PAUL DÉROULÈDE, REVANCHIST

by

EDWARD LEAVELL BYRD, JR., B.A., M.A.

A DISSERTATION

IN

HISTORY

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Texas Tech University in
Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Approved

Accepted

December, 1969

FOREWORD

This study of the life of Paul Déroulède developed from a realization that his career had importance both within the setting of his time and as a precursor of twentieth century right-wing nationalist movements. Therefore, the major events in Déroulède's life and his political ideas expressed in his speeches and writings received close scrutiny in an attempt to determine the immediate and long-range significance of his career. The persistent desire to revenge France's defeat by Germany in 1870-71, to reacquire Alsace-Lorraine, and to restore, by means of a strong state headed by a popular executive, the lost glories and prestige of France consumed Déroulède's energies. He actively sought a change in the governmental structure of the Third Republic and led an abortive coup to obtain that goal in 1899. Both by his methods and his attitudes he foreshadowed later French nationalistic movements.

The kind help and encouragement of several persons facilitated the writing of this thesis. Donald N. Brown, professor of history at Southeastern Oklahoma State College, graciously consented to read the initial manuscript; Wade Baskin, Chairman of the Department of Foreign Languages, aided in the translation of some difficult French phrases; and Mrs. Mamie Harris, librarian, helpfully procured materials through interlibrary loan. Jacquelin Collins, William Johnson, Ivan Little, James Reese, and George Robbert, professors at Texas Tech University, served on the doctoral committee and offered valuable suggestions.

Lowell Blaisdell, Texas Tech professor and chairman of the committee, was most influential and helpful in selecting the topic, directing the research, and guiding the writing of this study. His time and patience were given generously. Finally, the Research Foundation at Southeastern State College defrayed some of the research expenses by providing a grant that was greatly needed.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

Pivotal years in history, although infrequent, can be observed and so labeled. For the French and for much of western society 1870 was one of those occasions. In the short space of twelve months France clearly relinquished to Germany her position as the chief power on the European continent, and the Second French Empire collapsed with very little regret. As a result of their defeat by the Germans, the French developed a lasting and ultimately debilitating hatred for all things Teutonic. The desire for revanche became a factor in French politics for the succeeding forty-four years. Another development of 1870 was the creation of the Third French Republic. Since one of the characteristics of this government was constant instability, it provided many and varied antagonists the opportunity to conspire in hopes of bringing about its collapse. Not the least of these opponents and conspirators was Paul Déroulède, a man whose political consciousness was shaped by the events of 1870 and whose entire adult life was devoted to erasing the humiliation and redressing the penalty resulting from French defeat.

Paul Déroulède's birth, childhood, and youth-young manhood occurred during the regime of Napoleon III. To appreciate the forces which shaped Déroulède's early life, it is necessary to have some understanding of Napoleon III, his government, and the general environment of Napoleonic France.

Louis Napoleon became president of the Second Republic in 1848, then by a coup d'état made himself dictator in December, 1851, and in

November, 1852, replaced the Second Republic with the Napoleonic Second Empire. The nephew of Napoleon I wanted to emulate his illustrious uncle and restore to France her old glory and power. This ambition was never achieved, partially because Louis Napoleon lacked ability equal to that of his imperial predecessor, and partially because of significant changes in the European state system in the elapsed half-century. As a historical figure Napoleon III is difficult to assess: he has been variously characterized as an early modern dictator, as buffoon, and as sphinx.[1] For our purpose we need only note that he represented the strong-leader tradition in modern French politics begun by the first Napoleon and in some measure continued by the just ended regime of Charles de Gaulle.

In terms of French domestic history, Napoleon's rule is most conveniently divided into a period of rather severe autocracy, followed by increasing leniency and a move toward a liberal, parliamentary empire. For approximately the first decade of the Second Empire, Napoleon kept a tight rein on all political activity. The army was a tool of state used strategically to maintain the regime. Limitations on freedom of speech, press, and assembly were enacted and enforced. Labor unions or similar organizations were prohibited; secret police were relied upon heavily; and elections to the legislature were controlled. For these and other tactics designed to insure his dominance, some have viewed Napoleon as a forerunner of the twentieth century dictator.

---

[1]For an indication of the nature and variety of the scholarly arguments regarding the career of Napoleon III see Samuel M. Osgood, ed., Napoleon III: Buffoon, Modern Dictator, or Sphinx?, Problems in European Civilization (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1963). Also see Brison D. Gooch, ed., Napoleon III--Man of Destiny, European Problem Studies (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963).

A gradual reduction in governmental control followed this period of rigidity. The elections of 1863 were not regulated as severely as had been previous ones, and the ranks of the opposition in the legislature increased significantly. Labor unions were allowed to organize, but they were still restricted in their activities. Greater freedom of speech, press, and assembly was permitted; however, it was understood that the press would not be extremely critical of the regime. By 1869 the government had liberalized to the point that a prime minister responsible to the legislature had been authorized. In 1870 a new constitution established a liberal empire.

Throughout the reign of Louis Napoleon the economic state of the nation was relatively good. As the first stages of the Industrial Revolution had passed, some of the problems of that period had been alleviated. Wages were increasing; railroad construction rapidly provided France with an adequate system of transportation; and trade treaties, especially with England, proved beneficial to the economy of France. Two World Fairs were held during the Empire, and Paris was remodeled and beautified so that it became a leading tourist attraction. It was Ferdinand de Lesseps, a Frenchman, and supported partially by French capital, who constructed the Suez Canal, opened in 1869. These evidences of economic growth were paralleled by an outpouring of art and literature.

It was foreign affairs which were Napoleon's undoing and which were directly responsible for his overthrow in 1870. His inconsistent and overly ambitious ventures led him into a showy war with Russia, an inextricable commitment in Italy, a spectacular failure in Mexico, and, ultimately, a fatal conflict with Prussia and the other German states.

In this last war, France's defeat, due to inadequate preparation, poor army morale and leadership, and the Emperor's capture, was rapid. When the Second Empire fell on September 4, 1870, to be replaced by the Third Republic, the successor regime, the wartime Government of National Defense, was too handicapped to salvage the war effort. Early in 1871 France had to surrender. In the Treaty of Frankfort she accepted the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, the payment of an indemnity to newly united Germany of five billion francs, a victory march of German soldiers through the streets of Paris, and the crowning at Versailles of the Prussian King William I as Kaiser of Germany.[2] All this was a humiliation too great for many Frenchmen to accept with either grace or resignation. Some became obsessed with the idea of vindication, and none pursued the goal so single-mindedly as did Paul Déroulède.

Information about Paul Déroulède's childhood and formative years is fragmentary, coming chiefly from the man himself. Though the source is partisan, the crumbs he provided do give us insight into the character of the man.

Paul Déroulède was born on September 2, 1846, in Paris. He spent most of his life in Paris or in the département of Charente (located in southwestern France near Bordeaux with Angoulême as the principal city), where he had a rural residence, and from which on two occasions he served as deputy in the lower house of the French legislature, the Châmbre de Députés.

---

[2]John B. Wolf, France, 1814-1919 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1963), pp. 345-47.

Of Déroulède's father, we learn only that he was a lawyer in the Court of Appeals of Paris and in direct line of descent from Charles-Antoine Pigault-Lebrun, one of the earliest of French professional novelists and in the front rank of gai novelists. We cannot even surmise the relations between Déroulède and his father. Much more reference was made to the mother. On numerous occasions she was pictured by Déroulède and others as the model of patriotic "motherhood" and as the inspiration for all French women who would give their sons for the glory and honor of the Patrie. The signs suggest that the home life of the Déroulède children was matriarchal. Déroulède made frequent reference to his mother's brother, Émile Augier, who was a playwright of some standing during the days of the Second Empire. Presumably the references to Augier were intended to add prestige to Déroulède's own literary endeavors, which were pursued with the single-minded purpose of propagating his ideas of revanche.

Most of what little we know about Déroulède's childhood and family come from information he provided when in his middle twenties, just before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War. A close family relationship existed between Déroulède and his younger brother and sister. Since neither Déroulède nor his sister ever married, she was available to him for housekeeping duties in his later years and served him devotedly. The family was orthodox Roman Catholic in religious faith; however, there are indications that Déroulède's devotion to the church was perfunctory for the most part. We can infer that the family did not lack financial stability since the father was a lawyer with a country estate and Déroulède was able to travel without concern for money. He studied at the lycée Louis-le-Grand et Bonaparte and later

at the lycée Condorcet before finishing at the lycée du Versailles. Subsequently he travelled in Europe and in Egypt, studied law at the École de Droit, and was admitted to the bar in Paris in June, 1870.[3]

From early in his life Déroulède desired to make a name for himself as an author of plays. On the ninth of June, 1879, his play Juan Strenner was presented at the Comédie Française. Originally the play was in five acts, and Déroulède had presented it to Sarah Bernhardt for her comments. On the advice of his uncle, Augier, it was shortened to one act. The play was a story of domestic infidelity and the effect of it upon the youthful son of the unfaithful mother. Though the plot lacked originality and was rather banal, some critics indicated that the drama did possess a quantity of beautiful verse that previewed a brilliant career.[4]

Years later Déroulède recounted his attitudes toward the political scene in the days prior to the fall of the Second Empire. At that time he stated he "had only taste for belles-lettres, passion against the Empire, and love for my mistress."[5] He went on to explain that his interest in politics and opposition to the regime of Napoleon III was philosophical more than active. He was opposed to the army and to

---

[3]"Déroulède (Paul-Marie-Joseph)," Dictionnaire des Parlementaires Français, vol. IV, p. 1395.

[4]Camille Ducray, Paul Déroulède, 1846-1914 (Paris: L'Édition Moderne--Librairie Ambert, 1914), pp. 123-27. Hereafter referred to as Ducray, Paul Déroulède. Also see Paul Déroulède, Juan Strenner (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, Éditeurs, 1869).

[5]Paul Déroulède, -1870- Feuilles des route, 8th ed. (Paris: Société d'Édition et de Publications, Librairie Félix Juven, 1907), p. 4. Hereafter referred to as Déroulède, -1870- Feuilles . . ..

war in general. Déroulède spoke of himself as afflicted with the "malady of cosmopolitanism" and an absence of nationalistic feeling for France. These ideas had been impressed upon him during his last year at the lycée and were developed during his studies at law school:

> After 1863 . . . in the Latin Quarter . . . it had been the fashion . . . to devaluate the military virtues by glorifying the civic virtues and exalting individual liberty and relying upon national independence. Humanity above the Nation.
>
> The time seemed near when the human race would be reconciled, throw off its arms and its chains, and intermingle all peoples and all races in a worldwide embrace.[6]

He subscribed to the idea that all men were his brothers and all tyrants were his enemies. He had such contempt for the military that he told a soldier-minded friend about to enter the École Polytechnique: "Your profession of a soldier is the profession of a brute."[7] In a speech honoring Henri Martin, a prominent liberal historian and member of the Senate after 1876, at the time of his death in 1883, Déroulède admitted that before the disaster of 1870 the young men of his generation had little studied the history of France. He went on to say that they were preoccupied with their rights rather than with their duties.[8]

When the Franco-Prussian War broke out, it appeared to Déroulède to be "an anachronism in a century of light,"[9] but he did not expect it to trouble the course of his life. At the outset his father took

---

[6]Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[7]Ibid., p. 5.

[8]Paul Déroulède, Qui vive? France! "Quand Même" (Paris: Bloud et Cie, Éditeurs, 1910), pp. 6-7.

[9]Déroulède, -1870- Feuilles . . ., p. 1.

the precaution of purchasing a redemption for Déroulède so that he would not have to serve in the military. Yet less than forty-eight hours after the outbreak of war he was a part of a new military organization called "la garde nationale mobile." This rapid change of heart was due to a chance encounter with Victor Duruy, a noted French historian and former Minister of Public Instruction for Napoleon III. In a meeting that evidently made an overwhelming impression on Déroulède, Duruy convinced the young man of the need to perform his duty to his country.[10] His conversion to a willingness to fight was comparable, perhaps, to the way in which pre-World War II pacifist youths in England took up weapons after war was declared. But, unlike them, his change in viewpoint became so much a part of him that he remained a super-patriot to the end of his days.

Although Déroulède began his military career as an officer, he felt so strongly about the war that he resigned his commission when he learned the mobiles were to be retained in Paris for the defense of the city and would not be sent to the front and joined the zouaves, a crack infantry regiment, so that he could take part in the fighting on the frontier. It was at this point that the mother of Déroulède took the action that made her the exemplary French mother for all who subscribed to Déroulède's brand of patriotism. On the occasion when her son Paul presented himself to the officer in charge of the zouaves, Madame Déroulède arrived in a carriage with her younger son, André, who was sixteen at the time, and demanded that he

---

[10]Ibid., p. 2.

be taken along with his brother to fight at the front. She stated that if she had more sons she would gladly give them for the defense of the Patrie.[11]

The brothers went to the front and participated in the Battles of Mormizon and Bazeilles. At Sedan, the younger brother was wounded seriously. Déroulède propped him against a tree and returned to the fray. Later while tending to the wounds of his brother, Déroulède was taken prisoner by the Germans. Because his brother needed medical attention, Paul was allowed to remain with him until André was placed in a German hospital. During this time Déroulède was placed on his honor not to attempt to escape. Obviously, some of the romantic chivalry that he depicted in his later plays was a part of the character of Déroulède, for he dutifully marched several miles unaccompanied in order to deliver himself to his captors after his brother had been attended.[12]

Déroulède was transported to a German prison at Breslau, remaining there for several months. No longer considering himself obligated to his word of honor, he succeeded in escaping. Making his way through Bohemia, Austria, and Italy, he re-entered France. He returned to battle on the eastern front in the region of the Loire. On December 9, 1870, he received a battlefield promotion to second-lieutenant. At Montbeliard his actions in leading his band of turcos, who were recruits

---

[11] Le Drapeau, November 25, 1883, p. 379.

[12] Déroulède, -1870- Feuilles . . .. Or see H. Galli, Paul Déroulède raconte par lui-même (Paris: Librairie Plon, Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1900), pp. 4-30. Hereafter referred to as Galli, Déroulède par lui-même.

from Algeria, resulted in his nomination on February 8, 1871, as a chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur.[13]

By this time an armistice had been signed, but fighting for France and for Déroulède had not yet ended. The famous revolution of the Commune of Paris broke out in March, and the army was called upon to quell the fighting. Déroulède, as an officer of troops loyal to the national government, which took residence at Versailles while radicals held Paris, was ordered to lead his troops against the Commune. While attempting to raise a barricade he was wounded severely in the arm. His participation in behalf of a monarchist-oriented government later provided his political opponents with a basis for claiming that he was a monarchist. Déroulède defended himself by saying that he had done what he felt he had to do: carry the barricades, fight in the streets, and watch over the security of his soldiers; he had never fired a shot personally. He did not want to have anything to do with the spilling of French blood. Although he made no specific statement regarding his opinion of the beliefs of the Communards, he did fear further national humiliation from the hated Germans and, therefore, stipulated two motives for his actions:

> First motive: there could be no other reward [for the Germans] than after having been our conquerors, the Prussians should be our policemen. I know, and the fact is historically established today, that they demanded re-entrance into Paris to establish order. This supreme shame seemed to me to be the worst of all. The second reason has been borrowed from Plutarch's memoirs. While writing on the life of Solon this old sage conceived the following edict: In a civil war

---

[13]For a complete account of Déroulède's actions from his escape from Breslau to the end of the Franco-Prussian War see Paul Déroulède, -70=71- Nouvelles feuilles de route (Paris: Librairie Félix Juven, 1907).

> all citizens who have not fought for one or another of the factions cease to be a part of the city and will be considered as foreigners.[14]

The severity of Déroulède's wound necessitated a lengthy convalescence at the family residence in the Charente. While recovering he composed and had published his first volume of poetry, Chants du soldat.[15] This was a small book of patriotic poems with such titles as "La Marseillaise," "Les turcos," "Vae victoribus," and "Chasseurs a pied." Already the sentiments of the patriot and the vindicator were forcefully beginning to emerge. The poem, "Vive la France," concludes:

> Yes Frenchmen, it is a lively blood that is yours!
> The tombs of your sons are full of heroes:
> But on the bloody soil over which the victor brags,
> All your sons, O Frenchmen! are not fallen.
>
> And the revenge will come, slowly perhaps,
> But in all cases surely and inexorably;
> The hatred is already born, and the force is being born:
> It is for the reaper to see when the field is ripe.[16]

At this point Déroulède did not yet have the desire to become a politician. So great an impression did his war experiences make on him that he intended to make a career in the military. Upon recovering

---

[14]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 38.

[15]Paul Déroulède, Chants du soldat (Paris: Michel Lévy Fréres, Éditeurs--Librairie Nouvelle, 1872).

[16]Ibid., p. 6.

> Oui, Francais, c' est un sang vivace que le vôtre!
> Les Tombes de vos fils sont pleines du héros:
> Mais sur le sol sanglant où le vainqueur se vautre,
> Tous vos fils, Ô Francais! ne sont pas aux tombeaux.
>
> Et la ravanche doit venir, lent peut-être,
> Mais in tout cas fatale, et terrible à coup sur;
> La haine est déja née, et la force va naître:
> C'est au faucheur a voir si le champ n'est pas mûr.

from his wound the young soldier rejoined the 30th Battalion de Chasseurs. He was soon promoted from second-lieutenant to lieutenant. He appeared to have a promising future in his profession, which he now regarded as glorious and lofty rather than brutal. Unfortunately, in 1874 he fell off his horse and so seriously injured his foot that he was forced to resign his commission.

The end of his army career probably came as a blow to Déroulède. He had found there both happiness and a calling. One has the feeling that he was never entirely happy again. The army days may have been instrumental in fixing in Déroulède's mind the obsession with revanche which characterized him for the remainder of his life. Once he left the military service, with chiefly his writing and politics to occupy him, his revanchist spirit was maintained and fortified.

CHAPTER II

For a time Paul Déroulède found himself adrift after resigning from the army. But more significantly, the French state suffered like a leaky man-o-war under attack from several quarters. Although the government of the Third Republic had survived the Commune of Paris revolt, it had to face other foes who threatened its existence. The gravest threat during the 1870s came from the monarchists. The first National Assembly elected after the fall of the Empire was overwhelmingly royalist. Were it not for the effective efforts of Adolphe Thiers in delaying the devising of a definitive form of government for France and the ineptitude of the royalists themselves, the monarchists almost certainly would have accomplished a restoration, however short-lived.

Thiers concluded that there were more pressing problems than the immediate formation of a constitution and convinced a majority of the Assembly to adopt this view. Under Thiers' leadership the nation set about paying the indemnity owed to Germany so that France could be relieved of the odious burden of maintaining Prussian troops on French soil. The speedy retirement of the indemnity heartened and unified, to some extent, the French people. As local elections began to return an increasing number of republicans to the Assembly, the monarchist majority decided that further postponement of the constitutional question was undesirable. Since Thiers was, by now, openly republican in view, he lost all monarchist support and was forced to retire. He was replaced

in 1873 by Marshal Marie-Edme-Patrice de MacMahon (1808-1893)[1], the loser of the battle of Sedan and a monarchist at heart.

The monarchists did not want to delay any further in establishing a king for France, but the big question was who would be king? The royalists were split into two groups: those who supported the legitimist or Bourbon claimant, the Count of Chambord, grandson of Charles X, and those who favored the Orleanist candidate, the Count of Paris, grandson of Louis Philippe. In October, 1873, the Count of Paris recognized the Count of Chambord as the legal heir to the throne. However, the Orleanists qualified their support by making it contingent upon the acceptance by Chambord of a constitutional monarchy. The army generals were ready to back the claimant if he would give up the white flag of Bourbon absolutism. Fortunately for the republic, Chambord would not relinquish the white flag nor would he forsake absolutism. Thus he forfeited the monarchists' last chance.

The royalists did not consider themselves finished, but their lost opportunity did not recur. The Assembly finally turned to the work of drafting a charter. The result was the Constitution of 1875. The executive power resided in the position of an elected president, whose actual power would remain undetermined for a time. A Senate and a Chamber of Deputies composed the two-house legislature, with the Chamber the more important of the two. The Chamber was elected by universal manhood suffrage and controlled the ministry and, through it, the policy of the country.

The elections to the new legislature resulted in a large republican majority in the Chamber, while the monarchists held the Senate

---

[1]The Encyclopedia Americana, 1960 Edition, Vol. 14, p. 81.

by the narrowest of margins. In 1877 a constitutional crisis produced a complete republican victory and the relegation of the president to the role of figurehead. President MacMahon forced the issue by attempting to secure a popular mandate for his assertion of presidential authority over the Chamber. After forcing the resignation of a republican cabinet and persuading the Senate to dissolve the Chamber, MacMahon inaugurated a program of propaganda in favor of monarchist and clerical candidates and repression of republicans. Macmahon and his supporters expected victory; however, they failed to reckon with the persuasive powers of Léon Gambetta, one of the organizers of the Government of National Defense in 1870, whose eloquence nullified the monarchist efforts. The elections of October, 1877, returned a solid republican majority to the Chamber. The next year new Senate elections cost the monarchists their majority in that house. In January, 1879, Jules Grévy, a sincere republican, replaced MacMahon as president. Republicanism, although not yet very stable, had triumphed. The French ship of state, while still leaky, had weathered its first major battle.[2]

While this uncertainty disrupted the tranquility of France, Paul Déroulède kept himself politically inconspicuous. At the time of their occurrence these political crises and machinations provoked no comment from him. As he became more active in the eighties and nineties, Déroulède would repeatedly make comments regarding the Constitution of 1875 and its defects, but the decade of the seventies he spent in literary endeavors developing his ideas of patriotism and revanche. In

---

[2]For fuller account of French history of this time see D. W. Brogan, The Development of Modern France, 1870-1939, Vol. 1 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), pp. 77-143.

1875 Déroulède published his second volume of verse, Nouveaux chants du soldat.[3] Most of the poems in this work contained the same ideas and themes that had been expressed in his earlier work. The poem "A ma mère" was a song of praise for the patriotic qualities that made his mother a subject suitable for emulation. "Sur la Jeanne d'Arc" praised Joan of Arc for incarnating the will which had enabled France to rid herself of the English and advocated the same spirit for regaining Alsace-Lorraine. The poem most frequently reprinted in later years was "Le sergent," a laudatory work of commendation for the devoted, loyal, and self-sacrificing non-commissioned officer. These works are a good gauge of Déroulède as a poet; however, short poems circumscribed him too severely and proved an inadequate vehicle for the elaboration of his ideas.

The medium of drama offered Déroulède the means of expression that he sought. Camille Ducray, Déroulède's friend and biographer, said:

> But Déroulède seemed to consider intrigue only as an accessory, or better, as a means which permitted his characters to express their strong thoughts, beautiful words, and noble sentiments. The theater had for him another purpose besides that of recreating: it was to educate. He wanted to prove that it is not necessary to find oneself in complicated and entangling situations in order to do one's duty, and that life offers everyday, to those of a generous heart, the means to make themselves manifest.[4]

On February 2, 1877, Déroulède's play L'Hetman was presented in Paris at le théâtre national de l'Odeon.[5] In this play Déroulède tried to

---

[3]Paul Déroulède, Nouveaux chants du soldat (Paris: Michel Lévy, Frères, Éditeurs, 1875).

[4]Ducray, Paul Déroulède, p. 124.

[5]Paul Déroulède, L'Hetman (Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, Ancienne Maison Michel Lévy, Frères, 1877).

copy the style of one of the greatest of French dramatists, Pierre Corneille. The setting was Poland and the Ukraine in 1645, and the plot revolved around a war between Cossacks and Poles. This was a disguise for the Franco-Prussian War situation and provided Déroulède the means to render his ideas regarding the nation, devotion to duty, the spirit of sacrifice, the hope of revenge, and, above all, the love of the fatherland. It was an expression of his "disregard of the death of men for the continuity of the national life."[6]

While L'Hetman exalted the love of the fatherland, La Moabite, the next work of the soldier-poet, had another goal. Déroulède indicated his purpose in the preface of this play: "Republican and religious, I have attempted to demonstrate that liberty is not contrary to belief, and that human morals falter if they do not depend on divine law."[7] The play was accepted for presentation at the Comédie Française in 1880. The play was another story of attempted treason set in Canaan in 1326 B. C. The traitor, Misael, appeared to some to be a thinly-disguised version of Jules Ferry, then Minister of Public Instruction. According to Déroulède, Ferry made it known to the administrator of the theater that he would place an interdict on the drama to prevent it being shown.[8] The administrator asked Déroulède to accept a delay in presentation, but the author retired his work altogether. He

---

[6]Ducray, Paul Déroulède, p. 129.

[7]Paul Déroulède, La Moabite (Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1881), Préface.

[8]Ducray, Paul Déroulède, p. 132. The Constitution of 1875 was devoid of such normal necessities as a declaration of rights or preamble of principles. Thus it was often possible for governmental officials to exercise extraordinary powers. See Brogan, Modern France, vol. 1, p. 112.

presented it in a private showing at the home of a friend. In 1881 it was published with a preface that sharply rapped Ferry. Déroulède did not deny that the work was dangerous in a country which was in trouble and full of dissent and discord, for which he blamed Ferry. After a century of anticlericalism, Déroulède acknowledged "that a play which speaks of God with respect, of licence with disgust, and of liberty with love, yes, such a play resembles too much a satire not to be a danger."[9]

Although Déroulède published another volume of verse, Marches et sonneries,[10] in 1881, he was now ready to lay aside the poet's pen for a more active participation in the affairs of the nation. At this time Déroulède's main political attachment was not to a party but to a man, Léon Gambetta. Gambetta had been a strong proponent of republicanism throughout the struggle with the monarchists. He was elected president of the Chamber of Deputies in January, 1879, and in November, 1881, while François Grévy was president of the republic, he accepted the premiership. Gambetta proposed some sweeping changes, such as the replacement of scrutin d'arrondissement with scrutin de liste,[11] reform of the railroads, and foreign alliances to

---

[9]Déroulède, La Moabite, Preface. When Déroulède reported events that were matters of public record, his facts were usually correct. However, his interpretation of these occurrences was uniquely his own. On the other hand, when he reported events after a delay of some years and when immediate corroboration was difficult or impossible, he tended to exaggerate. Probably, he did not lie intentionally but had convinced himself of the veracity of his account.

