Royalism, War and Popular Politics in the Age of Revolutions, 1780s–1870s
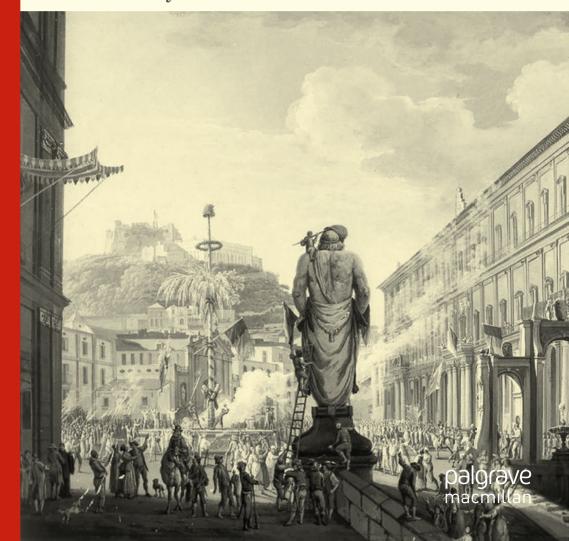
In the Name of the King

Edited by Andoni Artola · Álvaro París

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Editors

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King, War and Bread: Popular Royalism in Southern Europe (1789–1830)

Álvaro París

In recent years, historians have called into question the teleological narratives of progress portraying politicization as a linear process leading to modern republicanism and democracy. Royalist, counterrevolutionary and antiliberal movements were neither relics of the past nor nostalgic attempts to resist the course of history, but political alternatives which gathered wide popular support. Those who opposed the French Revolution and its European aftermath deployed novel political repertoires and discourses to conquer the public sphere, such as the press, pamphlets, collective petitions, public demonstrations, street riots, electoral rallies and popular militias. Although they formulated their plans as a return to an imagined past, this past was reshaped to respond to the needs and expectations of their present. In sum, royalism had a popular dimension—as well as elite-driven dynamics—and contributed to the rise of new models of political participation in much the same way as the revolutionary political projects.[1]

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As discussed in the introduction, although a royalist could be broadly defined as a person who supports a ruling king (or who believes that a king should rule), the emergence of a partisan form of royalism implies an explicit challenge to the monarchical system. The French Revolution represented a major shift in the history of royalism precisely because it entailed the first real challenge to the legitimacy of the European monarchies as a whole. Thereafter, the king's cause needed not only compliant subjects but active partisans. Old certainties collapsed, so that the people were called into action to defend what used to be taken for granted. For this reason, although many revolutionaries supported the monarchical form of government, the term 'royalist' acquired a counterrevolutionary sense in many European contexts.[2] The supporters of the traditional monarchy raised the king's flag as a universal framework of reference against revolution.

Popular royalism was not a paradoxical or contradictory phenomenon, although our teleological assumptions might suggest otherwise. To effectively confront the revolutionary challenge, royalists needed to resort to the social and military mobilization of large sectors of the population.[3] Far from being manipulated, however, those people who fought in the name of the king were pursuing what they perceived as their own interests and values.[4] On this basis, we have to explain why unprivileged social groups identified themselves with the monarchical order and, more precisely, what conceptions of monarchy were at play. Common people participated in royalist politics not only to defend their worldviews, but also to address their everyday concerns. Therefore, royalism had to offer them effective tools to deal with their social problems, and not merely a utopian escape to the past.

In order to explore this issue, I will focus on three southern European monarchies under the Bourbon dynasty—France, Spain and the Kingdom of Naples—between 1789 and 1830. Although these monarchies experienced very different circumstances during this period, they shared certain political features which explain the strength of royalist and legitimist movements and their persistence during the entire nineteenth century. The timespan covered by this chapter could be broadly divided in two periods. During the first of these (1789–1815), the three monarchies survived the challenge posed by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire, at the cost of undergoing some transformations, such as opening the Pandora's box of popular mobilization. During the second period (1815–30), they enforced the restoration of the monarchy while dealing,

on the one hand, with liberal and constitutional movements and, on the other, with a thriving ultra-royalist opposition.

The Bourbon Monarchies Facing and Surviving Revolution, 1789–1830

During our first period, between 1789 and 1815, the Bourbon Monarchies of France, Spain and the Kingdom of Naples collapsed in the midst of revolution, civil war and foreign invasion. Eventually, however, all three returned to power between 1814 and 1815, presenting the Restoration as a restitution of normality after a period of turmoil.[5]

The Restoration, however, did not imply a return to the past. Under the appearance of continuity, the three monarchies tried to learn from the experience of the revolutionary crisis in order to adapt and survive. The myth of the Restoration as a reestablishment of the natural order of things—sanctioned by an alliance between altar and throne—concealed the implementation of substantial changes.[6] The three monarchies adopted some of the innovations of the revolutionary and Napoleonic period, such as the centralization and modernization of the state, administrative reforms, the establishment of new police forces, an appeal to new kinds of 'national' identities and, more importantly for the purpose of this chapter, new sources of legitimacy based on popular consent.[7]

The war was a driving force for the emergence of new forms of popular political participation in the monarchical system. During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1789–1815), the agents of the Bourbon Monarchies called for the mobilization of the masses in defence of the king, religion and the homeland. Henceforth, the survival and independence of the nation were merged with the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty, giving rise to a new form of 'monarchical patriotism' by which the vassals became active players in the political arena.[8] Their duty was to take up arms and rise against the intruder government and internal enemies, joining the royalist armies, guerrillas and militias, thus sacrificing their own lives and forging a direct bond with the absent king. Relinquishing their assigned role as obedient and passive subjects, the war transformed these fighters into protagonists in the defeat of Napoleon. Once the monarchy was restored, the relationship between the king and his subjects was consequently transformed, redefined and negotiated.[9] Those who gave their lives in the name of the king assumed that he was duty bound to reward

their services and respond to their demands. The Bourbon Monarchies survived the crisis by recognizing, encouraging and using to their advantage the new role played by the masses and national communities from 1789 onwards, both in political and military terms.[10]

