

**THE COMMON WIND'S  
CREOLE VISIONARY:  
DR. LOUIS CHARLES ROUDANEZ**

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In September 1862, with Civil War New Orleans occupied by the U.S. Army, Louis Charles Roudanez, his brother Jean Baptiste Roudanez, and a small group of wealthy allies launched *L'Union*, the first African American newspaper in the Southern states (Foner 63). On the front page of the French-language bi-weekly's premier issue, the paper published two letters "in full and word for word" as they considered it "a sacrilege to lay thereupon our profane hand" (Brickhouse 1107). Written on February 6, 1860 in Port-au-Prince by republican proponent Eugène Heurtelou, the Haitian editor of the *Progrès* newspaper, the opening letter addressed Victor Hugo, France's internationally renowned Romantic literary artist.

In his message, Heurtelou expressed his gratitude to Hugo for having appealed to the United States government to offer clemency to abolitionist John Brown who had attacked Harper's Ferry with the aim of overthrowing slavery. Heurtelou praised Brown's actions in Virginia and predicted slavery's destruction: "On the horizon of each people, three stars gleam [. . .] *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*." In the realization of those ideals, Heurtelou envisioned the "fusion of peoples and of races through fraternity, their union in a great and universal republic [. . .]."

Deeply moved by the Heurtelou's stirring words, Hugo replied: "We are brothers! [. . .] I love your country, your race, your liberty, your revolution, your republic [. . .]. [Haiti] serves as a great example: it has crushed despotism. It will help us destroy slavery!"<sup>1</sup> The radical views of the two writers resonated in the pages of *L'Union* as contributors condemned slavery and attacked the slaveholding South.<sup>2</sup>

Less than two years earlier, the Roudanez brothers and Paul Trevigne, *L'Union*'s editor, would have faced grave consequences for

publishing such commentary. An antebellum state law prohibited the publication of materials “having a tendency to produce discontent among the free coloured population of this state, or to excite insubordination among the slaves [. . .]” (Bell *Revolution* 94). Violators were subject to a prison term of three to twenty-one years at hard labor, or the death penalty, at the discretion of the judge. Even with the presence of Federal troops, the Roudanezes and Trevigne exposed themselves to considerable danger given the paper’s abolitionist stance and its republican radicalism.

Northern newspapers expressed astonishment at the publication in the Confederacy’s largest city of the Heurtelou/Hugo exchange—an exchange in which one of Haiti’s leading republican journalists and France’s internationally acclaimed opponent of slavery extolled the virtues of the Haitian Revolution (Bell *Revolution* 228-29). While the correspondence and *L’Union*’s expressions of solidarity with Haitian revolutionaries may have come as a surprise to most outsiders, anyone with a grasp of Louisiana’s political culture, immigration history, and slave-based racial hierarchy understood the source of such sentiments. In Louisiana’s repressive three-caste society, Creole Louisianians of African ancestry like Dr. Roudanez drew inspiration from events in the Caribbean and took pride in their Haitian ancestry.

Roudanez, one of *L’Union*’s most influential supporters, was born in St. James Parish on June 12, 1823 in the midst of the Atlantic world’s age of democratic revolutions (Houzeau 27). Both he and his family experienced some of the revolutionary era’s most dramatic events. Those experiences clearly informed Roudanez’s response to the crisis of the Civil War and the struggle to reconstruct postwar Louisiana. This study centers on the impact of the Haitian Revolution in south Louisiana. It shows how events in the Caribbean as well as ongoing upheaval in France shaped Roudanez’s republican vision of a revolutionized United States society of racial equality.

