
Portraits of Toulouse students in the war

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In Toulouse, the academic year of the first year of war began on November 9, 1914. It unfolded “normally”, Dean Maurice Hauriou reported to his assembled colleagues. And yet the numbers speak for themselves. After 1,032 enrollments in 1913, only 295 in 1914. By 1916, only 175 enrollments would be registered and, although the increase somewhat resumed later, it was not until 1930 that the threshold of a thousand new students would again be crossed. The Toulouse Faculty of Law of was hit hard by the outbreak of hostilities. While many had already joined their regiment or would gradually leave, those in the rear were expected to mobilize in their own way as well.

For the deferred and exempted conscripts, though sometimes very temporarily, as well as for the youngest, not yet mobilizable students when they had not voluntarily joined the troops, this day of November 9, 1914 took place in a very special atmosphere. The same was true for the few female students lost among their male classmates (7 enrolled in 1913-1914, and their number would be reduced to 3 in 1914-1915 and 4 in 1915-1916) and for foreign students (34 in 1913-1914 from Spain, Brazil, Argentina, Russia, later joined by 25 Serbs in 1917-1918 due to the war). The euphoria of early August was long gone. Forced to retreat in the very beginning of hostilities, severely shocked, France was threading the edge of the abyss. The worst was avoided only after the Battle of the Marne (September 5 to 12), which forced the German forces to draw back at the very gates of Paris. The human toll was already terrible, and all now expected it to be a long war of attrition along a front line that would soon reach some 750 kilometers of trenches in which fighters on both sides were buried and died, face to face.

Dean Hauriou immediately reminded the young people of this, by gathering them in the great amphitheater of the faculty (in Paris, [Dean Larnaude](#) spoke before the professors). The past was gone. They were not to give in to shameful dilettantism as their elders sometimes had, and this despite the temptation they might have to consider it. Even if they were not, or not yet, serving in the army, they had to mobilize mentally and permanently. He also strongly reminded them of their duties as civilians of the rear: " L'intérêt supérieur de la patrie exige que la vie nationale, sous ses formes multiples, ne s'arrête pas. Vous allez donc obéir à une nécessité et vous allez le faire avec ardeur. [The best interests of the country require that national life, in all its many forms, should not stop. You are therefore going to obey necessity and you are going to do it ardently.]"

Regularly besides, and until the end of the Great War, Maurice Hauriou would summon them to evoke with them the terrible conditions of their fighting classmates, the feats of arms of those who fell, thus extending the list of names already laid down in the ever-lengthening *Livre d'Or* dedicated to the students of the faculty who died for France.

Indeed, at least 1.4 million French people died, around 4.2 million were wounded or maimed in battle, and the faculty soon paid a heavy price. As early as August 24, 1914, it recorded its first six casualties during the catastrophic Battle of the Frontiers; in addition, on the same day, to a gravely wounded fighter who died in prison, not to forget

Raymon Leygue, son of a former mayor of Toulouse, who was killed in action far from Belgium or Lorraine, during an attack on an obscure German Cameroonian post in Equatorial Africa. Its last death, less than a month before the Armistice, was Deputy Lieutenant Louis Buscon, who was killed at the age of 22 on October 18, 1918. Even younger, Gaëtan Saintavit, aged 18, had just completed his first year of law school when the war broke out. As a minor, he had managed to wrestle an authorization from his father's hands and immediately joined the army as a volunteer. Incorporated on October 1st, 1914, he was killed at age 19, on December 7, 1915 in Champagne, "foudroyé par éclats d'obus reçus à la tête [struck in the head by shrapnel]" in an attempt to rescue his older brother, aged 20, who was also a volunteer with the 11th Infantry Regiment. Also enlisted as a volunteer on October 28, 1914, Prosper Faduilhe, aged 18, had barely enrolled in his first year of bachelor's degree, officer cadet on September 1st, 1915, deputy lieutenant in June 1916, "d'une bravoure et d'un sang-froid remarquables, deux fois blessé, décoré de la médaille militaire, tué à 20 ans, le 5 juillet 1916 à Verdun, en s'élançant à la tête de sa section à l'attaque d'une tranchée allemande, chevalier de la Légion d'honneur à titre posthume. [of remarkable bravery and composure, twice wounded, decorated with the military medal, killed at the age of 20, on July 5, 1916 in Verdun, by launching himself at the head of his section at the attack of a German trench, posthumous knight of the Légion d'honneur.]" Their names appeared alongside the 222 other victims of the Great War in the long list engraved on the monument dedicated to the students of the faculty who died for France; but this list forgets some of them while others had already completed their studies. They included those who had barely had time to enjoy the degrees obtained; here, for example, Joseph Jouard, who had obtained his bachelor's degree in law on 20 July 1914, almost immediately donned his lieutenant's uniform and joined the 18th artillery regiment to go and die two months later, day to day, in Minaucourt during the first battle of the Marne; or Abel Muratet, made doctor of law on 20 July 1914, second lieutenant in the 238th infantry regiment, killed in the department of Aisne, the following October 23, whose eulogy was made by Hauriou himself.