Once the restoration was accomplished, the counterrevolutionary impulse was redirected towards a new enemy. From 1814 to 1830, the revolutionary menace took on a new form in southern Europe. The liberal revolutions of 1820 in Spain, Portugal and some Italian states (mainly in Naples, Sicily and Piedmont) advocated a political alternative which, distancing itself from the French Revolution to embrace monarchical and Catholic principles, gave rise to a revolutionary tradition anchored in the southern European context.[11] This liberal political culture could not be portrayed as a foreign innovation as easily as republican and Napoleonic ideals. Ferdinand VII of Spain (1820) and Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies (1821) swore allegiance to their respective constitutions only reluctantly and, immediately thereafter, started plotting to overthrow the new liberal regimes. Once they relied on a foreign invasion to regain their absolute power—1821 in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and 1823 in Spain—their political objective became indissolubly attached to the rejection of any form of constitutional government as well as the violent persecution of those who supported it.[12]

Counterrevolutionary royalism was not, however, the only possible means of escaping the crisis. The association between monarchy and counterrevolution was neither natural nor inevitable. Constitutional Bourbonism remained an alternative despite the antiliberal path taken by the kings themselves. In France—under the Charter of 1814 and until the ascension to the throne of Louis-Philippe in 1830—constitutional royalists pushed for the adoption of liberal reforms.[13] In Spain, after the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833, a civil war pitted two Bourbon candidates to the throne against one another: one increasingly affiliated with liberalism (Isabella II) and the other with antiliberalism (her uncle and pretender Charles V).[14] In the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the implementation of a Bourbon constitutional monarchy remained the goal of most Neapolitan liberals despite the defeat of the revolution of 1848.[15] Henceforth, if royalism was perceived as counterrevolutionary, it was because antiliberal royalists tried to monopolize the figure of the king, presenting the royal cause as that of the counterrevolution.

All this considered, at the beginning of 1830, the three Bourbon Monarchies seemed to have achieved their goal of surviving the

revolutionary challenge. That said, two of them were on the brink of a major new crisis. In France, the revolution of 1830 put a new dynasty on the throne, pushing Bourbonists into opposition. In Spain, a civil war pitted the supporters of Queen Isabella II against the legitimist pretender Carlos María Isidro, thus driving antiliberal royalism into opposition.[16] In both countries, counterrevolutionary royalists lost their former position of power within the state, while the ruling dynasty became indissolubly linked to constitutionalism. At this moment, then, legitimism emerged as a new stage in the history of royalism, thereby providing a suitable conclusion to the period under study here.

This chapter aims to show that one way to understand the persistence of the three Bourbon Monarchies and their ability to adapt between 1789 and 1830 is to be found in the mass royalist and counterrevolutionary politicization of a significant part of society. This new political dynamic contributed to revitalizing the traditional imaginary of the monarchy. One of the driving forces of this process was the role played by civilians in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.

King, War and Nation

Since the figure of the king was at the core of royalist politics, we must clarify what kind of relationship popular royalists forged with *their* king.[17] On the one hand, the legitimacy of the monarchy was rooted in tradition and experience, so the monarchical imaginary was vigorous enough to survive the challenge of the new models of political legitimacy based on abstract and rational principles which had yet to be proven. Tradition and custom, however, were not enough to confront the revolutionary challenge. Old formulas had to be updated to provide rhetorical and practical tools capable of sustaining the monarchy in an unprecedented period of turmoil.

From 1792 on, the monarchies of Spain and Naples went to war with the French Republic. This was not a conventional war, but one in which the foundations of society and the monarchical principle were at stake. The French Republic raised a citizen army in which every man was a potential soldier, thus changing the rules of war.[18] This unparalleled mobilization of human resources forced the Bourbon Monarchies to respond in similar terms.[19] During the War of the Pyrenees (1793–95) in northern Spain, every male resident was called to enlist as a volunteer against the godless republic. The Church, *ayuntamientos* (town councils) and

corporations raised militias and contributed with donations to the war effort.[20] The practice of defending territory, religion and national independence was thus merged with the defence of the monarchy, forging a new relationship between the armed vassals and the king. The logic of loyalty, service and reward therefore took on a new meaning since ordinary people were enlisted to preserve an order that, for the first time since time immemorial, was at risk.

The impact of this popular mobilization, however, was limited as long as the war was confined to national or even regional borders, so that the decisive change took place as a result of foreign invasion. In short, the French invasions of the Kingdom of Naples (1798) and the Iberian Peninsula (1807) provoked the sudden collapse of the Bourbon Monarchies. In December 1798, Ferdinand IV fled to Sicily while French troops easily occupied his kingdom.[21] In April 1808, Ferdinand VII left Spain in the hope of reaching an agreement with Napoleon, but was forced instead to abdicate in favour of the accession of Joseph Bonaparte to the throne.[22] The subsequent power vacuum and institutional collapse could have meant the end of the Bourbon Monarchies. Resistance, however, came from within society itself. The invaders had underestimated the ability of the body politic to ignite the resistance in the absence of its head (the king).[23]