The success of the Haitian Revolution in 1804 marked the beginning of slavery’s collapse in the Western Hemisphere. The watershed event produced the first black-led nation in the Americas and the second independent nation in the struggle against colonial imperialism. In securing Haiti’s independence, black revolutionaries liberated 87% of the former French colony’s inhabitants from slavery (Knight 105-14). Their remarkable victory lifted the hopes of African-descended peoples, both slave and free, throughout the hemisphere and fueled

national liberation movements in Latin America (Dubois 1-7). In North America, their military successes convinced Napoleon Bonaparte to sell the vast Louisiana territory to the United States in 1803 thereby nearly doubling the size of the new nation (Hunt 35).

Revolutionary leader Toussaint Louverture did not live to see Haitian independence. Arrested and imprisoned by Napoleon in 1802, Louverture died the following year. As he languished in prison, English Romantic poet William Wordsworth penned a tribute “To Toussaint L’Ouverture”:

Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,  
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind  
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;  
There’s not a breathing of the common wind  
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;  
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,  
And love, and Man’s unconquerable mind. (Scott v)

Subsequent events fully vindicated Wordsworth’s prophetic words and nowhere in the United States did the “common wind” carry as much force as in Louisiana.

The brunt of the revolutionary tempest hit hardest in the region where Louis Charles Roudanez was born and lived most of his life—an area along the Mississippi river extending approximately one hundred thirty miles from New Orleans to Pointe Coupée Parish just north of Baton Rouge. St. James Parish where Roudanez was born straddled the Mississippi river fifty-five miles upriver from New Orleans (Houzeau 27).

The region’s links to the Caribbean stretched back to 1698 when French explorer Sieur d’Iberville set sail from Saint Domingue to plant a Gulf Coast settlement in France’s Louisiana possession. From such beginnings, Saint Domingue’s European and African-descended peoples exerted a profound influence on the Mississippi river region (Bell “Haitian” 1-32). Their numbers and influence increased with the onset of the Haitian Revolution. The arrival of Louis Charles Roudanez’s white forebears in the early wave of Saint Domingue refugees signaled the approach of the revolutionary tide.

The Roudanez patriarch, Pierre Roudanez, a native of Angoulême, France, and his wife, Anne-Elisabeth Henry, were coffee planters in Dondon Parish in Saint Domingue’s North Province (Debien 162). The August 22, 1791 slave rebellion that determined the outcome of

the Haitian Revolution began within twelve miles of their plantation.<sup>3</sup> By early September, all of the plantations in the North Province's twenty-seven parishes had been destroyed by rebel forces (Fick 105). In such circumstances, it is probable that Pierre Roudanez and his wife, if they survived the initial revolt, fled to Louisiana soon after the outbreak of hostilities. Their daughter, Marie Anne, and another family member, Louis Roudanez, likely joined them in their flight.<sup>4</sup>

The Roudanezes apparently entered Louisiana through the port of New Orleans and temporarily settled in the city. In 1804, Pierre Roudanez's daughter Marie Anne married wealthy widower Emmanuel-Marius Pons Bringier in Saint Mary's Church on Chartres street (Nolan 285). In 1780, Bringier, a native of Aubagne, France had migrated to Martinique (Debien 161-62). With revolution engulfing the French Caribbean in the 1790s, Bringier and his brother escaped to New Orleans with a large number of enslaved workers. In St. James Parish, he established himself as an influential and highly successful sugar planter and built the renowned *La Mason Blanche*, one of the most lavish Louisiana plantations (Babb 168, 351-52).

Louis Roudanez, like Marie Anne, enjoyed considerable success after entering Louisiana. He apparently entered the state through New Orleans where free woman of color Aimée Potens gave birth to his son, Jean-Baptiste. Like Bringier, Louis Roudanez accumulated considerable wealth and eventually settled in St. James Parish where his second son, Louis Charles, was born in 1823.

Such was Louis Roudanez's influence as a "very honorable French merchant" that his son Louis Charles was baptized a Catholic by the president of Orleans College with Marie Anne Roudanez Bringier, and another member of Marie Anne's prestigious family, Marius St. Colomb Bringier, acting as the baby's godparents (Honora/Rouzan). Though the offspring of an interracial union, Louis Charles Roudanez was identified as white in the St. Michael's church record in Convent, Louisiana where he was baptized (Houzeau 25-27).

