Politics Lost: Civic Emotions and Political Institutions in the Early French Revolution

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Timothy Tackett notes in *The Coming of the Terror* that "part of the difficulty in understanding the [French] Revolutionaries is that theirs was a moving reality in which values, perceptions, and ideologies were continually developing and transforming, often in a quite unpredictable manner."[1] Among the entities in motion were, of course, the revolutionaries themselves: not just their bodies, but their ambitions, anxieties, expectations, fears, and aspirations for France, for the revolution, and for themselves. While prosaic, this reminder is nonetheless crucial to understanding the Revolution as a historical phenomenon and a historical process. It also poses very real challenges to historians who aim to understand both the Revolution and the revolutionaries. For this was a stormy revolution, and the revolutionaries were sometimes the cause, sometimes the consequence, and sometimes the casualty of the political tempests that swept France during 1789 and after. The revolutionaries cannot be isolated from the revolutionary storm, nor can the Revolution be divorced from the people who made it.

Revolutionary politics both fed off and gave rise to powerful emotions, and historians have long recognized that those emotions were fundamental to the events themselves, as a cursory glance at Jules Michelet's *History of the French Revolution* (1847–53) makes clear. But to understand the emotions of others is difficult, all the more so across gulfs of time, space, and context. Few have managed it with greater nuance, care, or insight than Tackett. In his exhaustively-researched and gracefully-written works, Tackett has tested historians' assumptions about how the French Revolution unfolded, led us to rethink the nature and course of revolutionary events, reframed our sense of how the French Revolution became revolutionary, and helped us to understand how it played out once underway.

While they may appear separable, one from the other, I suspect that the depth of Tackett's research and the grace of his writing are not so easily divorced. The goal – and the result – of such archival labor is more than just "thorough" research; it is, as Arlette Farge described what we hope for while in the archives, a sort of "saturation," one that makes fluid, confident, and accessible writing possible.[2] It is the sort of history, and the sort of writing, to which one aspires, and to which one returns when thinking through potential or on-going research projects. In that spirit, then, I aim in the following pages to highlight a few themes in Tackett's work and to

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[1] Timothy Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror in the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 3.
[2] Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, trans. Thomas Scott-Railton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 69.

suggest ways in which they might help us to think through some new and continuing questions about the Revolution.

The first theme – evident already in *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture*, clearer still in *Becoming a Revolutionary*, and established as a premise for *The Coming of the Terror* – is the critical importance of people's "experiences and sentiments" in shaping what "revolution" meant and how people encountered and engaged with the Revolution as it unfolded.[3] Witnessing the Old Regime's collapse, debating the nature and purpose of constitutional governance, working to address practical problems of immense social and economic importance, responding to outbreaks of violence in Paris and across France; these were emotionally-fraught and emotionally-charged experiences, and those emotions were central to the course and consequence of revolutionary events. As Tackett put it in *The Coming of the Terror*, "the experience of the years after 1789 invariably aroused a range of emotions, emotions that would often have a profound influence on the actions and perceptions" of the revolutionaries.[4] Recognizing and tracing these emotions is no mean feat though, and assessing their short- and long-term consequences is harder still. As a result, and as Sophia Rosenfeld noted in 2009, "the psychological complexity of humans, whether alone or gathered in streets and assembly halls, has become the focus of some of the most innovative work in the field."[5] Tackett has followed the revolutionaries through assembly halls, into the streets, and along the archival trail, giving us a rich, measured, and humane picture of what we might call the psychic life of revolution.

A second theme, alluded to already above, is the dynamism of the Revolution, the fact that revolutionary politics unfolded and evolved, over time and in lived time. The deputies did not arrive in Versailles as political novices or neophytes, nor did they arrive with ideological programs or blueprints. The Revolution did not just reveal or test ideological and associative commitments, it incubated and shook them, posing both practical and philosophical questions for which deputies did not have ready-to-hand ideas or answers. This insight has been largely borne out by exciting new work regarding word-use patterns and rhetorical innovation in the early years of the Revolution (as reflected in the record of deputy speeches in the *Archives parlementaires*). Rebecca Spang and Simon DeDeo note in their analysis of those patterns that, after 1789, members of the National Assembly "faced a double challenge: how to convey points in a way familiar enough to be intelligible by others, while nonetheless making claims that were in many cases substantially novel ('revolutionary,' even)…. The [National Constituent Assembly] was a site… of both epistemic and political innovation."[6] Whether they found the

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[3] Timothy Tackett, *Religion, Revolution and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France: The Ecclesiastical Oath of 1791* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); idem, *Becoming a Revolutionary: The deputies of the French National Assembly and the emergence of a revolutionary culture* (1789-1790) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 8; idem, *The Coming of the Terror in the French Revolution*, 3-4, *passim*.