Frequently raised in the middle class, or even high-standing [bourgeoisie](#), they were often the sons of lawyers, magistrates, notaries, bailiffs, journalists, wealthy landowners, senior officers or high officials, such as Louis Eydoux, whose father commanded the 11th Corps in August 1914, or Marc Estèbe, whose father was governor of the colonies. Aristocratic families were also well represented with, to name

but a few, the Beaumont, the Rességuier, the Solages and the Prévost de Saint-Cyr families. Cadet Officer André Hauriou, who distinguished himself on the front in 1918 and would return to become professor of administrative law, was none other than the son of the dean of the faculty. Cousins Louis and Joseph Deloume, killed, the first on 25 and the second on 30 September 1915 in the same area of the Champagne front, belonged to the dynasty represented by Jean-Baptiste Deloume (1786-1841), professor of Roman law and criminal legislation at the Toulouse Faculty of Law, and Antonin Deloume (1836-1911) also professor of Roman law in 1878 and dean of the faculty from 1900 to 1906. Indeed, although the phenomenon of social reproduction leading, generation after generation, to “go into law” was no longer the exclusive prerogative of the traditional social elite, representatives of popular categories, such as Louis Graëff, whose father was a master bootmaker, were still relatively rare. The vast majority were born in Toulouse, in Haute-Garonne or in a nearby department, which made it possible to measure the area of influence, all in all quite limited, of the faculty. With the exception of foreign students, few had been born outside the mainland. Martinique, Tunisia and, most importantly, Algeria were represented, sometimes because of a paternal assignment; for example, Pierre Loustau, born in Mostaganem and son of the president of the court of Mascara or Pierre Schenk, born in Tunis the son of a career officer. In their ranks, Guiana’s Gaston Monnerville, who had come to Toulouse to pursue his secondary studies, enrolled in the law school in 1915, obtaining his bachelor’s degree there in October 1918, soon became a lawyer (December 2, 1918), then a doctor of law (1921), future president of the Conseil de la République (1947), president of the Senate (1958-1968), and member of the Conseil constitutionnel (1974). When young Gaston was sworn in as a lawyer, the contemptuous and, in any case, not very perceptive columnist of the *Gazette des tribunaux du Midi* would describe, standing next to “la silhouette mince et blonde [...] [the slim and blonde silhouette]” of a young classmate, “le masque brun et énergique de M^e Monnerville, un créole des Antilles françaises, qui mettait là comme une note d’exotisme [the brown and energetic mask of Me Monnerville, a Creole of the French West Indies, who added a touch of exoticism to the scene]”. And, after each of the two took the floor in turn : “M^e Monnerville, dans un genre plus didactique, a eu aussi [...] sa bonne part de succès, et il le méritait ce jeune et laborieux confrère qui peut-être un jour devant les juridictions d’Outre-Mer, montrera quelle forte empreinte et quel judicieux enseignement il reçut de la faculté et du barreau toulousain... [Me Monnerville, in a more didactic genre, also enjoyed [...] his good share of success; and he deserved it, this hardworking young fellow, who perhaps one

day before the courts of Overseas, will show what a strong imprint and what judicious teaching he received from the faculty and the Toulouse bar...]"

Undoubtedly more generous were the professors of the Faculty of Law, aware of what the country owed to those who had sacrificed themselves. On December 18, 1917, they awarded Ludovic Valatx a [doctorate in law](#) following the posthumous defense of the thesis he had succeeded in completing before dying in Arcachon on August 17, 1916 as a result of a disease contracted at the front.

For their part, the student soldiers of Toulouse, in the correspondence that tethered them to home, took it upon themselves to continue to cultivate the ties that linked them to their faculty. Such as, among others, Henri Lescure announcing, in December 1914 and again in July 1915, the death in action of two fellow students: Sébastien Bach who, on July 12, 1917, used a few moments of rest to write to Dean Hauriou to acknowledge receipt of the contribution paid for the subscription to the L'Écho du Boyau newspaper, "organe des poilus du 214^e ", seizing the opportunity to inform him of the effects produced on the troop by the entry into war of the United States, "avec moins d'illusions peut-être [more disillusioned perhaps]" than the civilians, finally giving him his vision of the international situation; Jules Thabaut, completing "aux Armées, en octobre 1916 [in the Armed Forces, in October 1916]" the writing of *Souvenirs de la Grande Guerre* [Memories of the Great War], a signed copy of which he would send to Dean Hauriou as soon as they were published in 1917; Fernand Bastide too, who, one can imagine, summarizes by himself the thoughts of his comrades when he evokes, in a letter sent in 1916 to Professor César-Bru, "les « interminables nuits [...] passées, l'hiver dernier, dans les tranchées [the interminable nights [...] spent last winter in the trenches]" to oppose them, with painful nostalgia, to the memories of the happy times, those of the "cours de la faculté de droit de Toulouse [lectures of the Toulouse Faculty of Law)]".

Olivier Devaux, Professor of Legal History (Toulouse-Capitole University)

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