In 1803, near the time of Marie Anne Roudanez's marriage to Emmanuel-Marius Pons Bringier, another key family alliance was sealed when Bringier's daughter Elizabeth married Augustin Dominique Tureaud, a native of La Rochelle, France and a Saint Domingue refugee. By making a wedding gift of Union sugar plantation to the couple, Bringier forged a business as well as a family partnership (King 419-22; Dessens 72). The complex web of

Roudanez/Bringier/Tureaud familial, business, and interracial ties would produce three of the most important African American civil rights leaders of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Roudanez brothers and A.P. Tureaud.<sup>5</sup>

Nearly simultaneous with the Saint Domingue revolt that sent the Roudanez family into flight, an audacious slave conspiracy in Pointe Coupée in July 1791 signaled the approach of the revolutionary tide. Though quickly suppressed, the daring plot closely paralleled the successful August slave revolt that sparked the Haitian Revolution. In fact, Spanish authorities suspected a number of “free mulattoes from Saint-Domingue as instigators” (Dessens 115).

The spirit of rebellion was equally evident in New Orleans. In October 1791, Pierre Bailly, a Spanish officer and a free man of color who had distinguished himself in military expeditions against the British in the American Revolution, was tried for having proclaimed that he and his fellow militiamen were only awaiting word from Saint Domingue to “strike a blow like at the Cap [Cap Français]”. Though acquitted, the audacious Bailly was later found guilty of defaming the Spanish government and praising France’s revolutionary republic for having introduced “universal equality among men.” Even after Bailly’s incarceration in Havana, Cuba in 1794, members of the city’s free black militia was repeatedly investigated for conspiring with the French (Bell *Revolution* 25, 27).

Meanwhile, Pointe Coupée was the scene of another attempted slave rebellion in the spring of 1795. The subsequent investigation revealed the involvement of two free blacks and a slave from Saint Domingue as well as two French agents. The incident persuaded Spanish officials to shut down the entire slave trade. Their actions did nothing to suppress heightened black aspirations for freedom. In February, March, and April 1796, white authorities uncovered multiple slave conspiracies in Point Coupée, St. John the Baptist and St. Charles Parishes.

After Napoleon sold Louisiana to the United States in 1803, events in Saint Domingue loomed even larger in Louisiana. The 1804 victory of Haitian revolutionaries sparked another series of incidents throughout the region with over a hundred landholders in Pointe Coupée describing a “spirit of Revolt and mutyny” among their slaves. In New Orleans, authorities arrested a white Saint Domingue refugee

for fomenting revolution among free blacks and slaves with a plan to burn the city and massacre its white residents (Lachance "Politics" 183).

In 1806, to defend against repeated threats of revolt, territorial officials prohibited West Indian slaves and free black males of fifteen years or older from entering Louisiana. Subsequent legislation in 1807 barred the entry of all free black males regardless of their nationality. Severe penalties including enslavement accompanied the statutes (Bell *Revolution* 35). Still, United States efforts to prevent the entry of African-descended men from Saint Domingue/Haiti were even less successful than those of the French and Spanish.

Between May 1809 and January 1810, over six thousand Saint Domingans of African descent, both slave and free, entered the city in a multiethnic refugee movement that nearly doubled the size of New Orleans (Lachance "1809" 246-48). African American refugees representing seventy percent of the immigrant population increased the city's black majority from 56.8 percent of the total population in 1805 to 63.3 percent in 1810. Of all the major American cities, only Charleston, South Carolina possessed a comparable proportion of African American residents with a 53 percent black majority. Most impressive of all, the city's free population of African descent increased two and a half times with refugees accounting for 90 percent of that increase (Berlin 374-75).