The popular uprisings against the Parthenopean Republic backed by French armies (1799) and the Napoleonic troops in Spain (1808) were of course channelled by traditional elites who provided the infrastructure for the military and ideological resistance. Members of the aristocracy, local elites, former officers of the disbanded army and municipalities mobilized guerrilla forces and royalist militias.[24] But the protagonism of the common people—both the rural peasantry and the urban populace of Naples and Madrid—gave an unprecedented social significance to the irregular war. In the Kingdom of Naples, Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo brought together a myriad of royalist bands to lead an army (known as the Army of the Holy Faith) which recaptured the capital. Ruffo himself mistrusted the role played by the Neapolitan lower classes, and warned the king that they were not 'defenders of the throne' but an unruly mob which would join any political faction as long as they could loot and plunder.[25] Ruffo and the royal authorities tried to contain the 'popular anarchy' following the restoration by dissolving the royalist militias and establishing a new police force to take back the streets of Naples. In order to succeed, however, they

had to negotiate and grant concessions to the *plebe armata* (armed plebeians), since 'armed force was in the hands of the common people'.[26]

In Spain, some of the first uprisings against the Napoleonic army (1808) targeted the Spanish authorities, accused of collaborating with the invaders. In this context, rising up in the name of the king could led to disobeying the royal institutions and even the king himself. In fact, Ferdinand VII disapproved of the early stages of the anti-Napoleonic revolt from his 'captivity' in France, but he was meant to be deprived of liberty so his will was ignored.[27] Although the first insurrection in Madrid was bloodily suppressed, it was followed by movements in other cities, leading to an irregular war in which the common people played a crucial role both in urban and rural areas (1808–14).

The scale of popular mobilization shaped the political discourse in the aftermath of the Restoration. In 1799, the return of Ferdinand IV to Naples was marked by the establishment of a new kind of relationship between the king and his people. Ferdinand blamed the nobility and the traditional elites for the 'treason' while directly addressing the common people who had saved the throne, recognizing the role of the urban lower classes (the so called *lazzaroni*).[28] In Luca di Mauro's words, the restoration 'opened up a new phase in the history of the kingdom based, at least in public speeches, on a direct link between the sovereign and the people'.[29]

Similarly, the first absolutist restoration of Ferdinand VII in Spain (1814) was the setting for the deployment of a new rhetoric stressing the direct, unmediated bond between the king and the people. As Pedro Rújula has extensively demonstrated, Ferdinand VII's appeal to the masses in times of crisis contributed to building a 'direct relationship between the king and the people above the institutions'.[30] This privileged relationship, however, could be open to interpretation by the royalists themselves, to the extent that 'even the king could be delegitimized for the purpose of defending the relationship between monarchy and people'.[31]

In short, the Bourbon Monarchies developed a public discourse by which the 'people' became the collective actor responsible for their restoration. In contrast to the ambivalence and hesitation shown by the majority of the elites, the common people were supposed to be the custodians of the pristine values of loyalty to the Crown. According to a famous observation attributed to the Neapolitan Queen Maria Carolina: 'only the people [*il popolo*] were loyal, while the gentlemen of the kingdom were all Jacobins'.[32]

This innovation fulfilled two goals: on the one hand, it served to spread the idea that the 'true people' were naturally inclined to be loyal to the monarchy, so that those who supported the intruder government were not a part of the community and must be excluded from it.[33] On the other, it allowed the restored monarchs to undermine some of the privileges of the aristocracy, the clergy and the traditional institutions, in order to establish their own personal rule.

In Naples, after 1799, the king eroded the autonomy of the nobility who controlled the capital. He dissolved the *Consiglio di Città*—a city council representing the main noble houses—and implemented centralizing reforms such as the creation of a new police force.[34] Furthermore, some of the privileges and immunities of the nobility were abolished, not for the sake of equality, but to reinforce the undisputed primacy of royal jurisdiction.[35]

In Spain in 1814, meanwhile, Ferdinand VII also took advantage of the exceptional context to boost his personal power. He reinforced the king's authority over ecclesiastical matters, reduced the jurisdictional autonomy of the Church and turned the Inquisition into a political tool at the service of the absolute power.[36] Moreover, although the abolition of seigneurial jurisdictions undertaken during the first constitutional period (1812–14) was reversed, the king seized the opportunity to reinforce royal jurisdiction at the expense of feudal lords, incorporating some of their prerogatives into those of the Crown. In addition, the competences of the traditional courts (the royal councils and tribunals making up the polysynodial system) were reduced in favour of granting more authority to the secretaries of state, establishing a 'ministerial' practice of power. In order to limit the political influence held by the aristocracy and the bishops, Ferdinand VII promoted advisers from obscure origins who owed everything to his favour.[37] With every nomination and dismissal, he publicly emphasized that all counsellors, ministers and officials depended directly on him. On the whole, the restoration of 1814 led to a concentration of power in the hands of the monarch and a progressive erosion of the traditional jurisdictional system. The king's will (*real voluntad*) became the only ruling principle. Ferdinand VII no longer acted as an ancien régime-style monarch but established a new practice of government, which has been defined by historians as 'tyrannical' and 'populist'.[38]

The direct and unmediated bond between the king and the people was the foundation for an authoritarian monarchy whose legitimacy came from old and new sources. It was of course anchored in tradition and

portrayed as a return to the natural order of things. At the same time, however, it relied on the new political and ideological struggle brought about by the revolution and on the identification between the king and the independence of a nation whose awakening was depicted as the result of a struggle waged by the common people. The monarchy that rose from the ashes of its previous collapse was therefore ideologically prepared to confront liberalism and constitutionalism. It had successfully incorporated two of the defining features of the revolutionary ideology: national and popular legitimacy. The restoration was thus represented simultaneously as a return to the past and as the beginning of a new era in which loyal subjects had to remain vigilant and armed in order to fight for their king, their religion and their homeland.

Service and Reward

While historians have largely discussed the popular dimension of post-revolutionary European monarchies, less attention has been paid to the other side of the equation. How was the new relationship between the king and the people understood by popular royalists themselves? The appeal to the common people was more than a rhetorical abstraction or a strategy 'from above'. Those who fought for the king during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars felt like protagonists of the restoration and, therefore, entitled to ask for some compensation and obtain tangible returns. This logic was not merely instrumental, but a consequence of the ethics of service and reward which had served as the foundation of monarchies since medieval times.

