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the meanderings of Orleanism

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## Privacy and political assassinations in France during the *Trois Glorieuses*: the meanderings of Orleanism

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The *Trois Glorieuses*, being the three days of the July Revolution (27, 28 and 29 July 1830) that resulted in the fall of Charles X, are inextricably linked in the collective memory with Eugène Delacroix's painting of the same year, *Liberty Leading the People*. The allegorical figure of liberty as a woman of the people illustrates the ambivalence of the reign that was just beginning: the uprising ended with the acclamation of the Duke of Orléans at the Hôtel de Ville in Paris (1): "Lafayette's republican kiss made a king. Strange consequence of the whole life of the Hero of Two Worlds!" (2). The very name of Louis-Philippe I is a transaction (3), in the absence of transition: symbolically, it had already become essential to set aside memories stirred by the Bourbons and signal the dawn of a new era. This departure was also intended to be constitutional in nature, with the acceptance – and no longer the authorisation – of the Charter, as voted upon by the Chamber of Deputies on 7 August (4).

Louis-Philippe had long cultivated his difference from the more senior branch of the French monarchy, and this with no small degree of skill. The Duke of Orléans had demanded of Charles X all the prerogatives befitting his position as a prince of the blood (5); he was therefore able to receive the wishes of the Court of Cassation in a ceremony similar to that usually intended for the King (6). This attachment to his rank did not, however, prevent the Duke of Orléans from making his residence, the Palais-Royal, a place known for the warmth of its welcome and its festive, even "populist", atmosphere (7), which was likely to disconcert the Court (8). In fact, the Duke of Orléans was out of place in the aristocratic world of the 1820s, as he sought the support of the bourgeois classes. Hence an idea was entertained as to a bourgeois monarchy, as opposed to the aristocratic monarchy of Charles X. The political skill of Louis-Philippe's supporters would be seen in their hijacking, when the time came, of what was essentially a republican popular uprising (9).

Orleanism made itself increasingly felt from January 1830, particularly with the founding of a newspaper, *Le National*, which bolstered the opposition press (10). Admittedly, from the very beginning of the Restoration, censorship had revived the dissemination of political and literary writings criticising the monarchy. Symptomatically, editions of the complete works of Voltaire were consistently part of the longest print runs. The phenomenon was undoubtedly an expression of political aspirations (11). A publisher boasted, for instance, of having published two million copies of the *Charte constitutionnelle à cinq centimes* (The Five-Cent Constitutional Charter) (12). Even before it unfolded on the streets, the fight for a regime change was a battle of the written word, made possible by the modernisation of printing equipment and a fall in the price of paper (13).

The role of popular literature in preparing for and strengthening Louis-Philippe's accession cannot, therefore, be underestimated, if only in considering its proliferation. Highly heterogeneous in form and content (14), this literature reflects a change in the national state of mind. Violence prevails and reveals itself in proportion to the censorship that has oppressed it. Under the cover of information to be delivered to the reader, a full-scale attack was made on the very persons of Charles X and his intimates. As was noted by the Prince of Polignac, "*private acts, just like public acts, were revealed, scrutinised, wracked with impropriety*" (15). Although such a view is the result of a judgment formed *a posteriori*, it provides a sufficient indication of the singularity of political assassinations following the *Trois Glorieuses*, with the displaying of the private lives (real or assumed) of public figures.

Ambivalence on the part of Louis-Philippe, the 'Citizen King' and, consequently, his accession to the throne, are a reflection of the trials and tribulations of an age at the mercy of contradictory influences, in which private life occupied an increasingly important place. Incidentally, this development drew on the English example, which served as a source of inspiration (16) from the very beginning of the Restoration. Supporters of Louis-Philippe did not fail to present him as a French-style William III. In the image of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the 1830 Revolution was intended to establish parliamentary freedoms: to this end, the page had to be turned on the *Ancien Régime* at all costs, hence the discrediting of Charles X and his ministers. As a corollary, a dynastic change had to be made, which necessarily entailed the irrevocable disqualification of the Duke of Bordeaux, grandson of Charles X, from the line of succession.

