted towards the new politics of quality and away from old productivist tendencies. The CRAV's role had been one of "resistance" against malign external forces, as economic historians Touzard and Laporte observed:

Les institutions et réseaux viticoles languedociens sont le fruit d'affrontements successifs à "l'État", en particulier de la révolte de 1907. Ceux-ci ont en effet suscité une connexion politique au niveau de l'aire de spécialisation viticole et ont conduit à des représentations communes qui légitiment l'action collective (l'unité du midi viticole face à l'État ou aux fraudeurs, etc.).⁸⁵¹

Not all CRAV leaders were ready to give in. Maffre-Beaugé, a leader who had shown himself ready to support modernisation, called the leaders of the Comités d'action to a

⁸⁴⁹ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.259.

⁸⁵⁰ *L'Indépendant*, 14/01/1985.

⁸⁵¹ J. Touzard, J. Laporte, 'Deux décennies de transition viticole en Languedoc-Roussillon: de la production de masse à une viticulture plurielle', *Pôle Sud* no.9 (1998), pp.29-30.

meeting in Pézenas to reassert the relevance of CRAV alongside the FNSEA. He announced Ramond was to "constituer des cellules dans villages et cantons" in order to "mobiliser peu à peu la base." There was confusion amongst winegrowers as their leaders appeared divided and their role was uncertain. When the *Indépendant* highlighted the "4 têtes" of the Comités d'action, they speculated that it was "révélatrice d'un certain malaise."⁸⁵² The reaction of the usually supportive press was indicative of uncertainty in the Languedoc's political climate.

Meeting on 21 August 1985, the CAV de l'Hérault reinstated him at their head in recognition that "la situation viticole est grave et que la pari de Michel Rocard a été perdu."⁸⁵³ Huillet, as head of the CRAV, was becoming an emblematic figure, dependable for his combative style amidst the cooption and softening of older leaders. Huillet's revival as a viticultural leader was prefixed on a belief that economic action was proving incapable of mobilising the Midi in advance of the Presidential election. That he was quickly offered a job by the UMR led Conseil Régional in the Comité Économique des Vins de Table du Languedoc-Roussillon has been viewed not as meritocratic, but rather as "an apparent attempt to buy his silence" in the face of his tirades against the government.⁸⁵⁴

⁸⁵² C.A.V. à 4 têtes', *Indépendant*, 24/03/1985 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁵³ 'Un retour sous conditions', *Indépendant*, 23/08/1985 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁵⁴ McFalls, *In vino veritas*, p.237.



Jean Huillet addressing winegrowers⁸⁵⁵

Huillet's new role within local government was indicative of the extent to which the waters had been muddied. No longer could the CRAV reasonably expect to bring tens of thousands of winegrowers onto the streets. As part of this very same process, the old heads of the CRAV began to be co-opted by the state to act as conduits for change. André Cases was elected President of the Audois Chamber of Agriculture at the age of 53.⁸⁵⁶ His ability to mediate between the extremists acting in defence of regional viticulture and the State was seen as a force for stability as the region faced up to new CRAV action. Although Cases was receptive to the cause of the modernisers, he was also one of the most prominent leaders of the Défense movement. Likewise, Jean Huillet's career in the legitimate representation of the wine industry continued, as he assumed the leadership of the newly formed 'Béziers oenopôle', designed to promote the wines and AOCs of the Hérault.⁸⁵⁷ This co-option of former combatants of the Comités d'action did not put an end to ever-more radical actions by the CRAV, but these increasingly spoke for an extreme minority. Huillet's career would continue to

⁸⁵⁵ 'Après la démission de Jean Huillet', *La Dépêche*, 02/03/1985 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁵⁶ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.458.

⁸⁵⁷ 'La piquette n'est plus ce qu'elle était', *Le Monde*, 03/06/1990 - ADA 98J15.

progress in January 1991, when he became President of the Fédération des Caves Coopératives de l'Hérault.⁸⁵⁸

The CGVM's decline was accompanied by other changes in the regional structures of representation for winegrowers. The longstanding 'Wine Deputy', Raoul Bayou, declined to stand for re-election in 1986, after the Socialist Party listed him as third choice on their electoral list.⁸⁵⁹ This was emblematic of the changing importance of the wine industry to the region's economic future and of the winegrowers in the sociology of the PS. Olivier Dedieu's reflection on Bayou's career ends on the recognition that his resignation was symbolic of a shift in the character of the Midi, away from the model of the 'Député du vin' and towards a new future of professionalisation: "Si les élus méridionaux cherchent toujours à capitaliser des soutiens au sein des milieux viticoles, le modèle du député du vin est aujourd'hui historiquement daté."⁸⁶⁰ Andre Cases hoped that the CRAV could still be "un interlocuteur valable."⁸⁶¹ Andre Castera, "le terrible" of old, released his own alarmist communiqué: "Savoir si toute une région va se laisser rayer de la carte de France, sans brocher ou si la masse des vigneron et autres appuieront à fond les jeunes qui sont prêts à prendre la tête de la défense viticole du Languedoc."⁸⁶²

Throughout its existence, the CRAV, as the most activist expression of a wider *Défense* movement, had been able to rely on at least the tacit support of syndical organisations and Socialist politicians. This was no longer the case, and becoming

⁸⁵⁸ Gavignaud-Fontaine, *Le Languedoc viticole*, p.458.

⁸⁵⁹ Torres, *The Wine Wars*, p.55.

⁸⁶⁰ Dedieu, 'Raoul Bayou, député du vin', p.107.

⁸⁶¹ 'D'hier à aujourd'hui', *Midi Libre*, 18/04/1991 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁶² 'La viticulture en danger', *Midi Libre*, 24/04/1991 - ADA 98J15.

increasingly isolated in the region, it was forced into even more extreme gestures in order that its voice be heard. The CRAV declared that the political allegiance of whoever was in power in the region was largely irrelevant and garnered no sympathy as long as problems persisted; winegrowers "sont mobilisés pour défendre leur travail et la région, sans en faire un combat politique et sectaire." Although many still supported the party on a personal basis, the "union sacrée" which bound the party to viticultural syndicalism had been broken. The CRAV statement made clear the fractious relationship between the forces of order and those seeking to aggressively defend their industry and their region, acknowledging that "les grenades lacrymogènes, qu'elles soient de droite ou de gauche, ont la même odeur."⁸⁶³

'Terrorisme viticole': The acceptance and performance of violence

By the end of May 1992, local Police Colonel Weber stated that "il y a manifestement un terrorisme viticole"⁸⁶⁴ in the region. This came after a coordinated series of 4 bombings which saw government buildings targeted in both the Aude and Hérault during the Fête de l'Ascension on 28 May.⁸⁶⁵ In Olonzac, the Crédit Agricole was attacked, with windows smashed and the office itself damaged. Amidst the rubble was a young boy injured by shards of glass,⁸⁶⁶ according to one newspaper, although

⁸⁶³ CRAV communiqué, 09/03/1992 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁶⁴ 'Le CAV embrase l'Aude et l'Hérault', *L'Indépendant*, 30/05/1992 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁶⁵ 'Le Comité d'Action Viticole signe trois attentats', Clipping - source newspaper not recorded, c.30/05/1992 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁶⁶ 'Quadruple attentat à l'explosif', Clipping - source newspaper not recorded, c.30/05/1992 - ADA 98J15.

others described him as unharmed.⁸⁶⁷ The wide use of explosives and the potential-injury of a child ensured that the CRAV's actions had crossed a dangerous threshold. In his forceful press conference, Colonel Weber seemed to be drawing a line under "l'impunité apparente qui semblait protéger jusqu'à présent les activités du comité d'action viticole dans l'Aude."⁸⁶⁸ The veil of legitimacy provided by viticultural unity had been lifted and beneath it lay a hardcore of small winegrowers whose claims to represent the region were very dubious.

April of 1988 provided a useful barometer for how far the CRAV could go down the road of "action dure" without jeopardising their base of support. Winegrowers had congregated at Carcassonne to set up burning barricades and commit symbolic acts of vandalism. The injury to an innocent toll-booth operator brought many general workers' organisations out to condemn the winegrowers: "Le vin oui, le sang non!"⁸⁶⁹ Force Ouvrière wrote a strongly worded open letter of protest to the syndical organisations of the Midi viticole: "La casse, c'est nous tous, citoyens, qui la payons." The union also objected to the manner in which the CRAV was carrying out its attacks, highlighting that clandestinity was not a legitimate or laudable means for protest: "Vous venez ce premier avril de signer encore une fois par cet acte de violence, cagoules, cocktail molotov et bouteiller de gaz à l'appui, une façon certaine de vous mettre à dos le monde du travail."⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁷ 'Le Comité d'Action Viticole signe trois attentats', Clipping - source newspaper not recorded, c.30/05/1992 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁶⁸ 'La gendarmerie relève le défi', Clipping - source newspaper not recorded, c.30/05/1992 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁶⁹ 'La colère du printemps', *Indépendant*, 02/04/1988 - ADA 98J12.

⁸⁷⁰ 'F.O. pas d'accord', *Midi Libre*, 08/04/1988 - ADA 98J12.

The CRAV's violent protests increasingly drew comment about their sustainability. The *Midi Libre* asked if this phenomenon marked the "enterrement ou résurrection" of viticultural activism. Built into the *Midi Libre's* criticism was the possibility that the peaceful, politically oriented sectors of the Défense movement could be reborn to become representative of a newly modernised wine industry in the Languedoc. Indeed, this seemed to become something of an editorial theme, with the newspaper beginning to support conciliation over the extremes of the CRAV. Commenting on a large scale demonstration on 30 November which seemed to prefigure a return to viticultural unity, the *Midi Libre* hailed:

Un vrai miracle. Démobilisée, déboussolée par la confusion syndicale, égarée par la folle équipée du Leclerc et les absurdes arrestations de l'autoroute imputables à un préfet inconstant, qui aurait juré que la base pourrait encore se voir aussi nombreuse dans la rue? Et qui aurait juré de voir assis sans brocher à la même tribune, la totalité des formations viticoles, sans aucune exclusive?

But Henri Fabre-Colbert, the avowedly Occitan writer behind *Echo des Corbières*, came out in support, defiantly claiming that the Défense movement was still vibrant:

Les CAV ne peuvent ni être tués, ni se suicider. D'abord ils n'ont pas d'existence formelle. Ils ne sont qu'un état d'esprit combatif, fraternel, commandé par des hommes d'exception.