[10]Paul Déroulède, Marches et sonneries (Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1881).

[11]Scrutin de liste consisted of all candidates in a departement running en masse for all the seats available to that département. Scrutin d'arrondissement, the method then in use for electing members

restore France to the first rank in foreign affairs. The changes antagonized a majority of the Chamber, compelling Gambetta to resign in January, 1881.

During Gambetta's brief term in office Déroulède had tried to make an impression on the premier with regard to matters of foreign policy, always with an eye to revenge against Germany and the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine. Déroulède's family connections, his well-received patriotic poems, his creditable military service, and his position as a knight of the Legion of Honor enabled him to have access to high government officials. He attempted to persuade the premier to select General Marie-François Joseph de Miribel as head of the army because of the general's opposition to extensive use of the army in colonial ventures.[12] This effort failed, but Miribel was appointed Chief of Staff. Perhaps Déroulède's interest in the military at this time prompted Gambetta to appoint the ex-soldier to a newly-created Commission of Military Education, which operated under the auspices of the Minister of Public Instruction.

Included on this commission were such notables as Félix Faure (1841-1899),[13] a future president of the Third Republic, and Édouard

---

of the Chamber of Deputies, consisted in candidates standing for election in electoral districts and serving as representatives for that district rather than for the *département* as a whole. *Scrutin de liste* was advantageous to established political parties and could more easily serve as a kind of plebiscite on a given issue. *Scrutin d'arrondissement* gave fuller expression to local needs and sentiments. It had a tendency to discourage strong political parties because local personalities took preeminence over the issues. After Gambetta's death *scrutin de liste* was revived.

[12] Galli, *Déroulède par lui-même*, pp. 57-58.

[13] *The Encyclopedia Americana*, 1960 Edition, Vol. 11, p.64.

Detaille (1848-1912),[14] a painter of some reputation who specialized in military themes. Déroulède headed a portion of the commission which composed a catalogue of patriotic books and songs. Besides himself and Detaille this committee included Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray (1840-1910), a professor at the Conservatory of Music, Guillaume Jost (1831-?), Inspector-General of Instruction, and Gustave-Adolphe Salicis (1818-89), an ex-naval officer and instructor at the École Polytechnique. This committee presented its report and propositions in the spring of 1882. Déroulède, who drafted the report, began by comparing the patriotic emphasis in German education with the lack of the same in French schools. His committee offered a five-pronged program to cure the prevailing French indifference to patriotism. First, they proposed the acceptance of a list of military and patriotic books which related the stories of French military greatness and others which told the histories of the particular départements of France. Second, a catalogue of patriotic songs and poems was compiled for teaching to the youth. These songs should be a necessary accompaniment to school excursions and gymnastic exercises. Thirdly, the committee proposed the erection of statues and the engraving on school walls of patriotic subjects. Fourth, patriotic inscriptions should be placed on all public buildings. Finally, patriotic festivals should be held both in the schools and on a national basis.[15]

---

[14] Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 16.

[15] Le Drapeau, May 11, 1882, p. 154. For account of the life of Bourgault-Ducoudray see La grande encyclopedia, vol. 7, p. 757; for Jost see La grande encyclopedia, vol. 21, pp. 209-10; for Salicis see La grande encyclopedia, vol. 29, p. 348.

By the time this report came to the attention of the government, Jules Ferry had replaced Gambetta as premier. Ferry had no love for Déroulède and refused to adopt the bulk of the committee's proposals.[16] From this time on Déroulède viewed Ferry with scorn. Two of Ferry's policies in particular aroused the ire of the ardent revanchist: the laws restricting the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in education, and the colonial ventures of the Ferry government. Although Déroulède's hero, Gambetta had cried in 1877 "Le clericalisme, voila l'ennemi!" it was Ferry who inspired and pushed through the legislature the laws which reformed the educational system of France. The Jesuits were expelled; no unauthorized teaching order could maintain a school; and no one could teach in a state school without a state teacher's certificate. This last provision reduced the number of nuns and teaching brothers in the local schools. Déroulède believed that these provisions weakened the moral education of the youth, and this would diminish their resolve to restore France to greatness.[17]

Ferry's efforts to expand the colonial holdings of France seemed to Déroulède to be a foolish diversion from the true goal of restoration of Alsace-Lorraine. He correctly believed that Bismarck was promoting French imperialism in order to divert attention from the lost provinces. Déroulède, in his single-minded devotion to revenge, saw any dispersal of French forces from the German frontier as a threat to the eventual realization of his desires. One of Déroulède's biographers reported a conversation between Ferry and the ex-soldier:

---

[16]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 60.

[17]Donald J. Harvey, France Since the Revolution (New York: The Free Press, 1968), pp. 129-30.

> Jules Ferry rebuked him [Déroulède] one day on the misery of his indigenous patriotism:
>
> Monsieur Déroulède, he said to him, you make me believe that you prefer Alsace-Lorraine to France. Do you not think that it would be wise to sacrifice the lost provinces and take our compensation elsewhere?
>
> That's the way it is, replied Déroulède; I have lost two children, and you offer me twenty servants![18]

As Déroulède's interest in the affairs of France became more active, he needed an organization that would provide him with a vehicle for propagating his beliefs and a forum for his ideas. Just two days after his resignation from the Commission of Military Education, Déroulède received a visit from Félix Faure and another member of the Commission. They proposed that Déroulède establish a free association which would undertake the execution of the program which Ferry had rejected. At first, so Déroulède later claimed, he was inclined to refuse and remain in his quiet life of letters. However, the next day Louis d'Hurcourt, the founder of Le Drapeau, offered to Déroulède the services of his newspaper, and Joseph Sansboeuf, the president of an association of gymnasts in Paris, pleaded with him to create the organization. Déroulède accepted their pleas and went to the gymnase Heiser to a fête organized under the patronage of the historian, Henri Martin. There on May 18, 1882, the Ligue des Patriotes was created. Henri Martin became the first president; the motto adopted was "Qui vive?--France!"; the membership included such illustrious figures as Gambetta, Sadi Carnot, the grandson of Lazare Carnot and a future president of the Third Republic, and Victor Hugo, the great

---

[18]Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, La vie et la mort de Déroulède (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie., Imprimeurs-Éditeurs, 1925), p. 26. Hereafter called Tharaud, La vie et la mort.

writer, by this time an octogenarian.[19] The founders of the League issued the following statement of purpose:

> Jealous of the independence of the nation, ardently devoted to its greatness, desirous of connecting all the lively forces of the nation and persuaded that the restoration of the beaten nation is a common idea for all good Frenchmen of all parties, the undersigned have resolved to make an appeal to all their fellow citizens to organize a national league which has for its goal the propaganda for military and patriotic education, and to effect this the joining of all Frenchmen of good will.[20]

Déroulède made a speech on the occasion in which he praised the gymnastic and shooting societies for the physical training they provided for young Frenchmen, and he urged the development of a patriotic, military, and national spirit in the hearts of all true Frenchmen.[21] He now had his vehicle for political activism.

Since the League was supposedly non-partisan, in its early years it added to its roster members of all political faiths. Déroulède often claimed that royalists, Bonapartists, and republicans alike were welcome if they subscribed to the policies of the organization. However, any politician who, in Déroulède's eyes, relegated revenge and restoration of the lost provinces to a secondary status quickly felt the barb of the super-patriot's attack. In June, 1882, the newspaper Le Drapeau added to its masthead the inscription Moniteur de la Ligue des Patriotes. Through the pages of this paper Déroulède's ideas were

---

[19]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, pp. 61-64.

[20]A. Henri Canu and Georges Buisson, M. Paul Déroulède et sa Ligue des Patriotes (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Parisienne, Albert Savine, Éditeur, 1889), p. 21. Hereafter called Canu and Buisson, Déroulède et sa Ligue.

[21]Paul Déroulède, Pages Françaises (Paris: Librairie Bloud et Cie., 1909), pp. 205-09. Hereafter called Déroulède, Pages . . . .

dispersed. Any major, or minor, speech that Déroulède made was usually printed in full, and selections of his poems appeared weekly.

Déroulède's speeches and poems were very emotional and indicated the depth of his feelings. He was an orator of considerable skill. His imposing physique and dynamic delivery combined to make a formidable impression on a susceptible audience. The spark of fanaticism gleamed in his eyes while he spoke, causing a contemporary to describe him as "a great devil . . ., with long arms and legs, a huge nose, a long frock-coat, and sweeping gestures."[22] His emotionalism erupted into physical violence when Eugene Mayer, editor of La Lanterne, accused Déroulède of using the League as an electoral enterprise. Déroulède was fined twenty-five francs upon conviction of assault and battery against Mayer in November, 1882.[23]

Although the League was hurt by the death of Gambetta in December of 1882, Déroulède pressed his goals even more vigorously than before. In fact, without the restraining wisdom of Gambetta, he became less inhibited in his statements and activities. While Déroulède did not again resort to personal physical violence, he made speeches at every opportunity. He varied his topic to suit the occasion, but always the theme of revenge persisted.

In May, 1883, at Angoulême, Déroulède delivered a discourse on military education. He wanted this schooling divided into three periods: the first devoted to moral education from the age of eight to fifteen; the second period would be the time of physical education

---

[22]Adrien Dansette, Le boulangisme (Paris: Librairie Artheme Fayard, 1946), p. 62. Dansette was quoting a man who was contemporary with Déroulède.

[23]Le Drapeau, November 25, 1882, pp. 379-80.

to prepare the bodies of the youth for the rigors of war; and the third period would be given to military training. The goal of all this was to advance "the national interest and the common cause."[24]

Déroulède advocated an economic program which would further his oft-repeated goal. He stated that commercial patriotism was inseparable from all other forms of patriotism. In his opinion Germany was attempting to keep France subordinated through domination of its commerce. France should establish high protective tariffs to ban foreign, especially German, products and endeavor to build up French industry so that the nation would be self-sufficient. He acknowledged that at first the cost would be high but maintained that in time France would be financially healthier. He advocated both individual and collective resistance to the importation of German products.[25] Certainly these ideas were not new, dating back to the heyday of mercantilism, but they did indicate that Déroulède's chauvinism pervaded every area of his thought.

Déroulède's patriotic rhetoric reached its florid peak at the occasion of the unveiling of a monument to Gambetta at Cahors on April 15, 1884. He contended that in 1871 the Franco-Prussian War should have been prolonged so that a greater feeling of general public responsibility for the defeat could have been engendered, and thus the nation's obligations vis à vis Alsace-Lorraine made stronger. The ex-soldier of that war praised Gambetta for mobilizing the nation in that time of crisis. He also called the late premier a man of revindication.

---

[24] Déroulède, Pages . . . ., pp. 212-19.

[25] Chenu (M. le Batonnier), La Ligue des Patriotes (Paris: Librairie de la Societé du Recueil Sirey, 1916), pp. 24-26. Hereafter referred to as Chenu, La Ligue.

Déroulède then issued a challenge to all segments of the French population to seek revindication for the defeat at the hands of the Prussians and the loss of the precious eastern provinces. All Frenchmen should "dare all, do all, attempt all to make disappear from the maps of the world the visible and undeniable trace of our diminution and our shame."[26] When the time would come for performing this duty was uncertain, but the necessity of the duty was sure. The magnitude of Déroulède's dislike for and hatred of the Prussians became clear when he said:

> We are not the only ones oppressed, the only ones menaced, the only ones defeated. All of Europe suffers from the preponderance of this empire of the middle which has four hands for taking and four frontiers for invading, which menaces all around the West and the East, the North and the South. There is no state that this Prussia has not despoiled of something, territory or influence, rank or fortune.[27]

Déroulède did not care if the Germans took note of his speech; in fact, he hoped they did. He ended with a ringing "Glory to Gambetta! Honor to our dead! Vive la France!"[28]

With Gambetta no longer available to serve as his standard-bearer, Déroulède began to look for another entrée into the halls of government. Although he had claimed in a poem that he was only a "sounder of the trumpet," he was not averse to entering the political arena himself when he was approached on this matter in 1885. It did not require much persuasion to convince Déroulède to allow his name to be placed on the list of candidates. The campaign circular

---

[26]Déroulède, Pages . . . ., p. 234.

[27]Ibid., p. 235.

[28]Ibid.

distributed by Déroulède to the voters of Paris and the *département de la Seine* revealed the unmitigated arrogance of the man. He declared that everyone knew of him and his causes and that nothing else concerned him. If the voters wished to elect him, then, so be it, he would accept.[29]

For the first time the League of Patriots was drawn into an overt political campaign, although Déroulède did not request the League's support nor openly align himself with it. He ran as an independent republican candidate. His campaign platform was consistent with his previous efforts. Anxious to assure the welfare of the workers he advocated a program of reform; he wanted to open higher education to the sons of the workers and increase the schools of commerce, industry, and agriculture. He also desired the state to begin a program of accident and retirement insurance and levy a special tax on foreign workers whose competition lowered the job opportunities and pay of the French workers. To strengthen respect for the law he proposed an obligatory three years military duty for all citizens, the rigorous application of the Concordat of 1801, and prohibition of priests from voting. He opposed the evacuation of Tonkin, Indo-China, favored replacement of French troops by native troops, and desired the area to be reserved solely for French commerce. Another campaign circular prepared by his campaign committee claimed 100,000 Frenchmen of the League loved and followed Déroulède and no one was more popular.

> In the name of the nation which he has always served,
> in the name of the Republic which he again defends,

---

[29]*Le Temps*, October 2, 1885.

> in the name of the nation which he would reestablish in its prosperity, in its greatness, vote for Déroulède, the soldier, poet, orator, democrat![30]

Unfortunately for Déroulède, there were many candidates more popular. He obtained 60,408 out of 378,000 votes cast in the scrutin de liste on October 4, 1885, and was not elected. In fact, the official results of the balloting placed the ultra-nationalist 116th out of 147 candidates for the thirty-eight seats available in the Seine. His total vote was insufficient to qualify him for the run-off election. Among the victors on the first balloting were such notables as Anatole de la Forge, Charles Floquet, and Georges Clemenceau.[31] Déroulède had led the League into its first political adventure, and it had failed. Frustrated by his defeat and recognizing his lack of public appeal, he was ready to turn over to someone else the reins of leadership. But the big task was to find a suitable figurehead who could attract the popular attention and who would be amenable to Déroulède's ideas. Déroulède had already spotted just such a man and now utilized his eloquence in his favor. The man was General Georges Boulanger, and the association of Déroulède and Boulanger would almost destroy the Third Republic and would discredit the League of Patriots.

---

[30] Canu and Buisson, Déroulède et sa Ligue, p. 47.

[31] Le Temps, October 11, 1885.

CHAPTER III

In the cause of revanche Paul Déroulède had envisioned an important role for the gymnastic and rifle societies with which he had affiliated himself since the creation of the League in 1882. He saw in them a crucible for the molding of the physical strength and moral fiber necessary for the restoration of French glory. Late in 1883 Déroulède went to the office of the Director of the Infantry to obtain a permit, which he received, for his societies of gymnasts to pass through the capital carrying arms. There he was received by a young general who impressed Déroulède greatly. Although the general said nothing specific about politics, Déroulède managed to gather the impression that he had contempt for the French parliamentary system and lacked enthusiasm for colonial adventures. The general had spent some time in the United States on the occasion of the Centenary celebrations of American independence. The visit stirred in the superior officer a lively admiration for the American republic. When Déroulède left this interview, he returned to the meeting hall of the League and told several friends, "I have found our man. His name is Boulanger."[1]

For several years this meeting was tucked away in Déroulède's memory to be called upon when needed. After he had failed to win election to the Chamber of Deputies in late 1885, Déroulède looked for other means to advance his program on the national level. On January 8, 1886, Charles de Freycinet, the new premier, announced the

---

[1]Tharaud, La vie et la mort, p. 42.

composition of his new government. The post of Minister of War went, as usual, to a soldier; this time it was General Georges Boulanger. Déroulède decided that his chance had come. He was not willing to allow France to rest in the quest for revenge and could not be diverted nor restrained.

While conducting his campaign for the Chamber in 1885, Déroulède had reached the conclusion that the Constitution of 1875 must either be reformed or destroyed.[2] Until that time he had preferred to remain divorced from internal politics. However, the rather elementary idea that a nation cannot adequately devote itself to external affairs until its internal affairs are stable suddenly dawned on him. He noted, like General Charles de Gaulle a century later, that politics "composed of unceasing competition and permanent conflicts, with no strong person to serve as arbitrator, was nothing less than governmental anarchy organized for the profit of the rather dishonest class of politicians."[3] In Boulanger Déroulède thought he saw the kind of strong man needed to bring order out of the chaos of French politics.

Hoping to lay the foundation for a movement toward this end, Déroulède approached Boulanger on the day after the formation of the new cabinet. After requesting Boulanger to make no immediate reply to his proposals, Déroulède made a plea for his support. He explained

---

[2]Déroulède's criticisms of the Constitution of 1875 were vague and unspecific at this point. His clearest statement on the evils of the parliamentary government created by the constitution was not made until 1909. Generally, he felt that the constitution thwarted vigorous executive leadership, which he believed necessary for a strong France, and provided openings for corrupt and self-serving politicians.

[3]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 72.

to the general the difficulties involved in trying to restore France to greatness while plagued with the government created by the "Orleanist" constitution. He wanted Boulanger to use his powers as Minister of War to prepare for the eventual reform of the government under his leadership. Déroulède promised to support Boulanger with the three hundred thousand members of the League of Patriots.[4] Déroulède personally would make a trip to the major European countries to explain that the "revolution"[5] would have as its purpose the restoration of order, the ending of sterile agitations, the diminishing of corruption, and the advancement of social progress. To achieve this goal a strong man would rule, consented to and aided by the will of the people expressed through universal manhood suffrage. Déroulède ended by telling Boulanger that he had a great role to play for the republic and

---

[4]It is difficult to determine with any reliability the actual membership of the League. Several sources give the figure 300,000. (See article on Déroulède in Dictionaire de biographie Française, Vol. 10, pp. 1144-46; Galli, Déroulède par lui-meme, p. 64; and Tharaud, La vie et la mort, p. 39.) On other occasions Déroulède himself gave the figure 182,000. (See Le Drapeau, April 25, 1885.) However, Canu, a former delegate to the executive committee of the League, and Buisson, former stenographer for the League, claimed in 1889 that the league had never had 182,000 members and that some names were on the rolls as many as four or five times. (See Canu and Buisson, Déroulède et sa Ligue, pp. 34-35.) Frederic Seager stated that the League of Patriots reached its peak membership of about 82,000 in 1886 and declined numerically thereafter. (See Frederic H. Seager, The Boulanger Affair: Political Crossroads of France, 1886-1889 [Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969], p. 71.) Hereafter referred to as Seager, The Boulanger Affair. Seager's book is well-researched and thoroughly documented. However, in an effort to prove his thesis he sometimes overstated his case.

[5]Déroulède was not specific at this time as to the method to be used in this "revolution." But since constitutional revision was one of his goals, Déroulède likely realized that he would have to work outside established legal channels.

for the country, and that the presidency could be his within a year if he wanted it. Boulanger made no direct reply, but he had listened with attention and interest. Déroulède left the meeting confident that he had made an ally.[6]

This man in whom Déroulède placed his hope for a rejuvenated France was born at Rennes in 1837. His father had been a spendthrift solicitor who moved to Nantes after going bankrupt. After attending the lycée Boulanger saw in the army a good career for a man with ambition and no background. The empire offered the chance for rapid promotion and prestige. Boulanger graduated from the military academy at Saint-Cyr in 1856 and began a fine career as a regimental officer. He took part in four campaigns and acquitted himself well. By 1871 he was a full colonel. In the tradition of the French officer, he had taken no interest in politics.

Boulanger received a temporary setback in 1872 that caused him to take a more active interest in the political affairs of the new republic. A commission on the revision of rank in the post-war army decided that Boulanger had advanced too quickly for his age. His demotion to a lieutenant-colonelcy caused Boulanger to attempt to resign. The Minister of War persuaded him to withdraw his resignation, but the sting of his setback lingered in his mind even after he became colonel again in 1874. He realized that the Third Republic offered fewer chances for advancement than had the empire. He sought the good will of his corps commander, the Duc d'Aumale, the son of Louis Philippe, and of several Radical politicians, including Gambetta. When he was

---

[6]Tharaud, La vie et la mort, pp. 41-45; or Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, pp. 71-75.

promoted to Brigadier-General in 1880, he addressed a letter of thanks to the Duc d'Aumale. After this promotion he went on his short mission to America and served two years as Director of Infantry. In 1884 he became full General of Division and was posted to Tunisia to command the French forces of occupation.[7]

It was not long before Boulanger and Paul Cambon, the Resident in Tunisia, found themselves in conflict over the role of the military in the affairs of the protectorate. As long as Jules Ferry had been Prime Minister, Boulanger had curtailed his activities and behaved in accordance with Ferry's instructions to place himself under the authority of Cambon. But this restraint ended when Ferry's government expired in March, 1885. Boulanger then began to push the demands of the soldiers for the extension of their privileges and authority. Eventually Cambon asked for Boulanger's recall. Cambon was appointed Resident-General with powers over all other French authorities in Tunisia; however, the value of this appointment was doubtful for a while, since Boulanger had been assured the support of the Minister of War. Ultimately, Boulanger was recalled for an enquiry and replaced in November.[8]

The setback was of short duration since Boulanger became Freycinet's Minister of War in January, 1886. Immediately the new minister began the task of restoring the morale of the army, which had suffered from brutal discipline, poor food and lodging, and degrading conditions. More comfort for the enlisted men, privileges

---

[7]Dansette, Le Boulangisme, pp. 19-27.

[8]Ibid., p. 27-31.

for the trained soldier and non-commissioned officer suitable to their seniority, and smarter uniforms for all were effective levers for raising the esprit de corps of the troops. Boulanger also urged the acceptance of more modern weapons, including the Lebel magazine rifle, for the army. The Radicals rejoiced when Boulanger undertook innovations that were conspicuously "republican." He used soldiers in a miners' strike at Decazeville to show that he could be both the guardian of order and the friend of the worker. The Minister of War used a law of June, 1886, which provided that the heads and heirs of former reigning families could not enter military service, as an excuse to dismiss seven princes from their commands, among them the Duc d'Aumale. Naturally the royalists objected strongly and used letters from Boulanger to the Duc d'Aumale in an attempt to discredit the minister. Some of the General's former supporters began to drift away. Boulanger denied the authenticity of the letters, weathered the crisis, and soon the episode was forgotten.[9]

General Boulanger possessed those surface qualities which made him attractive to the ordinary citizen. He was a striking figure on horseback with his blond beard and prominent cheekbones. He rode a magnificent black horse that enhanced his military bearing. His blue eyes and personal charm made a strong impression on the press, which he took pains to cultivate. An indication of his popularity occurred when cheers for Boulanger drowned those for President Grévy on the occasion of a review at Longchamps on July 14, 1886. Some of

---

[9]John Roberts, "General Boulanger," History Today, V (October, 1955), pp. 660-61. Hereafter cited as Roberts, "Boulanger."

this cheering had been organized by Paul Déroulède and his League of Patriots, but the crowds responded to it instantly and willingly.[10]

When Freycinet's government was replaced in December, Boulanger retained his portfolio in the new cabinet under René Goblet. At this time Otto von Bismarck, the German Chancellor, was attempting to force an increased military budget through the Reichstag. To accomplish his purpose Bismarck was willing to provoke a war scare with France. He implied that the threat of war existed as long as Boulanger was Minister of War. The use of Boulanger's name by Bismarck in such fashion merely served to increase the popularity of the general, who had long advocated revenge against Germany. When Bismarck got his budget passed, the tension relaxed; but it was aroused again in April, 1887, when a French customs official, Guillaume Schnaebele, was lured across the border into Germany to be arrested as a spy. It developed that Boulanger had used, without authorization, customs officials as agents. However, since the man had crossed the border at the invitation of his German counterpart, Bismarck had him released after a week. The average Frenchman believed Bismarck had given way out of fear of Boulanger.[11]

The moderate republicans had become alarmed by the general's recklessness and wished to remove him from office. But the man was too popular to be dismissed summarily. The entire ministry had to be replaced. Goblet's government resigned on May 18, 1887, after a defeat on a minor budgetary issue. The moderate republicans had become

---

[10]Canu and Buisson, Déroulède et sa Ligue, p. 70.

[11]Brogan, The Development . . . ., pp. 189-90.

so alarmed by the growing prestige of "General Revanche" that, for the first time since the founding of the republic, the moderates and the monarchists formed a coalition under Maurice Rouvier.

To the crowds, the removal of Boulanger meant that patriotism had been cast out by the politicians, who were seeking to serve their own ends. The popularity of the man had been demonstrated already when 38,457 wrote in his name in a Paris by-election at the suggestion of Henri Rochefort, the editor of L'Intransigeant. Already concern over Boulanger's ambitions found expression in the French press. In reporting the results of this election Le Temps stated that it saw in the Boulanger vote the expression of a regrettable whim on the part of some Frenchmen. The paper realized that the leaders of this movement were trying to impose Boulanger as a necessary minister in any future cabinet, but this action opened the door for the restoration of "caesarism."[12] Now out of office Boulanger became the symbol of a patriotism that was above party squabbles.

