

Introduction

From tradition to terrorism

Wine producers, we appeal to you to revolt. We are at the point of no return. Show yourselves to be the worthy successors of the rebels of 1907, when people died so that future generations might earn their living from the land. Let us make sure that our children can know winegrowing.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 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, *Le 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.

This work attempts 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 mobilise 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.

As recently as July 2013, radical winegrowers launched explosives into the local Socialist party headquarters in Carcassonne.⁵ Afterwards, they spray-painted the name of their group on the charred walls and doors. With this act of defiance, we were reminded that the wine world, traditionally framed in a discourse of leisure and high culture, is in fact a vibrant and violent political arena where activism and militancy are widespread. In order to understand the link between terror and terroir (a ponderous French concept that invokes all of the conditions in which a wine is grown, from soil to *savoir-faire*), it is necessary to look at the roots of the winegrowers' movement and its activities in post-war France. By examining the politics of wine in the Languedoc region since 1944, this book unpicks the contentious issues of regionalism, protest and violence. In the space between terror and terroir lies an insight into a neglected area of France's past that continues to impinge on its future, infused with one of the most potent symbols of French culture: wine.

The concept of terroir is the key to unlocking the complex and contested significance of wine to French national identity. It helps to explain the concept of patrimony just as it helps to contextualise the myths of the nation. The word encapsulates the entire situation of the vine (soil, climate and grape variety), and is regarded with almost religious fervour as a viticultural 'holy trinity' which defines the produce of a vineyard and a region. It is the 'diverse mythology, untroubled by its contradictions' that surrounds the 'totem-drink' that Roland Barthes placed at the centre of 'the French nation'.⁶ This holistic and flexible notion supports the agricultural exceptionalism that has cast the French economy as a distinct and politicised entity, set askance from global currents of mechanisation

and industrialisation (or so it might be contested). In the English language, the phrase ‘wine industry’ is widely used and reasonably intuitive. Yet, in France, the direct translation of this phrase raises gasps of horror and sneers of derision (or at least, it did when this author used it in an interview). This notion runs counter to a long established sense that after a vine is grown, and a wine crafted, one drinks from one’s glass a drop of ‘France physically and mentally’.⁷ François Rabelais drew this out in the sixteenth century, in his descriptions of regionally specific foods imbued with distinct and established characteristics, albeit as they were devoured by the monstrous Gargantua.⁸ However, these *ancien* distinctions were not themselves devoured in the tumult of Revolution. The mapping of France after the Revolution, and the creation of new departments, did cut through some of these old regional specificities. Yet the coldly rational and uniform map advocated by the Abbé Sieyès gave way to some accommodation of people and their history with the land.⁹ Indeed, a prismatic view persisted in the work of the antiquarian Legrand d’Aussy, who, in 1789, had denoted ‘French cuisine as the natural fruition of provincial Agriculture’.¹⁰ Two decades later, a ‘Gastronomic map’ of France, created by Charles Louis Cadet de Gassicourt, would demonstrate that ‘agriculture and gastronomy’ remained bound, and that France remained ‘a diverse agricultural country and a culinary paradise’.¹¹ When considering the idea of terroir, it is then important to connect it as a supple constant through Rabelais, the Revolution and Roland Barthes. As such, agriculture supported a certain idea of a diverse and distinctive France, with wine an important bounty in that harvest.

Alan Bairner reminds us that ‘whilst the formation of a nation necessarily involves the imagination, the nation cannot be dismissed as imaginary’.¹² There is a real significance to material space when understanding nationalism: there is no fabled homeland without mountains to laud and seas to praise, nor, indeed, vines to exalt. As Richard Muir argues, there are two landscapes that exist simultaneously, echoing the meaning behind a phrase like terroir:

The one lying beneath our feet and extending to the far horizon is a *real* landscape; it is composed of rock, soil, vegetation and water, is home to an abundance of creatures and has objective past and present existences. The other is the *perceived* landscape, consisting of sensed and remembered accounts and hypotheses about the real landscape.¹³

In this reading of the Languedoc, its vines are both its principal economic characteristic and its principal cultural identifier.¹⁴ Bordering the

Mediterranean on France's south coast, the Languedoc is marked by its rugged terrain: canyons, plateaus, dramatic mountains and fertile coastal plains, all scorched by the heat of the midday sun.