[4] Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror in the French Revolution*, 121.

[5] Sophia Rosenfeld, "Thinking about Feeling, 1789-1799," *French Historical Studies* 32:4 (Fall 2009), 698.

[6] Alexander T.J. Barron, Jenny Huang, Rebecca L. Spang, and Simon DeDeo, "Individuals, institutions, and innovation in the debates of the French Revolution," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115:18 (May 2018), 4607.

period after 1788–89 a blissful dawn or a disorienting dusk, those involved in revolutionary events had suddenly to navigate and, if possible, influence the course of an unpredictable and unstable Revolution. And it was increasingly unclear how social and political stability might be won and what it might look like if it was. Revolutionary politics remained a laboratory (and an emotional cauldron) into and through the early years of the republic, an insight that has allowed Tackett to push beyond the reductive juxtaposition of "ideology" *or* "circumstance," not only in thinking about the Terror – where that binary is most often encountered – but also in his treatment of revolutionary crises more broadly.

Here we encounter a third focus of Tackett's work: the dynamic role of crises in the Revolution's unfolding. The psychological origins of the Terror and the Revolution's descent into terroristic violence have been among Tackett's central concerns since at least 2000, but it seems to have been the descent (rather than the instrumentalization or institutionalization of terror) that was his quarry. As he wrote then, this "was not a sudden paradigmatic shift, where one worldview or ideology was abruptly replaced by another, but was a slow, halting, and painful process."[7] It was a process spurred, marked, and altered by crises; as Tackett's work has revealed, these crises also played out as processes that the revolutionaries had to navigate in and over time.

In these crises, citizens and legislators alike faced problems that were practical, political, and personal, and how they addressed those problems would shape what seemed possible or permissible in the future. These were, as Reinhart Koselleck has described crises more generally, moments in which "a decision is due but has not yet been rendered."[8] The tension between rapidly-changing circumstances and time-sensitive decisions is most evident in Tackett's analysis of the hours and days after the royal family's June 1791 "Flight to Varennes," but it is central to his understanding of other critical moments as well. Revolutionary crises arose from and led to periods in which political actors were forced off script, when the organizing principles or expectations that had seemed to govern political affairs were obviously and unavoidably insufficient to the circumstances at hand, and when a new set of organizing principles or normative expectations had not yet taken shape.

In this, Tackett's analyses reflect well the multi-faceted dynamics of social and political change that William Sewell calls an "eventful temporality." As Sewell notes, "events bring about historical changes in part by transforming the very cultural categories that shape and constrain human action."[9] Like crises, then, "events" demand responses (mental, physical, emotional, etc.) even as they undermine or obliterate the expectations and assumptions that might pre-figure any particular decision (or range of possible decisions). One of the great strengths of Tackett's work is his recognition that the temporal and psychological space between the need for a decision and its occurrence is both fraught and consequential.

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[7] Timothy Tackett, "Conspiracy Obsession in a Time of Revolution: French Elites and the Origins of the Terror, 1789-1792," *American Historical Review* 105:3 (June 2000): 712.

[8] Reinhart Koselleck, "Crisis," trans. Michaela W. Richter, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67:2 (Apr. 2006): 363.

[9] William H. Sewell Jr., *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 83, 101, *passim*.

Taken together, Tackett's works have reminded us that the men and women of late eighteenth-century France had to navigate a revolution that was unfolding and evolving around them, and that the Revolution was always a human affair, even – perhaps especially – in its most transformative moments. His have been among a number of works aiming to bring the history of emotions and of social experience back into the post-revisionist historiography of the French Revolution.