The government was frightened by Boulangism and reacted by posting the general to command the XIII Corps in the Auvergne. This action did not please the mob of Boulangists. A huge throng gathered at the Gare de Lyon to cheer for Boulanger and attempt to prevent his departure. People covered the tracks with their bodies and refused to respond to appeals made by Paul Déroulède and others to disperse. Déroulède addressed the crowd:

> Citizens . . . calm down! . . . Your presence here says all that needs to be said. Everyone one understands. . . .

---

[12] Le Temps, May 24, 1887.

> But, Citizens, we are not now summoned to face the enemy. You can retreat. To the rear! Vive Boulanger! Vive la France! Vive la République![13]

His speech was applauded, but the crowd did not budge. Boulanger, who was jostled, constricted, and had his feet trampled by the overly-enthusiastic crowd, lost his taste, temporarily, for publicity. Eventually officials had to resort to subterfuge to get the general out of Paris. The potential strength of Boulangism had been revealed by this episode.[14]

Undoubtedly the government hoped that the popularity of Boulanger would ebb with his removal from public view. Clemenceau and other former supporters had renounced him publicly because they feared he would become another Louis Napoleon. Clemenceau had been badly frightened by the events at the Gare de Lyon, and this occurrence was final and convincing proof to him that his former protegé was a dangerous man.[15] Some others were slower in understanding the Boulanger phenomenon, although realization was not long delayed. A biographer of Jean Jaurès, the leading socialist of the period stated:

> By the spring of 1888 he [Jaurès] had formulated his understanding of Boulangism, finding in it most of those ingredients that a later age found in Fascism. A movement exploiting ultra-patriotism, accepting support from all the discontented, espousing a program vague enough to mean anything to anyone, such a movement, Jaurès charged now, was a threat to freedom.[16]

---

[13]Dansette, Le boulangisme, p. 98.

[14]Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[15]Roger L. Williams, Henry Rochefort, Prince of the Gutter Press (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 204.

[16]Harvey Goldberg, The Life of Jean Jaurès (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), p. 50.

Only eccentrics like Rochefort and Déroulède continued to give the general unqualified allegiance. The failure of the moderates to maintain order in their own ranks resurrected the movement, which had been partially stifled by the removal of Boulanger from Paris.

While Boulanger was out of sight in his command, the Wilson scandal broke. Daniel Wilson, the son-in-law of President Grévy, had used his position as deputy and his influence with the president to obtain appointments to the order of the Legion of Honor for those who would pay him an adequate fee. A prostitute involved in the affair attempted to implicate Boulanger in the scandal. When her charge was disproved, sympathy for the general escalated, especially since he had been placed under close arrest (which he had violated) for thirty days. The scandal badly damaged the prestige of the government; and Grévy, who was not personally involved in the mess, was forced to resign.[17]

All the elements that hoped for a basic change in the form of government were elated over the acute embarrassment which the parliamentary republic had suffered. They sought to use Boulanger for their own ends. That ambitious man was susceptible to persuasion from anyone who could aid him in regaining a position of power. Not only was he receptive to the pleadings of Rochefort and Déroulède, who wanted a republic with strong executive leadership, but he also conducted clandestine conferences with Baron de Mackau, an Orleanist, and Prince Napoleon, the Bonapartist pretender.[18] The Orleanists

---

[17]Brogan, Modern France, pp. 192-99; and Dansette, Le boulangisme, pp. 106-119.

[18]Roberts, "Boulanger," pp. 664.

saw in Boulanger a man who could prepare the way for a restoration; the Bonapartists advocated a plebiscitary remedy for the ills of the republic; and Déroulède and his patriots wanted Boulanger to purge the republic in the cause of revanche. For a time Boulanger was able to hide his collusion with these factions from each of the other two. He had no scruples and would use any means to get back into the war office.

Boulanger and his various supporters had a common interest in his advancement. In February, 1888, his name was placed on the list of candidates for a by-election to the Chamber of Deputies. Under the system of scrutin de liste the whole department voted to elect one deputy. Boulanger told the war office that he had nothing to do with the candidacy. This was not true, as the government soon discovered. After he had won an election in the département of the Aisne in March, he was dismissed from the service. This forced retirement freed Boulanger to campaign in earnest and openly. Boulanger's first big effort was in the département of the Nord in a by-election in April, 1888. Since the Nord was a big manufacturing area, the election was of great importance. Although the local papers were against him, copies of La Lanterne, L'Intransigeant, and La Cocarde were sent up in great numbers. Popular sentiment began to swing in his favor.[19]

On April 15, 1888, Boulanger won the election by a more than two to one majority.[20] This he accomplished without being explicit on the changes he hoped to make in the government. He was running on

---

[19]New York Times, April 8, 1888.

[20]Dansette, Le boulangisme, p. 140.

the popularity of his name. When questioned before the election as to his plans for revision he had said; "That is my secret which I shall keep to myself."[21] The possible consequences of Boulanger's growing popularity began to cause international apprehension. The New York Times editorialized that:

> A government that takes its tone from a popular hero partakes of his personal character. When he is a soldier who looks upon the politics of civilians only as affording him an opportunity to run a professional career, when he is "the man on horseback" as the phrase goes, his ascendency distinctly threatens the peace.[22]

Yet in France, Boulanger's support was reaching floodtide proportions.

While General Boulanger had been working to advance his personal ambitions, Paul Déroulède had been endeavoring to advance the cause of revanche, using Boulanger as the symbol of reform and restoration. Déroulède was seeking to prepare the nation for revision of the government to provide strong leadership so that a war to regain the lost provinces could soon begin. He was impatient with those who wanted to proceed with deliberation as regards the reacquisition of Alsace-Lorraine, and he could not stomach those who were willing to write off those areas as permanently lost. In Déroulède's opinion, all that was required to restore the lost territory was the proper leadership and the proper spirit on the part of the people.

Déroulède was deeply concerned with convincing the nation that it did not have to wait long for a war of revenge. In his speeches he continually dwelled on the theme that the French army could shortly

---

[21] New York Times, April 5, 1888.

[22] Ibid., April 20, 1888.

be ready for victorious conquest. In 1886 J. H. O. Barthélemy, a member of the League of Patriots, wrote a book designed to prove that France was ready for war against Germany or could become so on short notice. The book made the point that, militarily, France would be ready whenever the government was willing to act. Déroulède wrote the preface to the book, which was dedicated to the League. In the preface he scolded all those who would attempt reconciliation with Germany before the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine. He could see no justification for good relations with the Germans as long as France was a beaten nation. He declared: "Yes, certainly, rapprochement between France and Germany is necessary, but by means of arms; yes, certainly it would be useful and fruitful, but only by victory."[23] Déroulède claimed that a war of revenge would be not only a conflict for honor and self-interest, but it would be a war for justice for the dispossessed people of Alsace-Lorraine.

Déroulède was disgusted with those who argued that France could take its time in seeking revenge, on the ground that Prussia had waited over sixty years to make up for her defeat at Jena. Under Déroulède's inspiration Henri Galli wrote a book entitled L'Allemagne en 1813, which had as its thesis the idea that the Prussians had gained revenge at the Battle of Leipzig in 1813 and at the Peace Conference of Vienna in 1814-15. Again Déroulède wrote the preface.[24] He stressed the fact that it had taken the Prussians only seven years

---

[23]J. H. O. Barthélemy, Avant la Bataille, Préface de Paul Déroulède (Paris: A Lévy et Cie., Éditeurs, 1886), p. VIII.

[24]H. Galli, L'Allemagne en 1813, Préface de Paul Déroulède (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1889), pp. I-III.

after Jena to be ready for Leipzig. More than twice that time had passed for France, but revenge was no nearer.

Since Déroulède was not willing to tolerate any further delay, he was ready to take an active part in supplying France with the firm leadership necessary for revanche. He began to work with all the resources at his command to advance the cause of Boulanger. He made speeches throughout France and did all that he could to raise money for Boulanger's coffers.[25] Déroulède was convinced that foreign alliances would be most useful, perhaps essential, for the success of any mission against Germany. He also wanted the good will of Europe for the overthrow of the Third Republic by Boulanger. To serve this end Déroulède made an extended tour of several European states in 1886. On his return from this trip Déroulède spoke to the League of Patriots to report his activities and observations.[26] He spent much time in Russia traveling to the major cities and attempting to persuade the Russians to form an alliance with France. Among others, he talked to the great Russian novelist Leo Tolstoi, and reported at length his conversation with him. Déroulède believed that he had made some converts while in Russia. He reported: "The panslavist party chorused with me against the European pangermanists. And for the first time the Russian press discussed and foresaw the possibility of an alliance of interest between the Empire of the Tsars and the French Republic."[27]

---

[25]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 85; Dansette, Le boulangisme, pp. 62, 113.

[26]For a complete report of Déroulède's trip see the issues of Le Drapeau for December 4, and December 11, 1886.

[27]Le Drapeau, "France et Russie," October 30, 1886.

Deroulede said that everywhere on his trip he continued his double propaganda; to denounce the Germans as the oppressors of Europe and announce Boulanger as the future liberator of France.

Naturally Déroulède hoped to use the organization which he had founded to push Boulanger to the pinnacle of power. However, as the Boulanger movement gained strength in 1887 and 1888, Déroulède discovered, perhaps to his surprise, that his proposed remedy for the ills of France did not meet the approval of the entire membership of his League. The League of Patriots was organized on a democratic basis. It had over five hundred local units scattered throughout France, although the bulk of the membership was located in Paris.[28] Each unit of the League selected a delegate to represent it at the General Assembly of Committee Delegates. It was this group that chose the Board of Directors for the League, which in turn selected the president. The first president was Henri Martin, and he was followed by Anatole de la Forge, an eminent Deputy from Paris who resigned on Déroulède's entrance into politics in 1885. Déroulède then became honorary president of the League. The early membership of the League included some famous figures such as Félix Faure and Léon Gambetta. According to one recent historian, the League was "Gambetta's favorite veterans organization," and had been fostered to keep alive the great issues of the nation while the Chamber was being fragmented by political factions.[29] However, the League opened its roster to others besides

---

[28]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, p. 71.

[29]Nicholas Halasz, Captain Dreyfus: The Story of a Mass Hysteria (New York: Grove Press, 1955), p. 92. Hereafter cited as Halasz, Captain Dreyfus.

veterans and retained until 1885 its original political neutrality. While there were some influential and prestigious names on its membership list, the League attracted to its ranks primarily shop clerks, merchants, and factory workers, along with some of the middle bourgeosie.[30] One of the authorities on Boulangism claimed that intelligent Frenchmen refused to be swayed by the sentimentality and flamboyant parades of the League and withheld their adherence, although initially they regarded the organization with complacency.[31] In the first years after the creation of the League Déroulède had approached the great Biblical scholar Ernest Renan in an attempt to elicit his support for the group. Renan had said to him: "Young man, France is dying; do not trouble her agony!"[32] But such rebuffs did not deter the super-patriot.

Canu and Buisson, two former members of the League who had disapproved of Déroulède's involvement of the League in politics, published a book in 1889 that gave a detailed account of the fragmentation of the organization.[33] Déroulède's single-minded devotion to his cause and his contempt for any activity of the government which he felt detracted from revenge caused some of the members of the

---

[30]Dansette, Le boulangisme, p. 63; Francois Goguel, La politiques des partis sous la IIIe République (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1946), p. 94.

[31]Dansette, Le boulangisme, p. 63.

[32]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 70.

[33]It is interesting to note that the later biographers of Déroulède make little, if any, mention of the internal dissensions in the League. Nor does Déroulède himself ever refer to these episodes in the life of his organization. However, careful study of Le Drapeau and other journals of the time confirm that a split in the group did, in fact, occur.

League to begin to leave the fold as early as 1885. On the occasion of his resignation as president of the League in that same year, Anatole de la Forge told Déroulède: "You are an authoritarian patriot, but I am a liberal patriot." Déroulède responded that he had tried to maintain the political impartiality of the League, but the current state of affairs in France made him sick and forced him to give his opinion.[34] More members of the League drifted away when Déroulède campaigned for the Deputies in 1885. The moderate republicans began to suspect that Déroulède was not a republican at heart and that he was, perhaps, a Bonapartist because of his emphasis on the need for a strong executive, which they felt could lead to "Caesarism."

The growing disaffection in the ranks of his own cohorts discouraged Déroulède. For a time he began to feel that all his efforts and work for so many years were to no avail. Disheartened by the death of his elder sister, Mme Heurtey, and using his sorrow on that occasion as an excuse, he resigned from the League on April 20, 1887.[35] He had also suffered a rebuke by the League's board of directors for organizing a demonstration against Jules Ferry.[36] However, his absence lasted only a short time. The arrest of some Alsace-Lorrainers for possessing the French flag brought him back eager again for the fray. As the Boulanger movement gained speed, more members of the League began to make known their dissatisfaction with Déroulède's involvement in internal politics because this was a violation of the frequently-stated policy of political neutrality.

---

[34]Canu and Buisson, Déroulède et sa Ligue, pp. 32-33.

[35]Le Figaro, April 21, 1887.

[36]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, p. 193.

Especially disgusting to some was the new friendship between Déroulède and Henri Rochefort, the extremist who had been imprisoned in the south Pacific for his participation in the Paris Commune of 1871. Rochefort and Déroulède were old antagonists whose enmity dated from their days on opposite sides in the Paris Commune. The witty Rochefort had once quipped: "Déroulèdism, . . ., is a desease newly confirmed by the Academy of Medicine. The effects of this strange affliction closely resemble rabies, to the point that M. Pasteur has been charged with discovering the microbe."[37] However, Boulangism had reconciled the two men, for one was an opportunist who would embrace any partner in an effort to have his dreams realized, while the other was an opportunist per se.

Matters came to a head within the League when Déroulède supported, in the name of the League, Grévy for president against Jules Ferry. This was an overt political act in direct violation of the League's purpose to remain politically neutral.[38] Once again succumbing to the pressure of opposition, Déroulède resigned as honorary president for the second time on December 6, 1887. On December 15, the delegates of the League met and reaffirmed their abstention from internal politics. Déroulède now had no organization to support him, although he did retain control of Le Drapeau. For several months the League reverted to its former policy of political impartiality. However, shortly after submitting his resignation, Déroulède formed an "Action Group" of leaguers favorable to Boulanger.

---

[37]Dansette, Le boulangisme, pp. 150-51.

[38]Canu and Buisson, Déroulède et sa Ligue, pp. 30-90.

"At its inception, the Action Group numbered only fifteen members, but these grew to nearly three hundred by mid-April, 1888."[39] In March, 1888, the League underwent a reorganization, with Déroulède remaining detached. But Déroulède was by now a fanatic with a cause and with his goal in sight. He was not ready to give way to democratic procedures within his own organization and submit to being shunted to the sidelines.

Déroulède and his cohorts still within the League resolved on the use of a coup d'etat to regain control of the group. On the 16th of April, 1888, while some of the members of the Comité-Directeur were away from Paris, those on the committee who supported Déroulède convoked a meeting on the Boulanger question. Only 19 of the 30 members were present. By a vote of 10 to 7 the committee approved the following order: "The Comité-Directeur, in complete agreement with the views of Paul Déroulède, re-elect him president of honor of the League."[40] Many protests resulted from this action, and Henri Deloncle, a member of the committee and former editor of Le Drapeau, was suspended because of his protest published in the National on April 20, 1888. A few days later on April 22, the general assembly of the League refused to ratify the order of the committee regarding the re-election of Déroulède.

Still the ultra-nationalist refused to be stopped. He and his supporters led a splinter movement against the duly-constituted leadership of the League. The Board of Directors was now in an

---

[39]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, p. 194.

[40]Canu and Buisson, Déroulède et sa Ligue, pp. 131-32.

undefendable position. The League owed Déroulède more money than it could possibly pay; he had subsidized the organization from the start and owned Le Drapeau outright. The directors voted to release to Déroulède as his personal property the offices and lecture hall of the League; then they resigned as a group.[41] On April 25, the members of the Action Group met in the conference hall of the League. Déroulède read the resignation of Féry d'Esclands, president of the League, and the new program of the organization was approved.

> The undersigned, in perfect agreement of ideas with Paul Déroulède, and deploring like him the current situation in France, impose on the patriots the urgent duty of removing immediately all the internal difficulties in the League and the forcible expulsion of the henceforth unpardonable policy of neutrality.
>
> We approve the entrance of the League of Patriots into the revisionist movement.
>
> We adhere to its new program which is clearly political and declare ourselves partisans resolved to reform and reorganize the republic and to re-establish the national prosperity, the first condition for which is the return of Alsace-Lorraine.[42]

Déroulède was now ready to launch all his forces into the Boulanger movement without any restrictions.

The majority of the League's directors, who had been by-passed by Déroulède's coup, and, possibly, a majority of the total membership of the League were now left without an organization. Some of them formed in early May, 1888, the Union patriotique de France and continued the original non-partisan program of the League.[43] Henri Deloncle, the former editor of Le Drapeau and friend of Déroulède who

---

[41]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, p. 194.

[42]Le Drapeau, April 29, 1888.

[43]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, p. 194.

had edited in 1887 a collection of the super-patriot's speeches,[44] now ran for election to the Chamber from the département of Grenoble. Déroulède described him as a Ferryist and anti-Boulangist candidate.[45] Others also joined the ranks of the opposition to the "man on horseback."

Boulanger had, by this time, surrounded himself with an odd assortment of supporters. This was possible because, having manifested no ideas of his own, everyone could hope that he would realize theirs. In addition to Déroulède and Rochefort, there were some Radical republicans who tried to force their program on Boulanger. The general resisted this because he had come to rely heavily on royalist support. The Orleanists distrusted him but concluded that his name could help them in the elections. On May 25, 1888, the deputies on the Right constituted a Ligue de la consultation nationale to advocate constitutional revision.[46] The Bonapartists were even more willing to support Boulanger.

By June this motley assortment was ready for testing in action. The Radical supporters had now formed the National Republican Party with headquarters in Paris. Boulanger was installed as president, Senator Alfred Naquet was vice-president; and Comte Dillon was treasurer. This group "lacked cohesion and each acted according to his own temperament. Déroulède made his gestures, Rochefort his quips, Naquet his arguments; Laguerre intimidated; Dillon horse-traded."[47]

---

[44]Paul Déroulède, La livre de la Ligue des Patriotes (Paris: Bureaux de la Ligue et du Drapeau, 1887).

[45]L'Intransigeant, May 13, 1888.

[46]Dansette, Le boulangisme, p. 185.

[47]Ibid., p. 193.

On June 4th, Boulanger, after taking his seat representing the Nord, opened the campaign with a provocative speech in the Chamber which inspired Charles Floquet, the Prime Minister, to quip: "At your age, General Boulanger, Napoleon was dead."[48] This bad start presaged an electoral defeat on the 17th. But it was not Boulanger himself who lost. Déroulède was the candidate in this by-election in the Charente.

He had entered the race hoping to prove that the Boulangists constituted a real party, not just the lackeys of a popular hero. Boulanger promised support for his lieutenant and publicly stated that a vote for Déroulède was a vote for Boulanger.[49] The Charente was largely Bonapartist in sentiment and, since it was far from the German frontier, not overly concerned about Franco-German relations. Déroulède, in an open letter to the voters, claimed that the ascension to the German throne of Wilhelm II was a victory for the Prussian war party.[50] This appeal apparently made little impression for the revanchist, who also was handicapped by facing the opposing candidacy of the Bonapartist Gellibert de Seguins. Déroulède had openly sought the support of the Bonapartists in this campaign,[51] but they were not ready to vote for anyone but the general. In the election Seguins garnered 31,439 votes; an Opportunist candidate named Weiller received 23,993 votes; and Déroulède amassed only 20,674. It is significant, perhaps, that the leaguer carried the city of Angoulême, which he later

---

[48]Roberts, "Boulanger," p. 665.

[49]L'Action, June 1, 1888.

[50]L'Intransigeant, June 18, 1888.

[51]Le National, "L'Apotre du coup de poing," June 6, 1888.

represented in the Chamber when scrutin d'arrondissement was reinstituted.[52]

The Paris correspondent to the New York Times concluded that the failure of Déroulède was likely to prove a severe blow to General Boulanger.

> There will be another election, and unless the Bonapartists can be induced to take up M. Déroulède, which is hardly possible, the Boulangist will fail completely. Considering the audacity of naming a feather-head like him, his utter failure would be a great gain to the cause of peace and order in France.[53]

Naquet announced Déroulède's withdrawal from the race and requested Weiller to withdraw in favor of a "Republican revisionist."[54] Weiller refused, and the Boulangist committee ordered Déroulède's voters to cast their ballots for the Opportunist in the run-off elections. Thus the committee had to oppose a Bonapartist, with whose party it was officially allied, because of their strong commitment to republicanism. Still, Seguins won the election.[55]

Division in the ranks of the movement was appearing, with more trouble to come. Boulanger had an altercation in the Chamber with Floquet and resigned on July 12. The next day the two men fought a duel with swords. The general looked foolish when he impaled himself on the civilian's weapon. The movement seemed to lose the support of the crowd and was in danger of collapsing. An electoral loss on July 22, apparently substantiated this impression. However, on August 19,

---

[52]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, p. 146.

[53]New York Times, June 20, 1888.

[54]La Presse, June 22, 1888.

[55]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, p. 147.

Boulanger won a big victory when he captured seats in three departments. Various factors contributed to this success, but a major one was money, contributed to his campaign by the Duchess d'Uzes, a royalist.[56]

Many of Boulanger's supporters were certain that the time had come for the reform of the government. But Boulanger had vanished. He had gone to Spain and Morocco with his mistress, Marguerite de Bonnemains, and did not return for two months. Déroulède was appalled. To a man so fanatical in his devotion to a cause as was Déroulède, Boulanger's actions were disappointing and incomprehensible.[57] By the time Boulanger returned, the effect of the triple victory had diminished. New efforts were required.

Both the forces of the parliamentarians and those of Boulanger were divided. The first group was afraid of constitutional reform but feared that it might be necessary. The latter group found that its composite elements were mutually incompatible, as could have been anticipated. The general tried to persuade each of the groups in his ranks that he was cooperating with the others for purely tactical reasons. But this was becoming increasingly hard to do. A new chance for victory in January, 1889, provided Boulanger with the cohesion of forces that he needed.

The death of a Parisian deputy supplied the Boulangists with the opportunity of winning an election that would, in effect, serve as a national plebiscite. The republicans offered only one candidate,

---

[56]Roberts, "Boulanger," p. 665.

[57]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 84.

a M. Edouard Jacques, the president of the Seine General Council and owner of a large distillery in Paris.[58] The issue was clear-cut: Boulanger or parliamentarism. (A third candidate from the extreme left posed little threat to the other two.) In an election speech for this campaign Boulanger stated that he had no plans to establish a dictatorship, but that he wanted constitutional revision by a democratically elected constituent assembly. He maintained that he was a republican and would not serve as a scapegoat for the ineptitude of the parliamentarians.[59] The Times correspondent thought it remarkable that Boulanger made any address at all. "Those who vote for him do not ask him to state his views. They simply ask him to be their standard-bearer in opposing what exists." The speech was either silent or vague on the major issues, but that was the strength of the address.[60]

Déroulède, maintaining since May, 1888, that it was not a man that he followed, but an idea,[61] threw all the forces at his command into the fray. While he recognized that Boulanger drew some support from the monarchists and the Bonapartists, Déroulède was convinced still that the bulk of Boulangist support was republican. In fact, he was right. Boulanger got most of his money and much of his campaign advice from monarchists and Bonapartists, but his votes came

---

[58]The Times (London), January 7, 1889.

[59]David Thomson (ed.), France: Empire and Republic, 1850-1940 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968), pp. 87-88.

[60]The Times (London), January 5, 1889.

[61]L'Intransigeant, May 18, 1888.

from the working classes of the streets who saw in their hero the prospect of national regeneration.

The League of Patriots threw its weight behind Boulanger and was a significant element in the triumph of January 27th. Déroulède had committees active in all the sections of Paris. Prior to the election they campaigned and distributed propaganda favorable to the movement. On the 26th of January, Déroulède mobilized his forces; he established his headquarters at the hotel Saint-James in the rue Saint-Honoré; and there he organized the last acts of the campaign. He posted men to keep watch over the counting of ballots. For the first time in a Paris election carriages, manned by members of the League, were used to carry voters to the polls. Canvassers were given lists of names and addresses of Panama shareholders and other classes of electors likely to vote for Boulanger.[62] On the evening of the 27th Déroulède concentrated his cohorts at the Place de la Madeleine outside a restaurant where Boulanger awaited the results.

Until recently, there was a widely accepted account of the events of the evening of January 27, 1889. As the vote results began to come in, the magnitude of the victory delighted the crowds. Boulanger had won by a margin of 245,000 to 180,000. The huge crowd began to shout for their hero and surged uncontrollably all over the area. Although a police agent in the crowd had a warrant for Boulanger's arrest and a regiment of infantry awaited any trouble at the Elysée, it is doubtful that any force would have been strong enough to protect the government on that evening. Déroulède and others were con-

---

[62] New York Times, January 28, 1889.

vinced that the proper psychological moment for action had arrived. Probably they were correct. The crowds pleaded with Boulanger to lead them in a march on the Elysée, and they responded joyfully and riotously to a harangue by Déroulède. But Boulanger was not the man for a coup. He refused to act illegally; he was not a Bonaparte after all. When he did come out of the restaurant, the crowds enveloped him and escorted him to his carriage, expecting to conduct the new deputy of Paris to the Elysée; but the false hero went home to bed with his mistress. Déroulède later claimed that the police, the republican guard, and the army of Paris with its officers were Boulangist. Everything was ready for the victory except Boulanger.[63]

A contemporary historian, in his recent (1969) book on Boulanger, presented a different interpretation of the situation in Paris on that historic evening and supported his contention with newspaper accounts and material gleaned from the Archives de préfecture de police. He claimed that the traditional account was a legend unsubstantiated by contemporary reports. While large crowds did gather in the streets around the Place de la Madeleine, they numbered closer to 30,000 than to the 100,000 usually given. Nothing in the events suggested a coup d'etat. "Rather, the eyewitness account of Chincholle, who was present at the restaurant on election night, relates that when a crowd did assemble outside, Déroulède asked the people to disperse."[64]

---

[63]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, pp. 84-86; Tharaud, La vie et la mort, pp. 64-81. Eugene Florent-Matter, Paul Déroulède (Paris: E. Sansot et Cie., 1909); Charles Braibant, Le secret d'Anatole France: du boulangisme au Panama (Paris: Denoël et Steele, 1935).