### I. Charles X and his ministers discredited

The 1830 Revolution had its origins in Charles X's stubbornness in pursuing an ultra-royalist policy against a newly-elected, predominantly liberal Chamber of Deputies. By doing so, in the words of Charles de Rémusat (17), legitimacy lost the legitimate monarchy. The coup materialised with the enactment of four orders said to be fatal to freedom, published on 26 July. Come the end of the *Trois Glorieuses*, several hundred insurgents (18) had lost their lives and Charles X was about to lose his crown. During the night of 29 June, Thiers, Mignet and Laffitte orchestrated a large-scale poster campaign, with a view to making the Duke of Orléans the man for the job, emphasising that *Charles X ne peut plus rentrer sans Paris; il a fait couler le sang du peuple*: "Charles X can no longer set foot in Paris; he has spilt the blood of the people" (19). An indelible stain on Charles X's reign, the repression of the Revolution became the common denominator for the publications examined, although it is not possible to establish the exact moment when the people became aware of this. Some blossomed in August 1830, when Louis-Philippe had only just come to power. More generally, they appeared before the trial of Charles X's ministers, which was held in December before the Chamber of Peers.

*A minima*, in the spirit of the posters put up in the streets of Paris, it was a question of obstructing the path and persons of Charles X and Louis-Philippe; thus, while the people were being "machine-gunned", the former "was off hunting" (20). Charles' weakness of character had disastrously pushed him to enact the contemptible orders. Other factors in the challenge to the King were his great age, and the pernicious influence of his son, the Duke of Angoulême, who was nevertheless presented as "*idiocy personified. That dull, fixed stare, that vague look, that gangling gait; everything about the Prince suggested bigotry and stupidity*" (21). Guiding the son's hand were a number of Jesuits accused of having planted "fanaticism" (22) in his mind and, in fact,

contaminating the King. In reality, Charles X was essentially accused of incompetence in conducting public affairs, as was shown in the harmful nature of his entourage.

As a consequence, the blows struck against those ministers who signed the orders proved to be even harsher. Moral and social reprobation was a precursor to their political and criminal condemnation, which task fell to the Chamber of Peers, re-named the Court of Peers in the circumstances. The ministers in question were the Prince de Polignac, president of the Council of Ministers, loyal friend to Charles X and embodiment of the priests' faction that had dominated the Court (23); the Comte de Peyronnet, Minister of the Interior, author of the renowned *loi de justice et d'amour* (Law of Justice and Love) (24); Jean de Chantelauze, Minister of Justice; and, lastly, Comte Martial de Guernon-Ranville, Minister for Religious Affairs and Public Education. In truth, the latter two, both senior judges before their appointment as ministers (25), were not very well known to the general public and were secondary targets (26). Conversely, Polignac, as the son of Marie-Antoinette's favourite, symbolised the *Ancien Régime* and emigration, which points were endlessly hammered home by the pamphleteers (27). For his part, Peyronnet, vilified for his arrogance, crystallised the hatred of the ultras: "admitted as a lawyer at a time when everyone was admitted", this former Minister of Justice who passed as being "one of the most distinguished 'fashionables' (28) of Bordeaux", the city of his birth, had allegedly led a life of debauchery and corruption (29).

The publications of the time, despite the risky, even vulgar nature of their assertions, in many respects announced the judgment of the Court of Peers that sat on 21 December 1830, "[...] considering that while the personal will of King Charles X may have brought about the determination of the defendants, that circumstance cannot absolve them of legal responsibility" (30). Coldness, indifference and obstinacy had resulted in a great deal of bloodshed, even though not all the defendants had played a similar role to that of the monarch. In any event, the sentence had to be severe: life imprisonment in mainland France, the sentence being doubled for civilian deaths in Polignac's case (31).

The political and judicial judgment was based on a spirit of revenge in correlation with the Romantic age (32). The cult of the victims of the *Trois Glorieuses* explains the outburst aimed at the former King and his family. The popular press is an indicator of the Revolution of July 1830, the person of the Duke of Bordeaux crystallising quite spectacularly the divisions between legitimists and *orléanistes*.