This book focuses on the winegrowing departments of the Aude, Hérault and Gard as the heart of an area that produced the lion's share of French wine. By 1850, these departments produced around 20% of the nation's wine, growing to near 40% by 1872.¹⁵ The area played a vital role in the national economy by supplying much of the 'drinking wine' to the north. The large-scale nature of monocultural investment has meant that it has tended to act as a lens, magnifying issues affecting the wider viticultural sector, augmented by the notional southern predilection to protest. These factors become increasingly important when studying periods of significant change in French life, such as the period after the Liberation and spilling beyond the lifetime of the Fourth Republic, on which this study will centre.

Traditional rural fears about the urban nature and direction of government policy were largely augmented by the role of American aid in the post-war restructuring of France. To traditional antagonist forces, the spectre of American involvement served to confirm that France was moving towards a rather more Anglo-Saxon model of *haut* capitalism. Instances of rural protest thus seem to share two concurrent themes: a rejection of a shift towards increasingly insecure employment and an outcry against the social alienation inflicted upon the vulnerable classes by economic reform. In this context, the Midi winegrowers were not protesting against a single ministry or the government in general, but 'taking action as a highly motivated and sophisticated pressure group'¹⁶ in trying to force an institutional response to their specific grievances. Leo Loubère describes this process as 'demonstration democracy'¹⁷ and goes on to highlight the extent to which it represented a particular weapon of those in the Midi, an area with ten times more trade union activity than Bordeaux or the Champagne region since 1900.¹⁸ Traditions of rural protest developed as the wine industry struggled to keep pace with an increasingly capitalist market. The distinction between industrial workers and vine workers was that whereas 'workers go on strike ... farmers demonstrate and protest'.¹⁹ The normalisation of protest over the period of this study informed a process wherein the determinants of future struggle were commonly located in the political inferences of historical demonstrations. This created a positive feedback loop in which protest became a self-sustaining aspect of regional political currency, celebrating the distinction of local identity from national or Parisian identity.

