

SOULÉ, PIERRE (Aug. 31, 1801–Mar. 26, 1870), jurist, diplomat, was born at Castillon-en-Couserans in the French Pyrenees, the youngest son of Joseph and Jeanne (Lacroix) Soulé. His father, a brilliant Napoleonic officer, was for twenty years a magistrate; his mother came of distinguished native stock. Destined for the Church, Soulé at fifteen rebelled against the rigid Jesuit discipline of the Collège de l'Esquille at Toulouse and, turning to politics, became an anti-Bourbon conspirator at Bordeaux by choice and thus an exiled shepherd in Navarre by necessity. Pardoned in 1818, he returned to Bordeaux where, the next year, he took his bachelor's degree, and then proceeded to Paris to study law. A lawyer in 1822, he soon joined in the republican movement against Charles X, publishing with others the journal, *Le Nain Jaune*, and thereby inviting monarchical prosecution. Arrested in April 1825, he was convicted and sentenced to prison. Preferring exile, Soulé escaped to England and on Sept. 5, 1825, arrived at Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Finding conditions there unsatisfactory, he proceeded in October to the United States, landing at Baltimore.

A stranger in Baltimore, a wanderer in New York, Soulé in November found refuge in New Orleans. To perfect his English he traveled inland in 1827, receiving Andrew Jackson's hospitality at "The Hermitage" and, after an illness, requiring the kindness of Dominican monks at Bardstown, Ky., by acting as gardener. Returning to New Orleans, in 1828, he married Armanthe Mercier, a belle of the Vieux Carré and a sister of Armand and Charles Alfred Mercier [q.v.]. She bore him a son. The next twenty years witnessed his rise in varied fields of endeavor: as criminal lawyer, orator, financier, and man of affairs. He was a generous friend of French refugees, a philanthropist toward his fellow citizens, and, politically, a notable accession to the Democracy. Having spoken for Van Buren in 1840, he was chosen a delegate to the convention of 1844 for revising the state constitution; there he early gained recognition as the unofficial leader of the New Orleans delegation, although Judah P. Benjamin shattered his constitutional arguments. In the first election ensuing under the revised constitution, New Orleans, on Jan. 19, 1846, sent Soulé to the state Senate where he led the successful struggle for the abolition of compulsory capital punishment.

On the death of United States Senator Alexander Barrow in December 1846, John Slidell [q.v.], Soulé's rival, preferring a full term of six years, encompassed the latter's election for the unexpired term of three months. Although

mentioned as a possible colleague of Nicholas P. Trist as peace commissioner to Mexico, Soulé, in March 1847, retired from public affairs for a time, but in the senatorial election of 1848, utilizing a Whig majority and capitalizing his opponent's Plaquemines frauds of 1844, defeated Slidell, the regular Democratic candidate, for the six-year term and control of Louisiana. He served until his resignation, Apr. 11, 1853. As senator, Soulé succeeded Calhoun as leader of the state-rights wing of the Southern Democracy, but, except for his oratory, achieved no out-

standing parliamentary distinction. His senatorial career was a paradox in that he was a leader in the state-rights movement, although a sincere proponent of the democratic form of American government; a pioneer in the American movement for world republicanism, yet a strong protagonist of slavery; a sponsor of international amity, yet, withal, a staunch partisan advocate of American imperialism.

Soulé preferred Stephen A. Douglas in the Democratic National Convention at Baltimore in June 1852, but rendered services to Franklin Pierce in the campaign. Although mentioned for the attorney-generalship, he was passed over by Pierce in selections for the cabinet, and thus sought solace in the diplomatic service. The English and French missions being closed to him, the former by Buchanan's claims, the latter because of his republican hatred of Louis Napoleon, who cordially reciprocated, Soulé dreamed of St. Petersburg, only to be thwarted by the Czar, to whom his republicanism was anathema. On Apr. 7, 1853, Soulé therefore accepted the mission to Madrid, thereby deliberately revoking a pledge to secure it for his brilliant Louisiana friend, the historian Charles Gayarré [q.v.]. Soulé's qualifications included linguistic ability, a knowledge of Gallic Europe, and Catholicism. He was in complete harmony with Pierce's annexationist program as to Cuba, but his very zeal made his appointment an insult to Spain and a source of mortification to the United States. Continual errors marred his career. He lauded the Cuban Junta in New York; he visited Continental republican exiles in London; he sought to seduce France from Great Britain and Spain in Paris. In Madrid, after his arrival on Oct. 14, the condescending tenor and impertinent advice of his proposed address to the Queen led to revision and rebuke from the Foreign Office; his sartorial vagaries and belligerent pride led to two notorious duels by him and his son, and to the ostracism of his family. Despite the express prohibitory instructions of Secretary William L. Marcy [q.v.], Soulé sought the acquisition of Cuba by purchase, by favor of the Queen Mother, or as collateral for a royal loan. The *Black Warrior* episode in Havana led him to exceed instructions and attempt acquisition by threat of war. On Apr. 3, 1854, Marcy at last ordered him to attempt the purchase of Cuba and, failing that, to "detach" it from Spain. Finding purchase programs futile, Soulé, that summer, strove to "detach" Cuba, first, by aiding Spanish republican revolutions, and second, by conniving with Ledru-Rollin in engendering revolution in France, involving the assassination of Louis Napoleon. Failure in both plans caused Soulé's sudden and discreet withdrawal from Madrid to his Pyrenean château.