## II. The Duke of Bordeaux disqualified from the line of succession

The young Duke of Bordeaux found himself at the centre of the controversy owing to the abdication in his favour of Charles X and the Dauphin, the Duke of Angoulême, on 2 August 1830. Notwithstanding the circumstances, the gesture was surprising as it breached the rule on the *indisponibilité de la couronne* posited under the *Ancien Régime*. The abdication indicated in any case to Louis-Philippe and his supporters every danger that could be represented, in the future, by he who the legitimists were calling Henri V (33). The weakness of the royal child was also his strength at a time when political and moral responsibilities had to be taken into consideration. Following the failure to reasonably push the Duke of Bordeaux into tripping up in the blood already spilt, another stain emerged: that of his birth.

Far from being an heir to the throne who could be taken seriously, the Duke of Bordeaux was allegedly little more than a bastard born to the Duchesse de Berry, according to a hoax (34) that has since been carefully stripped apart. We must emphasise here the willingness shown to inform readers, which went hand in hand with historical preoccupations in some respects (35). Indeed, the political momentum was rooted in a reflection which appears to be back on facts past and present (36). Through this tale, or the tales related in the popular press, the connection was made with the 1789 Revolution. Such a need was felt all the more keenly as, for the regime emerging from the Restoration, “*history beggars belief*” (37).

According to one pamphleteer, the silence on the part of the Bourbons as to the 1789 Revolution and its repercussions was matched by their oblivion before they seized power again by surprise (38). From such a perspective, the bad luck that had allowed Louis XVIII then Charles X to take the throne would be extended with the birth of the Duchesse de Berry’s child. Every act and gesture of Charles X’s daughter-in-law was dissected, from the disappearance of the Duc de Berry to the birth itself. Not a single aspect went unnoticed: even the umbilical cord was discussed, to take but one example. This concern for detail is justified by the application of private standards to the royal family, as though that went without saying: “*such fraud is regarded as a crime amongst the ordinary classes, where the consequences thereof nonetheless affect only one family and only concern individual interests*” (39).

Above all, several publications reproduced a text presented as a ‘*protestation*’ by the Duke of Orléans with a view to denouncing the birth of the Duke of Bordeaux in all its aspects. The document did little more than relate the content of an authentic instrument at the wish of Louis-Philippe; it had been circulated immediately after the birth, in 1820, in England (40). In fact, distribution in England at that time guaranteed an unofficial circulation in Paris, bearing in mind the significant cultural exchange between the two countries (41). For reasons relating to censorship and the Duke of Orléans’ tenuous position, it was only in 1830 that the majority of French citizens learned of the document. The text was originally published in *Le Courrier français* (42), which assertion was reiterated by Louis Blanc several years later (43). In any event, Louis-Philippe did not deny the ‘*protestation*’.

Lastly, the reference to the Glorious Revolution proved straightforward to the point of caricature (44), demonstrating (were it necessary) the strength of the ideas conveyed by the liberals. Furthermore, the English influence went beyond revolutionary references considering that, from 1820 onwards, public opinion across the Channel had taken a keen interest in the marital setbacks of Queen Caroline and George IV (45). The private lives of dignitaries seized upon by public opinion also marked a move towards a form of modernity, bearing in mind the scale of the means of distribution.

Ultimately, popular literature after the *Trois Glorieuses* materialises the influence wielded by liberals, through the development of connections with the English Revolution of 1688, as well as the promotion of links with the French Revolution of 1789–1791. Relying on the sinister appeal of the private lives of government members to the general public, these publications are nevertheless a reminder of the most virulent writings of those revolutionary years, including 1792–1794. Admittedly this does not contribute to liberal thinking, but rather reinforces the paradoxical nature

of Louis-Philippe's accession: the monarchy, as Chateaubriand announced "*is a strange graft that will not take on a republican stem*" (46).