The intermittent character of the CRAV, was seen in this view as a measure of resilience during a period in which its support seemed to be diminishing. Expressing his loyalty to the Défense movement's goals, Fabre-Colbert spoke out against the creeping influence of the FNSEA:

Les CAV portent l'avenir viticole à bout de bras. Ils ont été et sont l'ultime recours. Il suffit que le front viticole sache se différencier des organismes politico-syndicalo-administratifs, dont certains comme la FNSEA plongent les viticulteurs dans une ambiguïté déroutante.⁸⁷¹

Such uncertainty was in itself fuel for both processes of radicalisation and disaggregation. Addressing the issue of damages in 1985 and the continuing pressure on the wine industry, Cases firmly indicted the government's role in the economy as the main culprit: "Lorsqu'une réglementation n'est pas bonne, elle n'amène qu'anarchie et violence."⁸⁷² One interviewee concisely summed up the role of the CRAV: "Ils ont le rôle de gardien des limites."⁸⁷³ It is interesting that for any consideration of 'the rules of the game' regarding ritualised protest, one must remember that as the CRAV remained convinced of their legitimacy, that they too were involved in policing the limits of acceptability. Their actions were intended to strike out against inequalities or hardships that constituted unacceptable behaviour on behalf of the state. In a worrying incident which presaged a return to exactly the days which many winegrowers would have liked to have forgotten, a policeman drew his weapon on rowdy protestors in Carcassonne on 21 January.⁸⁷⁴ The protesters were incensed by the discovery of a document which seemed to indicate that Italian grape must (unfermented grape juice) was being widely and openly imported to enrich French wine.⁸⁷⁵ If chaptalisation was a contentious subject for French winegrowers, and especially those in the Midi, then the use of foreign wines to carry out this practice was positively inflammatory.

⁸⁷¹ 'Fragile miracle et lourde attente de la viticulture', *Midi Libre*, 04/12/1988 - ADA 98J12.

⁸⁷² 'André Cases dans sa traversée du désert', *Midi Libre*, 02/09/1985 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁷³ Interview with 'Anonymous' - Clairette d'Adissan - Adissan - Herault - 30-07-2010.

⁸⁷⁴ 'Un policier sort son arme face à un viticulteur manifestant', *La Dépêche*, 22/01/1989 - ADA98J20.

⁸⁷⁵ 'Avertissement d'André Cases: 'Attention, on a, de nouveau, frôlé la bavure!'", *La Dépêche*, 22/01/1989 - ADA98J20.

Chaptalisation, in particular, motivated recourse to 1907's legacy, with the *grande revolte* having been largely motivated by objections to the very same process.

The appearance of a gun at a protest was indeed a worrying reminder of Montredon. That it was the forces of order who brandished the weapon only served to increase the tension between winegrowers and the state. The legacy of those shot in the 1907 demonstrations was powerful enough to have relevance nearly 80 years after the events, and the police were condemned for being swift to resort to violence. Local newspapers were firmly on the side of the winegrowers, viewing the police reaction as likely to incite escalation. Whilst worrying that the flashpoint "aurait pu avoir des graves conséquences" the *Dépêche* criticised the police for hiding behind technicalities to avoid explaining this lapse to the public.⁸⁷⁶ A CRAV spokesman attempted to capitalise on the support by declaring that "Nous ne sommes pas des bandits", highlighting the over-reaction of authorities and attempting to reclaim a little legitimacy.⁸⁷⁷ That the police had crossed the frontiers of acceptability was evident from the negative public reaction and the backlash from the press. This served once more to emphasise the unwritten 'rules of the game' governing the interaction of protesting winegrowers and the police.

In an attempt to mediate, despite his retirement, Cases spoke to the Prefect on behalf of winegrowers. From a personal standpoint he said "Ça fait trop de bavures. Il y a un problème de relations entre le maintien de l'ordre et notre profession. Les bavures ne sont pas de notre côté. Nous, nous revendiquons pour notre survie."

⁸⁷⁶ 'Un policier sort son arme face à un viticulteur manifestant', *La Dépêche*, 22/01/1989 – ADA98J20.

⁸⁷⁷ 'Avertissement d'André Cases: 'Attention, on a, de nouveau, frôlé la bavure!', *La Dépêche*, 22/01/1989 – ADA98J20.

During his meeting with the Prefect, Cases called for calm whilst he reiterated his support for the interception of wine tankers and the emptying of their contents as a viable means of combating "importations abusives.... chaque fois que cela sera nécessaire".⁸⁷⁸ Much as the "journées barrages" had become an acceptable aspect of ritualised protest in the 1950s, so too had the interception of tankers become a recognised part of the winegrowers' repertoire in the 1980s.

The boundaries of public acceptability were not entirely elastic, however. Although hijacking tankers may have proven a tolerable form of protest, the ill-health of the CRAV's standing in the Languedoc ensured that explosives were not. At the tail-end of 1991 the CRAV bombed a tax-office in the Aude, spray-painting its walls with the letters 'CAV' in large, red text - a clear indication of the author of the attacks. The attack drew howls of protest from the unions which governed treasury workers, who condemned "ces méthodes qui n'ont rien à voir avec la démocratie."⁸⁷⁹ Those three letters made a reappearance as vigneron cut telephone cables during the following night in Coursan.⁸⁸⁰ Neither attack was devastating, nor particularly were they obvious targets. Indeed, the *Midi-Libre* speculated that this may be a new mode of operation for the CAV and the CRAV at large: "A-t-il opté pour des opérations moins spectaculaires mais plus rapprochées?"⁸⁸¹ The condemnation meted out highlighted that such new methods were breaching the boundaries of acceptability. The CRAV had demonstrably acted outside of the 'rules of the game'. These new modes of operation were ever more

⁸⁷⁸ 'André Cazes chez le préfet', *Midi Libre*, 23/01/1989 - ADA 98J20.

⁸⁷⁹ 'Explosifs contre la perception', *Midi-Libre*, 01/01/1992 - ADA 98J12.

⁸⁸⁰ 'Deux attentats revendiqués par le CAV', *Indépendant*, 02/01/1992 - ADA98J12.

⁸⁸¹ 'Un câble téléphonique sectionné', *Midi-Libre*, 02/01/1992 - ADA 98J12.

desperate responses to the increasingly undeniable primacy of viticultural modernisation as a basic postulate of regional development.

After the bombing of the tax office, the spectre of radical violence was again roundly condemned in the press. A demonstration in Béziers on 6 February was motivated by perceived fraud, yet quickly escalated after a confrontation between the Deputy Mayor Alain Barrau and CAV member Michel Bataille over government responses to this fraud.⁸⁸² As 50 or so winegrowers noisily demonstrated outside, some jostled with the driver of a police car which triggered a response from police who had arrived to call a halt to the protest. The police *commissaire* ordered forces to "Arrêtez les masqués" and several CRAV members were seized.⁸⁸³ The appearance of masks at growers' demonstrations was a worrying development which echoed the criticism that the CRAV's methods had increasingly little to do "avec la démocratie."⁸⁸⁴ One interviewee wholly condemned the CRAV's use of masks as delegitimising their cause:

Je le condamne fermement. Il est plus facile et pas du tout courageux (comme ils le croient) de casser en mettant une cagoule, que de se battre démocratiquement, même si parfois cela est décourageant devant notre manque de solidarité.⁸⁸⁵

Such comments highlighted that although violence in itself was not always enough to draw open condemnation from the public, the appearance of accoutrements such as

⁸⁸² 'Francisation de vin', *Midi Libre*, 06/02/1992 - ADA 98J15; 'Le vin coule à Béziers...', *Midi Libre* 07/02/1992 - ADA 98J15; 'Deux viticulteurs interpellés', *Dépêche*, 07/02/1992 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁸³ 'Le vin coule à Béziers...', *Midi Libre*, 07/02/1992 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁸⁴ 'Explosifs contre la perception', *Midi-Libre*, 01/01/1992 - ADA 98J12.

⁸⁸⁵ Interview with Henri Cabanel - Conseiller Général, délégué à la Viticulture - Herault - 28-07-2010.

masks and hoods were suggestive of a more clandestine and less sympathetic group.

The CRAV, however "sur le pied guerre, ne sont pas prêt de se démobiliser."⁸⁸⁶

When dialogue took place within the boundaries of acceptable protest the establishment was responsive and the Défense movement could regain public sympathy. When these hazy boundaries were breached, the region's political climate was inimical and arson attacks only served to distance the CRAV from the political mainstream. With a very decentralised leadership structure, however, the CRAV struggled to keep its members within the boundaries of legitimacy and when the base mobilised, the leadership was under pressure to endorse these actions to maintain the fragile illusion of viticultural unity.

Colonel Weber's label of terrorism is, then, an interesting one. If the CRAV are or were terrorists, then they sit strangely alongside other violent groups mobilised during the 1960s. As with *Action Directe* (AD), the radicalisation of the CRAV's methods was a response to adverse external pressure; for AD the adherence of the French left to the Fifth Republic threatened an abandonment of revolutionary ideals, for the CRAV the adhesion of regional representatives of the PS to central government threatened the abandonment of the ideology of 'la Défense'. In both cases the groups "turned to terrorism out of weakness and fear of marginalisation."⁸⁸⁷ Interestingly, one interviewee was keen to stress the difference between the CRAV and the AD when this interviewer clumsily asked: "Approuvez-vous leur [CRAV] utilisation de l'action directe?" Remonstrating that AD were simply "terroristes", he expressed cautious

⁸⁸⁶ 'Le vin coule à Béziers...', *Midi Libre*, 07/02/1992 - ADA 98J15.

⁸⁸⁷ M. Dartnell, *Action Directe: Ultra-left terrorism in France* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), p.137-139.

sympathy for "l'action dur" of the CRAV when it was deployed judiciously.⁸⁸⁸ Such a distinction demonstrates that the CRAV's legacy has not been overly tainted by Weber's denunciation, yet still retains *some* semblance of respectability in popular memory as long as it respected 'the rules of the game'.

Aside from AD, there are interesting parallels between the CRAV and other contemporary groups denounced as terroristic. The majority drawn to political violence through *gauchiste* ideology (the *Gauche Prolétarienne* and the LCR, for example) drew back from the "tentation terroriste" towards the end of the 1970s.⁸⁸⁹ Both Maoist and Trotskyist groups demonstrated first of all the "deligitimization" of the PCF after 1968,⁸⁹⁰ then the "deradicalization" of the far-left at the end of the 1970s, as former activists moved towards electoral politics and alternative means of representation.⁸⁹¹ The impact of *gauchisme* on the national parties, as demonstrated by the PS-PCF Common Programme of 1972, provided acceptable outlets for activism, marginalising the *gauchiste* organisations themselves. So too did the establishment of more legitimate representational bodies in the Languedoc drain the reservoirs of support for the CRAV: when the FNSEA coupled Défense and development, the ossified tenets of la Défense seemed outdated. Yet the radicalism and violent mobilisation of the CRAV seemed to

⁸⁸⁸ Interview with Michel Coutellier - Chais des Vignerons - Lezignan-Corbieres Aude - 19-07-2010.