[64]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, p. 204. Cites Le Figaro, January 28, 1889.

This version was corroborated by Romain Rolland in his diary. "No mention of a possible coup can be found in press dispatches or police reports of the week following the by-election."[65]

Seager stated that Le Figaro began the legend after Boulanger's suicide in 1891. The story took on greater scope after the publication of Galli's book on Déroulède in 1900. Later biographers of Déroulède "embellished this theme to the point where he became the guiding spirit behind the entire Boulangist movement."[66] The version of J. and J. Tharaud, Déroulède's close friends and fellow leaguers, had Déroulède jumping on Boulanger's carriage as the latter was leaving Durand's restaurant in a vain attempt to have him change his direction and head for the Elysée. But Seager maintained that contemporary sources make it clear that no Boulangist advocated a coup d'etat in Paris after the victory.[67]

Both before and after the Paris election Boulanger and his associates had urged absolute calm on the part of the electors. The movement was intended to be democratic. Boulanger feared that any public agitation would only help the government; he expected time to aid him in his quest for power. Furthermore, Seager contended that a coup d'etat, had it been planned, could not have succeeded.

> Had Boulanger and his cohorts really wanted to stage a coup d'etat, they would have had to do far more than simply occupy the Elysée Palace. Control over the ministries, especially that of the Interior with its special telegraph, was a prerequisite. Saussier, the military governor of Paris, would have had to be arrested, along with leading

---

[65] Ibid., p. 205.

[66] Ibid., p. 206.

[67] Ibid., p. 207.

> Republican politicians. Finally, the complicity of the army was necessary before a government could be designated. Given the firm opposition to Boulanger on the part of the high officers, such complicity was far from assured . . . .
>
> In the final analysis, what prevented the Boulangists from resorting to force was the nature of their electoral strategy. As the self-proclaimed party of universal suffrage, they would have been hard put to explain to their followers why they bypassed the ballot box to assume power.[68]

In addition to the Paris newspaper accounts and police reports offered by Seager as support for his thesis, the articles filed by the Paris representatives of the London Times and New York Times made no mention of any coup. The Times reported in its staid fashion that Parisians received the results of the election "with rejoicing rather than uneasiness," but that the election might not have the serious consequences apprehended abroad. The Parisian electors always desired giving a lesson to the government of the day.[69] New York's correspondent reported no disturbances in Paris by midnight on the 27th.

> All the boulevards have been crowded with people waiting for news the whole evening. . . . and curiously enough the crowds were almost invariably against Boulanger. This seems to indicate that he was supported by the wealthier classes, including the hotel and upper shop keepers who desire better trade, but not by those who make up the street assemblage.[70]

This viewpoint is questionable due to the size of the Boulanger majority. A large number of the lower economic classes must have voted for Boulanger in order for him to achieve his impressive victory.

---

[68] Ibid., pp. 209-10.

[69] The Times (London), January 28, 1889.

[70] New York Times, January 28, 1889.

Admittedly, the events of that January night in Paris are open to differing interpretations. Roger Williams, in his book on Henri Rochefort, merely stated that "Eyewitnesses differ as to which of the Boulangists present were ready to take to the streets, and different explanations for the General's passivity have been advanced."[71] Certainly the Boulangists had no organized plans for a coup and were unready for action, which Rochefort admitted that night.[72] Yet Seager has probably overstated his case in attempting to make Déroulède's version a pure fictionalization presented when he could no longer be refuted by the principals in the incident. Déroulède exaggerated; he frequently believed his own exaggerations; but he seldom deliberately lied. Since he later stated that he had tried to convince Boulanger to march on the Elysée, he most likely did. If any of Boulanger's cohorts were likely to advocate a coup, it was Déroulède, a fervent man subject to emotional reactions to stirring events. Undoubtedly the government feared the possibility of precipitate action by the Boulangists. Otherwise, it would not have begun punitive actions against the leaders of the movement.

No matter which version of events one accepts, Boulanger's last and best chance was gone. After recovering from the initial shock of the election, the parliamentarians at last acted together. On February 13, scrutin de liste was replaced by scrutin d'arrondissement, and in July multiple candidacies were prohibited. Pierre Tiraud formed a new ministry based on a union of moderates and radicals. The government began to take severe repressive measures

---

[71] Williams, Henri Rochefort, p. 218.

[72] Ibid.

against Boulanger and his supporters. Leaders of the League were persecuted, including Déroulède, who was jailed at Angoulême for a few days. Boulanger was frightened and fled to Brussels for a short time in March, but he returned. However, rumors that he was to be arrested caused him to flee again. Déroulède and others appealed to Boulanger to return to serve at least as a martyr figure. But Boulanger could not overcome the possessiveness of his mistress.[73]

Without Boulanger in France the movement rapidly withered away. The League of Patriots, which by pretending to a monopoly of patriotism had long been a thorn in the pacific part of the population, was dissolved by the government,[74] and the royalist money had been spent. The last concerted effort came in the September elections. Throughout the summer of 1889 the Boulangists tried to hang on to their declining popularity and thwart the ministry's actions against them. The movement was beginning to fragment as the disparate factions went their separate ways. Alfred Naquet, one of the more intelligent advocates of Boulangism and Déroulède's close associate, stated his objectives in the movement. According to him, and he made no claim to speak for all Boulangists or Boulanger himself, the purpose was to make the will of the people effective while preserving order, justice, and internal peace. He believed this task impossible for a parliamentary ministry. His remedy was the separation of the executive branch from the legislative functions, the creation of an

---

[73]Roberts, "Boulanger," p. 667.

[74]The Times (London), March 5, 1889.

elective Executive for a fixed term, and the employment of the referendum or popular vote on questions of importance in Parliament,[75]

Meanwhile, Paul Déroulède, as he saw his hopes for success dim, became more frenzied in his efforts to effect a change in the government. Apparently he was party to a scheme to discredit the ministry by creating a great amount of disorder and fomenting a spirit of discontent. On July 12, he made an uproarious disturbance in the gallery of the Chamber of Deputies. Then on July 14, he attempted to cause a riot in the streets. Having been forbidden by the police to make a speech in front of the Strasburg monument, he encouraged the crowd with shouts for Boulanger, resisted arrest, and, when the crowd was dispersed, drove to the office of La Presse and began operations all over again. These antics did his cause no good, especially since this was bad for business during the Paris Exposition.[76]

As the date of the September elections approached, the Boulangists continued to hold meetings and create a number of minor incidents. On August 30, the Count of Paris urged "tolerance of the Boulangists," whose program of revision would release France from servitude and restore religious peace.[77] Boulangists campaigned all over the country, but funds were low and planning ill-conceived. Clemenceau and the Radicals advocated revision of the constitution but insisted that they were not Boulangists in any way.[78]

---

[75]New York Times, June 27, 1889.

[76]New York Times, July 15, 1889.

[77]New York Times, August 31, 1889.

[78]New York Times, September 21, 1889.

The elections on September 22, 1889, proved to be a complete disaster for Boulangism. Boulanger won a seat from his arrondissement in Montmartre, although his majority was not as large as anticipated. (He was later denied his seat on the legal technicality that a warrant for his arrest was out at the time of the election.) Henri Rochefort's failure to get a majority in Belleville was a great blow to the Boulangists. The only conspicuous and surprising success was the defeat of René Goblet at Amiens by Alexandre Millevoye, a Déroulède-type Boulangist.[79] Although Déroulède won a seat from his arrondissement at Angoulême in the Charente, easily defeating the republican candidate, a M. Donzole, by 10,475 votes to 3,893, only forty-four Boulangists and one hundred and forty royalists were returned. "In the first of a spate of postmortems, Déroulède blamed his party's failure on governmental pressures on the voters, as well as outright fraud. At the same time, he admitted that sincere love for the Republic had prompted many Frenchmen to oppose Boulanger and his movement."[80] The disclosure of the source of Boulanger's funds blew the surviving fragments of Boulangism spart in the spring of 1890. On July 15, 1891, Boulanger's mistress died of cancer in Brussels. Broken in spirit, Boulanger took roses to her grave on September 30, and shot himself. His last testament stated: "I have done nothing for which I reproach myself. All my life, I have done my duty, nothing but my duty."[81]

---

[79]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, pp. 240-41; Dansette, Le boulangisme, pp. 332-38; New York Times, September 23, 1889.

[80]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, pp. 241-42.

[81]Roberts, "Boulanger," p. 668.

Many reasons have been proffered to account for the popularity of Boulanger and Boulangism. Dansette placed Boulanger in the Napoleonic tradition because he posed a problem in familiar terms: the Man or the Assembly. Boulanger was a cry of hope to a beaten and discontented nation; he was the "Messiah." Émile Zola called Boulanger a "cocked hat on a post"--the man was a substitute for a mythical hero, the fruit of publicity and of passion. "Illusion, certainly! What does that matter? When one sees the illusion, it becomes the truth."[82] Parenthetically, nothing could be more wrong, but people insist upon being misled by their desires.

Seager claimed that Boulangism was the composite political philosophy of the leading republican Boulangists and was formed of various strands: "nationalism in foreign affairs, an ill-defined desire for social progress, and the conviction that universal suffrage would let France speak with one voice were it not for the monarchist constitution of 1875."[83] The Boulangists, according to Seager, wanted to establish a more democratic republic; the movement was not a latent form of Caesarism. Thus he refused to accord to Boulanger's royalist and Bonapartist supporters a place in the ranks of true "Boulangism."[84]

At this point Seager again overstated his case. To insist that Boulangism did not imply Caesarism dismisses Déroulède and Rochefort from the ranks of the movement as well as the monarchists

---

[82]Dansette, Le boulangisme, pp. 144-45.

[83]Seager, The Boulanger Affair, p. 249.

[84]Ibid., pp. 253-54.

and Bonapartists. The entire drive of the super-patriot was to place in power a man who could unify France in the pursuit of retribution and glory. In fact, the tradition of strong-man-rule in France, which can be justly labelled Caesarism, has as an essential characteristic the sheltering of many diverse and disparate elements under one umbrella in order to rejuvenate France. This was done by Napoleon I and Napoleon III; it was also done by Charles de Gaulle when he established the Fifth Republic. That Boulanger attempted, however ineptly, to do the same was in accordance with French history rather than an exception to it. Thus, in contradiction of Seager, Boulangism was a form of Caesarism.

Perhaps it is easiest, if not most accurate or acute, to dismiss the affair with the appraisal of the Times:

> Boulangism had never any serious mission. It sprang from chance and audacity; it offered itself in turn to the Republicans and to the Reactionaries, it has been rejected by the former, and as it is no longer serviceable to the latter they too will reject it.[85]

But the movement had come perilously close to destroying the Third Republic.

Déroulède still had his dream, although it had been blemished by the failure of his hero to live up to expectations. He had visited Boulanger in the spring of 1890 to try to persuade the general to return to Paris. When Boulanger refused, Déroulède, along with Alfred Naquet, an anti-clerical senator, resigned from the Boulanger committee, which met once more in May to hear that Boulanger had ordered

---

[85]The Times (London), September 25, 1889.

its dissolution.[86] But Déroulède continued to defend Boulangism, even if he did not always defend Boulanger. He believed that the movement had not been sterile, for it had sown in the people the germ of hope. Boulangism had survived the man in exile, and it would survive Boulanger dead. When Déroulède was reproached for being a Boulangist, he always responded: "No, I have not been boulangist, but I am still boulangist!" (italics mine) The man for him was the representation of his ideas, which would not die. "As long as I breathe, I hope."[87]

---

[86]Dansette, Le boulangisme, pp. 342-346.

[87]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 96.

CHAPTER IV

As the Boulanger movement withered away from lack of a leader and due to the pressure of the government, stability seemingly returned to the tortured Third Republic. The fragmentation of the Boulangist organization not only removed a major threat to the government but convinced many former opponents of the regime that republicanism was a permanent institution in France. With the establishment of republican superiority in the elections of 1889 and the maintenance of that domination in subsequent by-elections, the prospects for the replacement of the republic by any kind of system seemed hopeless. Many conservatives and devout Catholics saw the futility of advocating a royalist restoration and decided that they must make their peace with the existing institutions.

The presence on the papal throne of Leo XIII, a much more liberal and conciliatory pontiff than his predecessor Pius IX, made it possible for the republic and the Roman church to work for better relations. The needs of the Catholic Church in Europe, as well as in France, demanded that ecclesiastical interests no longer be sacrificed to the lost cause of the monarchy. Thus, with the approval of the Vatican, Cardinal Lavigerie, Archbishop of Algiers and of Carthage, on October 27, 1891, launched a new policy that was eventually called the "Ralliement." In a speech at Algiers, he asserted that "'when the will of a people had clearly declared itself, when the form of government has nothing in itself (as Leo XIII has recently declared) contrary to

the sole principles by which Christian and civilized nations can live', it was the duty of good citizens to accept the form of government at whatever cost to personal feelings."[1] Although many clerics resisted the Ralliement, one strong source of opposition to the republic had been materially weakened.

In the Chamber of Deputies the dominant republican majority conducted the affairs of state with little regard for the wishes of the vocal, but impotent, minority. And, since this latter segment was split between the socialist left and the royalist right, little chance for an effective parliamentary opposition existed. Speeches by opposition deputies were doomed to a reception of either indifference or hostility. The history of Paul Déroulède as a deputy from the second arrondissement of the Charente provides an excellent example of minority frustration.

The Deputy from Angoulême was seated on November 12, 1889.[2] As a Boulangist lieutenant, Déroulède obviously could expect no sympathy from the majority he had hoped to remove from power. And, as a conservative, authoritarian republican, he was rejected by the socialists and not entirely acceptable to the royalists. Therefore, his support in the Chamber was negligible. His flamboyant personality and oratorical style attracted attention and frequently made him a target for the hostile majority. What he proposed, the majority opposed; and, since he opposed not only the program of the cabinet

---

[1]Brogan, Modern France, vol. 1, p. 262.

[2]Journal Officiel de la République Française, Debats Parlementaires (Chambre des Députès), Session du 12 novembre au 23 decembre 1889, p. 14. Hereafter cited as Journal Officiel . . . .

but the entire form of government, his appearances on the speaker's platform were often stormy. He was easily goaded and baited so that the majority seemed to regard his every appearance as an opportunity for harassment, which was facilitated by Déroulède's frequently inflammatory speeches.

Déroulède made his first speech in mid-November. On this occasion he forcefully opposed the seating of Boulanger's opponent from the Montmartre district. Boulanger had won the election but was denied the seat because he was under indictment and out of the country at the time. Déroulède defended Boulanger and stated that the general's only crime was his popularity. He declared that Boulanger had been thrust into politics at his urging and as an interpretation and incarnation of the profound disgust which Déroulède held for the parliamentary regime, which dishonored the nation. He claimed that the republic need not take only a parliamentary form, and announced his opposition to it. He closed by saying:

> I demand therefore that the Chamber respect the will of the voters; I demand that it validate the election of general Boulanger (exclamations on the left), who is the true deputy of Montmartre and who remains even more the representative of republican revision (clamorings on the left and in the center), social revindication and French democracy.[3]

Such speeches did little to promote harmony between the majority and the stubborn Boulangist.

On the first day of the 1890 session of the Chamber of Deputies Déroulède's actions established a pattern that was to last the entire year. When M. Joffrin, the man seated from Montmartre, attempted to

---

[3]Ibid., p. 343.

make a speech, Déroulède vehemently protested. The result of this outburst was the pronouncement of censure with temporary exclusion from the Chamber. After about a week he returned.[4] In March Déroulède interrupted proceedings with constant demands for the right to make a point of order. Again he was censured.[5] This time he was out for several months. In fact, he did not again receive the floor until the Session extraordinaire convened in October. With his first speech at this session he again antagonised the majority and was again censured.[6] On several other occasions he narrowly escaped censure. Usually his crime took the form of personal attacks against members of the government. At times it appeared that he was deliberately provoked into making these attacks and that, in essence, his attacks were no worse than the preceding ones made against him. However, Déroulède was not of the majority; therefore, he was more likely to be punished for intemperate remarks.

The security of the parliamentary republicans in their control of the government and the Chamber was not of long duration. For even while the Boulanger Affair was the focus of attention, a new threat to stability was developing. In 1880 Ferdinand de Lesseps, the famous French entrepreneur responsible for constructing the Suez canal, formed the Panama Company to build a sea-level canal across the isthmus of Panama. De Lesseps preferred that his activities not be hampered by inquisitive and account-conscious large financial concerns.

---

[4] Journal Officiel . . . . (Session ordinaire et Session extraordinaire de 1890), p. 38.

[5] Ibid., pp. 707-10.

[6] Ibid., p. 1726.

Therefore, he sold most of the stock in the company to the French public, which had faith in the de Lesseps name. But Panama was not the Suez, and construction difficulties proved much more serious in the hilly, disease-infested jungle than in the Suez desert. The project was under-capitalized and poorly-organized and financial difficulties soon beset the operation. The two men chiefly responsible for public relations and finances were the banker Jacques de Reinach and an unscrupulous man of many talents Cornelius Herz.[7]

Both men knew that maintaining public confidence in the endeavor was essential if the company was to have any chance of success. To prevent the disclosure of the problems of construction, company officials bribed newspaper men and politicians on a grand scale. But despite all efforts the company went bankrupt in 1889. Many small French investors were seriously hurt, but the grumblings would be muted as long as secrecy was preserved. However, Herz began blackmailing Reinach and bled him of a considerable fortune. When many investors began to demand an investigation of the company, Reinach decided that he had to protect himself. The Chamber of Deputies late in 1891 announced that an investigation would be launched. Reinach, a Jew, then leaked information to La Libre Parole, an antisemitic newspaper owned by Edouard Drumont, on the understanding that his name would not be mentioned in the paper.[8]

The revelation of corruption in high places on a broad scale aroused a furor in France. Eventually Reinach committed suicide;

---

[7]Alexander Sedgwick, The Third French Republic, 1870-1914 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), p. 61.

[8]Brogan, Modern France, vol. 1, p. 274.

Herz fled to England; and de Lesseps and his son, along with three other directors of the company, were tried and given prison sentences, as was M. Charles Baihaut, former Minister of Public Works. Many famous politicians were implicated, including Maurice Rouvier, Jules Roche, Albert Grévy, Charles Floquet, and Antonin Proust. But the biggest name accused of nefarious dealings was Georges Clemenceau, the leader of the Radical party; his attacker in the Chamber was Paul Déroulède.

The animosity between the two men dated from Clemenceau's rejection of Boulanger in 1887. Déroulède, who was always capable of believing that which pleased him, became convinced that Clemenceau had not only received money in the Panama scandal but that he was an agent of the English government. Clemenceau had once accepted Herz as a business partner in his newspaper La Justice. However, this arrangement had been terminated several years before when Clemenceau bought Herz's interest. Déroulède chose to overlook this fact in making his attack before the Chamber of Deputies on December 20, 1892.[9] He began by claiming that Herz must have had a sponsor in order to advance to the rank of grand officer of the Legion of Honor.

> Who, therefore, among us has proposed to make for him a place in our ranks? Who, therefore, has little by little, yet rapidly at the same time, introduced, patronised, and nationalised in France this foreigner? You know well that he has not presented himself all alone and that it was no other foreigner who has taken him by the hand and pushed him among us; only a Frenchman, a powerful, influential, and audacious Frenchman, who would be both his client and his protector, could introduce him and support him.

---

[9]Journal Officiel . . . . (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1892), pp. 1886-90.

> Without support and without a patron the little German Jew could not have made such strides on the route to honors . . . .
>
> However, this obliging, devoted, untiring intermediary so active and dangerous is known to all of you, his name is on all your lips; but none of you will name him because there are three things you fear: his sword, his pistol, his tongue. But me, I dare all three and I name him: it is Clemenceau.[10]

Déroulède went on to claim that he had met Herz in 1885 and that Herz told him then that he had given money to Clemenceau. In all, so Déroulède claimed, Clemenceau had received over two million francs from Herz, who acted as paymaster to Clemenceau for the English.[11] Wisely, the accuser never specified the services that Clemenceau supposedly rendered to merit this kind of payment from the British. Clemenceau vehemently denied these allegations, but the temper of the times was not conducive to the acceptance of denials. "His friendship for England and Englishmen, his command of the language, his rational dislike of any policy hostile to England which could only help Germany, all were remembered against him."[12] Subsequently Clemenceau went down to temporary political ruin.

In nineteenth century France such an accusation as that made by Déroulède frequently led to a duel. After making his speech Déroulède met a friend who mourned that Clemenceau would kill the patriot. Déroulède supposedly replied that it mattered not; he had disencumbered France.[13] That same evening Clemenceau's seconds called

---

[10] Ibid., p. 1887.

[11] Ibid., p. 1888.

[12] Brogan, Modern France, vol. 1, p. 281.

[13] Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 100.

on Déroulède to make the arrangements. Déroulède suggested that General Félix Gustave Saussier act as arbitrator, but the general refused.[14] The duel took place the next day. Both men fired three shots apiece from twenty-five paces and each missed. Déroulède said, "I have not killed M. Clemenceau, but I have killed his pistol."[15]

Déroulède continued in the Chamber making speeches and proposals that were rarely adopted. He became increasingly excited over the events of the Panama scandal; and, when it became apparent that none of the big political figures implicated would be punished, he was willing to grasp at any thread that might destroy Clemenceau. On June 19, 1893, the super-patriot again attacked Clemenceau in the Chamber with a vitriolic speech condemning the "Tiger" as an English agent. Clemenceau responded: "I have already called you a liar; I add that you are the quack of patriotism."[16]

Two days later the Norton papers were presented to the Chamber by Lucien Millevoye, a former Boulangist and close supporter of Déroulède. Norton, a minor employee at the British embassy, sold Millevoye several documents, which purportedly proved that Clemenceau was a paid English agent. Millevoye presented this incriminating information to the Chamber. Unfortunately for their cause, the papers were no more than incompetent forgeries.[17] Déroulède later claimed

---

[14] New York Times, December 23, 1892.

[15] Brogan, Modern France, vol. 1, p. 281. Also see Geoffrey Bruun, Clemenceau (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1943), p. 49.

[16] Journal Officiel . . . . (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1893), p. 1767-68.

[17] Brogan, Modern France, vol. 1, p. 284.

that the police had slipped some forgeries into the packet in an attempt to discredit the whole accusation. He also maintained that he had doubted the authenticity of the documents and advised Millevoye not to use them.[18] But he continued to believe that Clemenceau was in the pay of the English. When it became apparent that his cause had failed and that "the government and its friends were playing an unworthy comedy," he left the hall after saying "You all disgust me, I am going!"[19] He left Paris as well and returned to his family estate at Langely in the Charente. He did not run for re-election in August, 1893.

Déroulède devoted his time and attention to running the estate. The main product of his farmland was wine made from the grapes in his vineyard, which was suffering from phylloxera, a plant disease causing much economic hardship in France at that time. But playing the role of the gentleman farmer was not a sufficient diversion for a fire-breathing super-patriot. Déroulède was divorced from active participation; therefore, he turned once more to his pen to expound his ideas. His first publication was a collection of poems, Chants du paysan,[20] to which the Académie française awarded the Jean Reynaud quinquennial grand prize. Primarily these verses extolled the virtues of the good French peasants who worked the land of their beloved fatherland. But some commended the young farmers who laid aside their tools to take up weapons for the defense of the nation:

---

[18]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, pp. 102-03.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Paul Déroulède, Chants du paysan (Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1894).

He is departing for the glory,
Without knowing what it is,
But he believes that which he should believe,
That which he should do, he does.
He is departing for the glory.

O good race for fighting, of valliant body, of healthy
spirit!
What soldiers you make!
When you serve your captain!

He is on his way now
The dear little peasant.[21]

This effort to praise the farmer was well-received; the next work was not so fortunate. Messire du Guesclin[22] was a historical drama-in-verse of three acts plus prologue and epilogue. The setting was France between 1358 and 1364 when the kingdom was threatened by England and internal dissension. Bertrand du Guesclin, a noble Breton, responded to the king's plea for help. Although du Guesclin was not fond of the king, he recognized the need to restore order and repulse the foreigners. After the literary failure of this work Déroulède again turned to poetry and published Poésies militaires,[23] a collection lauding the French soldier and the army.

Déroulède's activities in the Boulanger Affair and his stormy term in the Chamber indicated that his passion for revenge was leading him ever closer to a violent means for revamping and energizing the governmental system. A five act play published in 1897 provided a preview of sorts of his subsequent activities. La mort de Hoche

---

[21]Ibid., "En route," p. 37.

[22]Paul Déroulède, Messire du Guesclin (3rd ed.; Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1896).

[23]Paul Déroulède, Poésies militaires (Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1896).

glowingly portrayed the career of a French general during the days of the first French revolution.[24] Déroulède described Lazare Hoche as a disciple of Rousseau and a subscriber to the ideas of the philosophes. He supported the revolution and quickly rose in rank from sergeant to general by 1793. By that time he deplored the crimes of the republic but claimed: "I owe too much to the revolution to ever raise my voice against it."[25] According to Déroulède, the hero of this drama was a victim of intrigue during the days of the reign of terror but was liberated after IX Thermidor. By 1797 Hoche had become convinced that the corrupt Directory must be replaced and wanted the new government to be

> All that this one is not. Order in the government and in finances; the right of the people to directly elect their chief executive, and the head of state thus elected would again become the actual master of those who govern and the real protector of those who are governed.[26]

Hoche did not want a strictly military coup for fear that such would lead to civil war between his army and Napoleon's. Therefore Hoche made alliances with members of the Directory and others who wanted changes made.