#### Notes:

- (1) 31 July. François Furet, in *La Révolution II – Terminer la Révolution de Louis XVIII à Jules Ferry (1814–1880)*, Hachette Pluriel, 1988, republished 2010, p. 107–108, highlights the Parisian tradition of insurrection, the mob once again using the technique of barricades, as had been seen in the previous popular uprisings of Spring 1795.
- (2) Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, 1850, republished by Ministère de l'Education Nationale, 1972, tome II, p. 486.
- (3) François Furet, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
- (4) Emmanuel de Waresquiel, Benoît Yvert, *Histoire de la Restauration 1814–1830 – Naissance de la France moderne*, Perrin, 2002, p. 474. Cf. also Benoît Yvert, *La Restauration – Les idées et les hommes*, CNRS Editions, 2013, p. 146–147.
- (5) *Ibid.*, p. 137.
- (6) Anne Martin-Fugier, *La vie élégante ou la formation du Tout-Paris 1815–1848*, Fayard, 1990, p. 61.
- (7) Which made it quite unlike the Tuileries, the royal residence: cf. *ibid.*, p. 60.
- (8) *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- (9) On this subject, cf. for example Guy Antonetti, *Histoire contemporaine politique et sociale*, PUF, 1986, Rééd. 1999, p. 225–226 ; cf. also Emmanuel de Waresquiel, Benoît Yvert, *op. cit.*, p. 466.
- (10) Benoît Yvert, *La Restauration...*, *op. cit.*, p. 107; the newspaper was founded by Talleyrand and the banker Laffitte; Thiers, Carrel and Mignet were its editors.
- (11) François Bessire, « « Un vaste incendie qui va dévorer des cités et des provinces » : les éditions d'œuvres complètes de Voltaire sous la Restauration », in Jean-Yves Mollier, Martine Reid & Jean-Claude Yon (eds.), *Repenser la Restauration*, Editions Nouveau Monde, 2005, pp 183–196.
- (12) *Ibid.*; this was Jean-Baptiste Touquet, who fully committed himself to defending liberal thinking.
- (13) The authors of these books, brochures and pamphlets often remained anonymous. As regards the publications cited in this article, they have been digitised and may be viewed on the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* website: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/>
- (14) Jean-Claude Caron, « L'écriture des Trois Glorieuses : héros et barbares dans le cycle des violences insurrectionnelles », in Philippe Bourdin (dir.), *La Révolution 1789–1871, Ecriture d'une histoire immédiate*, Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, Musée de la Révolution – Vizille, 2008, p. 275–292.
- (15) Prince de Polignac, *Etudes historiques, politiques et morales sur l'état de la société européenne, vers le milieu du XIXe siècle*, Paris, Dentu, 1845, p. 254.
- (16) Georges Matoré, *Le vocabulaire et la société sous Louis-Philippe*, Slatkine Reprints, 1967, p. 79–84; seen both in everyday and literary language.
- (17) Quoted/cited by Benoît Yvert, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
- (18) Jean-Claude Caron, *La France de 1815 à 1848*, Armand Colin, 2011, p. 94, estimates that the battles led to 800 insurgents dead and 4,000 injured.
- (19) Emmanuel de Waresquiel, Benoît Yvert, *op. cit.*, p. 461. Conversely, Louis-Philippe's position was, according to Madame de Rémusat, "beyond compare": "*He is of Bourbon blood and he is covered in it*"; cf. Benoît Yvert, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