The history of emotions in the Revolution has clustered around three questions (broadly speaking and with a good bit of overlap among them): the first is perhaps the oldest, asking how people experienced the Revolution and how their experiences shaped the course and character of the Revolution. Tackett's work has been particularly influential in bringing rigor to this element of revolutionary historiography, where arguments can too easily rely upon anachronistic supposition or an unspoken act of divination. The second area of focus has been on the power of emotions and emotional regimes to pre-fashion or pre-figure people's experiences of the world, in general, and of the Revolution, in particular. Following William Reddy and others, works of this genre have recognized that the emotional experiences of people in the past differed from our own and that their emotional repertoires shaped what they experienced, even what they could experience.[10] The third has focused on how revolutionary legislators and ideologues sought to enlist emotional forces in their attempts to establish power, maintain legitimacy, or "regenerate" an insufficiently revolutionary citizenry.[11] Whether the revolutionaries are here cast as proto-totalitarians or utopian dreamers (or both), emotions – individual and collective – seemed to present an alluring target, a site of control that would make it possible for the revolutionaries to form the French people anew, to "force them to be free" from the inside out.

Some recent works have sought to synthesize these approaches by examining how revolutionaries' ideas about *other people's* emotions and attachments (again, individual or collective) might figure into the history of political action, institution-building, and legislative design during the Revolution. Similar approaches are evident in efforts to historicize the interpersonal and emotional dynamics that underwrite future-oriented political, economic, or diplomatic engagements, as in works seeking to understand "trust" as an historical, social, and political phenomenon.[12] David Andress, for instance, has called for us to consider how attention to people's "beliefs about emotions and desires… can open up new perspectives on how, and

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[10] William H. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), esp. 173–211.

[11] Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Pierre Rosanvallon, *The Demands of Liberty: Civil Society in France since the Revolution*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[12] E.g. Barbara A. Misztal, *Trust in Modern Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996); Charles Tilly, *Trust and Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Ute Frevert, *Does Trust Have a History?* (Fiesole, Italy: European University Institute, 2009), available online at http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/11258/MWP_LS_2009_01.pdf, accessed 20 July 2018; Geoffrey Hosking, *Trust: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); László Kontler and Mark Somos (eds), *Trust and Happiness in the History of European Political Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

why, the actors in the great drama of revolution behaved as they did."[13] Importantly, this is not primarily about the emotions that those actors themselves felt, nor is it about (or at least it is not necessarily about) their attempts to control the emotions of others. Andress asks us instead to think about how revolutionaries' ideas and expectations regarding other people's emotional lives fit into the development of their own intentions and actions as political agents. That is, he reminds us that emotions are anticipated as well as experienced. Tackett's work has shown us how important it is to account for people's emotional lives in understanding their political, ideological, and interpersonal paths; lines of inquiry such as Andress suggests remind us in turn that our eighteenth-century counterparts wrestled with similar problems when working to understand, anticipate, and accommodate the political and social lives of their contemporaries and of their fellow citizens. They, too, recognized the intersection of political and emotional concerns, not least when reflecting upon the prospects of and for new forms of political society.

Such concerns were both ubiquitous and understandable in the early years of the French Revolution. The liberalization of the press, the embrace of a participatory (and, to a point, contestatory) politics, the need to simultaneously invent and legitimize new political institutions and practices, as well as on-going economic crises and contentious disputes over economic reforms meant that the interests and opinions of large swaths of the population would come into very public conflict with one another. In light of such foreseeable contestation, the revolutionaries' "fear of the consequences if [sentimental union among the citizenry] was not achieved" seems eminently reasonable.[14] That fear inspired their turn to both formal and informal measures as they sought to mediate or mitigate conflicts and prevent political passions from becoming destructive. In this vein of revolutionary state-building, civic sentiments were not imagined as a means by which to preclude conflict, but as part of a social and political matrix that might sustain itself when conflicts arose. This was supposed to be a system in which the intersubjective work of sentimental citizenship occurred alongside and in concert with new administrative and representative institutions, aiming ultimately to establish new political habits, integrate new social dispositions into citizens' lives, and give practical force to the promise of a new national community.[15] With that, as Michael Sonenscher recently noted, "sociability had become political."[16]

The hope that civic sentiments might underwrite, preserve, and refine public and political institutions predated the Revolution, having served as a leitmotif of Enlightenment thought on

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[13] David Andress, "Navigating Feelings in the French Revolution," 1 February 2016, available at https://ageofrevolutions.com/2016/02/01/navigating-feelings-in-the-french-revolution/, accessed 20 July 2018.

[14] John Morris Roberts, "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité: Sources and Development of a Slogan," *Klasse en idéologie in de vrijmetselarij,* 1:3–4 (1976): 332.

