

Response Page

The following responses were posted on the H-France discussion list in response to Donald Sutherland's review of Micah Alpaugh, *Non-violence and the French Revolution: Political Demonstrations in Paris, 1787-1795* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

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The original review may be found on the *H-France Review* web site at:

<http://www.h-france.net/vol15reviews/vol15no175sutherland.pdf>

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David Andress

david.andress@port.ac.uk

Dear listmembers,

Following on from Donald Sutherland's incisive review of Micah Alpaugh's important book, some may be interested to read my own thoughts on a slightly different synthesis of the 'violent' and 'non-violent' paths of popular political engagement in the 1790s. I have written a short paper accessible here: <http://revolution.hypotheses.org/182>

To quote the conclusion:

I would propose three aspects of Parisian 'popular sociability' in this early revolutionary period as key. The first is that it was undoubtedly a phenomenon of far greater breadth than has been captured by traditional vanguardist narratives, and that, out of that 'dark figure' of unidentifiable daily interactions, a remarkable range of mobilisations emerged. The second is that it is impossible to draw any sharp and definitive distinction between violent and non-violent, and thus implicitly 'unsophisticated' and 'sophisticated' popular responses and understandings of their context, whether on a large or small scale. And the third is that, perhaps most curiously of all, as we look ahead into the years of the Republic, we see that the language of productive interests and of active economic agency will continue to be submerged beneath attitudes to the 'subsistence question', which are in fact amongst the strongest continuities from the daily life of the Old Regime. It is not, as Albert Soboul once thought, that the sans-culottes failed to reach forward to an understanding of the workers' situation, but rather that they chose a vocabulary and an agenda which suppressed evidently existing potential for such a grasp. To put the evidence of popular sociability alongside the conduct of the so-called 'popular movement' is to see a mystery in need of further explanation.

Best wishes,

Dave Andress

Associate Dean (Research), FHSS.

Professor of Modern History

SSHLS, Univ. of Portsmouth

Milldam, Portsmouth, PO1 3AS, UK

Tel. 02392 842204

david.andress@port.ac.uk