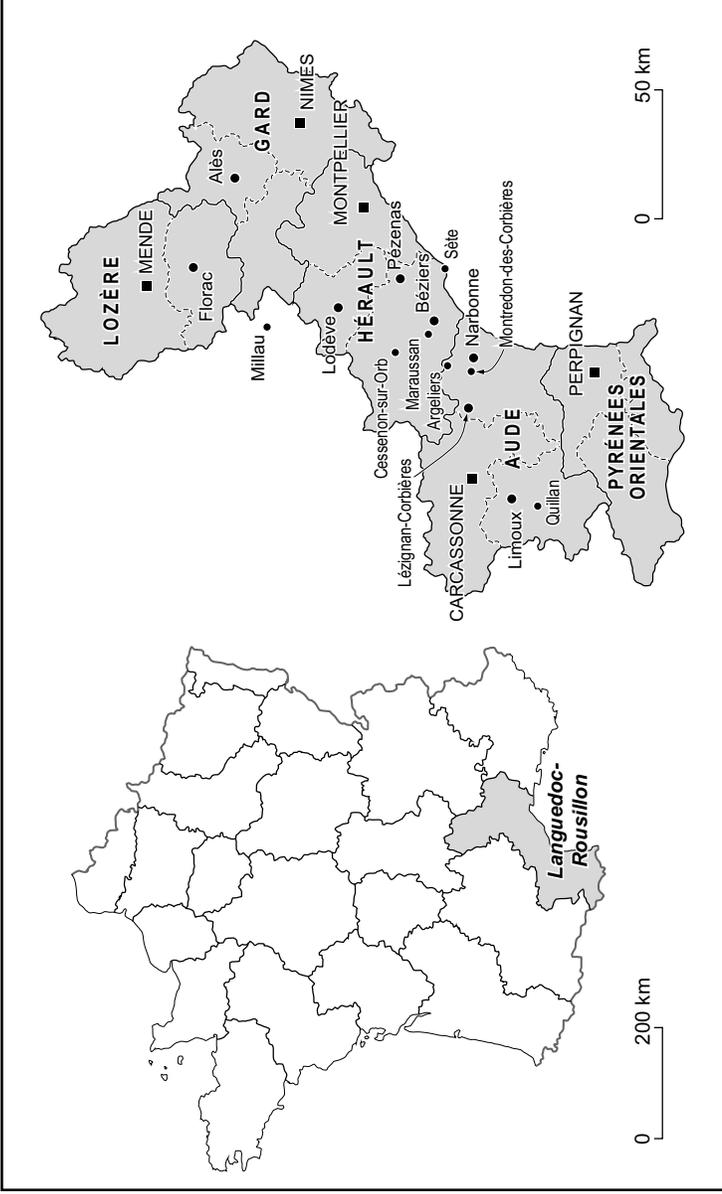


Figure 1 Map of the Languedoc, highlighting places prominent in the study

If France was, as Michelet contended, ‘the daughter of her liberty’,²⁰ the Languedoc was, in many ways, the daughter of her vines. Yet, despite the mystic obsession with the soil and religious attachment to symbols of belonging that terroir implies, this study does not propound a primordialist reading of nationalism. The centralising French state and its nation-building project are some of the central concerns of this book, and the argument will address the minority nationalism which arose in the periphery in opposition. Indeed, far from studying the soil, it is the interactions of the ‘local, regional and national’ which offer the best insight into how the modern French state has shaped identity at its fringes.²¹ The importance of the centralist French nation-building project at the state’s periphery has been actively studied, following the landmark work of Eugen Weber.²² More recently, Weber’s work has been critiqued as lending too little agency to the ‘peasants’ he described, and scholars like Lehning have challenged the utility of unitary labels like ‘peasant’ in the first instance.²³ Indeed, Suzanne Berger has stressed the pliability of these labels for many who might be labelled thus: ‘*agriculteur*’ (or farmer) often describes professional values, whereas ‘*paysan*’ (or peasant) carries more of a political identity, stressing the common interests of those who make their living from agriculture in the countryside.²⁴ By the same token, the preponderance of the word ‘*vigneron*’ (winemaker) over ‘*viticulteur*’ (winegrower) in the Languedoc speaks to a holistic occupational identity. The preponderance of cooperative wineries meant that many were principally *viticulteurs*, though throughout the course of this research have referred to themselves as *vignerons*.

Importantly, this is a study more concerned with production than consumption. Indeed, as time went on, this became exactly the problem facing the south: too much wine being made, too little wine being drunk. This is not the same story as other regions (specifically Bordeaux or the Champagne region) which produced luxury products for elite consumption.²⁵ With a reputation for producing wines that were drunk uncritically, as a staple rather than star of the dinner table, the Languedoc has been singularly associated with its robust and rustic wines. In many cases, this has also held true for its politics. In the words of Marion Demossier:

[I]t is the *vigneron* who dominates the scene as the main actor of regional identities and terroir, fighting at the crossroads of various other discourses on *ruralité*, artisanship, tourism, leisure and local identity.²⁶

Languedocian wine remained a product that embodied its terroir, the consumption of which connoted the landscape of the south. Alongside

the development of a culinary identity, however, occupational identity of the producers became more strident, drowning out the luxury discourse which predominated in more tranquil wine regions. Having acknowledged the mythic qualities of wine, and the resonant landscape of the Languedoc, we can begin to see how the region became a contact zone for the broader developments of the twentieth century. In terms of post-war recovery, the economic restructuring of the viticultural industry promised a restatement of one of the nation's core social identifiers, whilst simultaneously emphasising the greater importance of wine to regional rather than national identity.²⁷ Promotion of this 'heritage' was largely undertaken by local viticultural elites, the most vocal and effective of which were the producers themselves.²⁸ As such, it is important to consider the actions of the Languedoc winegrowers, in their social context, as indicative of a widening dissatisfaction with governmental influence and a development of the 'sense of communal identity'²⁹ which stemmed from collective action.

This work contributes to a vibrant historiographical field which has revisited the history of post-war France through regional, social and political histories. Robert Zaretsky has examined the history of the Camargue by looking at the development of regional identity.³⁰ In particular, he also deals with Occitanism, to discuss how the influence of historical culture informed debates with the French state. Zaretsky focuses on a central figure to draw out these stories and investigate the myths of the Camargue; *Terror and Terroir* will strengthen this field by drawing out complementary points relating to a similar area with very different regional actors. Herman Lebovics likewise considers the relationship of the French state with voices from the margins of French society.³¹ Lebovics invokes some of the same struggles in reconciling regional identity with a centralist narrative of French statehood, juxtaposing this with colonial legacies to analyse how France deals with individual challenges to the concept of the universal Republic. Recent studies have also looked at how a France of many languages and cultures came to utilise similar symbols and vocabulary to identify itself. The struggles outlined by writers like Maurice Agulhon,³² Eugen Weber,³³ Jean-François Chanet,³⁴ Caroline Ford³⁵ and Robert Gildea³⁶ all identified this process during an earlier age. They drew out the struggles and clashes which accompanied the attempts to forge a nation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This work will examine the edges of that nation, identifying struggles which continued, clashes which recurred and debates which were never resolved. By documenting how the embers

of regional identity ignited during the post-war period, *Terror and Terroir* will analyse the success of the French nation-building project faced with challenges such as decolonisation, European integration and profound economic restructuring.