The common wind swept through the city's neighboring parishes with equal force. Despite the efforts of territorial officials to enforce the laws prohibiting their entry, large numbers of free men of color entered the region surreptitiously through Barataria, a coastal colony of French-speaking smugglers dominated by Jean and Pierre Laffite (Kendall 144-46). The migrant population included as many as eight hundred free men of color who had served in France's republican army. The veteran soldiers remained devoted to the revolutionary republican cause and, given their circumstances, maintained a shadowy existence in south Louisiana (Bell *Revolution* 42-49).

The migrant population also included enslaved Saint Domingans who the Laffite brothers smuggled into the region through the maze of waterways that connected Barataria to New Orleans and its adjoining river parishes. The migrants reinforced the river region's population of enslaved Saint Domingue workers who Louisiana officials had allowed to enter with their masters. (Davis 56-57, 73-74). By 1810, the

African American fieldworkers who cultivated the flourishing sugar cane crops in St. John the Baptist and St. Charles Parishes, a region known as the German Coast (*Côte des Allemands*)<sup>6</sup> and favored by the Laffites for their smuggling activities, constituted 64.6 percent of the region's population (Davis 75, 189-90; Rodriguez 68).

In 1811, some of the German Coast migrants made their presence felt just thirty-five miles above New Orleans on the Mississippi river (Rodriguez 69). As in neighboring St. James Parish,<sup>7</sup> a considerable number of Saint Domingue sugar planters had settled along the river's German Coast after emigrating from the Caribbean with their enslaved workers.

On January 8, the largest slave revolt in United States history began on a German Coast sugar plantation on the east bank of the river where Charles Deslonde, a slave driver, organized the insurrection. When Deslonde and his rebel army of field workers, fugitive slaves, and free blacks headed southward to cheers of "On to Orleans!" as many as five hundred enslaved men and women joined them in their march (Rodriguez 70). In New Orleans, the "whole city was convulsed" (Davis 72), a naval officer observed, as panicked white residents of the upriver parishes entered the city with descriptions of their escape from "a miniature representation of the horrors of St. Domingo" (Aptheker *Essays* 35).

In fact, other aspects of the revolt likewise recalled the slave insurgency that dealt the decisive blow in the Haitian Revolution. In Louisiana, as in Saint Domingue, drumming signaled the start of hostilities (Le Glaunec 300) with insurgent commanders on horseback, some wearing military uniforms, leading companies of combatants escorted by flag bearers and drummers (Rodriguez 70). Clearly, leaders like Deslonde, described as "a free mulatto from St. Domingo," and Jupiter, an enslaved Congolese, possessed military experience (Aptheker *Slave Revolts* 249). Still, armed mainly with farming tools and only a few guns, they were no match for the combined forces of the U.S. Army, the New Orleans militia, and a large contingent of local militias. The rebellion was crushed on January 11 less than three days after it began (Dorman 396-97).

Altogether, two whites and approximately 150 insurgents were killed in the struggle (Rodriguez 80). But many more bodies were reported and a Louisiana newspaper report testified to a barbarous white backlash:

We are sorry to learn that a ferocious sanguinary disposition marked the character of some of the inhabitants. Civilized man ought to remember well his standing, and never let himself sink down to a level with the savage; our laws are summary enough and let them govern. (Aptheker *Slave Revolts* 251)

In the tribunals that followed, twenty-one suspected rebels were convicted and executed. Their corpses were decapitated and the severed heads were exposed on pikes at intervals from New Orleans to the German Coast to terrorize the enslaved population into submission (Aptheker *Essays* 36). It didn't work. On Christmas Eve, 1811, the threat of slave revolt in St. John the Baptist and St. Charles parishes sent panicked whites into flight once again while black New Orleanians exhibited a "disposition to rise in Insurrection" (Dorman 404)

In the tumultuous world into which Louis Charles Roudanez and his older brother Jean-Baptiste were born, memories of the 1811 revolt ran deep. In 1923, elderly black residents of the region "related the story of the insurrection of 1811 as they heard it from their grandfathers" (Dorman 403) and present-day descendants of the German Coast's African American community still commemorate the struggle (Thrasher vi, 130).