Traditionally, the common people had served the king primarily through their loyalty and allegiance, as well as, of course, by working, paying taxes and observing religious principles. As members of the body politic, ordinary subjects could be called to arms, but as soldiers in a hierarchical army led by their noble superiors. The impact of the French Revolution changed the rules of war. When the Spanish and Neapolitan monarchies collapsed, regular armies disbanded and bands of irregular guerrillas led the fight against French troops. Likewise, in France, royalist bands challenged the Republic and persisted during the Consulate and the Empire in the form of chronic political brigandage fuelled by resistance to conscription.[39] When the Napoleonic Empire was on the edge of collapse (both in 1814 and 1815), battalions of royalist volunteers were recruited and

funded locally to support the Coalition armies and carry out political retaliation against Bonapartists.[40]

In the midst of this irregular warfare, peasants from humble backgrounds and former brigands were promoted to the rank of brigade general in a matter of months, gaining the right to appoint their own officers.[41] War became a social leveller and a tool of upward social mobility, giving rise to new leaderships, loyalties and clienteles. When career officers and aristocrats were put at the head of royalist irregular units, they often faced distrust among the ranks unless they had built their own reputation on the field.[42] Civilians bearing arms were not always obedient soldiers but, rather, empowered fighters who had gained a new status in their communities and dared to challenge the authorities and the elites. Emerging military leaders in turn built their own patronage networks and loyalties, based on reciprocity and trust among their soldiers.

Once the war ended, those who fought for the king felt responsible for his restoration to the throne. Both officers and rank-and-file soldiers felt entitled to ask the king to address their personal and social grievances. The most common claim concerned the provision of jobs and administrative posts in the new regime. Self-promoted working-class officers sought to have their rank and military status confirmed and thereby receive a permanent wage. Moreover, grass-roots guerrilla soldiers were not always keen to go back to their old occupations, since they had perceived the war as an opportunity to climb the social ladder. Consequently, a wave of applicants aspired to achieve a position in the restored administration or, at the very least, earn a decent living on behalf of their merits. They were confident that they had earned this right through their sacrifice and service for the Crown.[43]

Repression and Purification

The search for public employment fuelled demands to intensify the repression against Bonapartists, republicans and liberals. Some royalists claimed that every official still in place should be removed because of their cooperation with the overthrown government. The administration and the army should thus be 'purified' in order to make way for 'true royalists' to get public employment.[44]

Some amnesty decrees and peace treaties established terms for reintegrating back into civil society those people who had held some form of public office in the previous regime. Those royalists who opposed these

'reconciliatory' measures were not moved purely by fanaticism, but also by practical reasons. In France, many royalists criticized the 'soft' nature of the First Restoration (1814), which aspired to achieve reconciliation and put an end to political retaliation outside the law. During the Second Restoration (1815), royalist militias harassed and even massacred those officials accused of having a Napoleonic past.[45] French ultra-royalists called themselves *épurés* (the purified) to distinguish themselves from the *girouettes* (the turncoats). In the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the Treaty of Casalanza (1815) tried to prevent a repeat of the popular anarchy of 1799 through a policy of moderation and reconciliation known as *politica dell'amalgama*.[46] Some of the Bonapartist reforms were maintained and elites and bureaucrats promoted during the Napoleonic period were partially integrated into the new order.[47] These measures were, however, resisted by Neapolitan ultra-royalists gathered around the Prince of Canosa and the secret society of the *calderari*.[48] The second absolutist restoration in Spain (1823), meanwhile, led to an analogous conflict between 'moderate' royalists and ultra-royalists concerning the level of repression that should be applied against the liberals.[49] In every context, ultra-royalists rallied around the idea that all those who had any link to the previous regime should be expelled from the community in order to purify the evil. This intransigence had quite practical implications. True royalists' who had served the king deserved a reward and any officials or public servants who had not shown unswerving loyalty to the cause should be replaced. Many of these sectors embraced the restoration as a social opportunity, in which being appointed to public office should not be based on qualifications or connections, but on the political engagement and sacrifices made for the royalist cause. In other words, the public appointments and royal favours should be 'politicized', since loyalty and service had taken on political overtones. This politicization of the distribution of the king's grace represented a major shift in the understanding of the merit and reward inherited from the ancien régime. It was therefore contested by 'moderate' royalists, who claimed that only the more educated and qualified should hold office, and accused the newcomers of being illiterate or unable to perform their duties. In 1825 Spain, military officers complained that many of the new sergeants were just kids 'who could not even read', 'drank in the taverns with the soldiers' and one of them had even been a butcher (considered an undignified trade).[50] The promotion of 'new men' based on their royalist credentials was therefore perceived as a disruption of social hierarchies.