Historicising the winegrowers' movement

Public reactions to the CRAV were often framed by the editorials and coverage of 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 winegrowers' leaders like André Cases and André Castéra, whose narrative of the Languedoc's history and present circumstances was consistently reflected in the local press, encouraging widespread acceptance of their rhetoric.³⁷

The three most important newspapers in the region were: the Socialist leaning daily newspaper *La Dépêche*, founded in 1879, which enjoyed a circulation of around 280,000 in 1967; *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; 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.³⁸ These regional publications drew the boundaries of acceptability within which the CRAV operated. Police and authorities frequently condemned the strong actions of the winegrowers; yet, infrequent editorial condemnation was often the first indication that the CRAV had meaningfully transgressed. In the holdings of the Departmental Archives of the Aude, Gard and Hérault, one can chart the moments at which the regional media pushed back against radical action. In addition to these regional journals, police records in Departmental and National Archives illustrate changing methods and messages of protests. By supplementing these readings with interviews of those involved in the Languedocian wine industry, it becomes possible to analyse the extent to which popular 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 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 organisational strand that plotted its course from 1907 came to be known as the *Défense du vin* (Defence of Wine) movement, and will be referred to as the *Défense* movement to distinguish their provenance. Their rhetoric was ranged against imports and fraud rather than meaningfully addressing natural overproduction inherent in the market itself.³⁹ For Lawrence McFalls, this focus on imports and fraud was the ‘viticultural unity’ of the south, and subsequent movements were founded on ‘freezing [these] professional ideology and values into place’.⁴⁰ This study moves beyond this analysis of viticultural politics to reassert the importance of regional identity alongside this ‘professional ideology’. By re-examining regional identity, one can better explain how the old ideology of 1907 became conflated with a narrative of struggle which pushed winegrowers towards odd alliances with Occitanistes and, eventually, *altermondialistes* (and other anti-globalisation activists). 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, the 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.⁴¹ Understandably, the book presents the movement in sympathetic soft-focus, blurring out the divisions that existed. Winegrowers were split between the defence of traditional production, or the acceptance of a modernisation agenda, which prioritised quality over quantity and promised painful changes for the region. The CRAV was a bastion of traditional producers, though its members were tempted over time by a positive vision for the region. Dealing with the founding myths and 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*’ (‘Who we are’) which traces the birth of the CRAV from

the embers of 1907. Indeed, the article's title quite deliberately echoes one published by the organisational committee headed by Marcelin Albert which coordinated much of the 1907 revolt, the Comité d'Argeliers.⁴² 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.

The 1976 gun-fight 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 Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française (ORTF – French Television Broadcast Office) (and then *France 3 Sud*) and *L'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 protagonists.⁴³ 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 1976.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶ Both these commentators' analyses focus on the changing regulation which led the Languedoc from producing *vin de la bibine*⁴⁷ to the independent artisanal produce represented by areas like Pic St Loup. The CRAV receives a fairly negative treatment in these works, and this book will attempt to more sympathetically extrapolate the motivation and methods of the group to understand their continued existence holistically. The ways in which resistance to change was expressed and received, help gauge the social and cultural impact of these economic reforms. In 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 book must address the impact of regional heritage upon responses to external pressure.

Historicising regional heritage

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 scholarship⁴⁸ to exercises in historical myth-making.⁴⁹ 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 strike.⁵⁰ 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 nineteenth century.⁵¹ 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.⁵² 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 (FRF) 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 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 Lafont⁵³ and a new core of sociologists keener to attach Occitanisme to issues of class and social function than to the gilded cultural reserve of poets and literary scholars in organisations like the Félibrige. This modern movement sought to forge alliances with other contestatory groups in the Languedoc. As a result, the convergence of the *Défense* 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-Baugé would clarify (and simultaneously complicate) his attachment to the Occitan movement by stating, 'I am not a Jacobin, and I am not a separatist.'⁵⁴

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 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,⁵⁵ 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 regionalism'.⁵⁶ The CRAV's relationship to the dynamics of the *années 68* is a contentious topic which requires careful unpicking.⁵⁷ This book argues that the winegrowers of the Languedoc can be situated within this period by understanding their relationship to the social pressures which motivated 1968 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 1976.⁵⁸ The focus on the *années 68* within this book has very much been informed by her sympathetic understanding of the pressures which moulded regional responses to central authority. Although this book is not centrally concerned with the historiography of 1968, the events of this year could not do other than affect the 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.