The two boys undoubtedly had some knowledge of the nearby rebellion. At an early age, they would likely have also learned of their French and Haitian roots and the ways in which the revolutionary age had transformed the lives of their father and his fellow refugees. And between 1829 and 1831, they would surely have been aware of a new wave of insurrectionary activity that swept the entire region from New Orleans to Point Coupée.

In early 1829, another uprising of slaves on German Coast plantations not far from their home "created a general alarm, but was speedily suppressed, and two of the ringleaders hung" (Aptheker *Slave Revolts* 282-83). In New Orleans in 1830, authorities discovered handbills calling on slaves to kill all the whites; two more slaves were executed after they were accused of plotting an insurrection; and the suspicious circumstances surrounding a series of devastating fires led at least one observer to conclude that the blazes were the "malicious design" of slave arsonists (Ingersoll 294).

Soon after the 1831 Nat Turner rebellion in Virginia, Louisiana authorities acquired information that "the colored people in the (West

Indian) Islands, had a correspondence with the Blacks of Louisiana.” The communication had encouraged “the insurrectionary dispositions” of the “coloured population of that city [New Orleans], and along the coast, to rise upon the white inhabitants” (Aptheker *Slave Revolts* 99).

Renewed fears of a slave rebellion swept the entire region and President Andrew Jackson dispatched Federal reinforcements in response to the entreaties of state officials. In Donaldsonville, seven miles upriver from St. James Parish, an influential resident urged the Federal government to dispatch two steamboats of U.S. Army troops to patrol the river region between New Orleans and Pointe Coupée (Aptheker *Slave Revolts* 311-12).

In 1832, in the frenzied atmosphere that followed three years of determined black resistance, eight year old Louis Charles Roudanez and his older brother Jean Baptiste confronted new challenges. State lawmakers, increasingly alarmed at the threat of slave rebellion, targeted free people of color as well as slaves in their efforts to control the state’s black majority. One of the legislative enactments took direct aim at children like the Roudanez brothers. Whereas Spanish law had provided for the legitimation of mixed-race children born in concubinage and entitled the offspring of such relationships to become legal heirs, an 1831 law strictly prohibited such practices. It barred the legitimation, under any circumstances of a mixed-race child. Categorized as bastards, children like the Roudanezes could not inherit from either parent.

When a bill was introduced into the state legislature in 1857 to legitimize the mixed-race child of an interracial relationship, state senator H.M. St. Paul of Orleans Parish bitterly condemned the proposed measure: “Oh! But we are told that some of them are rich—some of them are fair, scarce a characteristic of the African origin remaining. What if they Be? [ . . . ] Does it therefore follow that we are to recognize their social equality, invite them to our homes, and give our children to them in marriage? Never! Never!” (Bell *Revolution* 77)

Subsequent statutes aimed at curtailing the size and mobility of the free black population barred “free negroes and mulattoes” from entering the state; required slaveholders to remove emancipated slaves from the Louisiana within thirty days of their manumission; and finally, in 1857, prohibited slave emancipations altogether (Bell *Revolution* 87). Other laws prohibited interracial marriages; restricted free black access

to public accommodations; barred free black children from attending public schools; prohibited free blacks from serving on juries; and required free persons of African descent to carry identification papers. In New Orleans, a city ordinance even prohibited municipal managers from hiring free black workers. Finally, in 1859, the Louisiana state legislature directed “free persons of African descent to choose their own masters and become slaves for life” (*Bell Revolution* 87).

