

Hangmen of Lyon

Is there a double standard for war criminals? Frenchmen were asking themselves that question last week after revelation of the very different attitude that President Georges Pompidou has taken toward two such criminals, one German and one French. The German is Klaus Barbie, who was Gestapo chief in Lyon during World War II, and is living in Bolivia under the name Klaus Altmann (TIME, Feb. 14). Pompidou has been publicly and energetically demanding Altmann's extradition to France. Now the weekly *L'Express* has revealed that Pompidou, against the advice of his Minister of Justice, last November secretly granted a full pardon to another Lyon war criminal, a Frenchman named Paul Touvier.



EX-FASCIST TOUVIER IN CHAMBERY
Crimes only God can pardon.

Touvier, now 57, was a fascist in prewar France who later headed the regional militia under the Vichy regime. According to testimony at his postwar trial, he aided the Gestapo in hunting down Resistance fighters and Jews. He personally commanded an execution squad in an operation against partisans. Once, as a reprisal for the killing of a Vichy Minister of Propaganda, Philippe Henriot, Touvier took seven Jewish shopkeepers as hostages and had them shot.

After the war, Touvier was twice sentenced to death *in absentia* by French courts. He took refuge in French monasteries and convents for 20 years, until the statute of limitations on his crimes expired in 1967. Touvier had a powerful protector in Monsignor Charles Duquaire, a French prelate with influence in both Paris and the Vatican. Duquaire waged a ten-year campaign to gain Touvier a full presidential pardon, which General Charles de

Gaulle refused on two occasions to grant. Last year Touvier persuaded Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel to write to Pompidou on his behalf. "He gave me a sweetened-up version of his activities during the Occupation, and I was weak enough to believe him," Marcel explains today. When he learned the truth about Touvier, Marcel asked Pompidou to return his letter. "There are crimes that only God can pardon," Marcel now says.

But Pompidou was persuaded to grant Touvier a presidential pardon, which allowed him to return to his home on Chemin des Charmettes in Chambéry, near Lyon, and to regain possession of his confiscated property—much of it booty plundered or extorted from wealthy Jews during the war.

Touvier's pardon has especially infuriated veterans of the Resistance movement. The French League against Racism and Anti-Semitism has warned: "In no case will we permit Touvier to walk freely around the streets of Lyon." Touvier obviously takes these threats seriously: he is staying out of sight. Commenting on Touvier's pardon and the memoirs of a Gestapo agent in France, written by Barbie, purchased for \$36,000 and published by *France-Soir*, Resistance hero Marcel Rivière remarked: "The hangmen of Lyon are prospering this year, aren't they?"

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