Among those who hoped to make a living out of the restoration, we find people from all social classes, from notables who sought to become public servants to working-class militiamen and guerrilla fighters who wanted to ensure their livelihoods. The latter aspired both to material and reputational gains. Royalist combatants wielded their royalist credentials to claim their right to a job. In some cases, they were prioritized when it came to being hired as labourers in municipal public works and maintenance tasks.[51] Moreover, they battled to preserve a special status within the community by keeping their right to bear weapons and wear uniforms. Both demands were sometimes addressed by creating royalist militias which provided these combatants with a position, a uniform and a salary, while establishing a civilian force to sustain the regime.[52]

Demobilization and Institutionalization

In the aftermath of these restorations, royal authorities had to reintegrate former royalist troops into civil life. Demobilization was not an easy task, since the war had provided people of humble origins with an unprecedented social relevance. Furthermore, the proliferation of royalist irregular armies, volunteers and militias resulted in a wave of violence against the revolutionaries which, in many cases, overwhelmed the authorities. Once restoration was accomplished, disciplining these forces was a difficult task and required reaching certain compromises with the armed masses.[53]

In 1799 Naples, the restoration authorities first recognized the royalist militias and then incorporated them into a new police force to patrol the streets. In 1815 France, royalist volunteers who fought against Napoleon—spreading so-called White Terror through retaliation and plunder—joined the National Guard, initially preserving their autonomy and leaders. In 1823 Spain, a new militia of Royalist Volunteers was created through the institutionalization of the scattered royalist gangs which had fought in the war against the constitutional regime.[54] The dissolution and subsequent institutionalization of irregular royalist military units was, however, not always peaceful. In Spain, some guerrilla officers were stripped of their military rank and discharged from duty. Feeling aggrieved by what they perceived as an ungrateful government, they immediately started to conspire, leading to several insurrections. One of them resulted in a civil war in Catalonia (1827), known as the 'War of the Aggrieved' or the Malcontents.[55] In 1815 France, those battalions of the National Militia comprised of old royalist volunteers defied the authorities and kept

causing havoc.[56] They were finally reorganized, 'purged' and detached from their former leaders in order to subject them to greater discipline and a controlled hierarchy. In conclusion, those royalist fighters who found their way into the new regime saw their hopes realized and provided a solid base on which to preserve the *status quo*. By contrast, those who were not successfully integrated into the restored institutions were a permanent source of unrest and violence, fuelling an emerging ultra-royalist opposition.

Frustration and Ultra-royalism

The frustration of the social expectations placed in the restoration led disappointed royalists to push the authorities and the king himself. The term 'ultra-royalist' was born in 1815 France to refer to those sectors that refused any degree of reform or compromise with the Napoleonic past. They were also known as *épurés* (the purified), *purs* (the pure), *exclusifs* (the exclusive), *exagérés* (the excessive) or *exaltés* (the enraged), and depicted in derogative terms as 'more royalist that the king himself'.[57] The term was adopted in Spain during the second absolutist restoration (1823–33), when extreme royalists were known as *ultrarrealistas, ultras* or *exaltados* (the enraged), although they presented themselves as *puros, netos* (pure) or just 'the true royalists'.[58] To a lesser extent, the term was also used in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from 1815 onwards (*ultra-realisti*), although the reactionary royalists were better known as *calderari* or *reazionari*.[59]

Discontented royalists felt betrayed by the government and the king himself. They spread the idea that restoration was unfinished, under the assumption that the king was not completely free because he was being misled and tricked by his evil advisers. This motto was familiar and reliable, since it drew on the traditional formula from the ancien régime: 'long live the king, death to the bad government'. The authorities could be challenged and disobeyed, even by openly calling for insurrection, while still preserving an allegiance to the higher monarchical principle. Since the king was being deceived, the duty of the true royalist was to set him free by exposing the manoeuvres of his government and counsellors. Ultra-royalism was not, therefore, a mere fanatical desire to return to the past. On the contrary, it involved the idea that royalists had the right to interpret the meaning of the monarchy in their own terms and even to show the king the correct path to follow. In 1815 France, for example,

according to a police report, the '*exaltés* … under the pretext of *épuré* royalism', promoted a 'continual denigration' of royal power, leading to 'vengeance, plunder and murder'.[60] They managed to 'mislead' a 'fraction of the people', which they 'excited' and 'attracted' by the prospect of looting.[61] Although ultra-royalist elites had, of course, a very different idea, working-class royalists appropriated this logic and dared to make demands of the king (even riotously) in order to fulfil their own expectations.

There were many reasons for their disappointment, depending on each social group. Some members of the traditional elites and the Church felt displaced from power. Others saw their privileges eroded by the administrative reforms, which could be easily discredited by presenting them as based on Napoleonic and constitutional ideals. For many ordinary royalists, however, the reasons were more mundane. Many public servants who did not get a position in the new system or were even removed from one expressed their unrest in ultra-royalist terms. It was a similar case with the guerrilla officers who did not feel duly rewarded for their merits. It was not by a chance that these sectors identified themselves as the aggrieved (*agraviados* in Spanish) or malcontent (*malcontents* in Catalan, *malcontenti* in Italian). Ultra-royalism rested on the traditional principle of service and reward. In sum, people who considered themselves loyal subjects were asking the king to redress their grievances and properly reward them for the services they had rendered, even by the force of arms if necessary.

The ultra-royalists' sense of loyalty was more focused on the monarchy as an abstract principle than on the particular person who sat on the throne. At first, they exonerated the king and accused the government of being controlled by revolutionaries, freemasons and traitors, all of whom had manipulated the monarch. Later on, however, if the king persisted in his errors and failed to fulfil his reciprocal duty, he would eventually be made fully responsible for his acts. In Spain, from 1824 onwards, some ultra-royalists—believing the king to be unfit for office—began to call for Ferdinand VII to be dethroned and for his brother, Charles, to be crowned in his place. In conclusion, ultra-royalism was as an opposition strategy which used royalist principles as a weapon against the government and the king himself. The king as an individual could be the wrong person for the position, but the monarchy as a principle should be preserved, even if it required changing the titleholder of the Crown. How, though, could this discourse appeal to working-class royalists?

Bread and Taxes

The French Revolution and the reactions against it established a new scenario in which the foundations of the social order were openly discussed and questioned. The subsequent civil war, with its two opposing and seemingly irreconcilable worldviews, resulted in a polarized political landscape in which the 'others' were not considered legitimate contenders but, rather, 'foreign' elements which should be excluded from the community.