In the face of such extreme repression, it would appear that the 1823 death of prosperous white merchant Louis Roudanez left his racially mixed family dangerously vulnerable to social ostracism, impoverishment, and worse (Honora/Rouzan). In all likelihood, however, Louis Charles’s influential godparents, Marie Anne Roudanez and Marius St. Colomb Bringier, provided their godchild and his family with some assistance. Louis Charles’s subsequent education in Europe would certainly seem to indicate the support of wealthy patrons.

On the other hand, scholar Edward Maceo Coleman wrote that after Louis Charles moved to New Orleans to pursue his education, he was employed by a mercantile establishment at the age of fifteen.<sup>8</sup> He accumulated enough savings from his meager earnings to speculate in inexpensive municipals bonds. Through careful management of his investments, he was able to accumulate enough wealth to finance his departure for France in 1844.

Aimée Potens’s occupation as a nurse and midwife also favored Louis Charles’s advancement. Sometime after the death of her husband, Potens moved to New Orleans where, given the abysmal state of nineteenth century medical science, the city’s appalling death rate, and the absence of vital social services, her health care skills would have been in great demand. By the time Potens arrived in New Orleans, free women of color like the legendary Marie Laveau, one of the most successful of the celebrated yellow fever nurses, were carving out an influential occupation for themselves in the city’s health care services (Fanrich 166-67). There can be little doubt that Potens benefited from their pioneering work.<sup>9</sup> It is equally likely that Potens’s occupation influenced her son to enter the medical profession.

In New Orleans, the Roudanez family entered into one of the nation’s wealthiest, best educated, and most politically sophisticated free black communities. A large proportion of that community was descended, like the Roudanez brothers, from the Saint Domingue refugee population. They maintained political and familial links to

Haiti and traveled back and forth despite an 1831 law that prohibited free blacks from visiting “the West India Islands” (Bell *Revolution* 80). Deeply resentful of the discriminatory laws that relegated them to a separate and inferior cast, they nurtured an ideology of revolutionary republicanism that had triumphed over slavery and racial repression in the Haitian Revolution.

Upon his arrival in New Orleans, Louis Charles attended one of the free black community’s private schools where a generation of remarkably gifted instructors like literary artists Armand Lanusse and Joanni Questy introduced their students to the latest literary and political trends in the Francophone Atlantic world. By the time Louis Charles embarked for France in 1844<sup>10</sup> to study medicine, he was undoubtedly well educated to the democratic advances of the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions. These lessons were reinforced by his experiences in France.

At the prestigious *Faculté de Médecine de Paris*, his two most important mentors were renowned proponents of French republicanism (Rankin 27-28). One of his favorite teachers, Jean Baptiste Bouillaud, championed the 1848 French Revolution and when enraged Parisians confronted government forces in the revolt that toppled King Louis-Philippe’s government, Roudanez and his classmates “had been before the barricades in Paris.”<sup>11</sup> Led by ardent abolitionists like Alphonse de Lamartine, France’s Second Republic promptly abolished slavery and extended the vote to all males over the age of twenty-one, including the newly freed slaves.

Upon completing his medical education, Roudanez returned to New Orleans in 1856 despite the mounting threats to Louisiana’s free black population. By the time of the Civil War, he had established a flourishing medical practice and with the Federal occupation of the city in 1862, he and his allies proposed to revolutionize race relations. In the pages of *L’Union*, their newly launched newspaper, they urged the nation to follow the French Second Republic’s example in abolishing slavery; extending suffrage to free men of color and former slaves; and seating elected officials of African descent in the National Constituent Assembly—a revolutionary model of interracial democracy that Roudanez had witnessed first-hand in Paris (Bell *Revolution* 159-60).

An 1862 *L’Union* editorial urged free men of African descent to join the U.S. Army and take up “the cause of the rights of man [. . .].” Their

military service, the paper insisted, entitled the soldiers to political equality. In fact, the paper explained, the newly inducted soldiers already possessed a legitimate claim to equal citizenship. Their Haitian and Louisiana forefathers had fought in the American Revolution in support of the democratic principles proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence. Their historic birthright entitled the men to equal citizenship and voting rights.