⁸⁸⁹ For discussions of the process, see S. Cosseron, *Dictionnaire de l'extrême gauche* (Paris, Larousse, 2007); C. Pina, *L'Extrême gauche en Europe* (Paris: Documentation française, 2005); P. Raynaud, *L'Extrême gauche plurielle: entre démocratie radicale et révolution* (Paris: CEVIPOF-Autrement, 2006).

⁸⁹⁰ B. Fields, 'French Maoism', *Social Text*, no. 9-10, (1984), pp. 148-177.

⁸⁹¹ S. Charlton, 'Deradicalization and the French Communist Party', *The Review of Politics*, vol. 41, no. 1 (Jan., 1979), pp. 38-60.

outlive that of the ultra-left in France, even as their appeal shrivelled. As such, the CRAV's peers became terroristic groups from across Europe.⁸⁹²

By the late 1980s, the *Rote Armee Fraktion* (RAF), or Baader-Meinhof gang, in West Germany had fallen away from prominence as the extremity of their action provoked a far harsher crack-down from authorities. Before they officially dissolved in 1998, they had been responsible for 34 murders, yet the peak of their activity came during the 'German Autumn' of 1977 not long after the CRAV's most outrageous moment at Montredon.⁸⁹³ The German Left had met this challenge from the fringes, and Isabelle Sommier describes the disaggregation of the extreme left as the 1970s came to an end, plagued by "les vagues de défection des militants qui, soit rejoignent les partis traditionnels et les "nouveaux mouvements sociaux", soit cessent tout activisme politique."⁸⁹⁴ Particularly in West Germany, any sympathy which radicals had enjoyed became quickly exhausted, driving potential supporters towards different channels of representation. As Karen Hanshew observed of lapsed supporters of the *Rote Armee Fraktion*: "Their vision of social critique as outside institutionalized politics thus shifted to one of communication, nonviolence, and, eventually, cooperation with

⁸⁹² For the links which developed between the far-left terrorist groups of France, Italy and West Germany (both thematic and actual), see A. Hamon, J. Marchand, *Action Directe du terrorisme français à l'euroterrorisme* (Paris: Seuil, 1986).

⁸⁹³ For further reading on the Rote Armee Fraktion, see K. Hanshew, 'Militant Democracy, Civil Disobedience, and Terror: Political Violence and the West German Left during the 'German Autumn,' 1977' in M. Geyer (ed.), *War and Terror in Contemporary Historical Perspective* (Washington: Johns Hopkins University, 2003); T. Vague, *Televisionaries: The Red Army Faction Story, 1963-1993* (Oakland: ak Press, 1994); J. Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); J. Smith, A. Moncourt, *The Red Army Faction a Documentary History: Porjectiles for the People* (Quebec: Kersplebedeb, 2009); C. Tilmann, 'Le terrorisme en Allemagne fédérale', *Politique étrangère* no.4 (1986), pp. 937-949; P. Rethmann, 'On Militancy, Sort of', *Cultural Critique*, No. 62 (Winter, 2006), pp. 67-91.

⁸⁹⁴ I. Sommier, *La violence politique et son deuil: l'après 68 en France et Italie* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 1998), p.236.

mainstream political society."⁸⁹⁵ Similarly, the CRAV's increasingly marginalised role drove support away, strengthening the idea of development at the expense of the old Défense movement.

Interestingly, "terroristic" methods remained most resilient where grievances were grounded in territorial claims, as was demonstrated by Basque nationalists. The "terrorism" of the CRAV was not bound to the regionalist cause, though it had been associated with it in the past. This was in direct contrast to groups like *Iparretarrak*, whose violence, foreign links and political agenda distinguished them absolutely.⁸⁹⁶ Their formation was not directly related to the *années 68* but a result of the intensification of their fight against Franco and ideological fractures within ETA.⁸⁹⁷ Likewise in Corsica, political violence remained a serious threat to stability, as the *Fronte de la Libération nationale Corse* (FLNC) pursued its vendetta against the state.⁸⁹⁸ Breton nationalists also remained active, with the *Armée Révolutionnaire Breton* rejuvenating the violent nationalist movement in 1985 and continuing to strike out

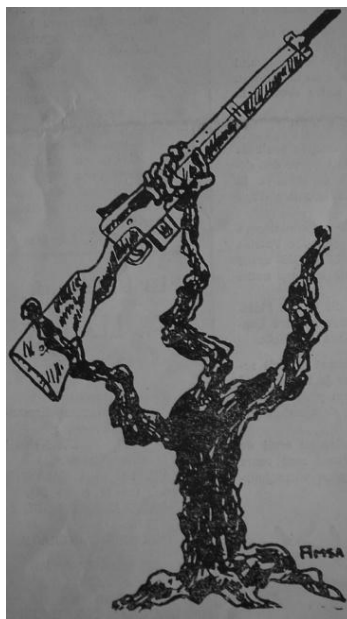
⁸⁹⁵ Hanshew, 'Militant Democracy, Civil Disobedience, and Terror', p.41

⁸⁹⁶ This Basque separatist group was formed in 1973 and carried out attacks in France in conjunction with ETA in Spain. They were considerably more violent than any group in the Occitan context, killing 4 policemen between 1982 and 1987 and carrying out frequent bombing campaigns. They had no visible links to the Occitan movement or the CRAV, nor are there any discernible intersections. They are distinguished from Corsican, Breton or Occitan nationalism by the fact that the government viewed it as a foreign (namely Spanish) problem. For further discussion of *Iparretarrak*, see J. Moruzzi, E. Boulaert, *Iparretarrak: Séparatisme et terrorisme en pays basque français* (Paris: Plon, 1988).

⁸⁹⁷ Moruzzi, Boulaert, *Iparretarrak*, pp.40-41.

⁸⁹⁸ For more on Corsican nationalism, see R. Ramsay, *The Corsican Timebomb* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983); G. Ravis-Giordani, 'La Corse : culture régionale ? culture régionalisée ?', *Ethnologie française*, vol. 33, no. 3 (July-September, 2003), pp. 451-458; P. Savigear, 'Corsica between Ballot and Bomb', *The World Today*, vol. 38, no. 11 (November, 1982), pp. 450-456.

against icons of the centralised state.⁸⁹⁹ The CRAV may have taken more from the model of Breton or Corsican nationalists than they had from ultra-left terrorists like the RAF or AD, yet they remained distinct from all these groups. Although the grievances of the CRAV were grounded in the land, they were not expressed as a desire for separatism. Although it engaged with Socialism and championed occupational identity it never engaged with doctrinaire Marxism or supported profound political change. Its flirtation with militant Occitanisme in the 1970s had highlighted the importance of the Languedoc to viticultural identity, yet also shown that separatism was not potent enough to direct violence itself. Its political pluralism likewise eschewed any ideological fervour, excepting that of its own rebellious heritage.



Cartoon illustrating the CRAV's links to the land⁹⁰⁰

Returning to the model of “relative frustration” developed by Gurr, the resilience of the CRAV was based in individual grievances and disappointments

⁸⁹⁹ See L. Henry, A. Lagadec, *FLB-ARB: L'histoire* (Fouesnant: Yorann Embanner, 2006); E. Chartier, A. Cabon, *Le Dossier FLB, plongée chez les clandestins bretons* (Spézet: Editions Coop Breizh, 2006).

⁹⁰⁰ ‘Charte du vin’, *L’Echo des Corbieres*, 29/08/1972 – ADA573PER1.

vocalised in the tradition of the *Défense* movement. The notion of a century long “guerre du vin” provided frustrated individuals both the means and the mode of action, without demanding overt commitment to political causes. The disintegration of winegrowing as a mass activity had diluted support and tolerance of increasingly violent actions committed without any clear agenda. The old ideals of the *Défense* movement had shown themselves incapable of addressing the problems of the Midi and had failed to meet the challenge of modernisation as the region moved forward.

In a comment upon the problems in the *Aude*, the *Indépendant* the fundamental shifts which the Languedoc had undergone:

La viticulture fait partie intégrante du patrimoine culturel et économique de l'Aude. Aujourd'hui, elle se trouve à la croisée des chemins. L'avenir se teintera des couleurs que voudront bien lui donner les politiques en réponse aux questions urgentes des viticulteurs.⁹⁰¹

These urgent questions were the very same facing the CRAV concerning the relationship between development and ‘la *Défense*’. Attempting to decouple the wine industry from the cultural heritage of the *Aude*, or the Languedoc more generally, was an onerous task for the government. Attempting to do this whilst depriving winegrowers of a living wage was, understandably, even harder to justify. As the government's approach to European economic integration and its viticultural implications remained consistent, the burden of change fell most squarely upon the Midi. Nevertheless, the national organisations shared a common platform with the government when it came to modernising wine production in line with European

⁹⁰¹ 'Vers une catastrophe humaine!', *L'Indépendant* 28/06/1992 - ADA 98J15.

standards. The difficult questions which faced the core of support which the CRAV still held was whether to fight against the trends of economic development in service of a static regional identity frozen on the vine or rather to undertake the painful process of modernisation and gamble on the region's future success. For the most committed CRAVistes, this gamble remained too great and the demands of modernisation too much to bear.

Conclusion:

CRAV BOUM!: Change and continuity in role of the CRAV

Despite the challenges delivered to the *Défense* movement in the wake of the shooting at Montredon, the appeal of the CRAV proved supple enough to withstand the shocks of changing political and economic climates. In the era of the EEC, the old enemies of Parisian bureaucrats and French merchants were replaced with those of European technocrats and Italian imports. At the same time, a concurrent change in the basis of viticultural politics meant that the attitude of growers to their traditional representative structures was massively modified. As the Socialist party broke up the 'union sacrée', so too did they break up the formula which had motivated protest throughout most of the twentieth century. Even as professional loyalty wavered, the electoral strength of the PS was testament to an enduring appeal which eclipsed that of the '*Défense*' movement. This was in part a reaction to the demographic changes in the region. As winegrowing became less central to the regional economy, the political interests of its elites became less immediately important.

Demographic shifts and political disaggregation exacerbated the strains of market pressures as "l'immense et puissant mouvement viticole du Midi soit réduit à un groupuscule d'hommes cagoulés"⁹⁰² The appearance of masks and the downgrading in local sympathy for the CRAV was a result of their increasingly dangerous relationship with the authorities. The sociologist Antoine Roger highlights that throughout the 1960s and 1970s "les actions violentes sont tacitement tolérées."⁹⁰³ Yet, after the economic and syndical developments of the 1980s, this tacit acceptance withered. By way of example, the traditionally supportive *Dépeche du Midi* qualified its coverage of CRAV attacks in 2001, seeking to distance itself from any perceived endorsement:

Le reportage de nos envoyés spéciaux Joël Ruiz et Roger Garcia, qui ont suivi le commando de viticulteurs audois, ne constitue pas une approbation. L'acte commis hier matin à Nantes est un acte hors-la-loi, il porte préjudice à une entreprise, et, par conséquent, la justice sera saisie.