In this new scenario, ordinary people learnt to express their grievances in the new political terms and frameworks established by the conflict. The emerging political arena provided novel opportunities with which to address the traditional concerns of working people, such as basic food prices, taxes, military conscription and unemployment. On both the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary side, these perennial claims were expressed politically to gain legitimacy and relevance in the new scenario.

From this perspective, politicization could be defined as a process through which social actors appropriated and shaped political discourses and practices in order to pursue what they perceived as their own interests and values. Politics was an expression of abstract ideas which made sense of the world, but also an effective way of fulfilling demands and providing material justice for the people.[62]

Royalist elites understood that, in order to gain popular support, they should address these material issues. Although the notion of counterrevolution has traditionally been depicted as a desire to return to ancien régime society, it actually involved a promise to make amends for the abuses and wrongdoings of the rich and powerful prior to the onset of revolution. This so-called return to a golden age did not entail, then, the reestablishment of eighteenth-century economic, social and legal inequalities. Monarchical imaginaries shared by the common people were flexible and complex enough to include egalitarian, anti-feudal and utopian ideals. To give an example, some popular royalists refused to pay tithes and feudal taxes that had been in force during the ancien régime, while taking the lands of the aristocracy by force and defending the commons.

Royalist elites took good note of these demands. Cardinal Ruffo, the leader of the insurrection against the Neapolitan Republic of 1799, promised to put an end to some of the abuses of the feudal regime. To mobilize the peasantry, Queen Maria Carolina instructed him to address their demands concerning feudal rights, tithes, taxes, access to land and the secular dispute over the commons (*beni demaniali*).[63] The queen was very

aware of the political implications of these social claims. She once wrote to Ruffo that 'it is necessary to abolish feudality, the *ius prohibitivi*, in short, to anticipate all those operations that the French will do and by which they will make themselves agreeable to the population'.[64] In order to 'captivate the common people', moreover, every measure should be taken, including the release of duties and taxes. In sum, royalists were aware that they had to 'compete' with the reformist promises of the revolutionaries in order to gain popular support.

In 1814, the Count of Artois (brother of Louis XVIII and future Charles X) promised to abolish the *droits réunis* (indirect taxes) in order to raise an army of royalist volunteers to fight Napoleon.[65] In doing so, he was thus appropriating one of the most urgent popular demands in order to stir up social unrest against the Napoleonic regime. In the subsequent popular protests against the Bonapartist authorities, royalist crowds often cheered what they believed to be the fact that they would not have to pay any more taxes once the restoration was implemented.[66] In the mind of those people exhausted by the cost of the Napoleonic Empire (in terms of war, taxes, conscription and the effects of the commercial embargo), the restoration seemed like a potential return to a golden age in which peace would be restored all grievances amended.

In Spain, many people who rose up in arms against the constitutional regime of the Liberal Triennium (1820–23) placed their social and economic hopes in the restoration as the reestablishment of the customary principles of the moral economy. Liberals were blamed for deregulating prices, introducing new taxes, selling Church lands to private owners who in turn raised rents, abolishing certain communitarian privileges, the general economic downturn and even the spread of epidemics.[67] A religious worldview and eschatological interpretation of history that defined the mindset of the period provided them with the framework by which to attribute their sufferings to an upwardly mobile 'new rich' elite that had violated the customary natural order sanctioned by God. Any return to normality would thus require a purification of the community through the exclusion—or even the physical extermination—of those who had illegitimately disrupted the social order in order to get rich by profiting from the emerging free market economy.

The social expectations of the common people in the restoration of the traditional monarchy have been traditionally considered a consequence of manipulation on the part of the elites and, more precisely, of the ideological power of the clergy. Yet this explanation deprives these popular sectors

of any agency or initiative. In order to be effective, the discourses and promises pledged by the elites had to find common ground in the experience of ordinary people.

Constructing the Other

Liberal and Marxist interpretations of this subject have generally assumed that counterrevolutionary workers failed to identify their 'true' enemies. According to these interpretations, the counterrevolutionary popular classes perceived revolutionaries as the scapegoats for their problems, and were therefore diverted from targeting aristocratic and clerical elites in order to overthrow what was a declining social order. However, the scenario was actually more complex. The labels used to define their political enemies (such as Bonapartists, liberals or Jacobins) were flexible enough to comprise almost any social group. In fact, popular royalists identified their traditional social enemies (such as wealthy merchants, speculators, gentlemen, landowners and the rich in general) as revolutionaries in order to legitimize their attacks against them.

In Naples, during the events of 1799, royalist popular sectors identified the *signure* (lords), *galantuomini* (gentlemen) and *giamberghe* (those who wore frock coats) collectively as Jacobins and pro-French. During the uprising against the Republic and the 'popular anarchy' which followed, popular sectors unleashed their anger against any 'respectable' people who, by their appearance, could be branded *galantuomini*. The 'enemy' was thus identified more on the basis of social rather than purely political reasons.[68]

In Spain, liberals were known as blacks (*negros*), a derogatory term—without, it should be said, any specific racial connotations—used to exclude them from the community as heretics and 'impure'.[69] The label, however, was not only applied for ideological reasons. It was in fact used as a weapon against anyone who could be considered an enemy of the community. During the second absolutist restoration (1823–33), popular royalists claimed that 'commerce was black' or that 'most blacks were rich' so that they intentionally raised food prices.[70] This 'famine plot persuasion' allowed customers to legitimize looting from and of the use of violence against shopkeepers and bakers under the pretext that they were 'blacks' (liberals). Moreover, those sectors of the elites and the middle classes who adopted foreign fashions and manners were also labelled 'black' and pro-French (*afrancesados* or Frenchified). Certain clothes and

attire considered by the elites as symbols of cosmopolitism and civilization were despised by the common people who defended traditional 'Spanish attire' against foreign fashions and dandyism. As a result, any elegant person could be potentially labelled as a 'black' (liberal) to the point that 'a decent suit' was enough to denounce the wearers as political 'suspects'.[71] During the first (1814) and second (1823) absolutists restorations, well-to-do people were harassed for wearing certain types of hats, ribbons and garments, while some businesses (such as elegant coffee houses in the European manner) were attacked because their owners and clients were supposed to be 'blacks' (liberals).[72]

In conclusion, these labels used to identify the political enemy were flexible enough to incorporate any person or group accused of harming the community's interests. We should not assume that popular sectors passively adopted the categories shaped by the elites. Instead, they adapted and appropriated them in order to legitimize attacks against their perceived enemies.