On Aug. 16, Marcy, cancelling the project of a commission to aid Soulé, which had led the latter to threaten his resignation, directed him, James Buchanan [q.v.], minister to Great Britain, and John Y. Mason [q.v.], minister to France, to confer on Spanish-American relations with particular reference to Cuba. Buchanan, seeking annexation on strict ethical and legal bases, posited the application of economic pressure on Spain through foreign bondholders; Mason, with passive complacency, would permit expediency to outweigh ethics, but demanded a semblance of legality; Soulé, militant and em-

bittered by past failures, sought Cuba regardless of ethics or legality. Meeting first at Ostend and then at Aix-la-Chapelle, the triumvirate on Oct. 18, 1854, signed the Ostend Manifesto, a document largely Soulé's handiwork (Ettinger, *post*, pp. 364–68), which proposed the purchase of Cuba in "open, frank, and public" negotiations with the Spanish Constituent Cortes. Should Spain refuse to sell, and should Cuba, "in the possession of Spain, seriously endanger our internal peace and the existence of our cherished Union," then and then only must it be wrested from Spain (*House Executive Document No. 93*, 33 Cong., 2 Sess.). Unknown to Buchanan, Soulé sent his own militant interpretation of this document to Marcy, who received both the Manifesto and the interpretation at a time when he was confronted by evidence of Soulé's revolutionary machinations, his untimely encounter with French officials at Calais, and decisive Democratic defeats in the congressional elections of 1854. Sheer expediency led Marcy on Nov. 13 to reject the Manifesto, thereby repudiating his own instructions on Apr. 3 to "detach" Cuba. For the seventh time Soulé had failed and, on receipt of Marcy's negatory letter, he resigned on Dec. 17, returning as scapegoat for the *volte-face* of the administration.

Retiring to private law practice, Soulé in 1857 successfully defended William Walker, the Nicaraguan filibuster, and became interested in a projected transisthmian canal in Tehuantepec, Mexico. In politics, he supported Buchanan as delegate to the Democratic Convention of 1856, and finally lost Louisiana to Slidell in 1859. The next year, although now opposed to secession, he went with his state. General Benjamin Butler's notorious régime in New Orleans found Soulé the chief adviser of Mayor Monroe and Confederate provost-marshal. Arrested in June 1862, he was sent to Fort Lafayette, N. Y., and paroled in November to Boston, whence he fled to Nassau in the Bahamas and Havana in February 1863. Successfully running the blockade to New Orleans, he tendered his services to the Confederacy at Richmond from September 1863 to June 1864, but President Davis' hostility prevented his rise to position other than a somewhat honorary brigadier-generalship. In 1865 he joined ex-Senator William M. Gwin [q.v.] of California in a project to settle Confederate veterans in Sonora. Four years later his powerful intellect gave way, and he was declared interdict. He died on March 26, 1870.

[In his last two years Soulé systematically destroyed his private papers; only a few unimportant letters remain in the Lib. of Cong., and in the possession of his grand-daughters, Mrs. A. H. Denis of New Orleans and Mme. M. G. S. de Arias-Salgado, Havre, France. Important sketches are Alfred Mercier, "*Biographie de Pierre Soulé, Sénateur de Washington*" (Paris, 1848), a partisan account by his brother-in-law; Jean Signoret, *Pierre Soulé* (Toulouse, 1911), a stirring little narrative based on documents in the possession of Leon Soulé; Leon Soulé, *Notice sur Pierre Soulé, avocat à la Nouvelle Orléans, sénateur de la Louisiane à Washington* (Toulouse, 1901), a memoir by his last surviving nephew; and Commandant Trespaillet, "*Pierre Soulé*," *Revue des Pyrénées et de la France Méridionale*, vol. II, (1890), pp. 540–72, highly laudatory and not based on original material. For surveys of his mission to Spain, see J. A. Reinecke, Jr., "The Diplomatic Career of Pierre Soulé," an unpublished master's thesis at Tulane University, New Orleans, 1914; H. B. Learned, "William Learned Marcy," in S. F. Bemis, ed., *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, vol. VI (1928); and R. F. Nichols, *Franklin Pierce* (1931). The latest study, which in ch. 3 reviews Soulé's life and which contains a full bibliography, is A. A. Ettinger, *The Mission to Spain of Pierre Soulé, 1853–1855* (1932).] A. A. E.