Toutefois, l'actualité est notre métier. En rendre compte, lorsque nous en sommes les témoins, constitue une obligation. Il s'agit donc d'expliquer à nos lecteurs les raisons qui ont poussé un groupe d'hommes à agir de la sorte.

Ce reportage de « La Dépêche du dimanche » est à verser au dossier plus général du malaise de l'agriculture qui, de la « vache folle » à l'épizootie de fièvre aphteuse, en passant par les démêlés de José Bové avec la justice, pose à notre société une question simple: quel avenir pour ceux qui travaillent la terre.⁹⁰⁴

The qualifications which the *Dépêche* placed on its coverage indicated how attitudes to the CRAV had changed. Whilst sympathy for the plight of struggling winegrowers remained, the methods practiced by the CRAV were far beyond the frontiers of

⁹⁰² McFalls, 'Effets discursifs, politiques et pratiques de la révolte de 1907', p.2.

⁹⁰³ Roger, 'Syndicalistes et poseurs de bombes', p.59.

⁹⁰⁴ 'En commando, les vigneron du Midi frappent à l'Ouest', *La Dépêche*, 18/01/2003.

acceptability. Suddenly, the interconnectedness of agriculture was more readily addressed by national bodies focussed on reform and development rather than violent defence. This did not rule out direct action, as indicated by the mention of José Bové, but rather placed an emphasis on constructive solutions to the “malaise de l’agriculture”.

Yet the failure of past solutions had shaped the CRAV. The rise in cooperatives during the post-war period is testament to the extent to which they were central to reconstruction - they allowed winegrowers to collectively capitalise on mechanisation and viticultural innovation. Yet, the *crises des méventes* which struck in the mid-1950s showed the post-war development model to have been flawed. These crises were driven above all by declining wine consumption in France, a phenomenon which was entirely unrelated to issues of production. Thus in response to continuing wine slumps in the 1950s and 1960s, cooperatives harked back to the productivist mindset of the post-Phylloxera days, clothed in the same symbolic vocabulary of 1907. So too did they reconstitute the organs of regional defence in an effort to unite winegrowers as a pressure group. Once again, they vilified traditional enemies to bring themselves closer together - imports, fraud and speculation. These remained important contributors to the Languedoc's declining fortunes, yet were all ancillary to the reality of declining consumption. One interviewee concisely summarised the protest movements of the Languedoc viticole:

En 1907, c'était la fraude, les vins artificiels, en 1962 l'importation des vins Algériens en 1975 les vins Italiens. Le négoce s'est toujours servi des importations pour faire baisser les prix des vins languedociens.⁹⁰⁵

This continuity of message was the CRAV's greatest strength, as it bound them to the region's contestatory heritage. Thus, they became spokesmen for a historical identity. The drama of 1907 projected divisions which remain to this day, with lasting suspicion of foreign imports and resistance to central authority neatly bundled up within a narrative of regional assertiveness.

In the midst of Giscard's premiership, the Languedoc was subject to the tinkering of technocrats committed to reducing the quantity and improving the quality of wine produced in the Midi. These were not new solutions and, indeed, built upon the legacy of the 1953 *Code du vin*. In the midst of European integration, this push towards a value-driven modernisation of the wine industry was accelerated. Structural transformation remained disguised by the issue of imports related to European integration, however, in line with the CRAV's continuity of message. Opposition to Italian imports, which were indeed substantial, saw a lack of engagement with the development debate. This left the CRAV outmoded, as the changing demographic realities of the Languedoc began to be echoed in the attitudes of its winegrowers to change.

Suddenly, the wine industry was split between attitudes to development and defence. The "unanisme viticole" which had governed the Défense movement since the end of the 1950s was ruptured. Inducements to modernise highlighted the Languedoc's

⁹⁰⁵ Interview with Philippe Vaillé - Domaine Saint Paul de Fannelaure - Castelnaud de guers - Herault - 27-07-2010.

potential as an area of quality production, drawing valuable support from the representative power groups of the Languedoc, who saw in the plan a new vision for development. This vision promised redundancy for a large share of small growers whose role had evolved almost unchallenged since at least the 18th century. With an intervening period which accentuated their ancestors' determination to celebrate and defend this role, their quiescence was understandably absent. The changing relationship of defence and development has straddled this narrative of the CRAV. Whilst the Défense movement played an important role in resisting overt challenges to regional industry in the 1960s and 1970s, their role subsequently lessened in its importance. By 1984, the CRAV were no longer mobilising the *masse viticole* in support of an entire region, but rather loudly representing a small constituency of truculent winegrowers. Although their methods had been born out of adherence to the mythology of 1907 and the experience of protest, the 1990s saw them become increasingly violent and unacceptable. As their support base dwindled, so too did the CRAV.

The modern media narrative which arose after the 2007 video depicted the CRAV as a 'Lear-esque' group railing against the void. In reality they were taking direct action as a pressure group defending 'la vie paysanne'. This has been an identifiable characteristic of the group for as long as they have existed. Regional and occupational identities have been easy bed-fellows as long as they both remained focussed on the construction of a peasant identity with historical resonance. The sudden dislocation of the CRAV's mandate, however, stemmed both from the creation of *groupements* as an administrative structure and the exclusion of the CGVM from the

political mainstream by the PS from 1981. The Socialist victory was momentous in a manner which had not been envisaged by supporters in the Languedoc, long reliant on the bonds between their party and winegrowers. The failure of the PS to shatter the agricultural stronghold of the FNSEA made it expedient to endorse their plan, limiting the ability of the left to shape agricultural policy. As the influence of the CGVM waned, the voice of the CRAV had to become increasingly loud to ensure it was heard. Its subsequent means of communicating were both violent and frequently dangerous, leading to condemnation from traditional supporters. As the CRAV alienated support in the media and the professional organisations increasingly tilted towards the politics of quality, the Défense movement all but succumbed to 'l'offensive moderniste'. Increasing marginalisation, increasing violence and a swathe of cyclical protests highlighted the fact that the CRAV would not disappear, although neither would it reclaim its role as the undisputed spokesmen of the Midi viticole.

This role was rooted in the region, and in a narrative which had seen the CRAV's development inflected with the political vocabulary of the Languedoc. As such, they fed off a climate of contestation within France, operating as a regional representation of contemporary challenges to central authority. Julian Jackson's historiographical survey, *The Mystery of 68*, highlights the temptation to ascribe all subsequent events to the 'consequences' of the May Events.⁹⁰⁶ This temptation is strong with a group like the CRAV, especially considering their dates of operation. If the violence and protests of the CRAV are to be related to the *années 68* then it is in recognition of the fact that their heights lay beyond the totemic year of 1968. Perhaps of

⁹⁰⁶ Jackson, 'The Mystery of May 1968', p.652.

closest relevance to the CRAV is Zancarini-Fournel and Artières' estimate of the *années* having lasted from 1961 to 1982. In the case of the CRAV, however, their *années* 68 would be bounded by their formalisation in June 1961 and the torching of the Leclerc in Carcassonne in May 1984. Yet this could equally be bookended by 1907 and 2007. It could also be argued that this process has yet to come to a close. The CRAV's continued existence and their resilience in the face of profound challenges has shown them to be rooted in regional processes of radicalisation and reliant on cores of local support. Whilst the boundaries of acceptability which have governed responses to their actions have moved, they retain enough support to continue their struggle. Mass support and mass mobilisations have been replaced by cautious, reluctant support and the violent acts of commandoes. Their message, vocabulary and styles of action, however, have remained remarkably consistent.

Attacks were not confined to remote history, and have continued until today. A tax office was destroyed by explosives in 1998, there were dynamite attacks on power stations and train lines in 2002, supermarkets were smashed up and the regional agricultural ministry dynamited in 2005, whilst explosives targeted wine merchants, banks and treasury buildings in 2006. In one of their most recent attacks, in March of 2009, they caused half a million Euros worth of damage at a large wine-merchant in Nimes.⁹⁰⁷ Increasingly, the CRAV has faded from the political mainstream, reappearing only as a name spray painted on a wall with some glib threat such as *CRAV BOUM*. The amenability which characterised their earlier attempts at reconciliation with public powers, and their attempts to engage with political process, have been largely

⁹⁰⁷ "French 'wine terrorists' attack merchants selling foreign produce," *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 March 2009.

forgotten. This leads us back to 2007, the anniversary of the great 1907 revolt and a resurgence of the CRAV. This was commemorated by the release of the video mentioned earlier, in which five masked men threatened violence against the French establishment. That newspapers around the world awoke to their presence, as if they were newly formed, highlighted the extent to which their story had been forgotten. The difficulty is that in forgetting their story, some of the understanding of the wine industry has been lost to statistical analysis and economic projections.

This interpretation is corroborated by the violence which followed the video threats made by the CRAV in 2007, with riots in the summer of 2008 spreading across the Languedoc as vignerons sought to "exprimer la colère" in violent demonstrations. The Interior Ministry denounced "une tentative d'homicide" as masked men attacked convoys of policemen and attempted to set fire to occupied police vehicles.⁹⁰⁸ That vignerons met demands to tear up their vines with this fury encouraged inevitable allegories of 1907 from regional commentators: "Alors le vent de la révolte se lève. Le spectre de 1907 plane." Much has changed since 1907, with a diversified economy, altered political structure and a diminished ability to stage mass demonstrations. Yet tradition and mythology still have a significant role to play in motivating regional responses to external pressure. As eminent Midi historian Remy Pech pointed out, the riots of 2008 were "l'expression de la violence du désespoir",⁹⁰⁹ a situation which encouraged a retrenchment to the established rhetoric of 1907. It is interesting, therefore, to note the extent to which the mythology invoked by the CRAV in 2007 has been adapted from its original generation, and also to realise that its rejuvenation is

⁹⁰⁸ 'Viticulteurs : une "tentative d'homicide" de policiers', *Nouvel Observateur*, 26/06/2008.

⁹⁰⁹ J. Rochfort, 'Les rasisins de la colere'

[http://www.agrobiosciences.org/breve.php3?id_breve=1182] [Accessed: 21/05/2010].

based in the realities of economic need and not pious observation of heritage. Whilst it may appear that the mythology has been a candle burning at the altar of 1907, in reality it has been used somewhat more cynically. The story that inspired violence and bloodshed has become a minority pursuit, resurrected only in times of direst economic need.