[15] The prospect that trust might be nurtured in this way to safeguard a social contract being established without rational or experiential underpinnings is discussed in Brian Skyrms, "Trust, Risk, and the Social Contract," *Synthese* 160:1 (Jan. 2008): 21–25. On the value of focusing on institutions and institutional dynamics – anticipated or actual – in the emergence and unfolding of revolutionary politics, see Gail Bossenga, "Institutions as a Mode of Historical Analysis," *Journal of the Western Society for French History* 44 (2016): 9–19.

[16] Michael Sonenscher, "Sociability, Perfectibility, and the Intellectual Legacy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *History of European Ideas* 41:5 (2015): 686.

how societies managed to function and persist. It was central to Montesquieu's political taxonomy and to Rousseau's political imagination and, by the 1770s, Turgot and Dupont de Nemours were trying to convince Louis XVI to refashion the institutional and administrative structure of the Ancien Régime to establish civic and affective foundations for the state.[17] At roughly that same time, the young Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès was scribbling notes about how a new civic and political order might reflect and nurture a vast *"union sociale."*[18] With the collapse of the Ancien Régime's social and political order, the sense that people's sentimental, emotional, and political characters might reinforce and preserve one another was given new urgency as the deputies worked to reimagine and reinvent the institutional, interpersonal, and administrative structures of French life and to establish an open, public, and participatory political order.

Given this pre-revolutionary concern and the scale of the revolutionaries' ambitions, there is an understandable temptation to see these designs as symptomatic of the totalizing and ultra-rationalist system building so often ascribed to the revolutionaries, as one more instance in which what they could imagine got the better of what they could reasonably hope to achieve. But what's striking in so many of the examples noted below is the degree to which the revolutionaries were hoping to enlist the good will and generosity of the citizens at precisely those points where their hopes for control ran thin, to moderate disputes they expected to arise, or to capitalize on (or defend themselves and their work against) social and emotional forces that seemed to appear unbidden from the shifting terrain of revolutionary politics. What may appear in retrospect to have been a utopian program to reinvent and restrict the emotional repertoires of French life was, more often than not, an attempt to anticipate, navigate, and weather the emotional storms of revolutionary politics.

The promising and the problematic character of this affective politics became clear when the deputies sought to rework the institutions of political administration, to define the national or patriotic community, and to accommodate the disparate and sometimes opposed interests of the French citizenry. While these efforts would collapse among the myriad crises of the coming

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[17] Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws,* Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold S. Stone, eds., (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1989), 5, 308–33; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men," in Rousseau*, The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, Victor Gourevitch, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 142, 164–67; *Idem.,* "Considerations on the Government of Poland," in Rousseau, *The Plan for Perpetual Peace, On the Government of Poland, and other writings on History and Politics*, Christopher Kelly, ed. (Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth University Press, 2005), 182; Pierre-Samuel Dupont de Nemours, *"Mémoire au Roi, sur les Municipalités, sur la hiérarchie qu'on pourrait établir entre elles, et sur les services que le gouvernement en pourrait tirer,"* in Anne-Robert Jacques Turgot, *Œuvres de Turgot,* t. II, (Paris: Guillaumin, 1844), 502–50.

[18] Sieyès' notes from the 1770s and 1780s are available in the Fonds Sieyès of the Archives nationales de France [hereafter AN], 284/AP, esp. dossier 7. On the broader concern with sentiment and what Susan Maslan has called the "feeling citizen," see Susan Maslan, "The Dream of the Feeling Citizen: Law and Emotion in Corneille and Montesquieu," *SubStance* 35, no. 1 (2006): 69–84; also Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001).

years, they nonetheless help us to understand how revolutionaries thought about the intersection of emotional, social, interpersonal, and constitutional regimes, and how they hoped that a "regenerated" political society might work.

Discussions about how institutional, administrative, and legislative practices might interact with or nurture popular and political emotions can be found across the constitutional and legislative debates of 1789 and after. As I have argued elsewhere, this was very much the case in debates over education and in the ambitions associated with "public instruction," a pedagogy with which revolutionaries – both in the Assembly and beyond – hoped to inculcate the sorts of skills, habits, and dispositions that would make participatory politics and representative government both legitimate and sustainable.[19] Elsewhere, too, the revolutionaries sought to design legislative and institutional reforms that would simultaneously establish, draw upon, and replenish a reservoir of civic sentiment and social affect despite the competing interests, social tensions, and day-to-day strife that they knew would characterize a free society and a public politics. Across a range of institutional and legislative cases, the deputies embraced Mirabeau's view that "man more often obeys his sentiments than his reason," and so they sought to nurture an emotional economy of fraternity, sympathy, and *bienfaisance* that might protect French society and the French state during periods of collective uncertainty or conflict.[20] More plainly, the deputies and commentators recognized that the emotional repertoires and responses of their fellow citizens would shape what was possible and what was practicable in revolutionary politics. We have tended to situate these ambitions in histories of revolutionary spectacles, festivals, songs, and rituals. But they were manifest also – and perhaps more tellingly – in the practical affairs of the new state, in the new administrative and bureaucratic map of France, and in the reform of the judiciary.