When, however, Federal military authorities stymied free black demands for voting rights, Roudanez and his colleagues sent representatives to Washington thereby compelling the president and the Congress to take up the issue of black suffrage even before the end of the war. In 1864, in a meeting with President Abraham Lincoln, Roudanez's brother, Jean Baptiste, and E. Arnold Bertonneau, a former officer of African descent in the Union army, urged the extension of voting rights to all Louisianians of African descent.

In *L'Union*, and its successor, the *Tribune*, the Roudanez brothers and their allies envisioned the complete assimilation of African Americans into the nation's political, social, and economic life. During the war, they pressed for the settlement of freedmen on confiscated rebel lands. The former slaves, the *Tribune* insisted in 1864, "are entitled by a paramount right to the possession of the soil they have so long cultivated [. . .]" (Bell "*Une Chimère*" 148).

At the outset of congressional reconstruction in 1867, Roudanez and his allies pressed ahead with demands for voting rights, proportional representation in office holding, equal access to public accommodations, and land reform. Their aggressive stance and republican idealism ensured that Louisiana's 1868 constitution would be one of the Reconstruction South's most progressive blueprints for change. Pointing the way to social revolution, the 1868 state charter required state officials to recognize, by oath, the equality of all men. It alone among Reconstruction constitutions explicitly required equal treatment in public accommodations including equal access to public schools. The chances for meaningful change dimmed, however, with the ascendancy of Republican conservatives.

Through a series of well-calculated maneuvers, Henry Clay Warmoth, a conservative Union officer from Missouri, undercut his radical opponents and seized control of the Louisiana Republican Party. When Warmoth secured the 1868 gubernatorial nomination, Roudanez and his fellow radicals bolted the party. Certain that a

Warmoth victory would undermine the cause of black civil and political equality, they put forward an independent Republican ticket.

When Warmoth won the election, he retaliated by persuading Federal authorities to withdraw patronage from the *Tribune*. Stripped of its subsidy, the newspaper suspended publication in 1868. Just as Roudanez and his allies had predicted, Governor Warmoth stymied civil rights legislation, resisted desegregation of the public schools, opposed enforcement of the constitution's equal accommodations provision, appointed white Democrats to political office, and accumulated a personal fortune by exacting tribute from railroad companies. His concessions to Democratic conservatives prompted Oscar J. Dunn, his black lieutenant governor to complain that Warmoth was the Republican party's "first Ku Klux Governor" (Bell *Revolution* 277).

Warmoth's resistance to civil rights legislation convinced Roudanez and his allies to revive the *Tribune*. Reappearing near the end of the year, the paper pressed for enforcement of the 1868 Reconstruction constitution's public accommodations and school desegregation provisions. The "spirit of slavery" survived, the paper insisted, until segregation was undone. Under pressure from the *Tribune* and black New Orleanians, the Warmoth administration desegregated the city's public schools. By 1874, hundreds of black and white schoolchildren attended approximately nineteen racially mixed schools (Bell *Revolution* 277).

Financial difficulties forced Roudanez and his associates once again to suspend publication of the *Tribune* in 1871. They nonetheless pressed ahead with their civil rights agenda by putting Aristide Mary forward as a candidate for the governorship in the 1872 election. Mary, a Creole of African descent, was a highly respected philanthropist and an uncompromising proponent of the "one-half guaranty"—a platform resolution introduced at the Republican party's 1867 state convention by black radicals. It mandated that "at least one-half of the nominations to elective office, as well as one-half the appointed offices, shall be taken from that class [of black Republicans], and no distinctions made whether said nominees and appointees were born free or not" (Bell *Revolution* 269).