Perhaps the most pertinent line of that video was one of the last:

Faisons en sorte que nos enfants puissent connaître la viticulture.⁹¹⁰

In reality, the CRAV embodies a very particular southern narrative which charted the latter half of the twentieth century. They have become emblematic of an industry which has lost its central place in the social fabric of the region and representative of an increasingly marginalised minority of winegrowers raised on articulate representations of their role. In this sense, the CRAV developed initially as just another *groupuscule* alongside the myriad divisions of the *Défense* movement. Yet in its prime it became associated with revolutionary ideals, as it formed social alliances which included the increasingly strident Occitan lobby. Yet its largest debt to the Occitanistes was the cry of "*Volem viure al país!*" After electoral failure and the stain of spilt blood had excluded it from the political mainstream, the CRAV's became a story of radicalisation and alienation. As the group developed its voice, so too did it develop methods increasingly based in clandestine operation and violent modes of protest. Defining the role of the group is grounded in an understanding of this narrative, and ultimately an understanding of the fact that their erratic and chimerical existence has rendered them

⁹¹⁰ France3/AFP – News Report (Montpellier region) 20/05/2007.

in the popular imagination as terrorists, revolutionaries and just another *groupuscule*. These labels were fleeting, but their identity as winegrowers, Languedocians and their desire to live and work their land for a living wage has been their defining characteristic throughout.

Epilogue:

From antiétatique to altermondialisme:

Development & Défense in a globalised world

This narrative of the CRAV's history ends in 1992 with the condemnation of CRAV activists as 'terrorists' by Colonel Weber. The purpose of this Epilogue is to connect the CRAV and the Défense movement into the larger *alter-mondialisme* movement in France and demonstrate the bonds between the core of the CRAV in 1992 and the broader "nouvelle gauche paysanne". The CRAV did not fade away in 1992 nor did the problems of the Midi viticole neatly resolve themselves.⁹¹¹ Indeed, the overarching narrative of the Languedoc has been one of structural transformation, a process which did not finish in that year. As mentioned in detail in previous chapters, improving vineyard quality and a shrinking vine coverage ensured that the wine industry had a more sustainable future, albeit with a more diminished role. The dwindling relevance of the CRAV alongside the amelioration of the region's output has seen economic growth and better production methods lead to an increased market share. Yet, cyclical downturns have not been eliminated and the occupation of winegrower is still not a

⁹¹¹ An excellent sociological study of the CRAV's activity between 1998 and 2010 has been published recently, which includes an annex with a timeline of CRAV actions during this period. See, Roger, 'Syndicalistes et poseurs de bombes'.

secure one. Indeed, these pressures upon the *Languedoc viticole* have encouraged a reaffirmation of identity, strengthening the idea of the *paysan* alongside modern, profitable producers. Jean-Phillipe Martin, a prolific commentator on the peasant movements of France, observed that:

Le terme de 'paysan' n'est pas neutre. La définition des exploitants agricoles et de leur activité professionnelle est un enjeu de luttes entre les diverses catégories d'exploitants, entre les syndicats agricoles voire entre les chercheurs spécialisés sur le monde rural. Au début des années 1960, de nombreux chercheurs avaient mis en évidence la fin des paysans, la disparition de la vieille civilisation rurale qui avait façonné la France.⁹¹²

Martin's analysis focuses on the 'industrialisation' of the agricultural sector, wherein producers were encouraged to standardise and 'rationalise' agricultural production in line with market demands. The battle he describes over the term *paysan* remained vivid after the modernisation drive of the 1980s. The endurance of the term *paysan* owed much to the organisations which had continued to fight for representation throughout the 1980s and 1990s, when European integration and the influence of the Common Agricultural Policy had fundamentally challenged the role of agriculture within modern French society. Likewise, its usage became more flexible as it became more associated with the *alter-mondialiste* movement and less with resistant forces in the French countryside.

⁹¹² J. Martin, 'José Bové un activiste sans projet?', *Modern & Contemporary France*, vol.11, no.3 (pp.307-321), p.308.

Alter-mondialisme & Paysan activism

Confédération Paysanne (CP) was an organisation which had links to the CRAV but dovetailed into a broader narrative of 'paysan' resistance to 'damaging' modernity. Its foundation myth lay in the Larzac struggle of the 1970s and the knot of *gauchiste* threads which bound the eclectic activists. CP was officially formed in 1987, reconciling the CNSTP which had emerged from the *Paysans-Travailleurs* movement founded in 1972 by Bernard Lambert, and the Socialist FNSP.⁹¹³ As mentioned in Chapter 5, these were the Agricultural unions which Edith Cresson had attempted to support as a bulwark against the conservative FNSEA following the Socialist victory in 1981. Their inability to act in concert, however, had cost them influence. Subsequently, neither Michel Rocard nor Henri Nallet had seen fit to confront the FNSEA after the popular discontent of 1982 and the difficult economic situation thereafter. Guillaume's (the former head of the FNSEA) appointment as Minister for Agriculture served only to highlight the renewed proximity of the union to government during the period of 'cohabitation'. In this sense, Guillaume's appointment acted as a catalyst for the Socialist unions, forcing them to issue a call for unity:

L'appel affirme que la crise persiste, que le modèle de développement est dans l'impasse et qu'il faut mettre fin à la diminution de nombres d'agriculteurs, d'où la nécessité de débattre et construire un mouvement qui rassemble ceux qui veulent s'opposer à ses logiques.⁹¹⁴

⁹¹³ Also cf. J. Martin, 'La Confédération paysanne et José Bové, des actions médiatiques au service d'un projet?', *Ruralia* no.6 (2000), p.2. (pp.1-25)

⁹¹⁴J. Martin, *Histoire de la nouvelle gauche paysanne* (Paris: Découverte, 2005), p.198.

The CP thus became a new means by which to challenge the dominance of the FNSEA in the syndical scene at the end of the 1980s.⁹¹⁵ Although stronger in the Hérault than in the Aude, CP continued to stress the specificity of Languedocian winegrowing as its main tactic to criticise the FNSEA.⁹¹⁶ This took it back to the old appeal of organisations like the CGVM, stressing the peculiar problems of the Midi as a reason to avoid national organisations. The CP would become more important towards the end of the 1990s as it drew the fragments of different Défense movements together, eventually incorporating members such as Huillet with ideological sympathisers from different industries such as José Bové. By changing the structure of the agriculture debate in France, CP moved away from direct competition with the FNSEA.

The CP grew to become more than simply a pressure group for French peasants. Its involvement with Via Campesina (the international conglomeration of peasant groups) has seen it represent a 'new-left' *alter-mondialisme* in myriad forms, from opposition to nuclear proliferation to resisting American corporations. Indeed, Bové was also a member of Greenpeace and was present on the ill-fated *Rainbow Warrior* as it sailed the Indian Ocean in protest at weapons testing. Involvement in such varied causes highlighted the broad ideological engagement of CP and its difference from the Défense movement in the Languedoc. Whilst the CRAV was decidedly regional and industry specific, CP's interests sprawled over continents and across issues.⁹¹⁷ The CRAV would continue to be active in the Languedoc, though the CP

⁹¹⁵ F. Seifert, 'Consensual NIMBYs, Contentious NIABYs: Explaining Contrasting Forms of Farmers GMO Opposition in Austria and France', *Sociologia Ruralis* vol.49 (2009), p.26. (pp.20-40)

⁹¹⁶ Martin, 'Le syndicalisme viticole en Languedoc sous la Ve République', p.48.

⁹¹⁷ P. Ariès, *José Bové: Le candidat condamné* (Lyons: Golias, 2007), pp.20-24.

presented a new national body to interact with, one which had as its motto: “For small farming and the defence of its workers.”⁹¹⁸ It was drawing former CRAVistes like Huillet towards a new form of activism, which recognised the specificity of Languedocien winegrowing but connected it to new trends of *gauchiste* contestation.

In 1999, Millau was the scene of the CP’s most mediatised moment, when a group of activists led by Jose Bové engaged in a symbolically cathartic act of destruction. Midway through the construction of a McDonalds restaurant, a crowd of activists began its deconstruction. Removing bits of roofing, doors and varied other pieces, the CP activists loaded a truck and dumped the debris at the door of the sub-prefecture. In an immediate sense, the destruction was in protest at American plans to restrict the import of products like Roquefort, which Bové described as “mesures de rétorsion américaines.”⁹¹⁹ In dismantling the restaurant with tractors, Bové was hoping to juxtapose the globalised homogeneity of the McDo with the artisanal quality of locally produced Roquefort.⁹²⁰ Yet the media reaction, led by the local prefect, was extremely negative and reports spoke of the restaurant being “ransacked”. Following the arrest of 4 farmers involved (and Bové once he returned from holiday), the prisoners refused bail and a trial date was set. Part of this negative reaction seems to fit in with the media relationship established by the CRAV and the increasing intolerance for acts of destruction in the 1990s. Colonel Weber’s label of ‘terrorism’ once again seemed to hang over agricultural protest. In the face-off against McDonalds, however, there lay a more sympathetic vein of public opinion than there was when the CRAV

⁹¹⁸ J. Bové & F. Defour, *The world is not for sale* (London: Verso, 2001), Appendix.

⁹¹⁹ J. Bové, *Candidat rebelle* (Paris: Hachette, 2007), p.91.

⁹²⁰ G. Williams, *Struggles for an Alternative Globalization* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), pp.124-126.

had targeted *négoçiants*.⁹²¹ Petitions and public support mobilised in favour of Bové and, by the time of his trial, a public clamour met the now famous photo of him with handcuffed wrists raised defiantly to the camera.⁹²²



*Jose Bové being arrested for dismantling a McDonalds*⁹²³

The town of Millau lies literally in the shadow of the Larzac steppe and so this act was directly bound to the spirit of contestation established during the Larzac occupation of 1971. So too did it connect with the nexus of interests which had bound Oc and vine in the 1970s, as discussed in Chapter 4. The destruction of the Millau McDonalds indelibly marked the CP with the spirit of the Larzac demonstrations (and the New Left ethos it embodied) and demonstrated that Bové was an effective and popular leader. Naomi Klein, writing in the foreword to Bové's best-selling *The world is not for sale* states:

⁹²¹ Although the protest's focus was intended to be the plight of Roquefort farmers, it also drew in the issue of McDonalds using hormone-treated meat (a fact subsequently highlighted by the CP). The proximity of the British 'Mad Cow disease' culling in 1996 remained trenchant enough to raise suspicion of tainted meat which helped to capture the public imagination

⁹²² Bové, Defour, *The world is not for sale*, pp.3-18.