Unfortunately for Hoche the plot was discovered, and he was betrayed by Barras and others of his co-conspirators. When they planned to make public the knowledge of Hoche's part in the conspiracy unless he resigned from the army, he decided to remove himself from the scene so that a military coup could succeed without causing

---

[24]Paul Déroulède, La mort de Hoche (2nd ed.; Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1896).

[25]Ibid., p. 68.

[26]Ibid., pp. 228-29.

internal war. Therefore he committed suicide with poison. While the potion took effect, he held an audience with his subordinate generals who came to him for orders. He said, "The order of the day: Bonaparte! --Long live the nation!"[27] Thus he encouraged his men to support Napoleon in overthrowing the government and restoring order to France. Even in his "peaceful family domaine of Langely"[28] Déroulède willingly accepted the idea of a violent coup.

Even while the poet-farmer pruned his vines and penned his lines in the countryside, events in Paris moved inexorably toward a new crisis that would embroil the entire nation, create long-lasting animosity, divide families, and materially alter French society. On October 15, 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus was arrested and charged with selling military secrets to Germany. A letter containing a list of secret documents had been taken from the office of the German military attache in Paris. After some examination several officers decided that the handwriting on this list matched that of Dreyfus. A closed

---

[27]Ibid., p. 254. In the last months of his life Hoche was in contact with Paul Barras, a member of the Directory, and other leaders in Paris regarding a coup d'etat designed to block a right-wing "Anglo-Royalist" plot. In July, 1797, Hoche was appointed Minister of War but had to decline the position since he was below the minimum legal age of forty. He did furnish some troops used by the Directory for the coup of the 18th Fructidor (Sept. 4, 1797). On Sept. 19, 1797, Hoche died at his headquarters at Wetzlar in Belgium. The cause of his death is usually ascribed to some respiratory ailment. Déroulède's fictionalization of Hoche's life was extremely idealistic but did not wander far from the central facts of the general's career. The circumstances surrounding Hoche's sudden death afforded Déroulède the liberty of presenting it as suicide. The deathbed statement regarding Napoleon was, in all probability, a figment of Déroulède's imagination. For references see: Georges Lefebvre, The Directory, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), pp 73-97; also Georges Girard, La vie de Lazare Hoche (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1926).

[28]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 103.

court-martial on December 22, 1894 convicted him of treason, stripped him of rank, and sentenced him to life imprisonment. Subsequently, Dreyfus was sent to Devil's Island. Most Frenchmen were convinced that the guilty party had been found; and at the time some, notably Jean Jaurès, the socialist leader, protested that the sentence was overly lenient.[29]

For all except the immediate family of the condemned man the case was closed. Dreyfus' brother Mathieu set for himself the seemingly futile task of proving the verdict wrong. Until March, 1896, he worked alone and with no success. At that time another letter revealing a traitor in French military ranks was taken from the German attaché's office. Lt. Colonel Georges Picquart, the new head of the Statistical Section of the French War Office, which was the counter-espionage arm of the military and the former employer of Dreyfus, discovered that the letter was addressed to Major Walsin-Esterhazy. A check of Esterhazy's handwriting disclosed that it was identical to the writing on the bordereau, the list used to convict Dreyfus. Picquart informed the War Office of his suspicions; however, the matter was not reopened, and Picquart was ordered to duty in North Africa in December, 1896, where he would be less of a bother.[30]

By this time the movement for revision, although still minor, was under way. Mathieu Dreyfus and the young literary critic, Bernard Lazare, had become convinced of Esterhazy's guilt. They

---

[29]Leslie Derfler, (ed.), The Dreyfus Affair: Tragedy of Errors? ("Problems in European Civilization"; Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1963), p. xi. Hereafter referred to as Derfler, The Dreyfus Affair.

[30]Brogan, Modern France, vol. 1, pp. 331-32.

persuaded the Alsatian senator, Auguste Scheurer-Kestner, to ask for revision of the trial, which he did on December 7, 1897, before the Senate. Esterhazy was tried and acquitted, and the anti-Dreyfusards seemed victorious. But by now the case had acquired considerable national attention and aroused much public passion. The case became a true cause célèbre when Émile Zola, the famous novelist, published his open letter "J'Accuse" in Georges Clemenceau's newspaper L'Aurore. Zola denounced the acquittal of Esterhazy and attacked members of the General Staff for associating with forgers and conspirators.

The French public began to take sides for or against Dreyfus. The anti-Drefusards still held the upper hand. In the next few months Picquart was dismissed from the army and Zola fled to England after trial and conviction for libel. But the elections of 1898 installed a more liberal ministry. Picquart wrote a letter to the new prime minister, Henri Brisson, claiming that some letters used by the new Minister of War, General Godefroy de Cavaignac, to affirm Dreyfus' guilt were either irrelevant or forged. When, after examination, Cavaignac admitted the possibility of forgery, the case appeared broken. Major Joseph Henry, the forger, was arrested, left a confession, and committed suicide.[31] Esterhazy then fled to England. Eventually Dreyfus was brought back from his prison on Devil's Island in French Guiana and was retried in the midst of a frenzied campaign in the press and on the platform. On September 11, 1899, Dreyfus was again found guilty of treason, but by a five-to-two vote and with "extenuating circumstances." On September 19, he was pardoned by

---

[31]Derfler, The Dreyfus Affair, p. xii.

President Loubet. On July 12, 1906, the High Court officially reversed the original conviction and fully exonerated Dreyfus. Both Dreyfus and Picquart were reinstated in the military and served with some distinction. With the victory of the Dreyfusards, the republic moved to the left, republicanized the army, and disestablished the Roman Catholic Church because it had supported the army. The Affair disrupted the nation for over a decade and caused conflicts of which remnants still remain.[32]

One of the aspects of the affair that most contributed to the heat and passion and hostility was the presence of growing antisemitism in France at this time. As a Jew of considerable wealth, Dreyfus became a focal point for the expressions of antisemitic feelings. How instrumental such antipathies were in obtaining the original conviction of Dreyfus has been a matter of controversy. At least one noted chronicler of the events of the Affair maintained that the conviction was the result of honest human error and that antisemitism was no more than an accessory.[33] Regardless of its role in the arrest and and trial of Dreyfus, antisemitism helped polarize public opinion and contributed to the viler aspects of the affair.

---

[32]For a brief summary of the Dreyfus Affair see Derfler, The Dreyfus Affair, pp. xi-xiv. For a more detailed account see Brogan, Modern France, vol. 1, pp. 329-87. The Dreyfus Affair has been the subject of much controversy, not only for the people involved, but also for its chroniclers. The interested reader should check, among others, Joseph Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus (7 volumes; Paris: Librairie Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1911); also Henri Dutrait-Crozon, Précis de l'Affaire Dreyfus (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924); also Guy Chapman, The Dreyfus Case: A Reassessment (New York: Reynal & Company, 1955).

[33]Chapman, The Dreyfus Case, p. 9.

News of the arrest of Dreyfus first came to general public attention through the pages of La Libre Parole, the newspaper owned by Edouard Drumont, who had launched his venomous campaign against French Jews with the publication of his book La France juive in 1886.[34] During the days and months after the conviction of Dreyfus his case was kept in the public eye primarily through the anti-Jewish press, which used his treason as an argument for condemnation of all Jews. As the anti-Dreyfusard movement gathered steam, Drumont and his ilk viewed all attempts to discredit the conviction and the army as necessarily being the work of a "Jewish syndicate."[35] Antisemitic riots in Algiers and Paris further separated the opposing camps in the tumultuous days of 1898 and 1899. Jules Guérin and his Antisemitic League were an integral part of the rabble that made of the Affair more of a conflict of the streets than a case for the courts. Antisemitism helped create the passion that caused many people to submerge the question of Dreyfus' guilt; they were more concerned with the triumph of their own conception of society.

Not every man who disliked Jews opposed Dreyfus. Picquart provided an example of a man whose love for justice was greater than his distaste for Jews. Many men previously considered liberal became anti-Dreyfusards. Maurice Barrès shocked some of his former disciples when he refused to change his mind regarding Dreyfus' guilt after Henry's confession and suicide.[36] People revealed to themselves, as

---

[34]Brogan, Modern France, vol. 1, p. 305.

[35]Derfler, The Dreyfus Affair, p. xii.

[36]Brogan, Modern France, vol. 1, p. 341.

well as to others, aspects of their character previously undiscovered. For many, this was a time of mass hysteria, in which both sides were swayed by emotions far too strong for reason to control. Yet the crux of the whole affair has been stated succinctly:

> The Dreyfus Case, complex as it was, can be reduced ultimately to a simple choice between two conceptions of society which had, ever since the Revolution, been struggling for mastery in the French mind . . . the basing of society and civilization on certain elementary individual rights, the other based on authority as external and prior to individual citizens.[37]

When viewed in this light the role of Paul Déroulède in the Dreyfus Affair is easily understood. He advocated republicanism as a form of government, but he was personally authoritarian by nature. He repeatedly talked about the rights of Frenchmen; however, he seldom pleaded for individual rights. In many ways Déroulède was a disciple of Rousseau's concept of the General Will, which superseded the desires of the person. His attack upon the "parliamentary republic" focussed on this issue. In the Dreyfus Affair, Déroulède saw a perfidious attack upon the army and the church, which were two institutions he deemed essential for a strong state and society.

Déroulède was an emotional man who used reason more as a rationale for actions taken, rather than as a basis for those contemplated. During the 1890s his desire to protect his beloved army was paramount. Without a strong army revenge against Germany was impossible, and Alsace-Lorraine would remain lost provinces. Thus he was eventually drawn into alliances which at calmer times he might

---

[37]Derfler, The Dreyfus Affair, p. xvi; quoting Roger Soltau, French Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931).

have repudiated and which were still slightly odious to him. So it was that he became affiliated peripherally with antisemitism.

Initially Déroulède collaborated with the antisemites in the last bitter and desperate days of Boulangism. After the defeats suffered by the movement in the September elections of 1889, some Boulangists, including Déroulède, were willing to clutch at any straws that offered renewed hope. In January, 1890, Boulangism and antisemitism openly allied forces in support of Francis Laur, an antisemite member of Boulanger's National Republican Committee, in his campaign for re-election to the Chamber of Deputies. In a rally held in Neuilly, a conservative section of northwestern Paris, an audience which included several deputies and some noted aristocrats "heard violent antisemitic speeches by Mores, Drumont, Laur, and Paul Déroulède, who was at that time considered the incarnation of French nationalism."[38] This alliance was short-lived because Drumont published a book, La Derniere Bataille, which scathingly denounced Boulanger as a coward and a "servile instrument of the Jews."[39] Boulanger was infuriated, and the National Republican Committee decided to oppose the antisemites in the spring elections. "Paul Déroulède and Gabriel Terrail thus found themselves denouncing the antisemites only a few months after they had allied with them."[40] For Déroulède the alliance had been one of expediency, not deep conviction.

---

[38]Robert F. Byrnes, Antisemitism in Modern France (Vol. 1, The Prologue to the Dreyfus Affair; New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 235-36.

[39]Ibid., p. 236.

[40]Ibid., p. 237.

After this brief excursion into the realm of racial prejudice no noticeable indication of antisemitism arose until the crisis years of the Dreyfus Affair. Then he frequently made common cause with Jules Guérin's Antisemitic League and used Drumont's weapons to lead the cause against revision in the Chamber of Deputies.[41] Guérin was present with Déroulède on the occasion of the aborted coup de Reuilly in February, 1899, and they were arrested as co-conspirators against the government in the late Summer of the same year.[42] But even then the alliance was not total. One historian of the Dreyfus Affair said that the royalists never succeeded in enrolling Déroulède into a united front with the Antisemitic League. "Déroulède still stood for the Republic and for equality. He rejected liberty only for the sake of authority and strength."[43] Another stated: "Déroulède had no use for Guérin, and looked jealously on his anti-semite leaguers as desirable recruits to the Patriots."[44] Joseph Reinach, the Jewish French historian was Déroulède's contemporary and was on the opposite side in the Dreyfus Affair. Yet even he claimed that Déroulède had not become antisemitic until the Affair and had once doubted that Dreyfus was guilty. Twenty officers sent letters to convince Déroulède.[45]

---

[41]Wilhelm Herzog, From Dreyfus to Petain (trans. by Walter Sorell; New York: Creative Age Press, 1947), p. 44.

[42]New York Times, August 13, 1899.

[43]Halasz, Captain Dreyfus, p. 185. Jules Guérin had allied himself and the Antisemitic League with the royalists in the summer of 1898. Absorbtion of Déroulède's League of Patriots into Guérin's organization would have meant absorption into monarchism as well. For an account of Guérin's connection with monarchism see Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, pp. 302-04, 305-09, 331-32.

[44]Chapman, The Dreyfus Case, p. 255.

[45]Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. III, p. 387.

Once persuaded, Dérculède strongly opposed revision but resisted Guérin's efforts to absorb the League after its reorganization in 1898:

> By misfortune Déroulède, working for himself, received willingly some subsidies, but would not sell himself. He obstinately called himself a republican and repulsed all advances. He would not destroy 'their quarry'--France--to restore the heritage of the princes. His way from the first was republican and he was resolved to place his hand in the hand of the first patriotic general. He (Guérin) did not have the means to domesticate this rhymester who believed himself to be Caesar.[46]

Déroulède's clearest statement on his attitude toward the Jews was contained in a speech made in August, 1899. This speech was reprinted in Le Drapeau. He stated that for twenty-eight years cosmopolitan financiers[47] had run the government, made themselves masters of the nation, disorganized the army and torn apart the idea of the fatherland. But with the Dreyfus Affair they had touched the heart of the people. After 1894 the French had forgotten Dreyfus; but, while the French forgot, the people of Israel worked in the shadows.

> Let me now make a vow to you, my dear citizens: I am not antisemitic, that is to say I do not make the expulsion or the extermination of the Jews the supreme goal of my politics. I hold even now the belief that they constitute a danger for a nation only when the nation where they live is a state unorganized for defense. Under a strong power, in a state well-regulated, the Dreyfus Affair would not have been born, or if it were born, it would have been smothered at birth.[48]

He further claimed that it was false to say that Dreyfus was arrested and condemned because he was a Jew; he was arrested and condemned

---

[46] Ibid., vol. IV, pp. 305-06.

[47] This term meant, for Déroulède, not only Jewish banking interests but also those money houses controlled by Swiss Protestants.

[48] Le Drapeau, August 6, 1899.

because he was guilty. However, it was because he was a Jew that he had been so strongly defended. "What prestige for the race in a martyred Dreyfus, a transfigured Dreyfus, a Generalissimo Dreyfus, governor of Paris, grand master of the Legion of Honor!"[49]

Déroulède, then, was an antisemite, but not a violent one. In times of tranquility and when the Jews posed no threat to his security, he held no animus against them. In fact, a Jewish firm published many of his books.[50] Yet he could not regard the Jews as true Frenchmen. That, for Déroulède, was their crime. To him they were a foreign element within the French state and their allegiance was, at best, suspect. By threatening the army they threatened the strength and security of France. This the super-patriot could not tolerate.

Déroulède's self-imposed retirement from active politics, begun in August, 1893, ended when he decided to run for election to the Chamber of Deputies in the general elections of 1898. According to him, several former members of his old electoral committee in Angoulême came to him to ask him to be the candidate from that district. He warned them that he had not and would not cease to be an irreconcilable enemy of parliamentarism.[51] The events of the Dreyfus Affair convinced the ex-Boulangist that his presence was required in the government to lead France out of the perilous times that beset her. Before embarking upon his campaign for office Déroulède returned to Paris from Nice, where he had been vacationing, to observe

---

[49] Ibid.

[50] The publishing firm owned by the Lévy family was Déroulède's most frequent publisher prior to 1898.

[51] Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 111.

the trial of Émile Zola for slander. The emotions of the patriot were already subduing his reason. He interrupted proceedings with an outburst demanding the expulsion of Zola from France.[52] The same evening he fought a duel with a Dreyfusard named Hubbard, with whom he had exchanged insults that day. When Hubbard grabbed Déroulède's sword with his left hand, the haughty patriot refused to continue the fight.[53] This unsportsmanlike action was considered by Déroulède to be indicative of the lack of honor among all Dreyfusards.

Déroulède returned to the Charente and devised his electoral program for the campaign. This platform was a clear statement of his ideas for restoring the strength and honor of France. His first point insisted upon the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine. He demanded a three-year tour of military duty for all able-bodied Frenchmen, maintenance of the military laws, replacement of colonial civil governors and residents by military generals, strengthened naturalization laws so that civil and voting rights would not be extended until the second generation, maintenance of the alliance with Russia, and the death penalty for all traitors. Internally he planned to maintain the rights of property and inheritance and the Concordat of 1801; he advocated the foundation of départementale chambers of industrial and agricultural workers on the same basis as chambers of commerce, proportionate and progressive taxation, special privileges for home distillers, severe application of the hoarding laws, and finally the organization of colonial tariffs for the exclusive profit of the parent state. As

---

[52]Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, p. 55.

[53]Ibid.

for the form of government, he wanted to keep the republican system but with a revised constitution enabling the president to be elected by direct universal suffrage.[54]

Déroulède wrote a letter to his lawyer Oscar Falateuf commenting upon this platform:

> In order for my program to be realised it is necessary to begin with constitutional reform. Without it all my promises are vain and the entire program is a dead letter. There are three means to obtain this reform: the will of one man, that is to say a coup d'Etat; the will of the people, that is to say a revolution; the will of parliament, that is to say the Congress. I will do all to see that this last and most peaceful means succeeds, but I scarcely count on it and I am resolved to retreat from nothing to achieve the triumph of one of the others.[55]

This declaration of war from the outset against the constitution of 1875 was the central argument in his electoral campaign. He even put on all his posters and billboards the words; "A bas la République parlementaire! Vive la République plébiscitaire!"[56] This sort of campaign appealed to the people of his district, for he was elected to the Chamber.

From the time of his re-entry into the Chamber Déroulède seized every occasion to denounce the parliamentary regime for allowing the Dreyfus Affair to continue. For him the Affair was the "most abominable anti-national campaign of the whole century."[57] While he thought highly of the conservative prime minister, Jules Méline, he believed

---

[54]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, pp. 112-14.

[55]Ibid., p. 114.

[56]Ibid., p. 115.

[57]Ibid.

the ministry powerless to stop the Dreyfusards. When Méline's government fell, Déroulède said that he would vote only for the cabinet which included General Godefroy Cavaignac.[58] The Brisson cabinet did include Cavaignac, but Déroulède's joy was short-lived because Cavaignac resigned at the end of August after the revelation of the Henry forgeries. The super-patriot blamed Brisson, whom he described as "that odious and impudent sectarian and the devout servant of international freemasonry,"[59] for the fall of Cavaignac and for the disorder and anarchy in France.

Perhaps as a result of his displeasure over the resignation of Cavaignac and the insistence of the Brisson ministry that the Dreyfus case be reviewed, Déroulède began in September, 1898, the reconstitution of the League of Patriots, which had been defunct since 1889. On September 17, the board of directors of the League met in Paris and set up plans for the group. In the early days of its new life the League had scarcely five hundred members; but the anti-Dreyfusard platform of the organization appealed to thousands of the French; thus the Patriots acquired new members rather rapidly.[60] On September 25, 1898, a public meeting of "protestation for the flag" was held in Paris at which the reconstitution of the league was publicly announced. It was at this meeting that Déroulède stated publicly for the first time his desire to instigate a union of the army and the populace to overthrow the parliamentary constitution. He also poured

---

[58] Journal Officiel . . . . (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1898), pp. 1889-90 (June 30, 1898).

[59] Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, pp. 115.

[60] Ibid., p. 117.

out vituperations and threats against such leading Dreyfusards as Clemenceau, Jaurès, and Reinach.[61]

Throughout the remainder of 1898 events moved at a rapid pace to prepare in Déroulède's mind the resolve necessary for staging a coup. On October 2, there was the threat of a street fight between the leaguers and some Dreyfusard socialists. The police were called to maintain order. According to Reinach both sides backed down. "In fact, neither the men of Déroulède, who did not want, so they said, to leave the street to anarchists, nor the socialists, who did not want to leave it to the antisemites, had greatly desired the fight."[62] On several occasions that fall, Déroulède invaded Dreyfusard rallies to refute his opponents on their own grounds.[63] He was encouraged in his opposition to revision when General Charles-Sulpice-Jules Chanoine, Brisson's new Minister of War, betrayed the cabinet by declaring that he shared Caviagnac's opinion about Dreyfus' guilt. Perhaps Déroulède had prior knowledge of Chanoine's views, for he had made a strong speech in the Chamber in support of the general's nomination.[64]

Still, Déroulède wanted a major change in the form of the republic. Some of his supporters urged him to lead a coup at the time of the fall of the Brisson ministry. But he did not think the time was right, especially since Brisson was succeeded as prime

---

[61]Chapman, The Dreyfus Case, p. 235.

[62]Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, p. 331.

[63]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 118.

[64]Journal Officiel . . . . (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire du 1898), p. 2110.

minister by Charles Dupuy, a conservative not inclined for revision. Besides, Déroulède hoped that President Félix Faure would carry out a peaceful coup d'etat, and the patriot pleaded with the chief executive to that end, but to no avail. Déroulède was still trying to remain faithful to the promise made to his constituents that he would resort to violence only as a last resort.[65] After Faure's refusal the revanchist searched for a general to lead a coup--as in Boulangist days, he was looking for a "man on horseback." He also contributed money to La Ligue de la Patrie Française, an anti-Dreyfusard organization formed primarily by some French intellectuals and headed by Jules Lemaître, famous author and critic.[66]

Faure's refusal to lead a coup determined Déroulède's future course of action. He would, himself, lead the coup with the help of some army general, if he could find one willing to serve his cause. By December the fire-breathing patriot was almost ready to act. However, he was prevented from executing his plans by an attack of acute bronchitis. When the illness lingered for some time, Déroulède's doctor ordered him to a warmer climate.[67] While recuperating on the Mediterranean coast, he followed the news of the events of the Dreyfus case in Paris. He was pleased with the passage of the loi de dessaisissement, which transferred the rehearing of Dreyfus' case from the Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation, France's highest court,

---

[65]Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, p. 351.

[66]Ibid., p. 505.

[67]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, pp. 121-22.

to the Court sitting as a body, which would include the judges of the Civil Chamber.[68]

Two days before the passage of this law of February 18, Félix Faure had died suddenly. This death was to set in motion a train of events that would culminate in the most ambitious and foolish act of Déroulède's warped life. He decided to leave Nice for Paris to attend the funeral services of the late president and to participate in the election of a new one. Before he left, he was invited by the Duc d'Orleans to come to San Remo for an interview. But Déroulède left for Paris, refusing to have any contact with royalism.[69] When he arrived there he told reporters that he would cast his vote for Dupuy, "the least evil of the probable candidates."[70] From the gare de Lyon Déroulède went to the office of the League in the hotel Saint-James, where he learned that Clemenceau was advocating the election of Émile Loubet, the prime minister at the time of the outbreak of the Panama scandal. The next day Déroulède went to Versailles for the election of the president. According to Reinach, the super-patriot refused to cast his ballot on the grounds that the right to elect the president belonged to the people, not to parliament.[71]

On the return from Versailles to Paris an incident occurred that set the stage for the events of February 23. According to the

---

[68] Ibid., p. 124.

[69] Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, p. 559. For his information regarding Déroulède's activities at the time of the coup du Reuilly Reinach relied upon the testimony given at the Cour d'Assises de la Seine, Instruction Pasques; Cour d'Assises de la Seine, Affaire Déroulède et Marcel Habert; and Haut Cour du Senate.

[70] Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 125.

[71] Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, p. 565.

Déroulède account, several thousand citizens met his carriage and began to shout "Down with Loubet! To the Elysée!", as a spontaneous expression of their contempt for the government.[72] According to Reinach, this crowd was composed primarily of Déroulède's leaguers.[73] By any account, when he came to the statue of Joan of Arc in the Place des Pyramides, he stopped his conveyance and addressed the crowd in his inimitable fashion. Jules Guérin had already distributed posters denouncing Loubet as the elect of the Jews, but this day belonged to Déroulède, not Guérin. At the base of the statue, the patriot told the people that it was necessary to cast out of France a "foreign constitution." As his eloquence soared to greater heights the crowd renewed its cries of "To the Elysée!" Déroulède told them that they should do nothing that evening because there was death in that house. Then he said:

> Thursday (the day set for the funeral of Faure) meet again and I promise you that I will do my duty; we will drive out the newly elected president who for me is not the chief of the French nation; we will overthrow the current republic, and replace it with a better one. Long live the better republic! Down with this one![74]

Now Déroulède knew that the time had come for him to put into action his previously developed plan, such as it was. He refused to divulge to the leaguers his intentions but asked them to follow him on faith.[75] He told them merely to be near the Place de la Bastille at 2:00 p. m. on February 23. The royalists had approached him to try

---

[72]Tharaud, La vie et la mort, p. 114.

[73]Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, p. 568.

[74]Ibid., p. 569.