Structure of the book

The CRAV was 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 provided the focal point for a turn of the century wave of unrest that witnessed the defection of the 17th Regiment of the *gendarmerie*, which had been ordered to defuse the tension. As Chapter 1 explores, 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 in the latter half of the twentieth century. 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 did its vocal spokesmen begin to make themselves heard, as will be covered in Chapter 2. 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. Throughout the 1950s, the winegrowers' movement was dominated by a collection of small organisations all jostling for prominence. By attempting to outflank each other, however, these representative groups also injected a degree of dynamism, forcing the movement to reinvigorate itself. In the midst of this, the focus of this study, the CRAV was created. It would become the ultimate embodiment of the winegrowers' movement, and led the opposition to governmental efforts to aggressively change the shape of the Languedoc's traditional industries. The third chapter will look at how the CRAV fitted into the renewal of 'the left' and profound national challenges to the centralised state. It also considers the CRAV's most pronounced period of action, concluding with their most notorious act, the gun-fight at Montredon, which saw a policeman and winegrower killed. Was this shooting in 1976 related to the '1968 years' or was it simply the tragic tale of radicalisation in the region? By addressing these questions, Chapter 3 illuminates the tangled relationships that constituted southern identity, outlining where it differed from national developments and where it drew on existing currents of protest. Working with radical literature produced at the time as well as the songs, poetry and art that emerged from the movement, Chapter 4 will trace the dual narratives of alienation elaborated by both Occitan and viticultural movements. This revivalism relied on the proliferation of 'ethno-history' and regional myth-making, in which kernels of regional heritage were extrapolated into myths of more contemporary relevance.

Yet, the Languedoc's post-war story is not dominated by a notion of renewed regional assertion alone, but rather by the wine crises of 1953, 1956, 1961, 1967 and then the long crisis of the 1970s. These repeated crises provided the backdrop to a story of radicalisation and direct action which provoked increasingly extreme rhetoric from the

Défense movement. Chapter 5 will look at what happened to the CRAV after Montredon, a turning point in their history. Killing a policeman challenged the very existence of the group, tainting their subsequent actions with the stain of spilt blood, yet it did not cause them to disband. The expansion of the European Economic Community (EEC) 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 programme of modernisation advanced by President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing pressured the region to embark on campaigns of uprooting and restructuring, the long-established principle of monoculture was slowly eroded along with support for the CRAV. The Socialist victory in the elections of 1981 was celebrated in the Languedoc, where President Mitterrand had been overwhelmingly favoured. Yet within a few years criticism of the Socialist party began to rumble as modernisation continued and the traditional winegrowers' organisations were diminished by government politicking. As the actions of the CRAV became increasingly violent, the traditionally supportive media became less tolerant. Popular sympathy faltered as the CRAV's rhetoric became 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.

It was this conflict over the region's trajectory which progressively isolated the CRAV, as its attacks became viewed as increasingly unacceptable, such as the torching of an enormous supermarket and the bombing of tax offices. This drew accusations of terrorism and a renewed resolve by the forces of order to stamp out the group. Declining relevance amongst their base and the marginalisation of public opinion forced the CRAV ever further away from the political mainstream. Chapter 6 will look at the period from 1984 until 1992, when the CRAV were 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 era 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 but one that offers insights into broader social and cultural issues in the region and in France itself. By examining the particular concept of identity espoused by the Midi *vignerons* as a form of cultural currency (i.e. in direct competition to vying regional concepts of identity), we can analyse its development not only abstractly and in isolation, but in relation to broader concepts of national identity and their development in corresponding periods. As such, the conflict between the Midi *vignerons* and the government can be broadly juxtaposed with the conflict which began to develop between the French people and the particular notion of teleological modernisation which came to be identified with America. The correlatory trends apparent are a culture of dependence and a reliance on regulation which had fostered resentment in those who were dependent. Thus we can diagnose these symptoms not only in the 'regional-Parisian' conflict but also in a broader 'Gallic-Anglo-Saxon' conflict. As one journalist in the *Témoignage Chrétien* summated, 'the wine of France will do. Neither Coca-cola, nor vodka.'⁵⁹ Such a desire to subscribe to whatever form of independence was available highlights the flashpoints which occurred when there was a simultaneous threat to both regional and Gallic identity.