In redesigning the political map and administrative infrastructure of France, legislators and administrators imagined the cantons, districts, and departments as venues for the socialization and fraternalization of the citizenry, even as they recognized that the *hôtel de ville* and the marketplace would bring together people with divergent or competing interests and agendas.[21] Similarly, on matters of taxation and the state's finances, the deputies hoped that sentimental appeals might see them through periods of crisis. For instance, the deputies hoped to turn the "patriotic gifts" of autumn 1789 into a 160-million *livre "contribution patriotique"* by appealing to the "honorable sentiments of the French nation"; in their appeal for funds, the deputies promised that there would be no inquiry into citizens' finances and no implicitly-coercive review of citizens' pledges, reinforcing the state's explicit dependence on the citizens' personal investment in the new administration.[22] Similarly, the Revolution brought with it the "re-

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[19] Adrian O'Connor, *In Pursuit of Politics: Education and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), esp. chapter 3.

[20] Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, *Travail sur l'éducation publique, trouvé dans les papiers de Mirabeau l'aîné*, (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1791), 82–83.

[21] Yann Lagadec, "La formation des cantons en Bretagne: une représentation des territoires (1790-an IX)," in Yann Lagadec, Jean Le Bihan et Jean-François Tanguy, eds, *Le Canton: un territoire du quotidien?* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 23–35.

[22] AN, D/XXXIV/1, dossier 1, no. 1, *Déclaration du Roi, portant sanction du Décret de l'Assemblée nationale, du mardi 6 octobre 1789, concernant la contribution patriotique. 9*

emergence of a 'civic' vision of poor relief," one in which affective bonds were supposed to help citizens recognize the value in insulating one another from the cruelties and vicissitudes of economic misfortune.[23] This vision was evident in the May 1790 decision by the Assembly's *comité de mendicité* to embrace a national model of publicly-funded poor relief, and it survived – at least as an ideal and an aspiration – through 1793–94, when the Jacobins sought to "use poor relief… to create ties of 'fraternal solidarity' within the nation, and to involve citizens as a whole in the task of relieving their 'poor brothers.'"[24]

The attempt to integrate the affective and institutional workings of the revolutionary state is perhaps clearest in the reform of the judiciary, especially in the establishment of new judicial offices and the associated efforts to manage and mediate points of social, civil, or familial discord. The reform of the judiciary was considered one of the most important steps towards realizing what Michael Fitzsimmons has called the new "ideal of the polity" that emerged in the early years of the Revolution. The reformed judicial system was supposed to "reflect faithfully the new values of the nation" and, more to the point here, was designed to "discourage litigation and to foster the spirit of harmony and union that was an indispensable element of the Assembly's new ideal."[25] The courts, and through them the law, were supposed to serve as a "conciliatory authority… responsible for bolstering [France's] moral unity and [for] preserving its social continuity."[26] More than just a change in judicial personnel and institutional practices, these reforms were a "critical element in [the Assembly's] regeneration of France."[27]

Working to modify social and administrative encounters in which a certain degree of discord was to be assumed, the deputies sought to design institutions that would not only mediate or adjudicate points of conflict, but foster reconciliation and social cohesion. This is clear in their design of the bureaus of peace and reconciliation, local institutions to which would-be litigants were to present themselves before going to trial. The bureaus were supposed to "calm the passions" of those embarking on legal proceedings, to serve as a "salutary institution" that might

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octobre 1789. See also Ted W. Margadant, *Urban Rivalries in the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 171–72; Joseph Zizek, "Revolutionary Gifts: Sacrifice and the Challenge of Community during the French Revolution," *The Journal of Modern History* 88 (June 2016): 306–341, esp. 312–13.

[23] Katherine A. Lynch, *Individuals, Families, and Communities in Europe, 1200–1800: The Urban Foundations of Western Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 172–73.

