

Andrew S. Tompkins, Review of *Terror and Terroir* by Andrew W. M. Smith (Manchester University Press, 2016) in *French History*, Volume 32, Issue 4, December 2018, pp. 615–617.

In the summer of 1907, France's *Midi rouge* (the 'red South') was in revolt, with regular Sunday protests in towns throughout the region drawing as many as 600,000 participants. After protesters torched buildings in Narbonne, the military occupied the town, leading to violence in which six people were killed and to the mutiny of a locally-recruited regiment. The cause of all this upheaval? A dramatic downturn in the price of wine, specifically the *vin de table* on which the regional economy of the Languedoc depended. Local leaders allied with the Socialists demanded government intervention to protect small-holding winegrowers from fraud (by larger producers allegedly adding sugar to their wines) and from competition with foreign labour. According to Andrew W. M. Smith's *Terror and Terroir*, this militant, direct action by regional winegrowers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century created a foundational myth and set a pattern for subsequent protests in the post-war period, as the region faced new challenges from the modernisation of agriculture.

The 'legacy of 1907' is everywhere in Smith's book, which tracks the growth, radicalisation, and subsequent marginalisation of the Comité Régional d'Action Viticole (CRAV, Regional Committee for Viticultural Action) between 1944 and 1992, during which time it served as the 'armed wing' of a wider regional *Défense du vin* movement. The *Défense* movement worked through formal as well as informal channels, with trade union representation and parliamentary *députés du vin* such as the long-serving Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé. However, it came to national attention most clearly in sensational guise, such as when CRAV and its allies blocked the port of Sète from receiving imports from Algeria, intercepted and dumped truckloads of Italian wine, stopped Spanish trains, bombed French tax offices, or attacked supermarket wine shelves with bats and clubs. Much of this violence found support in the regional press, especially during the 1970s. Militant winegrowers overstepped the bounds of acceptability though on several occasions, most notably in the skirmish with riot police at the bridge in Montredon in 1976 that left one winegrower and one CRS officer dead, and when they set fire to a Leclerc supermarket in 1984, doing 30 Million Francs in damages. The latter incident, Smith argues, reflected a radicalisation born of CRAV's increasingly marginal position in the wake of economic change.

The economic problems of Southern winegrowers arguably had less to do with fraud and foreign competition than with declining wine consumption, which halved in France between 1961 and 2001 (though the loss was partly compensated by Common Market trade). This fundamental problem was exacerbated by cyclical overproduction of low-quality wine. In times of crisis, the French government repeatedly intervened to depress production through measures such as distillation (turning excess wine into industrial alcohol) and *arrachage* (paying farmers to uproot vineyards). These were deeply unpopular in the Midi, where professional identity and Occitan regionalism intersected in a desire to retain rural employment. According to Smith, *Occitanisme* was less important to CRAV than economic interest, but the latter too was defined in regional terms.

To remedy the industry's underlying problems, first Paris (under Giscard's prime ministers Chirac and Barre), then Brussels (especially after its 1984 Dublin summit) proposed programmes of ameliorative modernisation: instead of the *vins de table* that dominated Midi production, winegrowers were encouraged to follow Bordeaux's example and produce 'quality' wines under the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) system, which would fetch higher prices at lower outputs. However, re-tooling production accelerated the exodus of producers who did not 'modernise' (especially smallholders who could not afford to), leading to a consolidation of land and producers that undermined the traditional identity of the *Midi rouge*. Longstanding links to the Socialist party likewise eroded when Mitterrand too encouraged modernisation, disappointing Southern winegrowers who hoped for protectionist measures rather than European integration with Spanish EEC membership. In this context, 'the CRAV came to speak for the losers in this modernisation struggle' (168). However, Smith argues that CRAV remained too violent, too regional, and too

short on alternatives to escape marginalisation. Instead, others such as José Bové eventually articulated similar grievances with much more success, using opposition to globalisation as their framework.

Smith is particularly good at his economic analysis, enriched as it is by his strong knowledge of wine and winemaking (he is also the author of *The Wine Pocket Bible*, 2009). His narrative of wine syndicalism occasionally becomes very crowded with names and acronyms, but he effectively uses CRAV to show the complicated interplay of regional identities, national politics, and European integration on French winemaking in the second half of the twentieth century.