[75]Tharaud, La vie et la mort, p. 118.

to get him to lead a combined coup. But he rejected their offer and threatened to arrest the Duc d'Orleans if he appeared in Paris.[76] He was determined to carry through his own program for reform. On February 23, he went to lunch with several friends but did not disclose to them that his pockets were filled with money and a proclamation. The money was for the soldiers to inspire them to follow him in his coup; the proclamation was to be presented to the French public on the successful conclusion of his actions. The proclamation read as follows:

> Frenchmen, the usurpatory constitution of 1875 is abrogated; the suffrage restraint is abolished; universal suffrage is re-established; the Republic becomes again French and republican. A government of privileges and corruption has exploited the Nation and degraded the Patrie; with the aid of the people of Paris and of the army of France we have overthrown it. The parliament is dissolved; the president of the Republic is ousted:
> There will no longer be an Assembly without a mandate which decrees the future organic laws of the French State; there will be the representatives of the people invested by them with constituent powers. There will no longer be a parliamentary coalition which elects the head of the republican State; it will be the French.
> In a few days the people will meet in their electoral districts. They will inform us of their will; we will respect it.
> From now on, we will guard and maintain order and the defense of our reconquered liberties. We are not usurpers; we are the guardians of the ballot boxes and the sentinels of the country.
> The parliamentary republic has lived. Long live the plebiscitary Republic.[77]

Déroulède had applied to Dupuy for a place for the League of Patriots in the funeral procession and had received such a position. He had planned to wait for an advantageous time when he would find himself near a column of infantry headed by a general. Then he would induce the officer to follow the leaguers in a march on the Hotel de Ville, Place de la Bastille, and the Place de la Nation. When newspapers

---

[76] Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 127.

[77] Ibid., p. 128.

friendly to Déroulède, such as Gaulois and Libre Parole, revealed that the leaguers were to be in the march, the ensuing public uproar forced Dupuy to revoke the authorization.[78] Déroulède was furious but hastily concocted new plans.

The route of the procession revealed that, on its return from the obsequies, it would pass by the Place de la Nation. Many of the leaguers were told to station themselves there, and others were sent to the Place de la Bastille.[79]

Déroulède waited for the troops in a "loge de concierge" at the Place de la Nation. Near him were Maurice Barrès, Guérin, and Déroulède's constant companion and fellow-Deputy, Marcel Habert. There were almost one thousand leaguers and antisemites, some of them armed, ready for a coup de main if the army would let itself be detoured. There was not a single police agent around despite repeated warnings.[80] Dupuy had retained most of the police at the Elysée, which would have been of little avail had the crowd and populace gotten that far.

Shortly after 4:00 p. m. the procession proceeded into view of the waiting conspirators. Two troop contingents were allowed to pass before Déroulède approached the general leading the third group. Although Déroulède had expected this segment to be led by General Gabriel de Pellieux, the officer in charge was General Gaudérique

---

[78] Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, p. 579.

[79] Ibid., pp. 580-81.

[80] Ibid., p. 598.

Roget.[81] Déroulède would not be deterred by this unexpected turn of events. He went up to the officer, seized his horse by the bridle, and shouted: "Follow us, General! To the Elysée, to the Hotel de Ville, to the Bastille. All my friends will accompany you. It will be a September 4 without spilling any blood."[82] Later Roget would claim that in the noise of the street he could not hear Déroulède.[83] The general's horse was frightened by the action, causing the officer to strike Déroulède on the arm with his sword. As the troops marched on a band began to play La Marseillaise, which added to the confusion. Roget decided to lead the troops to the barracks at Reuilly. When Déroulède realized that Roget had refused him and was taking the troops home, he again approached the general and was again rebuffed. He then shouted to Habert and the leaguers to bar the street leading to the barracks. But Habert misunderstood in the din and racket. Déroulède and Habert were swept along with the soldiers into the courtyard of the barracks, but the other leaguers were detained at the gates.[84]

---

[81]Both Reinach and Chapman claimed that Déroulède had an agreement with Pellieux, but that he backed down at the last minute (Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, pp. 591-92; Chapman, The Dreyfus Case, p. 255.) Tharaud related a conversation between Déroulède and an unnamed general (Tharaud, La vie et la mort, pp. 116-17). Le Siècle, March 30, 1899, stated that the pact was between Déroulède and Roget; therefore, Déroulède knew his footing when he approached Roget.

[82]Tharaud, La vie et la mort, p. 120.

[83]Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, pp. 601-02.

[84]Tharaud, La vie et la mort, p. 121.

Once inside the courtyard Déroulède tried to persuade Roget again. The general was not fond of the regime, but he was a loyal officer and would not lead a coup. Déroulède then addressed the other officers and men in the courtyard. Habert and Déroulède were asked to leave. However, the Deputies knew that once they left the barracks they would be arrested by the police. Déroulède preferred to be arrested by the army and refused to leave. Eventually orders were given by the government to arrest the pair.[85] The coup d'etat had failed miserably.

The next day the Chamber of Deputies authorized the prosecution of Déroulède and Habert for conduct constituting an attack on the republic and injury to the army.[86] The entire affair was an exercise in futility and farcical to the extreme. At best it was poorly-planned and ill-conceived. By this time Déroulède had forsaken reason and given himself over completely to his passion and desire for reform and revenge. One journal dismissed the events as a comic opera coup destined to cover Déroulède and his League with ridicule and claimed that it probably helped the cause of Dreyfus revision more than anything else that had happened for some time. Déroulède in his role as a political agitator

> has been actuated by a chauvinism that amounts to a positive mania. A poet of no mean order, a dramatist of talent, a dashing soldier, an elegant society man, a brilliant conversationalist, rational in every other respect, M. Déroulède

---

[85] Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. IV, pp. 603-15.

[86] New York Times, February 25, 1899.

> is patriotically as mad as the proverbial March hare. The sight of the tri-color has been known frequently to excite him to frenzy.[87]

Déroulède's days as a political force, if he had ever been one, were over. He and Habert were kept in jail and denied provisional liberty, but they were not mistreated. The government did not want to bestow on the old leaguer the air of martyrdom.[88] In fact, when he was brought to trial, he was not charged with treason or revolt against the government, both of which were serious charges. Instead Habert and Déroulède were charged with inciting soldiers to disobey their officers.[89] This charge infuriated the ex-soldier. He maintained that he had never incited the troops to disobey their officers; he had tried to overthrow the entire government! Any lesser charge was an insult.[90] At both the preliminary hearing and the trial before the Cour d'Assises de la Seine he made lengthy addresses, which resembled stump speeches, detailing his past history and his oftstated desires for France. These sessions were attended by many leaguers and other anti-Dreyfusards and were frequently interrupted by wild cheering for the defendants.[91]

---

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid. The Parisian daily, La Siècle expressed an opinion that probably represented the feeling of the government regarding Déroulède's fate. "The act of Déroulède was not important. Do not take it seriously. He is a big child convinced of the necessity of crushing the parliamentary republic. But since it amuses him to play this role, why not leave him at ease in his fantasy?" (La Siècle, March 30, 1899.)

[89] Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. V, p. 3.

[90] Le Drapeau, April 23, 1899. (Letter to Charles Dupuy.)

[91] Cour d'Assises de la Seine 29, 30 et 31 mai 1899, Affaire Déroulède et Marcel Habert ("Plaidoyer de Me Oscar Falateuf pour Paul Déroulède"; Paris: Macon, Protat Frères, Imprimeurs, 1899).

On May 31, 1899, the three-day trial ended in acquittal for both defendants. The jury was absent for twenty-two minutes, during which time the prisoners held a reception for their friends. After the jury announced its verdict, the audience invaded the dock, the jury box, and other reserved parts of the courtroom, shouting "Vive Déroulède! Vive le jury!" and singing the national anthem. Déroulède and Habert greeted everyone, and finally Déroulède mounted a table and called for cheers for the jury.[92]

After the trial Déroulède returned to his estate in the Charente for several days to rest and give some attention to his personal business. He did not remain there long. Although he had been acquitted of the crime charged to him, he had been slighted by the attitude of contempt shown for him by the government and the serious press. He still believed that there was mass discontent on the part of the people and that he could exploit it. When he was approached by Guérin, agents of the royalists, and Catholics of the Assumptionist Order on the prospects of a new conspiracy, he listened willingly. These anti-Dreyfusards proposed a new government headed by a triumvirate of Guérin, Déroulède, and General Félix-Jean-Marie Hervé, who had testified for Déroulède at the trial.[93] This grouping of conspirators in several ways resembled the old Boulangist movement, but without a Boulanger.

Déroulède became involved in this new conspiracy because, as Reinach said, "he would have lost his reason for being if he ceased

---

[92]New York Times, June 1, 1899.

[93]Chapman, The Dreyfus Case, p. 282; also Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. V, p. 182.

to conspire, and he still had hallucinations of certain revenge."[94] Accepting aid from the royalists was distasteful to the ardent republican, but he planned to worry about the form of the government after the success of the conspiracy. However, chances for success were exceedingly slim. Although this conspiracy had more support than the one in February, the planning was totally inept. The plotters were astonishingly indiscreet, especially Déroulède, who made many speeches calling for his supporters to recognise the proper time to join a revolt in the streets.[95] He anticipated that the Army would join him in revolt, even though he had not received its support in February. He had no assurance that the men he expected to be in his cabinet would serve. Yet, apparently, he planned to move either on the day General Auguste Mercier gave his evidence before the Dreyfus court-martial at Rennes or on the day of the verdict.[96]

Unfortunately for Déroulède's aspirations, most of his meetings and planning sessions with his co-conspirators had been attended by police agents. The whole plot was known to the government. On August 12, 1899, the day for Mercier's testimony, the police began the round up of all those involved in the plot. Déroulède was arrested on his estate at Croissy near Paris. At the time of his arrest, he shouted: "It is a rascality on the part of the Government, which is trying to implicate me in the same affair as the Orleanists,

---

[94]Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. V, p. 251.

[95]Chapman, The Dreyfus Case, p. 283.

[96]Ibid.

whose adversary I am."[97] The tragicomedy aspect of the conspiracy was continued when Guérin barricaded himself in his fortified home, "Fort Chabrol," in Paris and resisted arrest for six weeks before giving up due to hunger.[98]

Eventually the conspirators were brought to trial before the Senate sitting as the High Court of France. The trial began with the reading of the indictment on September 18, 1899. Déroulède was charged with conspiracy, and his League of Patriots was linked to the royalists and the Antisemitic League.[99] Throughout the trial Déroulède maintained that he was a republican and that it was a "gross calumny" to send him to trial as a royalist conspirator. He conducted himself in a childish manner alternating between total silence and virulent outbursts.[100] Before the trial was over, he was sentenced to three months imprisonment for attacks against the president of the Republic and to two years imprisonment for libeling Senators. He was also excluded from the court for several days to prevent further disruptions.[101]

The Senate's conduct of the trial was scarcely superior to that of Déroulède. The New York Times correspondent reported that "The Senate made itself so ridiculous [by its emotional conduct of the trial] today that everybody hopes for a speedy termination of the

---

[97] New York Times, August 13, 1899.

[98] Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. V, p. 311.

[99] New York Times, September 19, 1899.

[100] Reinach, Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus, vol. V, p. 32.

[101] New York Times, December 23, 1899.

proceedings."[102] The French public began to regard the trial with indifference or disdain. One historian has declared: "In their zeal to secure a conviction the prosecutors did not hesitate to use shady police methods, and they pressed towards their goal with a cold ruthlessness reminiscent of the Dreyfus proceedings."[103]

Eventually the trial ended. In early January Guérin was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment, Déroulède to ten years of banishment, and Habert to five years of banishment. These were the most severe sentences. Déroulède's political career was now over. He would be forced to leave his beloved France in the hands of his erstwhile enemies and go into exile, where he would follow the example of Napoleon in compiling his memoirs in an effort at self-justification.

---

[102] Ibid., November 11, 1899.

[103] Bruun, Clemenceau, p. 69.

CHAPTER V

Frustration and impatience motivated Paul Déroulède in his two attempts to overthrow the Third French Republic. Déroulède's participation in the Boulanger Affair and his leadership of the farcical coup du Reuilly were the actions of a desperate man who saw no other method of achieving his ends. He was frustrated because his appeals to patriotism had not been heeded. He was impatient with the procrastination of the government in moving toward the goal which he considered supreme for France. Déroulède never wavered in his devotion to the restoration of French prestige, which had been lost in the Franco-Prussian war, and the reacquisition of the former French provinces of Alsace-Lorraine. From the time of the Treaty of Frankfort in 1871 to his last public speech in December, 1913, he constantly stated his desire to witness "the decisive and saintly victory which would put the civilized world in equilibrium, replace the Prussians back in Prussia, restore Alsace-Lorraine to France and re-establish France in all her splendor, in all her independence, and in all her glory."[1] Yet despite all his patriotic urgings in poems, plays, and speeches, Déroulède saw France no nearer the realization of his dreams.

By the time of the Boulanger Affair Déroulède had concluded that the parliamentary regime instituted by the Constitution of 1875 was incapable of energizing the nation for revenge. His immediate

---

[1]Chenu, La Ligue des Patriotes, pp. 116-17.

solution was the institution of General Boulanger as a symbol of revindication in the strong-man-rule tradition of French politics. At that time Déroulède contented himself with nebulous proposals for the creation of a plebiscitary republic. The failure of the Boulanger movement strengthened his conviction that France needed to rid herself of the existing constitution and the government it authorized. During the next ten years he developed his ideas regarding a proper replacement for the parliamentary regime.

While serving in the Chamber of Deputies from 1889 to 1893, Déroulède frequently voiced his opposition to the government. He regarded it as self-serving, corrupt, inefficient, and unrepresentative of the will of the French people. He believed that he possessed a greater understanding of the needs and desires of the people than did the majority in the Chamber.

> The universal suffrage has given you a power equal to ours, but not superior. To be the majority is a collective means to triumph over the minorities, but not an actual right to annihilate or exclude it. And even, to go further, I can say that this minority, elected despite administrative pressure, chosen in all independence with all the resistance of free citizens, actually represents public opinion more than does the majority, as crushing as it is.[2]

For Déroulède the defects of the government originated in the constitution that had been imposed on the republic by the royalist majority in the legislature in 1875. Since that time the government had caused "the bed of the king to be the resting-place of the people."[3]

---

[2] Journal Officiel . . . . (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1890), p. 373.

[3] Ibid. (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1892), p. 1951.

The Boulangist deputy wanted to eliminate "parliamentary sovereignty" and replace it with "national sovereignty."

Although he denounced the existing republic, Déroulède always maintained that he was in favor of a republic; France simply was afflicted with an evil form of government. The first remedy for the confusion besetting the French state was the establishment of a new constitution providing for a clear separation of the executive and legislative powers. In a speech before the Chamber in 1892, Déroulède repeated this desire and added that cabinet ministers should be chosen outside of parliament. He recited articles from the Constitution of 1791 in support of this thesis. According to the old leaguer, under the existing regime the competition for ministerial portfolios was a major source of the confusion that plagued the state. As matters stood in France at that time, he believed that the deputies were constantly seeking to become ministers, then president of the council, and then president of the republic. And all this was due to the failure of the Constitution of 1875 to provide for a delimitation of powers or for the separation of functions.[4]

In the same statement before the Chamber, Déroulède advocated a reduction in the number of deputies and senators by half. According to him "France had not and could not furnish eight hundred politicians worthy of the name."[5] At the same time he insisted that the salary of legislators should be doubled to insure their independence from pressure

---

[4]Ibid., p. 1952.

[5]Ibid.

groups and to compensate them amply for their work and the loss of their careers.[6]

The principle foundation for a democratic revision of the government was, for Déroulède, the establishment of popular sovereignty culminating in the election of the president of the republic by the people. This was the only way to give the state the democratic progress that it needed. Déroulède wanted the chief executive elected for four or five years by universal manhood suffrage, and eligible for reelection. This last provision was necessary to prevent a popular president, i. e. Louis Napoleon, from staging a coup to retain power when his term had expired.[7] The remainder of Déroulède's reform program would be established on this basic structure.

While Déroulède was out of the Chamber between 1893 and 1898, he possibly gave some thought to the type of government he envisioned for France. Although his first consideration was for the destruction of the old regime, he had formulated some rudimentary ideas which he incorporated in his electoral platform when running for the Chamber in 1898.[8] After the failure of the coup du Reuilly, Déroulède, in several steps, made his most detailed prescription for the governmental ills besetting France. Beginning with his defense at the Cour d'Assises in May, 1899, running through a speech made to the League of Patriots in July of that year, and culminating with a speech sent from exile to the League in 1901, he revealed his aspirations for constitutional reform.

---

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., pp. 1962-53.

[8]See Chapter IV for Déroulède's electoral program in 1898.

In each instance the super-patriot initiated his statements with a rousing condemnation of the existing parliamentary regime. Before the Cour d'Assises, Déroulède claimed in his speech to the jury that the Panama scandal had been a symptom of social decay, but that the Dreyfus Affair was a symptom of national decay. He further stated: "That which some call, according to their passions or their fears, the cosmopolitan peril, the anarchist peril, the financier peril, the Jewish or Protestant peril, all this for me has a single name and a single cause--the parliamentary malady."[9] The depressing state of French finances was caused, he claimed, by too much corruption, too many political appointments and functionaries, and an ill-advised colonial venture. France had lost international prestige partially because the government changed too frequently and diplomats too willingly made humiliating concessions. For Déroulède a government worthy of the name should achieve three things for the nation which it governs: social progress without disorder, public prosperity based on the stability of the state, and liberty under the law for all its citizens. None of this had been accomplished, but corrupt politicians were acquitted for crimes that resulted in prison sentences for average citizens. Yet, "the true danger of parliamentarism is not the number of rascals, it is the number of those who tolerate them."[10] One of the worst crimes of the existing regime was the subordination of the president to the parliament. Déroulède considered President Loubet a perfect example of this defect in the

---

[9]Déroulède, Qui Vive? France!, pp. 203-04.

[10]Ibid., Quotation on p. 221. Summary, pp. 205-21.

government.

> That the private life of M. Loubet is irreproachable, agreed! But it was not for his honorable private life that he was elected. It was for his public life. . . . .
>
> His past complicity is a gauge for his future complicity. His inertia is no less reassuring than his indulgence. His mediocrity is a guarantee. Even his unpopularity is a hope. He will be, he is more than any other man, the creature, the tool of parliament.[11]

Déroulède concluded by again demanding separation of powers and the popular election of the chief executive.

On July 16, 1899, Déroulède delivered an address entitled "Vive l'Armée!" to an assembly of the League of Patriots. This discourse stated more completely and precisely the Leaguer's political program. He reiterated his basic plea for a strong executive and further stipulated that the president should choose the cabinet ministers, who would be responsible to the executive rather than to the Chamber of Deputies. The ministers of the chief of state would play before the parliament the role of advocates for the government to a national jury. If they spoke poorly or pleaded badly, or could not make themselves heard or believed, the president would quickly replace them. But that would be the president's responsibility, not the Chamber's.[12]

Not only did Déroulède desire direct election of the president of the republic, but he also advocated direct election of senators by the method of universal suffrage. The Constitution of 1875 provided for the election of senators by the départemental and communale assemblies. Déroulède thought that the royalists had devised this method

---

[11] Ibid., p. 223.

[12] Ibid., p. 243.

as "a kind of citadel against the Republic."[13] The Senate of the Third Republic served as a block to progressive legislation and enabled the members of the Chamber of Deputies to stage a masquerade. They could vote for a law they disliked to please their constituents, all the while knowing that the Senate would reject the law. Thus they could satisfy their electors without making any real changes.

For the system that he would impose Déroulède insisted on a two-house legislature with the Chamber of Deputies possessing initiative and the Senate exercising control. Eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies would remain unchanged. Senators should be forty years old and serve for nine years, which was no different than the existing regulations. However, they would be elected by direct universal suffrage and only from the _département_ where they lived or in which they paid direct taxes. The Senate could exercise suspensive control over legislation for a maximum of three years. If the matter was deemed urgent by the president, he could arbitrate between the two chambers and, ultimately, could send the matter to the people by dissolving one or the other of the houses and calling for new elections. The Council of State would be entrusted with the special mission of drafting the laws.[14]

Always Déroulède had insisted on universal suffrage as the only viable method for selecting a president and legislators in a democratic republic. Now he carried that further by advocating _scrutin de liste_ as the best system for voting. According to him, _scrutin_

---

[13] _Ibid._, p. 245.

[14] _Ibid._, p. 247.

d'arrondissement facilitated the growth of pressure groups, which could too easily control an election in small constituencies. Scrutin de liste would be too difficult to control and would provide true electoral equality, which was Déroulède's goal.

> Universal suffrage is true equality only if the social portion of influence on the affairs of the nation is equal for all; universal suffrage is liberty only if the expression of the popular will is exactly expressed and directly obeyed. Universal suffrage is fraternity only when all the sons of the same nation, rich or poor, small or great, fraternise without distinction of class or of party before the ballot box, from which should derive the destiny of the fatherland and the government of the state.[15]

Déroulède believed that universal suffrage was the "primordial right" of democracies and served as a title of nobility for all French citizens. The title of "Citizen" was precious and should be accorded carefully. The super-patriot claimed that many of the evils that beset France were caused by a policy that too easily opened the doors of citizenship to foreigners. He feared that nationalized citizens were, little by little, dominating the state. France needed liberation from their influence. "These despicable naturalized assistants of our renegade cosmopolites have been more traitorous for France than the traitor Dreyfus."[16] Déroulède did not ask for their extermination nor even for their exclusion, but he did seek to deny them the rights of citizens. Admission to Déroulède's political organization would henceforth be limited to sons of Frenchmen. "France for the French" would be the motto of the League of Patriots.[17]

---

[15] Ibid., pp. 248-49.

[16] Ibid., p. 250.

[17] Ibid., pp. 251-52.

Having been banished for ten years by the high court of the Senate in 1900, Déroulède took up residence in San Sebastian in Spain. From that place of exile he addressed a speech to the League of Patriots, which was presented by Henri Galli on May 23, 1901. Although overloaded with verbiage this harangue did contain some additional points in Déroulède's governmental program and exposed the mechanics of the plebiscitary system.

The first new item that he introduced in this address concerned initiative in making budget proposals. Déroulède believed that it was the right and the duty of the legislators to share with the president the task of initiating laws of reform; however, he deemed it necessary that financial initiative be removed from their power. The duty of proposing a budget should be placed on the shoulders of the president, so that responsibility for financial policy would be clearly visible to the people. The Senate and the Chamber of Deputies would vote on the budget after proposal by the president. Parliament would have the right to reduce appropriations but could not increase them.[18]

Déroulède greatly longed for a government in France which established a strong executive power, but he did not espouse the complete suppression of the legislature. Although the role of parliament would be reduced, it would always retain its task of examining and establishing just distribution of funds; parliament would still be responsible for enacting legislation for social justice, worker protection, and national solidarity. The president should be strong, but

---

[18]Ibid., pp. 273-74.

not supreme. It would be a tragedy "if after having liberated France from the irresponsible dictatorship of eight hundred masters, we deliver her bound hand and foot to the dictatorship without appeal of a single man."[19] Supremacy belonged to the people of France. Thus, whenever irreconcilable differences developed between the president and the two chambers or when the popular will was ignored, the people should have some recourse to rectify the situation. The remedy was, for Déroulède, always the plebiscite. This explains Déroulède's constant reference to himself as a "Républicain Plébiscitaire."

In addition to the direct election of Deputies, Senators, and the president of the republic (Déroulède called these elections plebiscites), two other uses of the plebiscite existed. The first usage would be invoked when the executive and the legislature disagreed over legislation and reached a stalemate. Then the president could submit the issue to a direct popular vote, and the majority will of the people would be final. The second usage would be initiated directly by the people. A popular petition containing the signatures of either one-third or one-fifth of the registered voters could force a general plebiscite on the retention of an existing law or the institution of a new one. "Such is, my friends, such should be according to my heart, according to my wishes, according to my faith as a republican and as a patriot, the vital tripod of French democracy."[20]

True to his original concern Déroulède concluded this oration on constitutional and national reform with a ringing plea for the

---

[19] Ibid., p. 275.

[20] Ibid., pp. 277-78.

restoration of the lost, but never forgotten provinces of Alsace-Lorraine. The rejuvenation of France would be consummated by the reacquisition of the loyal and long-suffering territory. "For Alsace-Lorraine, for France, for the fatherland, for the nation: 'Vive la République-Plébiscitaire!'[21]

So deep was Déroulède's antagonism to the Third French Republic and so thorough his commitment to his goal of national recovery, revenge, and restoration that he seldom had time to devote extensive thought to other aspects of French political and social life. Yet as representative from Angoulême to the Chamber of Deputies he was bound to make contact with issues that did not directly affect his goals. Whenever he did so, however, he approached these issues from his solitary point of view. Whether the matter be tariff policy, colonial policy, agricultural affairs, social conditions for urban workers, public education, or religion, Déroulède's attitude was consistent with his supreme goals.

It could be expected that, in keeping with his desire to preserve France for the French, Déroulède would be an ardent protectionist regarding tariff policy. Such was the case. In a discourse in the Chamber of Deputies in December, 1891, the ardent nationalist claimed that France, with her army, was strong enough to occupy herself exclusively with the regulation of its national interest. For the honor of the Chamber, the ministry, the government, and the nation no foreign preoccupation should be allowed to interfere in the Chamber's economic deliberations. As things were, in his opinion,

---

[21] Ibid., p. 279.

when concessions in financial diplomacy were made, it was France that conceded. He insisted that the French foreign minister make no attempt to modify the tariff laws passed by the Chamber except within the minimum and maximum limits set by that body.[22] Earlier that same year Déroulède had further indicated his strong protectionist leanings to the Chamber. "My opinion would be, thanks to these tariffs, to close the door to those products for which we have no need and facilitate the entrance into France of those products which are necessary to our manufacturing, our commerce, and our industry."[23] Any purchases made outside France that were not essential he regarded as money lost and France weakened at the expense of potential enemies. In economic matters there should be for France neither friendly nations nor enemy nations; there were only the interests of France looked at from the single point of view of Frenchmen.[24]

Frustration marked Déroulède's attitude toward French colonial policy. As previously indicated, he opposed overseas expansion as early as 1882 because he feared it would detract from his primary goal of recovery of Alsace-Lorraine. However, once France had entered an area, Déroulède's national pride made it difficult for him to accept withdrawal willingly, if such would involve loss of face. In an address before the Chamber of Deputies in April, 1892, he clearly revealed his feelings on colonial policy. The issue of the moment concerned the extension of government supported credits for business

---

[22] Journal Officiel . . . . (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1891), p. 2772.