When Mary lost his bid for the Republican gubernatorial nomination, he, Roudanez and other African American leaders joined the Louisiana Unification Movement, a nonpartisan coalition organized by the city's white business elite. With the state on the verge of anarchy after the tumultuous 1872 election, the Unifiers moved to oust the

existing Republican regime and return control of state government to local leaders. Since black votes were essential to the restoration of "home rule," the Unifiers invited Roudanez, Mary, and Lieutenant Governor Ceasar C. Antoine to join a platform committee to formulate the movement's objectives.

In return for their support, Roudanez and his African American allies exacted remarkable concessions. The approved 1873 platform guaranteed black civil and political rights; accepted an equal distribution of political offices between the races; sanctioned the desegregation of all places of public accommodation including schools, factories, and transit carriers; and even promised to consider the breakup of large landholdings into small farms, so that "our colored citizens and white emigrants may become practical farmers and cultivators of the soil." When, however, Roudanez and his fellow African American committee members publicly withheld their support for home rule until "the existing opposition against the enjoyment of our rights [. . .] shall have ceased," the Unification movement collapsed (*Bell Revolution* 278-79). With its demise, Roudanez apparently returned to his medical practice until his death in 1890.<sup>12</sup>

Roudanez's militant republicanism, his steadfast solidarity with Louisiana's oppressed African American masses, his understanding of Haitian history, and his own experience of democratic possibility in the 1848 French Revolution propelled him to the forefront of one of the nation's most far reaching campaigns for racial equality. With Reconstruction's collapse, his vision of an interracial republic of freedom, equal citizenship, and universal male suffrage succumbed to a nightmare of semiservitude, segregation laws, and disfranchisement. Yet, the common wind would not be denied. Roudanez's Creole vision lived on in African American aspirations for a reconstructed nation of racial equality.

Sustained by those aspirations, New Orleanian A. P. Tureaud, a Creole like Roudanez with ancestral roots in both Haiti and St. James Parish, would assume the civil rights mantle of his nineteenth century forebears. Taking lessons and inspiration from Roudanez's vision of representative democracy, Tureaud and his allies would wage a fifty year battle against racial discrimination that would carry the common wind's promise of freedom and equality into the twentieth century.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *L'Union*, September 27, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> See Brickhouse for an impressive discussion of the international sensibility, Haitian affiliation, and revolutionary heritage of Creole New Orleanians like the Roudanez brothers.

<sup>3</sup> For the proximity of the Roudanez plantation to the center of the slave revolt, see the map in Fick, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> The genealogical chart in the Roudané Family Papers and the baptismal record of Louis Charles Roudanez cited in the Honora and Rouzan paper offer strong evidence that Marie Anne and Louis Roudanez were siblings.

<sup>5</sup> New Orleans attorney and civil rights leader A.P. Tureaud alluded to his ancestral roots in St. James Parish in an interview with Professor Joseph Logsdon. A typescript copy of the taped interview is available at the University of New Orleans. Tureaud joined the NAACP in 1922 and fought discrimination in Louisiana for fifty years. At one point he was the only African American lawyer in the state. The more than 100 cases he argued in state and Federal courts constitute all of the significant civil rights litigation in twentieth century Louisiana (Worthy 2).

<sup>6</sup> This river region takes its name from the German-speaking settlers who colonized the area after acquiring land grants in 1721 from French governor Jean Michiele de Lépinay Bienville.

<sup>7</sup> St. James Parish is on the upriver boundary of St. John the Baptist Parish.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Maceo Coleman's handwritten manuscript history of African American Louisianians in the field of medicine is in the Alexander Pierre Tureaud Collection at Amistad Research Center at Tulane University.

<sup>9</sup> For the storied role of Marie Laveau and other free women of color in the city's health care history, also see Martha Ward, *Voodoo Queen: The Spirited Lives of Marie Laveau*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004, pp. 24 and 41-43.

<sup>10</sup> Coleman manuscript.

<sup>11</sup> New Orleans *Crusader*, March 22, 1890.

<sup>12</sup> New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, March 12, 1890.

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