⁹²³ Cropped Cover of Bové, Defour, *The world is not for sale*.

Theirs is not a nationalist battle, nor is it only about food. Bové's and Dufour's message has resonance everywhere battles are fought for the right to local democracy and cultural diversity in a world governed increasingly by the principles that govern McDonald's: the same fare everywhere you go. It is about the right to distinct, uncommodified spaces – cultural activities, rituals, pieces of our ecology, ideas, life itself – that are not for sale.⁹²⁴

Klein's analysis of Bové's significance is perhaps grandiloquent, but helps connect to the narrative of the Défense movement as it developed out of the 1960s. The desires which Klein attributes to Bové's cause are essentially the same which motivated the Défense movement and the CRAV: the desire to promote traditional industry as a vital activity which promised a future for Languedocians; the desire to protect Occitan language and culture as an expression of difference to the Parisian centre; the desire to fight against the dominance of tourism in the Languedoc.

In this sense, a figure like Jean Huillet presented a natural ally for Bové. Huillet's involvement with the CRAV and desire to strike back against peripherisation through involvement with the Occitan movement and founding of MIVOC singled him out as an activist whose campaigns were more significant than their immediate surroundings. Huillet himself acknowledged that during the most extreme moments of the CRAV: "J'étais en contact avec les révolutionnaires irlandais de l'IRA ou basques de l'ETA, mais je détestais le nationalisme. Je ne savais plus où j'étais."⁹²⁵ His politics were naturally aligned to Bové's, although his commitment to the region was much stronger. Whilst Bové's endorsement of regional protest as part of Larzac's repertoire had demonstrated his interest in the theme it was never central to his politics. The

⁹²⁴ Naomi Klein *foreword to Bové, Dufour, The world is not for sale.*

⁹²⁵ 'Sa vendange sera terrible', *Midi-Libre* 18/03/2006.

cooperation of such figures highlighted the supple nature of *paysan* identity. Much as with the early regionalists like Charles-Brun and Camproux, these new *altermondialistes* were not readily identifiable by traditional political labels. Their loose adhesion to the left was not based on doctrinaire socialism or revolutionary ideals. Rather, Bové and Huillet both championed protectionism, heritage and the right of people to live and work the land. Such pliable ideals meant that the Languedocian Défense movement could engage with *altermondialisme* without being subsumed by it. Much as Occitanisme had been an important characteristic of the modern Défense movement since the 1960s, so too was resistance to global capital and market standardisation a prominent characteristic of the Défense movement after the 1970s.

Guibert and Mondavi

Although the narrative of this thesis has described a shrinking vine area in the Midi as a result of the reforms begun in the mid-1970s, the decline had, however, halted after 1995.⁹²⁶ An upturn in regional fortunes led to replanting and an acknowledgement that the area had become a "nouvel eldorado viticole".⁹²⁷ Such success predictably drew admiring glances from investors keen to source value within the global wine market. So it was that the incredibly successful American firm Mondavi investigated options for opening a flagship European vineyard in the South of France. The swift mayoral acceptance of the plans to construct the Mondavi winery in the Arbroussas massif, in the Gard, roused local anger. The scheme's opponents

⁹²⁶ As shown in the table in Chapter 5, however, this seeming upturn lasted only a short period and failed to arrest a long-term downwards trend in the value of Languedocien agriculture.

⁹²⁷ Touzard, Klajman, *Développement régional Agriculture et IAA en Languedoc-Roussillon*, p.12.

derided the quick decision as evidence of collusion with an over-bearing 'dollar menace'.

The winegrower Aimé Guibert has done more than most to ensure that the issues surrounding the South's traditional production methods have remained in the public eye. Specifically this has been in his resistance to the establishment of a French arm of the Mondavi brand. Much like the protagonist of the film *Local Hero*⁹²⁸, Guibert stands for an indefinable and outdated romance, bound to the land which he works at Mas de Daumas Gassac in the Hérault. Guibert became a hero of the *alter-mondialiste* movement by resisting the influence of winemakers like Mondavi and also fashionable consultants and critics, such as Michel Rolland or Robert Parker. This focus on the economic significance of American capital alongside the cultural implications of standardising food binds Guibert to the same movement represented by Bové. Likewise, with his defence of winegrowing in the Languedoc, he inevitably conjured up the spirit of the Défense movement. The film *Mondovino* captured the character of Guibert and the struggle in which he was engaged, spreading its focus to understand the global impact of increasingly industrialised wine production.⁹²⁹ Yet *Mondovino* is not without its critics, even in the Languedoc, where its message might perhaps be expected to be warmly received. Jean Clavel has criticised the film for its tendency to "simplifie et caricature souvent..." As an anti-modern rural Frenchman, Guibert has frequently been dismissed by detractors as little more than a stereotype, railing against the irresistible spread of American influence.

⁹²⁸*Local Hero* (1983), dir. Bill Forsyth.

⁹²⁹ *Mondovino* (2005), dir. Jonathon Nossiter.

One curious aspect of the story is the relative unimportance of the land parcel which Mondavi sought to rent. At merely 50 HA, the vineyard was unlikely to flood the region's cellars and the renown which would have come from the wine would undoubtedly have raised the region's profile. Jean Clavel considers the affair a missed opportunity: "Le Languedoc a encore raté une chance historique d'acquérir une audience internationale, une image et notoriété positives sur le plan viticole."⁹³⁰ This was the perfect example of path dependency in the Languedoc, wherein responses to external pressure had led to a rejection of foreign influence and denunciation of wealth. Embodying the core concepts of the 1907 riots, Guibert led a campaign rounded in a rejection of industrially produced foreign wine and fraud (which would see the Mondavi corporation sell the produce of the winery at cost-price to a subsidiary in order to evade value-linked taxation within the Hérault).⁹³¹ When, in *Mondovino*, Guibert declares that "Le vin est mort" he is specifically referring to a definition of wine which he believes has been forged through millenia of experience: "une relation presque religieuse de l'homme ... avec les éléments naturelles."⁹³² In essence, many of Guibert's criticisms of 'industrial wine' are somewhat hazy and ill-defined, though they represent a laudable artisanal spirit which has seen the Languedoc become a leading bio-dynamic producer, as vigneronns strive to create a point of difference in genuinely hand-crafted wines.

⁹³⁰ J. Clavel, *Mondialisation des vins*, pp.91-92.

⁹³¹ Oliver Torres has written extensively about 'The Mondavi Affair' and the reasons that it produced such strong feeling from supporters and detractors. See O. Torres, *La guerre des vins : l'affaire Mondavi - Mondialisation et terroirs* (Paris: Dunod, 2005) and O.Torres, 'The failure of the Californian Mondavi's implantation in France: entrepreneurship and corporatisme', *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, vol.1, no.1/2 (2004).

⁹³² *Mondovino* (2005), dir. Jonathon Nossiter.

Yet, such a defence of the small-scale in the face of overwhelming competition has formed the vital activity of the South since at least 1907. Guibert's criticisms and prejudices about small-scale production channel the themes of this earlier, well established dialectic which has continued to condition reactions to contemporary phenomena. The constituency, of which Guibert is only the most contemporary champion, do not represent the "vrais paysans" dismissed by Michel Rolland but a powerful conduit for a centuries-old tradition of resistance. Guibert's story was strongly evocative of the contestation bound into the narrative of the CRAV. This illustrated the supple nature of Languedocian identity as it related to *paysan* resistance, with both Bové and Guibert plugging into a narrative of rural resistance which was directly bound to 1907 and the 2007 video address made by the CRAV.

There is, however, a clear conceptual distinction between, on the one hand, Bové and Guibert and, on the other, the continued actions of the CRAV. Both Bové and Guibert have been involved in searching for developmental alternatives and have supported the value of regional agriculture rather than simply reacting as part of an historic tendency towards *la Défense*. In part, although Guibert and Bové's actions represented a defensive stance against external pressure, they also embodied a certain progressive attitude which valued the potential of regional producers. Their stands against development were rooted in a vocabulary of international resistance to economic and cultural hegemony, not the regional issues of the CRAV.

The targets of these protests have also been important. For Bové, McDonalds offered a rather unsympathetic foe which helped augment his popular reception. So too did Guibert choose a fight which named an unsympathetic multi-national as his foe.

This tapped into the old debates which the CRAV had used in the 1970s alongside the Occitan movement. Yet, in the twenty-first century, changing attitudes to the amelioration of wine have undercut regional opposition to viticultural modernisation. As the CRAV became increasingly marginalised in the 1990s, groups like Achille Gauch's *Vignerons Indépendants* began to dominate a new balance of defence and development. Thus, it is possible to understand how interviewees expressed confusion or even indifference to the targets of the modern CRAV. This, in reality, is the means by which we can bridge the Languedoc's contestatory heritage and the realities of progressive growers today.

In particular, the FNSEA has emerged from its tussles with the Défense movements reasonably unscathed. One interviewee who identified themselves as a member of the FDSEA also identified himself strongly as Occitan. In addition, his reflections on 1907 emphasised that it had been a "lutte contre la fraude sur le vin et une affirmation de l'identité régionale."⁹³³ His words certainly seemed to chime with the message which the CRAV had been promoting throughout the 1970s. Clearly, however, they had moved away from an audience which was once supportive. Within this context, the winegrowers who distanced themselves from the actions of the CRAV after the 1980s⁹³⁴ affirmed that the shared heritage of Défense did not have to be dominated by the action of the CRAV. The CRAV, however, continued to pursue defensive measures against the iniquities of regional development and the precarious existence of small winegrowers but offered little as a progressive alternative. This assured them of

⁹³³ Interview with Philippe Vaillé - Domaine Saint Paul de Fannelaure - Castelnau de guers - Herault - 27-07-2010.

⁹³⁴ The interviewee cited denounced their actions after the 1970s and 1980s as outdated.

an audience, but increasingly diminished the size of that audience to a core of radicalised winegrowers.