[23] Ibid., p. 43.

[24] Ibid., p. 2772.

ventures in the Sudan and, for the future, in Dahomey.[25] Déroulède began his discourse by stating that France was not ready for colonizing because France, itself, was colonized. By this he meant that French territory (Alsace-Lorraine) was under foreign control. Besides, France, according to Déroulède, had no national interests in Dahomey. The Sudan was another matter.

> I say, even, that it is precisely because I am hostile to the expansion or the continuation of the expansion of France in Dahomey that I do not wish to withdraw any of the forces necessary to maintain our prestige in Sudan. It would create a great immediate peril for our soldiers who are surrounded by enemies and expose us to, I know not what, troublesome situations in all the Mohammedan lands, Algeria and Tunisia at the head.[26]

Basically, the nationalist opposed all colonial adventures. According to him there were three kinds of colonies: colonies of settlement, colonies of plantations, and colonies of exploitation. France had none of the first, few of the second, and too many of the latter, because France was the area being exploited. Far too frequently the French people were paying, through their government, for railroads that went nowhere and non-existent bridges and wharves. Colonization demanded more than money; French soldiers were required to fight and die in the conquest of foreign soil. Thus, acquisition was too costly to support.[27]

Expansion would have been more acceptable to Déroulède had he thought that the French people benefitted from the colonial policy.

---

[25] Ibid. (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1892), p. 509.

[26] Ibid., pp. 509-10.

[27] Ibid., p. 510.

But all the profits from conquest went into the hands of a few. For instance, in Dahomey the sole beneficiaries of acquisition would be three large coal mining firms in France, plus eight or ten others that were German in origin.[28] Déroulède claimed that "it is too much to be obliged to send to Dahomey a thousand or several thousand of our soldiers, for safeguarding, not the persons, but the interests of three French traders."[29] He believed that those companies profiting from colonization should pay the expenses for protecting their operations. Withdrawal from the Sudan would hurt French prestige and control in her other Moslem colonies, but the situation in Dahomey was different. While he did not advocate complete evacuation of Dahomey, he preferred that to fighting a war of conquest in the area.[30]

Déroulède held Jules Ferry responsible for the initiation of French imperialism. Ferry's intention was to console the nation for her lost continental territories by colonial acquisition. But the monomaniac maintained that France did not wish to be consoled in such fashion.

> No, messieurs, it is neither by the millions of Tonkinois nor by the thousands of Sudanese or Dahomeans that you can ever replace the million and a half Alsace-Lorrainers that we have lacked for twenty-two years.
>
> . . . la grande France is continental France, the France of our traditions, of our history, of our letters and our arts, of our glories and our ideas! It was never intended that the amount of territory should be the measure of the grandeur of a people.[31]

---

[28] Ibid., p. 511.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., p. 512.

[31] Ibid.

For these reasons Déroulède voted against the extension of credits and continued his essentially anti-imperialist policy.

Since Déroulède represented the primarily agricultural district of the Charente and as he was a gentleman farmer, it was natural that he supported measures that he thought beneficial to the French peasants, whom he had glorified in poem and song. His most significant accomplishment in their behalf was the proposal of an agricultural commission to be charged with studying the means of improving French farm production and quality. This commission would concern itself with all "the projects and propositions which involve agriculture [farming], viticulture [vine-growing], sericulture [silk-worm breeding], sylviculture [forestry], and in general all projects and propositions concerning the cultivation of the earth."[32] Remarkably, this proposal was adopted by the Chamber.[33] On other occasions he defended the rights or privileges of the farmer when they were threatened by the government. His spirited defense of the exemption accorded to home-distillers is a case in point.

> These people of France, let them work! . . . At the time when the vine is replanted everywhere, do not discourage the vine-grower! Leave him his hopes! Let him believe in the maintenance of all his rights, of all his benefits! Say to him: 'Make us good wine, tranquilly cultivate your vines, give us good products and do it without anxiety!' And I add, . . . do not kill the chicken with the golden eggs before it has laid![34]

---

[32] Ibid. (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1898, p. 1870.

[33] This proposal was the only one initiated by Déroulède which was accepted by the Chamber during his career in that house.

[34] Journal Officiel . . . . (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1892), p. 1684.

Déroulède was just as ardent in his support of projects for the laboring classes in France. While he was never a socialist and was usually at odds with those that were, both in and out of the Chamber of Deputies, he did recognize the necessity of providing for the welfare of the worker. One aspect of his anti-foreigner program was the expulsion of non-French labor, which lowered the wages of the native worker. He also advocated the passage of rudimentary child and female labor laws and demanded that national holidays be established by law.[35] In June, 1891, Déroulède, in an inflammatory speech before the Chamber, urged the creation of a national retirement fund for workers, which would have been a type of social security.[36] The next month he urged the passage of a law of amnesty to release workers, who had been jailed for rioting on May 1, in time for Bastille Day celebrations. He was afraid that failure to do so would drive the workers en masse into the arms of the Marxists. Then the red flags hanging from the windows of the workers on July 14, would be tinged with the blood of the victims of parliament. "Take care! The Fourth Estate will be like the Third a hundred years ago. If they ask something from you, and you give them nothing, they will break you."[37] Déroulède stated frequently his desire for equal rights for all Frenchmen, but his pleas for the

---

[35]Ibid. (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1891), pp. 227, 236, 249, 250-51.

[36]Ibid., p. 1148.

[37]Ibid., p. 1729.

welfare of the worker sometimes seemed motivated more by fear than by love of his fellowman.

The nationalist's strongest appeal for human parity was in the field of education. He had been interested in the education of the French youth since his days on the education committee created by Gambetta. Since his proposed plebiscitary republic was based on popular sovereignty expressed through universal suffrage, an educated and literate electorate was essential. But Déroulède wanted to go beyond equal primary education at public expense to equal opportunity for education at all levels. He presented his ideas regarding public instruction to the Chamber in November, 1890. It had been proposed to the Chamber that all French children be given an identical integrated education. Déroulède did not believe that to be possible at that time. Instead, he desired the establishment of nationally-funded scholarships to provide for education beyond the primary level for students who showed merit but whose parents could not afford to pay for further schooling.[38] According to the super-patriot, a democracy should recruit for its service the sons of poor peasants and workers and allow them to gain by their work and their capacity a place of importance for themselves. They, in turn, would provide new intellectual energy for the state. This system would create better understanding between rich and poor in France and thereby increase national unity.[39]

---

[38] Ibid. (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1890), p. 2203.

[39] Ibid.

Déroulède feared that equality of education which failed to discriminate between skills and capacities would contribute to a decline in the overall quality of French education. He wanted to raise the standards of classical studies and superior instruction. Therefore, scholarships should be accorded only to those recognized as worthy. These awards would grant free instruction at both the secondary and superior levels of education. Déroulède believed that the beneficiaries would become grateful servants of the French state and lead it to greater strength and prestige in the eyes of the world.[40]

One other issue in national politics attracted the attention of Déroulède, and that was the status of the Roman Catholic Church in the state. Dating from the time of the great French Revolution some elements in the nation had advocated a policy of complete separation of church and state. This element existed in the Third French Republic and would eventually triumph after the events of the Dreyfus Affair had served to discredit the church. Déroulède resisted this movement. By his own admission he was not a frequent church-goer, and he claimed that he did not want the politics of the state governed by the church. Yet, any attempt to separate church and state was regarded by the nationalist as an intrusion of a foreign element into national politics.[41] Like Maurice Barrès and Jules Soury, two nationalist theoreticians, Déroulède believed that Protestants and Jews

---

[40] Ibid., p. 2204.

[41] Déroulède, Qui Vive? France!, p. 250.

stood outside France. They "could never be part of that physico-mental continuum which mystically encompassed the nation."[42]

When a proposal for separation was presented to the Chamber in 1891 by Camille Dreyfus, Déroulède voiced his opposition most vociferously. He claimed to be a Christian republican ready to do battle against all those who wanted to dechristianize France. He thought it ironic that the question had been raised "not by one of the thirty-six million Catholics implicated in the issue, but rather by one of 500,000 or 600,000 Israelites."[43] This statement led to a heated exchange between the two deputies accompanied by frequent outbursts by other members of the Chamber. Déroulède concluded:

> Therefore, in seeking the disappearance of all spiritualistic ideas, in working to tear apart all beliefs, they destroy consciences, they divide the vital spirits, and they disperse the treasure of moral forces for which we will sooner or later have need for the restoration of the fatherland.[44]

In 1899 Déroulède insisted that, although he was a firm believer in the Christian faith, he was not a clerical. He thought clericalism to be an intrusion of religion into politics, which was not healthy for the state. He was neither for a government of priests nor for a government against the priests, "but I am even less for a government of rabbis and pastors."[45] Irrationally, he feared that separation of

---

[42]Nicholas Halasz, "The Story of a Mass Hysteris," The Dreyfus Affair, Derfler, p. 2.

[43]Journal Officiel . . . . (Session ordinaire et session extraordinaire de 1891), p. 2012.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Déroulède, Qui vive? France!, p. 250.

church and state would ultimately result in domination of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies by naturalized citizens from Geneva, Jerusalem, and Berlin.[46] To the end of his life Déroulède continued to oppose all efforts to weaken the Catholic Church in French society.[47]

In the course of his active political career Déroulède was forced to devote some time and thought to matters that were not always directly related to the pursuit of his primary aims. Despite the variety of issues brought to his attention, the man was remarkably consistent. Given an understanding of his background and the motivations for his actions, comprehension of his attitude toward any subject was more than easy; it was predictable. Always the revanchist, always the super-patriot, Déroulède never deviated from his course.

---

[46] Ibid.

[47] Alexandre Petit, Paul Déroulède, 1846-1914 (Paris: P. Lethielleux, Éditeur, Publicistes Chrétiens, 1947), 32pp.

CHAPTER VI

The sentencing of Paul Déroulède by the High Court to ten years of banishment accorded to the super-patriot a greater significance than he merited. His capacity to disrupt the government, if it had ever been great, was removed by the failure of his ill-planned coup in February, 1899. The conspiracy plot of August, 1899, was so incompetently planned that, had it ever been executed, it would surely have failed. Déroulède's forced exile cast him in the role of a minor martyr, but to little avail. Since the Dreyfusards were in the ascendancy in France, Déroulède gained little sympathy from the masses, who were essential for the success of his type of activity. He had failed to energize sufficient support for his program while he was in France; in exile his chances for creating changes were nil. "It was the end of Déroulèdism as a force; it survived as a minor idea to be kept academically alive through the discussions of Charles Maurras as to whether a coup de force was still possible."[1] Although Déroulède's supporters gained twenty-one seats in the next elections to the Chamber of Deputies, the revanchist's active political career was over.[2]

Déroulède left Paris for Belgium, where he intended to spend his term in exile. However, the climate there was not suitable, and he eventually settled in San Sebastian in Spain. From this vantage point near the French border on the Bay of Biscay, he kept a close

---

[1]Chapman, The Dreyfus Case, p. 307.

[2]Tharaud, La vie et la mort, p. 138.

watch on the events which transpired in his homeland. He continued to direct the newspaper of the League of Patriots, Le Drapeau, although Déroulède's close friend Henri Galli served as editor.[3] Déroulède insisted that the League select a new president who would be available at all times. Maurice Barrès, the nationalist author, became the new executive. Déroulède was out of sight but not completely out of touch with his old supporters in France.[4]

The old fire-brand found his inactive and impotent condition very trying. Not even the publication of a small book of poems written in his honor by fifty-two French poets,[5] among them Augustin Angles, the founder and editor of Petit Poète, and François Coppée, an ardent nationalist and member of the Académie Française, could console the leaguer whose fervent hopes and constant dreams were still unfulfilled. Therefore, like many other and much more important exiles, such as Napoleon I, Déroulède devoted much time and effort to collaborating with Henri Galli in composing his autobiography, Déroulède Raconté par lui-même. In addition to detailing the events in his career this book attempted to explain and justify Déroulède's program and goals. In this polemic he reiterated constantly his quest for revenge, restoration, and reform, maintained his desire to establish a plebiscitary republic, and protested that he had never sought

---

[3]Dictionnaire des parlementaires Français, vol. IV, p. 1399.

[4]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 137.

[5]Poètes de France á Paul Déroulède (Paris-Nice: Le "Petit Poète" Éditeur, 1900).

to restore the monarchy nor conspired with monarchists toward that end.[6]

If any coalition had ever existed between Déroulède and the royalists, it expired in 1900. Déroulède and André Buffet, like Déroulède accused of conspiracy against the government in August, 1899, carried on a lively controversy over the responsibility for the failure of their plans and the resulting mass arrests of August 12. Buffet, a royalist, blamed the nationalists for the debacle, while Déroulède insisted that the monarchists were at fault. The conflict became so heated that Déroulède determined to journey to Switzerland to fight a duel with Buffet. However, the Vaudoise police were alerted and prevented the encounter.[7] Never again would the "Républicain Plébiscitaire" associate with monarchists in the political arena.

On one other occasion while Déroulède was in exile he sought a violent outlet for the frustration caused by his isolation and his inability to effect changes in the French governmental system. In November, 1904, young nationalists of the Ligue de la Patrie Française ostentatiously demonstrated before the statue of Jeanne d'Arc in Paris. Jean Jaurès, the outstanding French socialist ridiculed the exhibition in his paper L'Humanité. He ended the article by saying: "We await the inevitable telegram from M. Déroulède."[8] On November 30, Déroulède wired a message to Jaurès in which he proclaimed Jeanne d'Arc as the most sublime heroine in French history.

---

[6]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, pp. 132-33.

[7]Dictionnaire des parlementaires Français, vol. IV, p. 1399.

[8]Goldberg, Life of Jaurès, p. 333.

He added that he thought the young nationalists far more necessary for the nation than Jaurès and his socialists. He concluded by calling Jaurès the "most detestable corrupter of the public conscience who has ever played the foreigner's game in France."[9]

Jaurès responded in an uncharacteristic fashion by challenging Déroulède to a duel. On December 4, Jaurès headed to San Sebastian for that purpose. However, the Spanish authorities learned the plans and refused to admit Jaurès. Both men were determined to uphold their "honor" and jointly requested temporary entry for Déroulède into France. Permission was granted, and on December 6, they fought at Hendaye. Two shots were fired; no hits were scored; Jaurès returned to Paris; and Déroulède went back to exile. Jaurès suffered some derision on his return to Paris, which hurt his career.[10] This ridiculous incident indicated that the judgment of both men was impaired by the current status of their political fortunes.

Mere exclusion from France could not silence the "prince of nationalists."[11] He regularly sent items to Le Drapeau calling for revenge and reform and expressing his opinions on contemporary events. Déroulède was especially perturbed by the measures passed by the government restricting the power and influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Déroulède's biographer, Tharaud, reported that at one time the old leaguer contemplated illegally returning to

---

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 334.

[11]Ibid., p. 444.

France, landing in the Vendée, and rallying around himself "men of courage who needed direction." Fortunately for him, his friends did not encourage this plan and prevailed upon their ex-leader to "stay where the government had put him."[12]

On several occasions Déroulède drafted speeches which he sent to Paris to be read to members of the League of Patriots. On July 12, 1904, the super-patriot wrote a message entitled "France d'abord" in which he urged the members of the League to maintain their patriotic devotion and not to succumb to the blandishments of those who would weaken the state.[13] He wanted France to serve the role of a protective and succoring mother to her children so that they could live a good life. However, this good life was to be reserved for Frenchmen exclusively. He concluded: "I always return to my old formula which summarizes in a few words the fullness of my patriotic faith: All men are my brothers, but my first brother is the French brother."[14]

In July, 1905, Déroulède declined a special pardon, which would have permitted him to return, and traveled to Vienna, where he spent the last months of his exile.[15] While in Vienna he wrote an article which was published in The National Review, an English

---

[12]Tharaud, La vie et la mort, pp. 146-47.

[13]Déroulède, Qui vive? France!, p. 31.

[14]Ibid., p. 32.

[15]Dictionnaire des parlementaires Français, vol. IV, pp. 1399-1400.

magazine.[16] Déroulède approved the recently-achieved Entente Cordiale between England and France. Although Déroulède had charged Clemenceau with supplying information to the English, the super-patriot harbored no deep-seated antagonism against Great Britain. Therefore he willingly accepted an agreement which strengthened France vis à vis Germany and in which France was an equal partner. He explained at some length how Germany had taken Alsace-Lorraine, diverted France into imperialism, which had caused bad relations at times with England, and how Germany was trying to extend its control and hegemony over all of Europe. For him, it was essential that Germany be prevented from further expansion. A step in this direction had been made when the Franco-Russian alliance was concluded. However, neither France nor Russia could stop Germany on the seas. England was important to the French because of her fleet. England would provide maritime protection, and France would furnish ground troops. Together they could stop Germany to the ultimate advantage of both nations and Europe in general. The end result for England would be commercial supremacy on the seas; and, at last, France would reacquire her beloved Alsace-Lorraine, which was ever Déroulède's primary concern.[17]

Eventually Déroulède was able to return to France to continue his diatribes against Germany and the parliamentary republic. On November 2, 1905, a law of amnesty removed the strictures against Déroulède after six of the ten years of banishment had been served.[18]

---

[16]Déroulède, Qui vive? France!, pp. 89-105.

[17]Ibid., pp. 102-03.

[18]Dictionnaire des parlementaires Francais, vol. IV, p. 1400.

With the Dreyfus Affair virtually concluded, the government probably felt secure against any possible future effort by Déroulède to unseat it. If that were the belief, it was correct. The ardent nationalist had been away too long to garner any real support for his ideas. As Tharaud related: "In France, in his own party, he found himself still in exile."[19]

Shortly after his homecoming Déroulède eagerly threw himself into the political arena in an effort to regain his seat in the Chamber of Deputies, from which he had been removed by a vote of the Chamber on March 4, 1901. Even in his old bailiwick, the second electoral district of Angoulême, he could not elicit enough support for victory. His primary opponent was the incumbent, M. Auguste Mulaç, formerly mayor of Angoulême. On the first ballot of May 6, 1906, Déroulède polled a small plurality of 7,087 votes to 6,948 for Mulac. But on the second ballot, cast on May 20, Mulac garnered 9,353 votes to 7,205 for Déroulède.[20]

With his last chance for political activism ended by this electoral defeat, Déroulède devoted his energy to writing and to his functions as president of the League of Patriots, a position he regained on his return from exile. His two primary publications were Pages Françaises (1909) and Qui vive? France! Quand même! (1910), which were compilations of his various speeches and politically-oriented letters. His functions as president of the League consisted essentially in his appearances before and discourses to patriotic

---

[19]Tharaud, La vie et la mort, p. 166.

[20]Dictionnaire des parlementaires Francais, vol. IV, p. 1400.

groups on occasions of fêtes commemorating past wars, battles, and heroes.

These nationalistic orations stated and restated the ideas that he had espoused all his life, to the absolute exclusion of any new thought. Déroulède was seldom profound, but he was always consistent within the framework of his passions and prejudices. He railed against the notion of "internationalism," which would detour France from the pursuit of her lost glories. His remedy was drastic, but typical: "All Frenchmen who abjure the idea of the Patrie and desertion of the flag should be condemned, either temporarily or permanently, to the loss of all their political rights."[21] He ceaselessly castigated the parliamentary government for its failure to create a France sufficiently strong for regaining its lost provinces and prestige.[22] And he continually urged his listeners to a renewal of devotion to their patriotic duties so that his invincible hope in the triumph of "Right" ("du Droit") would be justified.[23]

Throughout the last few years of his life Déroulède suffered from poor health. By 1913 he was no longer able to withstand the rigors of the Parisian climate. Therefore he retired to an estate which he owned near Nice in the Maritime Alps. He was frequently visited there by close friends, whom he regaled with his reminiscences

---

[21]Déroulède, Qui vive? France!, p. 40.

[22]Paul Déroulède, Les Parlementaires (Paris: Bloud et Cie, Éditeurs, 1909), pp. 1-54.

[23]Déroulède, Qui vive? France!, pp. 126-33.

and anecdotes from his days in the public eye.[24] He also did a little writing, which usually took the form of prefaces to patriotic works. To the end he never varied. In the preface to Henri Zislin's Sourires d' Alsace, a book of political cartoons which attacked German attempts to "germanize" Alsace, Déroulède commended the author on his efforts and urged the circulation of the work throughout France to aid in reviving the desire to reacquire Alsace-Lorraine.[25]

He also wrote a short story entitled Monsieur le Hulan et les trois couleurs. Although supposedly a children's Christmas story, the work was not very peaceful. The setting was in Alsace-Lorraine. On Christmas day all the children miraculously received blue, white, and red cockades. This angered the German official named Hulan, who had a woman shot because her face was white, her lips red, and her eyes blue. But the elements conspired against him--blue sky, white clouds, red earth. Thus the official was forced to realize that the blue, white, and red could not be removed from Alsace-Lorraine.[26] Even the spirit of Christmas was inadequate for quelling the desire for revenge in Déroulède's heart.

By the end of 1913 Déroulède's health was very bad. Yet he could not be deterred from his intention to attend the annual ceremony at Champigny-la-Bataille commemorating the French soldiers killed in

---

[24]Franzelé (pseud.), Au Chevet d'un héros: cinq mois de veilles auprès de Paul Déroulède (Paris: H. Floury, Éditeur, 1915), pp. 1-221.

[25]Henri Zislin, Sourires d'Alsace (Paris: Les Marches de l'Est, 1913), pp. 5-9.

[26]Paul Déroulède, Monsieur le Hulan et les trois couleurs (Paris: A Lahure, C. Marpon and E. Flammarion, 1917), pp. 1-23.

the Franco-Prussian War. On this occasion he made his last public address, which was shorter than usual because of his weakness. There was no variance in his theme:

> I want to speak of renewing the protest for our brothers of Alsace-Lorraine; I want to speak of the persecution and condemnations of the patriots of Metz and of Colmar, of Strasbourg and of Mulhouse, and finally of the undignified treatment, the debasing injuries, and ignoble brutalities imposed, even yesterday, on the recruits and the citizens of Saverne by the insolent military snobs of the Prussian army.[27]

Déroulède's efforts on this occasion proved too much for his welfare. The same evening his condition worsened; and on the advice of his physicians, he returned immediately to his Mediterranean villa at Mont-Boron. On January 30, 1914, at the age of sixty-eight Déroulède died from cardiac arrest. Since he passed away six months before the beginning of the war for which he had hoped for forty-four years,[28] this probably was the crowning irony of Déroulède's frustrated life. After the war which ultimately restored the lost provinces to France a statue of the ardent super-patriot was erected in Paris in Henri Bergson Square.[29] Maurice Barrès succeeded Déroulède as president and directed the League of Patriots in its fervent support of France in the war against Germany.[30]

The career of Paul Déroulède was no more than a sideshow, albeit a sometimes fascinating, annoying, or amusing one, to the central pageant of French history in the interlude between the Franco-

---

[27]Chenu, La ligue des patriotes, p. 115.

[28]Dictionnaire des parlementaires Français, vol. IV, p. 1400.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Chenu, La ligue des patriotes, pp. 129-36.

Prussian and First World Wars. The man never exercised direct control over the affairs of his country, nor did he influence in a pervasive fashion either the heads of state or the masses of the people. His writings reached a sizeable audience, but they failed to evoke mass devotion to his cause. His speeches were fervently greeted by his faithful supporters, but their energies were usually dissipated in wild cheering and self-congratulations on the justness of their program rather than in specific actions to make it realized. Yet despite his failure to achieve the goals of his program, neither Déroulède's life nor his proposals were historically sterile.

Personally, Déroulède's life conformed to the pattern prescribed for the "true believer" in Eric Hoffer's book of that title.[31] He was the type person attracted to and necessary for the success of a modern mass movement. The actions of his adult life were the products of the frustration spawned in him by French defeat and his individual inability to prevent that disgrace. His search for self-realization in a patriotic movement began after he no longer could pursue a military career. The resulting rudderlessness coupled with his pre-war self-centeredness made him an ideal candidate for total devotion to a cause. As Hoffer stated:

> The fiercest fanatics are often selfish people who were forced, by innate shortcomings or external circumstances, to lose faith in their own selves. They separate the excellent instrument of their selfishness from their ineffectual selves and attach it to the service of some holy cause.[32]

---

[31] Eric Hoffer, The True Believer (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951).

[32] Ibid., p. 47.

While it may not be fair to Déroulède to imply that he lost all faith in himself, his frustration and disappointment conditioned him for devotion to idealistic nationalism.

Déroulède began as a dissatisfied and disgruntled "man of words." Before his cause acquired a structural vehicle for dissemination of his dreams, he used his pen to express his discontent with the status quo, his enamoration with past glories, and his aspirations for the future of France. The literary merits of his writings were more pronounced during that period between his departure from the army and the founding of the League of Patriots than at any other time of his life.[33] The creation of the League gave form, substance, and, ultimately, direction to his passions and exacted a devotion that was totally consumptive in its demands. Rapidly, as his participation in the Boulanger Crisis indicated, he moved toward that fanaticism that exhausts and stifles the creative capacities. From then on, Déroulède's literary talents, such as they were, were subordinated to the advancement of his movement.