The final chapter broadens the story to analyse the ways in which elements of the winegrowers' movement became involved in the anti-globalisation movement, combining regionalism, syndicalism and a focus on peasant values in a durable political context. 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 the American wine giant Mondavi and José Bové's outspoken attacks on McDonalds, linking back to the protests of the 1970s. In this movement, prominent CRAV members 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. The chapter will consider how the CRAV fitted into this narrative and what its experiences suggest about its compatibility with the international and transnational anti-globalisation movement. As such, individual actors will be traced in multiple global contexts, as winegrowers became activists alongside 'peasants' from all over the world. The influence of ritualised violence and political alienation will be cast as processes which steered the group in a negative direction, whilst their key messages will

be integrated with contemporary debates on sustainable development and the value of terroir. Ultimately, the group's positive messages will be juxtaposed with their tragic story to highlight the difficult reconciliation of local, traditional cultures with global finance, directed development and economic modernisation.

This book argues that the CRAV became emblematic of a region struggling to react to the modernisation of the French economy. They marked out the margins, and set the limits of reform for two decades, accenting responses to change thereafter. Their violent resistance was an extreme attempt to hold out against the inexorable logic of the market. The CRAV were a romantic, flawed response to the odd paradox of France's engagement with modernity. As mentioned earlier, the fact that their product spoke so naturally to notions of national and regional identity lent them a greater meaning than suggested by raucous peasant activism. Francis Spufford wrote elegiacally about the end of Khrushchev's premiership in the Soviet Union, the death of alternatives and a return to the status quo. There is something of that in the CRAV's resistance, and in their marginalisation, wherein errors and missteps undermined a hazier attempt to stand against the prevailing logic of development:

The dance of commodities resumes. And the wind in the trees [...] says: can it be otherwise? Can it be, can it be, can it ever be otherwise?⁶⁰

Political currency won and lost by the CRAV was ultimately geared towards the improvement of their material condition, a factor which has been absolutely central to the motivation of direct action. Their material condition remained tied to the way that modern France interacted with its countryside and the landscape that spoke to its own national identity. Between the romantic mythology of terroir, and the misguided, passionate violence of terror, the story of the CRAV offers an important commentary on the development of the nation, the region and of wine.

Notes

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- 4 'Le Midi viticole sous la menace d'extrémistes violents', *Le Figaro* (14/10/2007).
- 5 'Carcassonne: Valls condamne avec 'une très grand sévérité' l'explosion au siège du PS', *Midi Libre* (17/07/2013).
- 6 R. Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), p. 69.

- 7 T. Parker, *Tasting French Terroir: The History of an Idea* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), p. 154.
- 8 Parker, *Tasting French Terroir*, pp. 13–17.
- 9 Parker, *Tasting French Terroir*, pp. 147–148.
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- 11 Parker, *Tasting French Terroir*, p. 150.
- 12 A. Bairner, 'National Sports and National Landscapes: In Defence of Primordialism', *National Identities*, 11:3 (2009), p. 225.
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- 17 Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, p. 239.
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- 24 S. Berger, *Peasants Against Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 4.
- 25 See especially, K. Guy, *When Champagne Became French* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2003).
- 26 M. Demossier, *Wine Drinking Culture in France* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), p. 113.
- 27 Interview with Raymond Laporte, Domaine Laporte (03/08/2006).
- 28 L. Bérard and P. Marchenay, 'A Market Culture', in S. Blowen, M. Demossier and J. Picard (eds), *Recollections of France: Memories, Identities and Heritage in Contemporary France* (Oxford: Bergahn, 2000), p. 162.
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- 42 J. Sagnes, *Le Midi rouge: mythe et réalité* (Paris: Anthropos, 1982), p. 229.
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- 51 For a useful summary, see S. Gerson, 'Une France Locale: The Local Past in Recent French Scholarship', *French Historical Studies*, 26:3 (2003), pp. 539–559.

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- 57 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, *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 focusing 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).
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