- (20) *Victoires et conquêtes des Parisiens ou histoire complète des événemens qui ont précédé et suivi l'héroïque révolution de 1830, l'avènement au trône de Louis-Philippe 1<sup>er</sup>, la chute de Charles X, son départ de France, et son arrivée en Angleterre*, Paris, V<sup>e</sup> Demoraine & Boucquin, s.d.
- (21) *Vie scandaleuse, anecdotique et dévote de Charles X, depuis sa naissance jusqu'à son embarquement à Cherbourg*, Paris, 1830, p. 104.
- (22) *Ibid.*, p. 108; these terms show the anticlericalism that continued to grow during the reign of Charles X. Cf. Jean-Claude Caron, *op. cit.*, p. 76-77.
- (23) Emmanuel de Waresquiel and Benoît Yvert, *op. cit.*, p. 435.
- (24) Ironic name for a restrictive law on press freedoms, which in reality remained in draft form in 1827.
- (25) *Ibid.*, p. 442 et 449, Guernon-Ranville had been Chief Prosecutor in Lyon, while Chantelauze had been First Presiding Judge of the Court of Appeal at Grenoble.
- (26) Their stigmatisation was an extension of that of Charles X's ministers as a whole. For example, the *Grande et sublime plainte de la famille royale, rédigée à Rambouillet d'après quelques notes authentiques, par un élève de l'ex-ministre Guernon de Ranville*, 1830, 15 p., barely mentions Guernon-Ranville, even indirectly.
- (27) Cf. *Révélations secrètes de Jules de Polignac ou entretien particulier de cet ex-ministre avec un garde national*, Paris, Bellemain, 1830, 7 p.
- (28) A term very much used in 1830: cf. Georges Matoré, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
- (29) *Vie publique, privée et ministérielle de M. de Peyronnet, Ex-garde des sceaux et ex-ministre de l'intérieur*, Paris, Gauthier, 1830, 20 p.
- (30) *Condamnation des Ministres de Charles X*, Troyes, 1830.
- (31) On the weak legal basis of the prosecution and conviction of the former ministers, cf. Jean-Pierre Royer, *Histoire de la justice en France*, PUF, 2001, p. 513 à 520.
- (32) On this topic, cf. Emmanuel Fureix, *La France des larmes. Deuils politiques à l'âge romantique (1814-1840)*, Champ Vallon, 2009, p. 453-457.
- (33) Chateaubriand, *op. cit.*, p. 495, emphasises that the very name of Henri V has been removed from the Duke of Orléans' statement on the abdication, "by a wretched ruse and cowardly reticence".
- (34) This would also affect the Duchesse de Berry's pregnancy and the substitution of a male new-born for a female new-born.
- (35) Cf. Jean-Claude Caron, « L'écriture des Trois Glorieuses : héros et barbares dans le cycle des violences insurrectionnelles », in Philippe Bourdin (ed.), *La Révolution 1789-1871, Ecriture d'une Histoire immédiate*, Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2008, p. 275-292.
- (36) Francis Demier, « Les modèles révolutionnaires du « Parti national » en 1830 », dans *Romantisme*, 1980, n°28-29, p. 47-68.
- (37) Françoise Melonio, « L'histoire à l'assaut du pouvoir. *Le Globe* de 1828 à 1830 », in *Colloque François Guizot* 1993 : [www.guizot.com/wp-content/1970/03/colloque93-Melonio.pdf](http://www.guizot.com/wp-content/1970/03/colloque93-Melonio.pdf)
- (38) *Souvenirs de 1830. Le faux héritier de la Couronne de France, preuves authentiques de l'illégitimité du Duc de Bordeaux*, Paris, Deshayes, 1830, 196 p.
- (39) *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- (40) *Ibid.* and *Le Duc de Bordeaux bâtard. Protestation du Duc d'Orléans, aujourd'hui Louis-Philippe 1<sup>er</sup>, Roi des Français, contre la naissance du prétendu Duc de Bordeaux*, Paris, Lefebvre et Cie, August 1830, 13 p.
- (41) Diana Cooper-Richet, « Paris, capitale des polyglottes ? Edition et commercialisation des

imprimés en langues étrangères sous la Restauration », in Jean-Yves Mollier *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 197–209.

- (42) T.P. Gavaud, *Le duc de Bordeaux, le duc de Reichstadt et la France nouvelle*, Lyon, Roubier, September 1830, p. 23.
- (43) *Révolution Française : Histoire de 10 ans, 1830–1840*, Bruxelles, Raspoet et Cie, 1843, p. 39.
- (44) *Le Duc de Bordeaux bâtard...*, *op. cit.*, presents as an appendix a table on the almost perfect "*rapprochemens historiques*" (*sic* – literally, "historic similarities") between the two revolutions.
- (45) Cf. Catherine Hall, « Sweet Home », in Philippe Ariès & Georges Duby (eds.), *Histoire de la vie privée*, Seuil, 1999, tome 4, p. 47–76.
- (46) *Mémoires...*, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