Déroulède saw little of value in the contemporary. His hopes for French revivication were in the future, no matter how distant that future might be. He exalted self-sacrifice and frequently expressed the wish to be able to die for France in the cause of revenge. He possessed the true believer's ability to ignore facts or situations that were unpleasant or which he considered unworthy of his consideration. He could not "be frightened by danger nor disheartened by

---

[33]Ducray, Paul Déroulède, pp. 123-43.

obstacle nor baffled by contradictions"[34] because he overlooked their existence. In no other way can one account for his blind confidence and imperturbable faith at the time of the abortive coup du Reuilly. And when this escapade failed, he insisted that the charges against him be in keeping with the magnitude of his intentions.

Déroulède's historical significance is derived from his status as a true believer. Both his attitudes and the policies they produced foreshadowed twentieth century French fascism. Characteristically, fascism has achieved its greatest success in industrially more advanced societies which have had some degree of democratic experience. It has required both mass enthusiasm and mass support to be an effective movement. Essentially, French fascism was a conservative, "right-wing" movement. Paul Déroulède, despite his frequent advocacy of plebiscitary democracy, fitted this mold.

The portents or actualities of fascism have appeared in most western states in the twentieth century. Each nation's brand of fascism has differed to some degree from that of all the others. And even within the same country varieties have appeared. Thus, it has frequently been difficult to define the phenomenon in such a fashion as to be generally acceptable. Furthermore, the placement of certain peoples and groups within the fascist framework has been doubly difficult. Prior to the rise of the Pétain regime in Vichy after the German conquest of France in 1940, no French fascist group had been able to dominate the state. Since no faction managed to produce a leader of sufficient drawing power to attract national allegiance,

---

[34] Hoffer, The True Believer, pp. 78-79.

French fascism was chiefly characterized by dissension and fragmentation.

Ernst Nolte, a German philosopher and historian, recently offered a study of fascism in three European countries. He attempted to observe the unifying thread common to all forms of the movement, as well as describing national differences. He defined fascism as

> . . . ANTI-MARXISM WHICH SEEKS TO DESTROY THE ENEMY BY THE EVOLVEMENT OF A RADICALLY OPPOSED AND YET RELATED IDEOLOGY AND BY THE USE OF ALMOST IDENTICAL AND YET TYPICALLY MODIFIED METHODS, ALWAYS, HOWEVER, WITHIN THE UNYIELDING FRAMEWORK OF NATIONAL SELF-ASSERTION AND AUTONOMY.[35]

This definition implied that Marxism was a necessary prerequisite for fascism. It is Nolte's claim that fascism has an inclination toward a radical ideology and depends for its existence upon at least the rudiments of an organization and upon extensive propaganda. The definition supplied by Nolte provides understanding for the existence of various stages of fascism which appear

> . . . according to the evolution of the ideology and the predominance of one of its two chief components, the pseudosocialist or the elite--that is, race--element, according to the degree of determination in, and the more or less universal nature of, the will to destruction; and according to the energy of execution. The decisive factors, however, are starting point and direction, for this concept is a 'teleological' one, and even the most marked differentiation of stages does not do away with the unity of its essential nature.[36]

It is interesting to note that Nolte used, instead of one of the later forms of French fascism, Charles Maurras and the Action

---

[35]Ernst Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 20.

[36]Ibid., p. 21.

Française as his example of revolutionary conservatism. In Maurras, Nolte saw the "first man in Europe who as a thinker and a politician drove conservatism beyond the limits dividing it from incipient fascism."[37] The Ligue d'Action française provided Maurras' basic organizational structure and by its very name renounced any claim to be a party. Because of this, Nolte placed the Ligue in the tradition of "the great mass and street movement such as Déroulède's League of Patriots."[38]

If one accepts Nolte's placing of Maurras within the structure of fascism, then Déroulède's position as a fascist precursor can be established. French fascist leaders of the late 1930s acknowledged their indebtedness to thinkers like Maurras,[39] while the latter claimed Maurice Barrès as one who helped to form his ideology.[40] Although Barrès may not have been influenced by Déroulède, he certainly was in close accord with him, as his succession to the presidency of the League of Patriots demonstrated. Barrès also thought highly enough of the super-patriot to accompany him on the occasion of the attempted coup de force of February 24, 1899.

In any event Déroulède embodied many of the essential ingredients of fascism in his own right. William Ebenstein, a professor of political science currently at the University of California, Santa

---

[37]Ibid., p. 87.

[38]Ibid., p. 68.

[39]Robert J. Soucy, "The Nature of Fascism in France," International Fascism, 1920-45, ed. Walter Laqueur and George L. Mosse (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), p. 29.

[40]Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism, pp. 52-53.

Barbara, listed some of the empirically ascertainable traits that characterize the fascist personality.

> First, a tendency to conform compulsively to orthodox ideals and practices; emotional rigidity and limited imagination; excessive concern with problems of status and strength; strong loyalty to one's own group . . . coupled with vehement dislike of outsiders . . . and stress on discipline and obedience, rather than freedom and spontaneity, in human relations . . . .[41]

Déroulède exhibited all these traits in his support of orthodox Catholicism, in his zeal for restoration of Alsace-Lorraine, in his devotion to the cause of restoring French power and prestige, in his loyalty to the League of Patriots and antipathy to all "foreigners," and in his emphasis on the necessity of performing one's duty.

In several ways Déroulède encompassed the principal facets of fascism, most notably in his ardent and excessive nationalism. To him France was much more than merely a nation-state in which people lived and to whom they owed certain duties in return for a tranquil and ordered existence. For this storied "la France" possessed a mystique that distinguished her from and made her superior to all other nations. France was, as Maurras called her, a goddess, in some fashion a divinity to be served, but also to be worshipped. Thus, Déroulède's conception of the welfare of his country exacted his utmost in devotion and energy. To him the French people lost identity as individuals, more nearly resembling instead the German concept of Volk--a vast amorphous mass that combined all the varied interests of the people into an entity with a common myth and a common soul. For this reason Déroulède expected the institution of his desired form of

---

[41]William Ebenstein, Today's ISMS (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 102.

government to unify the people in a concerted effort to bring proper tokens (Alsace-Lorraine) of homage to the benevolent divinity.

The common participation of all Frenchmen in their government would be symbolized by the emergence of a leader who would activate their shared human natures by his own activism, his heroic will. Déroulède recognized that he lacked the capacity for leadership; hence, he was constantly searching for a heroic figure--a general, a "man on horseback," a Boulanger--to rally Frenchmen to their duty. Although the "Républicain Plébiscitaire" advocated popular sovereignty, the tone of his pronouncements bore warning that he expected more from his executive than mere execution of the wishes of the people. That leader was to suggest, form, and construct the basic ideas of the people. He was to be the depository of the "General Will," which can result in totalitarianism when carried to its logical extreme. Déroulède assumed that this leader would couple charisma with professional perfection, i. e., much like the Pope in historical Catholicism, he could err personally but not when giving direction to his institution. This was probably Déroulède's ideal, which he never really expected to achieve, but the implications in this direction are legion in his writings.

Another proto-fascist concept demonstrated by Déroulède was that of the elite. His superior group was never as restrictive nor as delimited as was that of later and purer fascists, for he was willing to include all citizens of long-standing French origin. His statements regarding his primary obligation to his "French brother" before all others, his desire to prohibit or restrict immigration of non-Frenchmen into the Patrie, his advocacy of withholding of citizenship

to naturalized aliens until the second generation, and his suggested withholding of civil rights from those who preached international cooperation are all indicative of his belief in a distinctively French elite, which must be protected from contamination and whose interests must be served above all.

To achieve his ends for France he was willing to use force and, perhaps, even violence. The Boulangist demonstrations in the Spring of 1889, the street fighting of the Leaguers at the height of tension in the Dreyfus Affair, his own proclivity for duels, and, above all, his attempts at coups and conspiracies demonstrated a willingness to abjure peaceful and orderly courses of action. Coupled with this tendency to violence was a fervent moralism. One historian of French fascism, Robert J. Soucy, in describing its ideology stated:". . . perhaps the most striking thing about this ideology was its moralism (italics his), its righteous indignation at all it deemed decadent and its zealous determination to root out sinfulness (e.g. weakness) wherever it was found."[42] Within this context Déroulède railed against the corruption of the French government, as evidenced in the Panama scandal, the Wilson Affair, and in all ways in which the regime seemed to favor special economic interests. Déroulède's ideal was to eradicate all forms of corruption and wickedness, since they diverted the state from its proper goals.

For the super-patriot the ultimate goals for France were restored glory and prestige and reacquired territory, the latter being a prerequisite for the former. Since Germany possessed Alsace-Lorraine and

---

[42]Soucy, "The Nature of Fascism in France," p. 55.

French fortunes had suffered at her hands, Germany was the obstacle to French ascendancy. France could not expect Germany to relinquish willingly the two provinces; therefore war was a necessity. In a manner typical of later fascism Déroulède exalted war and considered the soldier's contribution the highest form of service to the state. The titles of some of Déroulède's collections of poetry--Chants du soldat, Nouveaux chants du soldat, Refrains militaires--indicate his love of and regard for the military life. And he often expressed a desire to give his life in the realization of his aspirations for his beloved fatherland.

So much having been said, it needs to be added that it would be inaccurate to place Déroulède in the ranks of the full-fledged fascists. Perhaps most important in his case was his placing in time. His life ended before World War I began, and his active political career terminated around the turn of the century. In Europe fascism seemed dependent for its growth and development, at least to some degree, on the phenomenon of the great war. Therefore, Déroulède could be only a forerunner of the movement. Secondly, he was neither a profound nor an original thinker. He was a man with an all-consuming passion for one goal. His writings, plans, and actions were dedicated to the restoration of honor and status for France, which could only be achieved through the return of Alsace-Lorraine. His limited scope and depth made him more suited to the role of ardent and devoted disciple rather than to that of charismatic leader or intellectual founder. Action fitted his nature more than reflective thought, but his constant search for a military leader reflected his lack of confidence in his own ability and his preference for a secondary role. Déroulède, then,

never crossed the indistinct line dividing conservative, plebiscitary republicanism from totalitarian fascism.

But for all that he was proto-fascist, for his conservatism went beyond a dispassionate political philosophy and the standard "right-wing" vogue of his era. Déroulède made himself distinctive by his attitude, his frame of mind. It was in his capacity as a "true believer" that Déroulède overstepped the normal and foreshadowed twentieth century fascism. His single-minded devotion to his ideals allowed no leeway for compromise or conciliation. His loyalties were total; his antagonisms were irrevocable, except in cases like that of Rochefort who became a convert to and co-sponsor of his causes. Galli, Déroulède's close friend and almost constant companion, said of him: "Déroulède is not, he has never been, either a platonic enemy or friend; he has a horror of equivocation and discounts as negligible a faith that will not act."[43] Déroulède wanted to restore past French glories and status and so was reactionary; he was willing to use revolutionary tactics to reach his goals and was, therefore, a revolutionary. Nolte states that the underlying characteristic of fascism is "revolutionary reaction."[44] Déroulède possessed this quality.

Actually, there exists a more complete connection between Déroulède's program and that of General Charles de Gaulle, president of the Fifth Republic from 1958 to 1969, than between Déroulède and fascism. The constitution installed by de Gaulle in 1958 in many ways

---

[43]Galli, Déroulède par lui-même, p. 136.

[44]Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism, p. 53.

resembles Déroulède's proposals for a plebiscitary republic. With the approval of a constitutional amendment in 1962 providing for direct election of the president of France, de Gaulle's government became almost an exact replica of that once espoused by Déroulède. The Fifth Republic, under de Gaulle, featured a strong executive whose powers were separated from and independent of the legislative branch. The ministers of the cabinet were chosen by and were largely responsible to the president. The legislature consisted of two houses with a distinction in terms of office for the members and in functions of the two chambers. And, finally, de Gaulle was able to resort to the use of a referendum to take his proposals directly to the people, thereby incorporating the plebiscitary democracy which Déroulède advocated so vehemently.[45]

Armand Plat, a member of the League of Patriots as a youth, wrote two books attempting to show the indebtedness of France and de Gaulle to Paul Déroulède. The first book, Deux français libres sur les traces de Paul Déroulède, was a personal account of how the example of Déroulède in his quest for the return of Alsace-Lorraine inspired Plat and his son to rally to de Gaulle in the resistance movement against the Germans during World War II.[46] As he recounted Déroulède's reactions to the French defeat in 1870-71 and anger at the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, Plat compared Déroulède's situation to his own and

---

[45]For a summary of de Gaulle's governmental institutions see Roy C. Macridis (ed.), De Gaulle, Implacable Ally (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), pp. 33-63.

[46]Armand Plat, Deux français libres sur les traces de Paul Déroulède (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1960), p. 9.

that of France in 1940.[47] Plat wished to restore to prominence the name of Déroulède and have the super-patriot's body reinterred in the Panthéon in Paris with the other great men of France.[48] Plat's second book, Paul Déroulède: héros national et precurseur de la constitution de la Ve République Française, related in glowing fashion the principal events in Déroulède's life and pointed out the similarity between Déroulède's program and de Gaulle's.[49] Plat concluded by calling Déroulède the grandest man of his time and placed him just below Jeanne d'Arc and Napoleon I in his list of French heroes.[50]

While it is apparent that de Gaulle and Déroulède desired the same form of government for France, it is no less clear that Déroulède was not de Gaulle. First of all, the old leaguer never approached de Gaulle's achievements or his status with the French people. Secondly, de Gaulle possessed qualities of leadership for which Déroulède wished in vain. And, owing to the nature of his duties, and his far greater abilities, the president of the Fifth Republic devoted his attention to a wider variety of subjects than did Déroulède and dealt with them in greater detail. Although a prominent American intellectual historian has gone so far as to accuse de Gaulle of intellectual feebleness,[51] few would agree, and judging by his success alone he must be

---

[47] Ibid., p. 189.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Armand Plat, Paul Déroulède: héros national et precurseur de la Constitution de la Ve République Française (Paris: Jean d'Halluin, Éditeur, 1965).

[50] Ibid., pp. 256, 269.

[51] H. Stuart Hughes, "A French Form of Fascism," De Gaulle, Anachronism, Realist, or Prophet, ed. F. Roy Willis (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 47.

credited with vastly more political and intellectual acumen than Déroulède, an undisciplined activist of mediocre intellect.

Paul Déroulède's life was episodic and, ultimately, unrewarding. His dreams were unfulfilled, his programs unrealized, and his passing unmourned by the great majority of his countrymen. His efforts to institute basic changes in the French government were, at once, amusing and pathetic in their futility, disorder, and failure. Yet Déroulède should not be dismissed too lightly in recounting the history of France. He served as a portent of and a warning to twentieth century man. Perhaps Déroulède's uncertainty as to his own merit led him to proclaim excellence for his nation and his cause. His passions and his prejudices provided his reason for being and made him a man highly susceptible to irrationality. Such a type, according to his ability and predilections, can either lead or join mass movements, which often are detrimental to their nation and to human society. Although the super-patriot's writings are now seldom read by his own countrymen, and his life is rarely studied, his career had a striking immediacy and a long-range prefigurement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The materials used in writing this thesis were collected from a variety of sources in the United States and in England and France. Most of the English-language references were obtained from the librairies at Oklahoma University, Southern Methodist University, Louisiana State University, Tulane University, Texas Tech University, and from the Dallas, Texas, Public Library. The bulk of the French-language sources were studied at the British Museum Reading Room in London and at the newspaper collection in the Museum's Collingwood branch, and also at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the newspaper files at the Bibliothèque Arsenal.

Works by Déroulède

Déroulède, Paul. Affaire Déroulède contre Savoy, Bourdon, Marot. Paris: Imprimerie Capitaine & Cie., 1885.

_____. Chants patriotiques. Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1882.

_____. Chants du paysan. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeurs, 1894.

_____. Chants du soldat. Paris: Michel Lévy, Frères, Éditeurs--Librairie Nouvelle, 1872.

_____. Conférence sur Corneille et son oeuvre. Paris: Librairie Bloud et Cie, 1911.

_____. La défense nationale. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1883.

_____. Désarmement?. Paris: E. Dentu, Éditeur, 1892.

_____. -1870- Feuilles du route. Paris: Société d'Édition et de Publications, Librairie Félix Juven, 1907.

_____. L'Hetman. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, Ancienne Maison Michel Lévy Frères, 1877.

_____. Histoire d'amour. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1890.

_____. Juan Strenner. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, Éditeurs, 1869.

_____. La livre de la Ligue des Patriotes. Paris: Bureaux de la Ligue et du Drapeau, 1887.

_____. Marches et sonneries -- chants du soldat. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1881.

_____. Messire du Guesclin. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1896.

_____. La Moabite. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1881.

_____. Monsieur Le Hulan et les trois couleurs. Paris: A. Lahure, C. Marpon & E. Flammarion, 1917.

_____. La mort de Hoche. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1897.

_____. Nouveaux chants du soldat. Paris: Michel Lévy, Frères, Éditeurs, 1875.

_____. -70=71- Nouvelles feuilles du route. Paris: Société d'Édition et de Publications, Librairie Félix Juven, 1907.

_____. Pages Françaises. Paris: Librairie Bloud et Cie., 1909.

_____. Les parlémentaires. Paris: Bloud et Cie, 1909.

_____. La plus belle fille du monde. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1898.

_____. Poesies militaires. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1896.

_____. Le prémier grenadier de France: la tour d'Auvergne. Paris: Georges Hurtel, Artiste-Éditeur, 1886.

_____. Qui vive? France! "Quand Même". Paris: Bloud et Cie, Éditeurs, 1910.

_____. Refrains militaires. Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1889.

_____. Républicains-plébiscitaires. Paris: Imprimerie Marquet, 1902.

Works by Déroulède's Contemporaries

Auboeuf, Docteur J. Le coup de massue. Préface de Paul Déroulède Paris: Henri Charles-Lavauzelle, 1907.

Barrès, Maurice. Scénes et doctrines du nationalism. 2 vols. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1925.

Barthelemy, J. H. O. Avant la bataille. Preface de Paul Deroulede. Paris: A. Levy et Cie, Editeurs, 1886.

Biographie de Paul Deroulede. Paris: Imprimerie Modele, 1888.

Canu, A. Henry, and Buisson, Georges. M. Paul Deroulede et sa Ligue des Patriotes. Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Parisienne, Albert Savine, Editeur, 1889.

Chenu, (M. le Batonnier). La Ligue des Patriotes: son programme--son passe--son avenir. Paris: Librairie de la Societe du Recueil Sirey, 1916.

Claretie, Jules. Celebrites Contemporaines. Vol. III. Paris: A. Quantin, Imprimeur-Editeur, 1883.

Cordonnier, Henry. Exploits heroiques de nos soldats au Maroc. Paris: R. Roger et F. Chernoviz, Editeurs, 1913.

Cour d'Assises de la Seine 29, 30, et 31 mai 1899, Affaire Deroulede et Marcel Habert. Plaidoyer de Me Oscar Falateuf pour Paul Deroulede. Paris: Macon, Protat Freres, Imprimeurs, 1899.

Cour d'Assises de la Seine, 29 juin 1899, Affaire de la Place de la Nation. Proces Paul Deroulede-Marcel Habert. Plaidoire de Me Oscar Falateuf. Paris: Aux Bureaux du Drapeau, 1899.

Ducray, Camille. Paul Deroulede, 1846-1914. Paris: L'Edition Moderne, Librairie Ambert, 1914.

Florent-Matter, Eugene. Paul Deroulede. Paris: E. Sansot & Cie., 1909.

Franzele (pseud.). Au chevet d'un heros: cinq mois de veilles aupres de Paul Deroulede. Paris: H. Floury, Editeur, 1915.

Galli, H. L'Allemagne en 1813. Preface de Paul Deroulede. Paris: Garnier Freres, Libraires-Editeurs, 1889.

_____. Paul Deroulede raconte par lui-meme. Paris: Librairie Plon, Plon-Nourrit et Cie., Imprimeurs-Editeurs, 1900.

Grisez-Droz, Jules. Heures de melancolie, 1886-1890. Montbeliard: Imprimerie Ad. Peterman, 1891.

_____. Heures de melancolie, 1886-1892. Montaidier: Leon Carpentier, Editeur, 1892.

Lermusiaux, F., et Tavernier, Adolphe. Pour la Patrie! origine, histoire, but, fondation et constitution des societes de tir en France et a l'etranger. Paris: A. Levy et Cie., Editeurs de la Ligue des Patriotes, 1886.

Mahalin, Paul. Les patriotes. Deuxieme Édition. Paris: Bibliothèque des Deux-Mondes, Frinzine, Klein, et Cie., Éditeurs, 1885.

Milliet, Paul. Chants Français. Sous la direction et avec une préface de Paul Déroulède. Paris: Eugène Weill et Georges Maurice, Éditeurs, 1885.

Poètes de France à Paul Déroulède. Paris-Nice: Le "Petit Poète" Éditeur, 1900.

Reinach, Joseph. Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus. Vols. III-VI. Paris: Librairie Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1903-11.

Sérieyx, Marquerite. Un semeur d'energie, Paul Déroulède. Conférence donnée aux membres de la Ligue des Patriotes et de la Société de Graphologie. Paris: Société de Graphologie, 1923.

Tharaud, Jérôme, and Tharaud, Jean. Paul Déroulède. Paris: Émile-Paul Frères, Éditeurs, 1914.

_____. La vie et la mort de Déroulède. Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, Imprimeurs-Éditeurs, 1925.

Zislin, Henri. Sourires d'Alsace. Préface de Paul Déroulède. Paris: Les Marches de l'Est, 1913.

Related Books

Braibant, Charles. Le secret d'Anatole France: du boulangisme au Panama. Paris: Denöel et Steele, 1935.

Brogan, D. W. The Development of Modern France, 1870-1939. Vol. I. New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row Publishers, 1966.

Bruun, Geoffrey. Clemenceau. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1943.

Byrnes, Robert F. Antisemitism in Modern France. Vol. I. The Prologue to the Dreyfus Affair. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1950.

Chapman, Guy. The Dreyfus Case: A Reassessment. New York: Reynal & Company, 1955.

Charpentier, Armand. Historique de l'Affaire Dreyfus. Paris: Fasquelle Éditeurs, 1933.

Coston, Henry. Partis, journaux, et hommes politiques d'hier et d'aujourd'hui. Paris: Michel de Mauny, 1960.

Dansette, Adrien. Le boulangisme. Paris: Librairie Artheme Fayard, 1946.

Derfler, Leslie (ed.). The Dreyfus Affair: Tragedy of Errors? Problems in European Civilization. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1963.

Dutrait-Crozon, Henri. Précis de l'Affaire Dreyfus. Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924.

Ebenstein, William. Today's ISMS. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961.

Girard, Georges. La vie de Lazare Hoche. Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1926.

Goguel, François. La politique des partis sous la IIIe République. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1946.

Goldberg, Harvey. The Life of Jean Jaurès. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1962.

Gooch, Brison D. (ed.). Napoleon III--Man of Destiny. European Problem Studies. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963.

Greene, Nathaniel (ed.). Fascism: An Anthology. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968.

Halasz, Nicholas. Captain Dreyfus: The Story of a Mass Hysteria. New York: Grove Press, 1955.

Harvey, Donald J. France Since the Revolution. New York: The Free Press, 1968.

Herzog, Wilhelm. From Dreyfus to Petain. Translated by Walter Sorell. New York: Creative Age Press, 1947.

Hoffer, Eric. The True Believer. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951.

Laquer, Walter, and Mosse, George L. (eds.). International Fascism, 1920-45. New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row Publishers, 1966.

Lefebvre, Georges. The Directory. Translated by Robert Baldick. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House, 1967.

Macridis, Roy C. (ed.). De Gaulle, Implacable Ally. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966.

Nolte, Ernst. Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.

Osgood, Samuel M. (ed.). Napoleon III: Buffoon, Modern Dictator or Sphinx? Problems in European Civilization. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1963.

Petit, Alexandre. Paul Déroulède (1846-1914). Paris: P. Lethielleux, Éditeur, Publicistes Chrétiens, 1947.

Plat, Armand. Deux Français libres sur les Traces de Paul Déroulède. Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1960.

_____. Paul Déroulède: héros national et précurseur de la constitution de la Ve République Française. Paris: Jean D'Halluin, Éditeur, 1965.

Seager, Frederic H. The Boulanger Affair: Political Crossroads of France, 1886-1889. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969.

Sedgwick, Alexander. The Third French Republic, 1870-1914. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968.

Soltau, Roger. French Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931.

Thomson, David (ed.). France: Empire and Republic, 1850-1940. New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row Publishers, 1968.

Weiss, John. The Fascist Tradition. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967.

Williams, Roger L. Henri Rochefort, Prince of the Gutter Press. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.

Willis, Roy F. (ed.). De Gaulle: Anachronism, Realist, or Prophet? European Problem Studies. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.

Wolf, John B. France: 1814-1919. New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1963.

Articles, Dictionaries, Newspapers

La Cocarde. (Paris). 1888-1890.

Dictionaire de biographie Française. "Déroulède, Paul." Vol. 10, pp. 1144-46.

Dictionnaire des parlémentaires Français. "Déroulède (Paul-Marie-Joseph)." Tome IV, 1395-1400.

Le Drapeau. (Paris). 1882, 1886-90, 1898-99.

Fisher, H. A. L. "French Nationalism," Hibbert Journal, XV (January 1917), 217-29.

L'Intransigeant. (Paris). 1888-89, 1899.

La Lanterne. (Paris). 1888-89.

Le National. (Paris). 1888-89.

New York Times. 1886-1890, 1898-1900.

Le Petit Temps. (Paris). 1899.

Roberts, John. "General Boulanger," History Today, V (October, 1955), 657-69.

Le Siècle. (Paris). 1898-99.

Le Temps. (Paris). 1885-1889.

The Times. (London). 1888-89, 1898-99.

Public Documents

Journal officiel de la République Française. Debats parlémentaires (Châmbre des Députés). Sessions ordinaires et sessions extraordinaires de 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1898, 1899.