[24] *Ibid*. See also Alan Forrest, *The French Revolution and the Poor* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 172; Catherine Duprat, *"Pour l'amour de l'humanité"*: *Le Temps des Philanthropes. La philanthropie parisienne des Lumières à la monarchie de Juillet*, T. 1 (Paris: Éditions du C.T.H.S., 1993), 154–55.

[25] Michael Fitzsimmons, *The Remaking of France*: *The National Assembly and the Constitution of 1791* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 104.

[26] Richard M. Andrews, "The Justices of the Peace of Revolutionary Paris, September 1792 – November 1794 (Frimaire Year III)," *Past and Present* 52 (August 1971): 61. A similar point is made in Hervé Leuwers, "Révolution Constituante et Société Judiciaire: L'exemple Septentrional," *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 350 (octobre/décembre 2007): 27–47, esp. 28–29.

[27] Fitzsimmons, *The Remaking of France*, 100.

"balance" the discord that leads to and too often follows from legal or interpersonal conflicts.[28] So that they might do so, the deputies sought to require that "before a case could proceed to a district court, the litigants had to present a certificate attesting that they had attempted arbitration in a bureau of peace and reconciliation."[29] Even when arbitration failed, it was hoped that the process itself would demonstrate and engender good faith among the disputants and among those who had a stake in the dispute.

Similarly, the office of the justice of the peace was designed to ensure that rural and poor communities had access to the law, but also to preserve civic and social sentiments that might be frayed by impersonal or overly formalized courts. They would offer what Serge Bianchi describes as a "*juridiction de proximité*," a more accessible judicial venue that would welcome the "artisans, laborers… and women" who were expected to make use of it.[30] Operating with a keen sense of local circumstances rather than jurisprudential precision, the justices would serve as a "sort of flying squadron of legal order and social peace."[31] Their mandate focused on small-claims cases, extending from property damage to calumny, from family law to conflicts between employers and workers; in short, they had dominion over the "points of chronic tension in the life of any community."[32] The justices were imagined as both embodiments and evangels of "public spirit," and they were supposed to offer citizens not only legal recourse, but also wisdom, counsel, concord and, when necessary, "consolation."[33] This was a social, political, and cultural undertaking, a point that Jacques-Guillaume Thouret emphasized when he argued that "it was necessary to sow [civic sentiments among the people] through institutions."[34]

Critically, the justices were to be elected, integrating the judiciary into the new administrative and political infrastructure being codified in the Constitution of 1791. As elected officials, the judges were supposed to both reflect and reinforce the norms and values of the new political order; in their work mediating conflicts "at their source" (in the countryside or, literally, "in the fields"), they were to embody and enhance the bonds of social trust upon which collective regeneration and the efficacy of the new political institutions was going to depend. That "trust" was a primary consideration is evident when we compare the ubiquity of concerns about nepotism (and the logistical problems to which anti-nepotism measures would give rise) with the relative consensus that legal expertise was unnecessary for this position.[35] Justice appeared here as a social and interpersonal concern, one in which the danger of "bad blood" persisting between

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[28] J. Madival and E. Laurent, *et. al.*, eds. *Archives parlementaires de 1789 à 1860: recueil complet des débats législatifs & politiques des Chambres françaises* [hereafter AP] (Paris: Librairie administrative de P. Dupont, 1862), 17: 616.

[29] Fitzsimmons, *The Remaking of France*, 106.

[30] Serge Bianchi, "L'expérience des cantons en milieu rural dans la décennie de la Révolution française: pertinence et problèmes d'une greffe électorale, judiciare, militaire et administrative," in Lagadec, Le Bihan, et Tanguy, eds., *Le Canton*, 47.

[31] Andrews, "The Justices of the Peace of Revolutionary Paris," 59.

[32] *Ibid.*, 61.

[33] AN, D/XVII/5, folio 22, dossier 59, no. 2.

[34] AP, 17: 618.