The CRAV Endures

The destruction of a McDonalds in Millau and the resistance to a franchise winery in Arbroussas were not immediately linked to either the *grande révolte* of 1907 or the shootings at Montredon in 1976. Yet the revival of these themes helped to legitimise the struggle of the CRAV against modernisation imposed by the EEC. In this instance, modernisation could be conflated with globalisation, with 'improved' quality representing a shift towards a standardised product. During this period of resurgence in the cultural capital of rural resistance, old scars were very much in evidence. In 2002, Huillet led a protest of between 700 to 1,000 winegrowers to Montredon to lay wreaths at the monument to the fallen and commemorate Emile Pouytès and his service to Southern wine. This came after an emergency distillation of 4 million HL of table wine promised economic woe for the winemakers of the region. Huillet, writing to the newly installed Agriculture Minister Francois Patriat, suggested that he take the opportunity to help the Midi in the name of peace: "Je vous demande d'agir vite pour retrouver la paix sociale."⁹³⁵

Between 'la paix sociale' and the contentment of Languedocian vignerons, however, there was a considerable gulf. In reality, differing attitudes to development fuelled constant breaches of 'la paix sociale', promoting conflict with the forces of order

⁹³⁵ 'Viticulteurs: veillée d'armes avant Montredon', *Midi Libre* 02/03/2002

and viticultural competitors. There was a prominent struggle between the Languedoc and Bordeaux in 2005 and 2006, when a war of words erupted over development patterns and unequal development. Jean Huillet stood at the forefront of the debate, accusing Bordeaux growers of 'twiddling their moustaches' as Languedocians struggled. Much of the debate centred around surpluses coming from Bordeaux, a sore point considering the long march of 'l'offensive moderniste' designed to curb the Languedoc's overproduction.⁹³⁶ The disparity encouraged recourse to vocabulary which evoked 1976. Huillet proclaimed:

Vignerons, la patrie vigneronne est en danger! Je vous demande de vous organiser en armée de révolte qui va faire que nous sortirons de notre sort debout!⁹³⁷

The familiar rhetoric was a precursor to familiar violence and 3 CRAViste winegrowers were arrested for setting fires by a Leclerc in Nîmes, dredging up memories of the "affaire Leclerc" which had so embarrassed the Défense movement in 1984.⁹³⁸ Such violence was naturally allied to a sense of vulnerability which was only intensified by inequality amongst regions of France. The under-current of the winegrower's ire was that the Languedoc was being specifically ignored or written off as unworthy of saving - a fact seemingly justified by recourse to rhetoric which stressed a century long 'guerre du vin'. Indeed, in June 2005 when a new CRAV leader Phillipe Vergnes addressed an

⁹³⁶ 'Après le ministre, la parole aux vignerons', *La Dépêche* 24/02/2005.

⁹³⁷ '10.000 dans les rues de Nîmes', *La Dépêche* 26/05/2005.

⁹³⁸ 'Arrestation de trois viticulteurs', *La Dépêche* 29/05/2005.

8,000 strong crowd in Nîmes, he spoke of “an economic genocide” being perpetrated against the winegrowers of the Languedoc.⁹³⁹

Abundant harvests in 2005 saw Bordeaux struggle and, as the saying goes in the South-west, “quand Bordeaux va mal, tout va mal.”⁹⁴⁰ After further commando actions from the CRAV, Huillet issued another statement:

Nous sommes, je crois, en route pour une situation de révolte. Car les viticulteurs ont le sentiment de ne plus avoir d'avenir. Et les autorités ne font rien.⁹⁴¹

Prices were reported to have fallen 30% in a year, as winegrowers in Bordeaux faced up to the reality of market 'blockages' and the Languedoc continued to struggle.⁹⁴² Rhetoric became increasingly inflamed as the contrast between strategies for easing the market highlighted the Bordelais unwillingness to compromise or engage in *arrachage*. *Libération* came down firmly on the side of the Languedocian growers, presenting the disparity as a class issue:

Les vigneron du Languedoc en ont marre! Marre d'une crise qui les étouffe chaque jour un peu plus, marre des ministres de l'Agriculture qui les méprisent, marre de l'image de mauvaise piquette que l'on colle à leurs vins alors qu'ils remportent des médailles aux quatre coins du monde. Et marre, aussi, des viticulteurs de Bordeaux, qu'ils accusent de ne pas participer à l'effort collectif mené contre la surproduction et la crise du vin français. «Nous, on n'arrête pas d'arracher, on envoie des millions d'hectolitres à la distillation, et pendant ce temps les Bordelais se gavent en se frisant les moustaches!» se plaint Jean Huillet, le très populaire patron des caves coopératives de l'Hérault.⁹⁴³

⁹³⁹ 'Grapes of Wrath', *The Independent* 12/06/2005.

⁹⁴⁰ 'Vin : comment sortir du grand embouteillage', *La Dépêche*, 16/08/2005.

⁹⁴¹ 'Nouvelle action violente des viticulteurs', *La Dépêche*, 30/11/2005.

⁹⁴² 'La tension monte dans le Bordelais et le Languedoc', *La Dépêche* 02/12/2005.

⁹⁴³ 'Les vigneron du Languedoc remontés contre les Bordelais', *Libération*, 21/01/2006.

As the matter reached the National Assembly, the reputation of the CRAV preceded the discussion. When one Deputy spoke of Huillet's involvement in a consultative body to look at the crisis and his willingness to work with government, another Deputy responded:

M. Patrice Martin-Lalande: Ou alors il le cache bien! (*Sourires.*)⁹⁴⁴

Although the schism between the Bordeaux and the Languedoc was a result of the refusal by Bordelais winegrowers to support a nationally coordinated protest demanded by syndical organisations in the Midi,⁹⁴⁵ the animosity between them was spurred by differing development strategies and the double standards of Bordeaux growers who considered their product inherently better than that of the Midi. This played into a traditional mythology arising from 1907, namely the sentiment that the Languedoc was being oppressed or victimised by the more affluent centre, whether that be Paris politically or the French establishment in the wine world. Such lingering beliefs helped demonstrate that a profound part of the Languedoc's patrimonial inheritance was tied to the concept of contestation and rooted in a rejection of inequality (regardless of its cause).

In Bové or Guibert it is possible to see an embodiment of the ideology of Défense which has evolved to meet new challenges with a focus on the qualities of 'local' and 'paysan' initiatives. In the responses to Bordelais growers, however, we are able to see the recurrence of a certain '1907 syndrome' or path dependency. This

⁹⁴⁴ Assemblée Nationale – Compte rendu integral -27/06/2006.

⁹⁴⁵ 'Bordelais 'twirl their moustaches' as Languedoc suffers', *Decanter*, 23/01/2006.

duality of reactions was illustrative of differing approaches to viticultural development, wherein the Bordeaux model's credibility was challenged and the traditional Languedocian model continued to be ridiculed by government.

AMAPs versus attacks?

This fundamental difference between the actions of the CRAV and that of the legitimate Défense movement has seen support for the CRAV falter in recent years. Interviewees tended to view them as an outdated institution which had altered since its 'golden age' in the 1970s. Some granted that although the CRAV had been a great force in pressurising debates on development, "ces méthodes sont dépassées et nuisent à l'image qualitative des vins de la région."⁹⁴⁶ Others stressed that the very character of the CRAV had changed, and that attacks which took place after the 1990s were the result of "certains vignerons [qui] ont voulu se mettre en avant mais ils n'ont rien compris et ils ont fait passer leurs ambitions personnelles avant notre viticulture ce qui à causé la perte du CRAV."⁹⁴⁷ In this vein, support for the CRAV as a contemporary organisation seems low, especially when they turn to violence. Anonymity, unclear motives and a shift away from the leadership models of the past left them devoid of the support on which they could once depend.

Now that prominent figures like Huillet are more readily associated with the actions of legitimate representation, the avenues of progress which they have pursued

⁹⁴⁶ Interview with Philippe Vaillé - Domaine Saint Paul de Fannelaure - Castelnau de guers - Hérault - 27-07-2010.

⁹⁴⁷ Interview with Michel Sebe - President de IGP Coteaux du Liberon - Cornheilan - Hérault - 08-09-2010.

seem to offer more than the commando actions pursued against supermarkets and railways. American influence was not entirely unwelcome with the Midi's *paysannerie*. Based on the model of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in the United States, collective crop shares between producers and local consumer groups were established in France. In 2001, the first *Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne* (AMAP) was founded in Toulon. Over the next few years, this model grew in popularity and from 2004 the first AMAPs were founded in the Aude, Hérault and Gard. In traditional viticultural areas this practice built upon *Vente directe*, which had seen winegrowers selling their produce locally for more than a century.⁹⁴⁸ By 2010 there were 20 AMAPs operating across the Languedoc-Roussillon.⁹⁴⁹

In the Gard, the *Centre des Initiatives pour Valoriser l'Agriculture et le Milieu rurale* (CIVAM) is one organisation which has encouraged an increase in organic wine production amongst growers and cooperatives. Formed in 1986, this organisation consists of 150 producers.⁹⁵⁰ This 'bio-dynamique' (or 'bio') wine has formed a new pole of growth in the Languedoc, where replanting and the turnover of vineyards brought about by demographic changes has allowed an increase in the number of wines certified as organic. The Languedoc-Roussillon has been the leader in conversions to 'bio' production since 1996, with about half of France's total 'bio'

⁹⁴⁸ As shown by a letter written by an Audois cooperative manager in 1909 which identifies *vente directe* as a useful model for growth which nonetheless requires greater investment in infrastructure. Photocopy supplied by Michel Coutellier of Chais des Vignerons in Lezignan-Corbieres, Aude.

⁹⁴⁹ National AMAP Resource Network - [URL: <http://www.reseau-amap.org>] [Accessed: 25/07/2011]

⁹⁵⁰ CIVAM Gard website [URL: <http://www.civamgard.fr>] [Accessed 15/10/2011].

vineyard area in 2007.⁹⁵¹ Such production forms part of a niche sector of the European wine market, part of a wider 'quality turn' which has taken place. This upturn in the consumption of certified organic produce across Europe has accentuated some of the Languedoc's traditional attributes. In particular, the small-scale family owned vineyards which have constituted an important part of its vineyard coverage. The attraction to this was described by one interviewee:

The "locals" want to protect their own small (sometimes, very small) appellations or territories (there are more than 400 wine appellations in France). This is related with the French culture where "small" means beautiful (i.e. "when you order a "petit café" it means a great coffee or when you say that "this is a petit vin" it means a great wine). By opposition, in the American culture people denote a preference for everything in "big" sizes (big car, big house, big Mac...). I would say that this "theory" relates with French culture where "small" is beautiful. Therefore, for all local and small appellations are great territories with great wines. In France you cannot dissociate the French wines from the regional identity.⁹⁵²

This focus on the specificity of French produce has reinforced ideas like 'bio' production.⁹⁵³ Likewise, it has given rise to developments like the 'slow food' movement and other ideas which have fed back into the *alter-mondialiste* movement, notably through the endorsement of José Bové.⁹⁵⁴ Yet, in reality, 'bio' production still

⁹⁵¹ T. Bouzdine-Chemeeva and A. Krzywoszynska, 'Barriers and driving forces in organic winemaking in Europe: case studies in France and Italy' [URL: <http://academyofwinebusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/5-AWBR2011-Bouzdine-Chemeeva-Krzywoszynska.pdf>] [Accessed: 01/12/2011].