More importantly, these labels were used to target not only supposed revolutionaries, but also royal authorities, magistrates, police officers, and even the king himself. Ferdinand VII was accused by Spanish ultra-royalists of colluding with the revolutionaries and being 'more black than the blacks themselves'.[73] In Naples, Cardinal Ruffo and the royal ministers were accused of being Jacobins when they deceived popular expectations. Working-class royalists demanded the right to take justice into their own hands, punishing the so-called Jacobins and the government which protected them.[74] A placard hanging on the wall of a Neapolitan street in 1800 proclaimed that 'the government did not punish the Jacobins severely enough, meanwhile sending those guilty of common crimes to the islands [as convicts]'.[75] In the words attributed to a fisherman from Trani, 'the king [Ferdinand IV] was a *Pulcinella*, allowing things to be governed like before, he should instead let the lower orders rule [*far governare al popolo basso*]'.[76]

In 1825 Madrid, working men and women gathered on the streets protesting that Ferdinand VII 'did not govern well' because he protected the liberals while some of the constitutional policies were still in place 'albeit by a different name'.[77] Popular royalists soon realized that they had been deceived when it came to their expectations regarding lower taxes, affordable food prices and the end of conscription. However, instead of blaming the absolutist system, some of them blamed the king and those who had betrayed the true ideals of the restoration. They therefore

concluded that the best thing would be to put a different king upon throne, someone who knew how to properly punish the liberals and accomplish the unfinished restoration.[78] Otherwise, royalist militiamen and ordinary people felt legitimized to 'slaughter all the liberals' by their own hands. These calls to violence were socially as well as politically motivated. Under the cry 'death to the liberals', they plundered shops, seized stocks of bread, refused military conscription and chased wealthy merchants, businessman and those wearing foreign clothes which transgressed working-class customs.

Conclusion

Popular royalism in southern Europe was an original form of political participation through which working people found a way to intervene in the transformation of the traditional monarchies during the Age of Revolution. Instead of assuming that they should have been naturally inclined to embrace the revolutionary ideals, we must identify which particular benefits and opportunities they stood to gain by expressing their demands within the counterrevolutionary side. In the first place, the traditional monarchy provided a way of legitimizing a wide range of claims, as long as they were expressed in a familiar discourse of loyalty, service and reward. The monarchical culture provided a well-known frame of reference which was easy to deal with for the majority of the population, in contrast with those novel revolutionary ideas which could easily be perceived as foreign to common sense and, more importantly, which were championed by the educated middle-classes and the commercial and cultural elites. In fact, one recurring topic of royalist propaganda was the idea that revolutionaries were all 'lawyers, notaries, doctors, apothecaries and usurer- merchants'.[79] When we speculate why the popular sectors supported the so-called traditional elites, we often neglect the fact that they targeted primarily those ascending groups whose wealth was tied to new economic activities seen as 'parasitic'. From their perspective, their 'enemy next door' could be the shopkeeper, the baker, the buyer of confiscated national lands or the elegant dandy dressed in a foreign style.

However, popular royalists did not limit their attacks to ascending social groups linked to the market economy. The civil war between revolution and counterrevolution created a polarized landscape in which anyone could be suspicious of complicity with the enemy. This state of paranoia allowed common people to point to the upper classes in the pursuit of

traitors. Aristocrats, ministers, magistrates, generals, Church dignitaries and even the king himself were labelled Bonapartists, Jacobins and liberals, therefore legitimizing the violence against them.

As paradoxical as it may seem, these anti-elite discourses were sometimes instigated and fuelled by the monarchs themselves. The traditional elites who had hitherto been the pillar of the monarchy were sometimes identified as accomplices of the revolutionaries, thus presenting the common people as the only trustworthy class, due to their natural instinct of loyalty to their king. This discourse was extremely useful to enforce the personal authority of the king, by eroding the privileges and exemptions which set boundaries on his absolute power. The king appeared as the only one who could interpret the will and love of his 'true people'. Meanwhile, the nobility, the civil servants and all those who had something to lose were presented as inclined to compromise with the enemy in order to preserve their interests. The idea that only the common people could be trusted meant that the king could potentially override any institution or intermediate power which interfered with his personal rule.

Bourbon monarchs tried to steer the counterrevolutionary enthusiasm of the masses in their favour. They relied on popular royalism to defeat revolution, enforce their personal power, get rid of their enemies and establish a new kind of authoritarian monarchy which extended the limits of their power that had prevailed during the ancien régime. However, in some conflictive scenarios, the situation risked getting out of their control. During the popular anarchy in Naples (1799), the White Terror in France (1815) and the most turbulent period of the second absolutist restauration in Spain (1825–27), the kings and their officials were contested by popular royalists. All things considered, we should not overestimate the ability of popular royalist to achieve their goals. They sometimes put the monarchy in danger by disobeying the authorities and even challenging the throne. At the end of the day, however, they lacked the effective power to propose an alternative project to respond to the hopes and expectations which they had put in the restoration.