[35] Anthony Crubaugh, "Local Justice and Rural Society in the French Revolution," *Journal of Social History* 34:2 (winter 2000): 333.

the parties was at least as problematic as the prospect of an improper decision. The reform was thus a social and civic affair as much as it was a judicial one, and the revolutionaries sought to "usher in a new social climate in rural France on the back of a reformed judiciary."[36] Reimagined and reinvented in this spirit, the law could become not just the polity's guardian or protector, but itself a "source of equality, fraternity, equity and union" among the citizenry.[37]

Despite the generally enthusiastic response that these institutional reforms received in the National Assembly and among correspondents who wrote to encourage the deputies or congratulate them on their work, a number of commentators responded with a mix of concern and contempt. Correspondents worried that it would be impossible to find a sufficient number of suitable justices, that qualified candidates would soon tire of a job that required them to deal day-in and day-out with the "petty complaints of peasants," or that the new institutions would get in each other's way, creating jurisdictional conflict and controversy.[38] Some worried about how the decisions reached by the bureaus or by the justices of the peace would be enforced, warning that the courts were likely to remain toothless and ineffective; these were matched by concerns that the justices would become local despots, wielding power that might seem insignificant from afar, but would give them tremendous influence over the lives of the very people that the dismantling of seigneurial justice was supposed to insulate from the whims of personal authority.[39] Others worried about the procedural implications for cases that were already working their way through the seigneurial courts, or cases for which seigneurial courts had reached but not yet announced a decision.[40] More fundamental still were concerns that by increasing the number and availability of courts, the deputies were inadvertently promoting a more litigious and acrimonious society, thereby creating a problem by setting out to solve it.[41]

In these criticisms, the merit of the judicial reforms was evaluated primarily on two fronts: first, the plausibility and practicality of the proposals and, second, how new state institutions would shape citizens' encounters and interactions with one another. That is, the criteria were practical and interpersonal, and they remind us that national "regeneration" was supposed to take place through and in the everyday lives of French citizens, lives that would include disputes and disagreements, conflicts and concessions, interests and emotions.

In this, the history of emotions resembles the history of ideology in the early years of the Revolution, on which Tackett has shed so much light. In trying to understand and to accommodate the emotional forces of revolutionary and political society, the revolutionaries struggled to identify the forces shaping popular and political emotions, to recalibrate as the experience of revolutionary politics changed both how and what they thought about emotions

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[36] Crubaugh, "Local Justice and Rural Society in the French Revolution," 332.

[37] Fitzsimmons, *The Remaking of France*, 108.

[38] E.g., AN, D/XVII/5, f. 33, dossier 57, 7; D/XVII/5, f. 33, dossier 57, 13; D/XVII/5, f. 33, dossier 58, 5; D/XVII/5, f. 33, dossier 60, 1; D/XVII/5, f. 33, dossier 60, 2; D/XVII/5, f. 33, dossier 60, 21.

[39] E.g., D/XVII/5, f. 34, dossier 66, no 19; D/XVII/5, f. 34, dossier 66, 25; D/XVII/5, folio 33, dossier 60, no 4.

[40] E.g., D/IV/5, dossier 68, 4; D/XVII/5, f. 33, dossier 56, 12–13.

[41] E.g., D/IV/3, dossier 21, 26 ; D/XVII/5, f. 33, dossier 57, 7.

(their own and those of others), and to improvise as a broader political culture took shape around them, one that would shape how emotions were imagined as political forces for generations thereafter. To better understand this history, we will have to balance the social, cultural, and intellectual legacies of the Ancien Régime with the fluidity and instability of the Revolution, to integrate the ideological and experiential dynamics of revolutionary politics, and to embrace the history of emotions as part of the history of political thought (and vice versa).

We will also have to wrestle with why and how so many of these efforts failed. Here, again, Tackett's work is a model. Since *Becoming a Revolutionary*, his works have traced the descent from often idealistic innovation to distrust, paranoia, and terror. A similar trajectory unfolds in the revolutionary governments' projective and administrative engagement with collective emotion: from 1789 to 1793, France descended from the "combat of generosity" that characterized the abolition of feudalism on 4 August 1789 to the ominous call of "*fraternité ou la mort*" during the Terror. In working to understand this descent, we are ill-served by the cynical presumption that gentle emotions would necessarily give way to crueler ones, that civic trust would inevitably collapse into violent paranoia, and that political discord would lead inexorably to distrust and destruction. These things did happen, but the process by which they did so reveals as much about the Revolution as does the bloody terminus. Instead, we ought to see in this process the entanglement of plans and personalities, expectations and disappointments, intentions and anxieties that shaped the Revolution. Tackett has drawn our attention to the critical role these entangled forces played in shaping the Revolution. He has offered us a model of how to untangle and understand them, and to write about them in a way that is nuanced, informed, accessible, and humane.

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