⁹⁵² Interview with Alfredo Manuel Coelho - Associate Researcher - UMR MOISA SupAgro Montpellier - Hérault - 29-07-2010 (Answers given in English).

⁹⁵³ See O. Torres, *La guerre des vins : l'affaire Mondavi - Mondialisation et terroirs* (Paris: Dunod, 2005).

⁹⁵⁴ 'Slow food' originally came from Italy, but is championed as an example of the model for *paysan* agriculture in J. Bové and F. Dufour, *Food for the Future: agriculture for a global age* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), p.136.

accounted for only 2.5% of European vine coverage as of 2006.⁹⁵⁵ The temptation to credit 'bio' production and AMAPs with too much significance should be avoided, but they represent creative ways in which winegrowers in the Languedoc have led and responded to innovation. In particular, researchers have identified the use of these local networks (or 'clusters') of 'bio' production and AMAP distribution as one of the most sustainable models for the small to medium sized cooperatives which still dominate some 75% of the Languedoc's wine produce.⁹⁵⁶ These were new solutions for the problems of the *Languedoc viticole* which aligned themselves with the agenda of the *alter-mondialiste* movement, further underscored the anachronism of the CRAV.

What remained of the CRAV, operating clandestinely and without the same visible leadership of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, took little interest in these new forms of collectivism. Instead it continued to deploy historic networks of support in service of their traditional aims of halting imports and identifying fraud. This is well illustrated by the case of one CRAViste arrested and sentenced in 2008.

On 25 July 2008 a 34 year old winegrower called Jérôme Soulère was arrested by police at his house in Malviès, in the Limoux. Soulère was charged with possessing bomb-making material after an accident in his cellar left him badly injured. Materials found in the cellar matched those used in incidents previously linked to the CAV d'Aude.⁹⁵⁷ Police accused him of having participated in previous attacks, namely the

⁹⁵⁵ T. Bouzdine-Chemeeva and A. Krzywoszynska, 'Barriers and driving forces in organic winemaking in Europe: case studies in France and Italy', p.2.

⁹⁵⁶ Y. Chiffolleau, F. Dreyfus, R. Stofer and J.M. Touzard, 'Networks, innovation and performance in a cluster of co-operatives: An empirical evaluation from Languedoc wine industry (South of France)' in K. Karantininis and J. Nilsson (ed.s), *Vertical Markets and Cooperative Hierarchies* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006).

⁹⁵⁷ 'Malviès. Le jeune vigneron testait des explosifs', *La Dépêche* 25/07/2008 .

bombing of a tax-office in Montréal in 2006, and a threat to plant a bomb in 2007 when the Tour de France passed through the Limoux.⁹⁵⁸ On the attempt to destroy the tax office, Soulière claimed that their goal was "montrer l'ampleur qui frappe les vignerons et qu'elle soit médiatisée." Likewise, his bomb-threat during the Tour de France was intended not to explode and cause damage but to raise awareness of the plight faced by winegrowers; he alerted police of the device's location in advance and left alongside it "un document détaillant les revendications du peuple vigneron."⁹⁵⁹

During his arrest and the investigation into his actions, Soulière received support from the militant Occitan movement Anaram Au Patac (a self proclaimed revolutionary movement of the Occitan left)⁹⁶⁰, who cast him as a "victime de son engagement pour la cause viticole." This was, to an extent, a revival of the grand social alliance which had characterised the CRAV's strongest moment. Yet the profile of the Occitan group and the nature of their solidarity was expressive of not only the distance the CRAV had fallen but the calibre of their fellow-travellers in such extreme methods. Anaram expressed solidarity with the struggling Midi wine industry and condemned industry figures who spoke out against Soulière as "soumis à la domination étatique de Paris".⁹⁶¹ In supporting these actions both the CRAV and Anaram placed themselves on the wrong side of the development debate.

⁹⁵⁸ 'Jérôme Soulière avoue des attentats', *La Dépêche* 26/07/2008.

⁹⁵⁹ 'Carcassonne. Il avait fait sauter la perception : 6 mois de prison', *Dépêche du Midi* 03/12/2009.

⁹⁶⁰ *Anaram Au Patac* were formed in 1992 in Pau and had 3 regional presences in Bordeaux, Clermont-Ferrand and Montpellier. They published a review called 'Har/Far' and survived until 2009, when on the 19 September they joined with *Combat d'Oc* to form a new revolutionary Occitan Party, *Libertat*.

⁹⁶¹ Anaram Au Patac communiqué, 12/08/2008 [<http://occitania.forumactif.com/quiosc-f25/solidaritat-vinhairons-t867.htm>][Accessed: 27/10/2010].

This shifting dialectic underlined the ways in which both the region and the CRAV had changed. The process begun by the Chirac Plan had enjoyed greater success in the 1980s, when the rump of Languedocian syndicalism had committed itself to the primacy of development over defence. By buying into this process, local elites were given the opportunity to accent development, as seen in the role of Cases and Huillet in the legitimate representative organisations. After Colonel Weber's denunciation of the CRAV in 1992, they existed in a political hinterland, stripped of their old significance and bearing little resemblance to the grand movement of the 1970s. This was accelerated by the development of the *paysan* movement, which became increasingly inclusive in its ideology and increasingly focussed on the inequality of global markets. Winegrowers resistant to processes of modernisation could be grouped with those who opposed inequality in the global market. Essentially, the groupings represented by both FNSEA and CRAV in the 1980s could interact more profitably and with greater unity in this new political vocabulary of *paysan* and *alter-mondialisme*. Figures like Bové and Guibert can be directly linked into the heritage of the CRAV, though they represent figureheads in a far more vibrant political current than contemporaneous CRAVistes. So too have progressive factors like 'bio' production and AMAP distribution taken the shine off tired ideas of productivism and traditional rural recalcitrance. The *alter-mondialiste* movement has translated the legacy of the 1970s Défense movement into a new force which was neither bound to the Languedoc nor reliant on the economic importance of winegrowing. Rather, in recognition of the fact that the cause of regional defence has been broadly unsuccessful, contemporary debates focus on influencing the dynamics of development. As markets have become

global, so too have the movements of those opposed to this trend and the specifically regional narrative of the CRAV has fared poorly alongside this.

Appendix:

Script for Interviews conducted in Summer 2010

- How long have you lived and worked in this region?
Combien de temps avez-vous vécu et travaillé dans cette région?
- What is your role in the wine industry?
Quel est votre rôle dans l'industrie viticole?
- Are you involved in a Cooperative?
Etes vous adhérent d'un organisation Coopératif?
- Are you involved in a Growers/Labour Union?
Etes-vous adhérent d'un syndicat ou union des travailleurs?
- Were your family involved with wine before you?
Est-ce que votre famille travaille dans l'industrie viticole?
- Do you think that winegrowers of the past faced greater hardships than today?
Pensez-vous que les vignerons du temps passé confrontaient des problèmes plus difficiles qu'aujourd'hui?
- Do you think that there have been substantial changes in the wine industry of the Midi since the Second World War?
Pensez-vous que l'industrie viticole a changé depuis la deuxième guerre mondiale et comment?
- Who/What do you feel has been responsible for these changes?
Qui/quoi était responsable pour cette évolution?
- Do you feel that wine is an important element of national identity? And regional identity?
Croyez-vous que le vin est un élément important de l'identité nationale? Et de l'identité régionale?

- Do you feel more attached to regional or national identity?
Identifiez-vous plus avec l'identité régionale ou nationale?
- Do you habitually speak Occitan or any other language than French?
Parlez-vous quelque autre langue (comme Occitan) que français?
- Do you feel Occitan?
Est-ce que vous vous sentez Occitan?
- Were the '1968 years' important in the region?
Quel a été l'import des années 1968 dans la region?
- What does the Revolt of 1907 mean to you ?
Que représente pour vous la révolte de 1907 ?
- Is it still relevant to today ?
Est-ce qu'il y a toujours des leçons pour notre époque ?
- Has the memory of 1907 always been important ?
Est-ce que la mémoire du 1907 reste toujours actuelle ?
- Do you believe that protest is or has been an effective way of changing the wine industry?
Croyez-vous que des manifestations sont (ou étaient) des moyens efficaces de changer l'industrie?
- Do you believe that 'Defense du vin' organisations are necessary?
Croyez-vous que les organisations de 'Défense du vin' sont (ou étaient) nécessaire?
- What do you feel the main threats were to the wine industry of the past?
A votre avis, quelles étaient les plus grandes menaces pour l'industrie viticole dans le passé ?
- What do you feel the main threats are to today's wine industry?
A votre avis, quelles sont les plus grandes menaces pour l'industrie viticole?
- What do you think the CRAV's role is in the Midi wine industry?
Quel était le rôle du CRAV dans l'industrie viticole?
- Would you endorse their direct action?
Approuvez-vous leur utilisation de l'action directe?

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Box 13

Box 18

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III. Interviews

Cathy Do - Domaine Campaucels - Montagnac - Hérault - 27/07/2010

Philippe Vaillé - Domaine Saint Paul de Fannelaure - Castelnau de guers - Hérault -
27/07/2010

Henri Cabanel - Conseiller Général, délégué à la Viticulture - Hérault - 28/07/2010

Anon - Clairette d'Adissan - Adissan - Hérault - 30/07/2010

Alfredo Manuel Coelho - Associate Researcher - UMR MOISA SupAgro Montpellier -
Hérault - 29/07/2010

Michel Artigues - Château des Aveylans - Bellegard - Gard - 02/08/2010

Pierre Bonafé - Domaine de Larzac - Pezenas- Hérault - 17/08/2010

Michel Sebe - President de IGP Coteaux du Liberon - Cornheilan - Hérault - 08-09-2010

Bernard Auge - Directeur du Syndicat des vins IGP de l'Herault - Caux - Hérault - 09-
09-2010

Ryan O'Connell - O'Veineyards - Moustausou (Near Carcassonne) - Aude - 15/07/2010

Michel Coutellier - Chais des Vignerons - Lézignan-Corbières - Aude - 19/07/2010

Jean-Noël Bousquet - Chateau Grand Moulin - Lézignan- Corbières - Aude - 19/07/2010

Christian Segura - Cooperative Caves Moliere - Viticulteur à Caux (pres de Pézenas) -
Hérault - 20/07/2010

Béatrice de Chabert - Syndicat AOC Coteaux de Languedoc - Montpellier - Hérault -
27/07/2010

Edouard Raymond - Domaines Lacassagne - Perpignan - Pyrénées-Orientales -
03/08/06

Raymond Laporte - Domaine Laporte - Perpignan - Pyrénées-Orientales - 03/08/06

Alain Trille - Château des Batilles - Talairan - Aude - 04/08/06