Notes

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3. Charles Esdaile (ed.), *Popular Resistance in the French Wars: Patriots, Partisans, and Land Pirates* (London, 2005); Simon Sarlin, 'Arming the People against Revolution: Royalist Popular Militias in Restoration Europe', *Varia Historia* 35/67 (2019): 177–208; Álvaro París, 'Popular Royalism in the Spanish Atlantic: War, Militias and Political Participation (1808–1826)', *Contemporanea* 24/3 (2021): 381–411.

4. Marcela Echeverri, *Indian and Slave Royalists in the Age of Revolution: Reform, Revolution, and Royalism in the Northern Andes, 1780–1825* (Cambridge, 2016).

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6. For a reassessment of the Restoration period see: Jean-Claude Caron and Jean-Philippe Luis (eds), *Rien appris, rien oublié ? Les Restaurations dans l'Europe postnapoléonienne (1814–1830)* (Rennes, 2015); Michael Broers and Ambrogio A. Caiani (eds), *A History of the European Restorations*, 2 vols. (London, 2019); Emmanuel Fureix and Judith Lyon-Caen (eds), '1814–1815: Expériences de la discontinuité', special issue of the *Revue d'Histoire du XIXème siècle*, 49 (2014), https://doi.org/10.4000/rh19.4739; Daniel Gutiérrez Ardila and Juan Luis Ossa Santa Cruz, 'La Restauración como fenómeno extra-europeo, 1814–1826', *Revista*

Universitaria de Historia Militar 15 (2018), https://doi.org/10.53351/ruhm.v7i15.

7. Marco Meriggi, 'The Nineteenth Century: A Monarchical Century?', *Contemporanea* 24/3 (2021): 553–563; Renata de Lorenzo and Rosa Ana Gutiérrez Lloret (eds), *Las monarquías de la Europa meridional ante el desafío de la modernidad (siglos XIX y XX)* (Saragossa, 2020).

8. Pedro Rújula, 'El nacimiento de un patriotismo monárquico', in *Cuando todo era posible: liberalismo y antiliberalismo en España e Hispanoamérica, 1780–1842*, eds Encarna García Monerris et al. (Madrid, 2016), 73–94; Pedro Rújula, *Religión, Rey y Patria. Los orígenes contrarrevolucionarios de la España contemporánea, 1793–1840* (Madrid, 2023). For a further discussion of the notion of 'monarchical patriotism' in a comparative perspective, see: Carmine Pinto and Pedro Rújula (eds), 'La monarchia dopo la rivoluzione: Europa e America Latina tra restaurazione borbonica e guerre civili (1814–1867)', special issue of *Memoria e Ricerca* 62/3 (2019): 395–490.

9. Rújula, 'El nacimiento', 86.

10. Álvaro París, 'Le peuple royaliste en armes: Milices et Terreur blanche pendant les Restaurations à Naples (1799), le Midi de la France (1815) et Madrid (1823)', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 396 (2019): 95–120.

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13. Emmanuel de Waresquiel, *Penser la Restauration, 1814–1830* (Paris, 2020); Olivier Tort, *La droite française: Aux origines de ses divisions, 1814–1830* (Paris, 2013).

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37. La Parra, *Fernando VII,* 309 and 514–518.
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47. Pierre-Marie Delpu, *Un autre Risorgimento*, 55–59.
48. See note 59 below.
49. Gonzalo Butrón, 'Franceses, ultras y moderados: pulsos y tensiones en los inicios de la segunda restauración absolutista española (1823–1824)', *Hispania Nova*, 21 (2023): 364–393.

50. Archivo Histórico Nacional [AHN], Consejos, leg. 12.312, police reports no. 41 (10 June 1825) and no. 43 (11 June 1825).

51. In Spain, town councils were required to prioritize Royalist Volunteers—especially day labourers—for any available job. 'Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios Realistas del Reino' (Madrid, 1826), art. 10.

52. In Spain, the liberal regime (1820–23) refused to fund uniforms for volunteers in the National Militia, thus excluding those who could not afford them. Royalists, however, removed social barriers by allowing the enlistment of day labourers and providing uniforms for the recruits. Juan Sisinio Pérez Garzón, *Milicia nacional y revolución burguesa* (Madrid, 1978); Álvaro París, 'Los voluntarios realistas de Madrid: politización popular y violencia contrarrevolucionaria (1823–1833)', in *El desafío de la revolución* eds Pedro Rújula and Francisco Javier Ramón, 89–106.

53. Pierre Triomphe, 'Les sorties de la "Terreur blanche" dans le Midi', *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle* 49 (2014): 51–63.

54. For a detailed analysis of the three cases, see París, 'Le peuple royaliste'.

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56. París, *Le peuple royaliste*, 115–118.

57. Tort, *La droite française*, 25–32.

58. Josep Fontana, *De en medio del tiempo: La segunda restauración española, 1823–1834* (Barcelona, 2006); Álvaro París, 'La Década Ominosa ante el bicentenario: nuevas miradas sobre la segunda restauración absolutista en España (1823–1833)', *Hispania Nova* 21 (2023): 394–432.

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65. Emmanuel de Waresquiel, *Cent Jours: La tentation de l'impossible mars–juillet 1815* (Paris, 2008), 127.
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71. Dionisio Chaulié, *Cosas de Madrid: Apuntes sociales de la Villa y Corte* (Madrid, 1884), 212.
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75. Archvio di Stato di Napoli [ASN], Esteri, 3595, Antonio della Rossa to Acton, 31 July 1800.
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77. AHN, Consejos, leg. 12.335, police report, 29 December 1825, *celador* 6.
78. Some examples of the circulation of these discourses among the popular classes can be found in: AHN, Consejos, leg. 12.321, police report, 14 August 1827, no. 7; AHN, Consejos, leg. 12.312, police report, 19 June 1825, *celador* 3.
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