

attention Tackett gives to such relatively neglected matters as the proliferation of committees, the relationship between the deputies and their constituents, and the rise and fall of a variety of transitory clubs is also informative and stimulating.

Despite its clarity, however, this remains a book more for scholars than for the general reader. Tackett indeed disarms an obvious criticism by explaining in his introduction that his work is neither a traditional political history nor one which purports to comment upon every aspect of events (p. 13). Even so, it may be that too much is presumed. Thus, so far as personalities are concerned, the reader will encounter Jérôme Pétion de Villeneuve simply as one of many “local lawyers of considerable repute” (p. 36) who had “advocated reforms of the criminal justice system” (p. 56); but neither his subsequent importance nor his miserable fate is ever indicated. Again, Tackett’s concern with the development of attitudes apparently causes him to evade previous assertions that some single specific occasion was of cardinal importance. Indeed, his rigid concentration upon his thesis and his primary sources sometimes suggests no other scholarly arguments merit attention.

Such comments, however, relate principally to what Tackett does not say. The fact remains that the present book is invaluable both in detail and in substance, and the hint that another may follow is therefore doubly welcome. If we are indeed to have a salutary reminder that changing circumstances were as influential in 1790–1792 as they were in 1789–1790, perhaps we may also hope that Tackett will allow himself a little more latitude in descriptive writing. All analysis apart, the account he gives in these pages of the crises of May and June 1789 is certainly exciting, and both his initial portrayal of the opening of the National Assembly and his concluding account of the euphoria that prevailed during the first Festival of Federation may well be thought worthy of Michelet himself.

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Peter McPhee — *A Social History of France, 1780–1880*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. vii, 347.

Peter McPhee has written a lively introduction to the social history of France between the end of the Old Regime and the consolidation of the Third Republic, the principal merit of which is its emphasis on the social experience of women and the integration of a wide range of recent work on gender and ethnicity into a comprehensive survey. In contrast to Roger Price’s *Social History of Nineteenth-Century France*, which minimizes the social impact of the French Revolution and concentrates on mid-nineteenth-century agencies of structural change, McPhee insists that the revolutionaries “reshaped every aspect of institutional and public life according to bourgeois assumptions of rationality, uniformity and efficiency” (p. 97). Unlike Christophe Charle, who anchors nineteenth-century French social realities in two successive models of social domination, one organized by traditional notables between 1815 and 1880 and the other by “meritocratic” republicans from

1880 to 1914, McPhee stresses the importance of popular resistance to elite domination and the generative and instructive nature of political mobilization for the workers and peasants who participated in the three great revolutionary outbursts of 1789–1794, 1848, and 1871.

Although he naturally argues against the inattention to social history on the part of “revisionists”, McPhee nevertheless tries to link social history to political culture by defining the former as the history of “the social relations of power” (p. 2) and is thereby able to appropriate François Furet’s periodization for the history of “revolutionary France” and cast Furet’s institutional, legal, and ideological consolidation of the Third Republic in 1880 as “a victory won by revolution ‘from below’ ” (p. 276). McPhee is also critical of the apoliticism (and ethnocentrism) of “modernization theory”, but he joins the proponents of modernization in linking the triumph of parliamentary democracy to transformations in French rural society and merely pushes back the moment at which peasants became Frenchmen by concluding that the achievement of popular sovereignty in the 1870s was “due more than anything else to deeply-held beliefs among working people” (p. 276), whose aspirations for a democratic policy faced continued resistance from entrenched elites. In this manner, Furet’s long French Revolution ends in the triumph of the masses who defend the modern values of the bourgeois republic against the “archaic hatreds of the rich” (p. 276).

A Social History of France offers a judicious but often unfocused and contradictory defence of an essentially traditionalist or “Marxist” reading of French political and social history from 1780 to 1880. According to McPhee, France in the 1780s was a society in which a rising bourgeoisie contested the power and privilege of a nobility which was for the most part anxious to preserve economic power and seigneurial rights. Increasing bourgeois assertiveness expressed itself through the “class-based ideology” of the Enlightenment (p. 27), which was symptomatic of a generalized rejection of authority and deference. Three chapters on the French Revolution offer a more or less standard account of events and are divided according to the conventional political chronology. In contrast to “minimalists” and “revisionists”, McPhee argues that the Revolution did indeed reconstruct French society and instituted changes which were consolidated by a chastened bourgeoisie, whose consistent liberalism in social and economic policy after the fall of Robespierre failed to serve its unrequited search for political stability until the Napoleonic regime managed successfully to embody both its social priorities and its desire for order. In the end, McPhee criticizes the politically minded revisionists for ignoring the Revolution’s social importance, but goes on to discuss mostly political, institutional, legal, and cultural changes in order to describe its social consequences, noting that “the full triumph of the nation-state” was required to facilitate “the economic integration of capitalist structures” (p. 99).

McPhee’s treatment of the period from 1815 to 1845 emphasizes the consolidation of a capitalist society and a bourgeois culture, with the Revolution of 1830 representing “the completion of the bourgeois revolution of 1789” (p. 120). Resistance to the forward march of capitalism took shape in the world of urban working people, where McPhee sees substantial evidence of “the development of a distinctive workers’

movement and ideology after 1830'' (p. 140), expressed in evolving forms of protest and in innovative cultural responses to the ravages of the bourgeois order, especially among working-class women. Although rural France exhibited greater continuity in this period, significant change occurred there, too, as France followed the ''peasant route'' to small-scale capitalist production, a conclusion which leads McPhee to reject the ''anglocentric assumptions'' that ''the French Revolution retarded the movement toward agrarian capitalism'' and forestalled ''a real economic take-off'' (pp. 163–164) until the modernization of transport in the 1860s. McPhee goes on to characterize the mid-century crisis of 1846 to 1852 ''as the dramatic expression of wide-ranging changes occurring in the first half of the century'' (p. 195), which he illustrates by describing an impressive variety of creative forms of popular revolutionary activism. Although the threats to the social order unleashed by revolution, especially in the countryside, propelled noble and bourgeois elites toward accepting the dictatorship of Louis-Napoleon, McPhee insists along with Maurice Agulhon that the Second Republic was ''a time of mass 'apprenticeship' in republicanism and, in particular regions, democratic socialism'', thus making the period ''the watershed of nineteenth-century France'' (p. 195).

McPhee's subsequent discussion of the transformations in urban and rural France between 1852 and 1880 focuses less on urban expansion and economic growth than on the way in which such changes caused a veritable revolution in daily life, responsible for new realities in the workplace, new forms of artistic expression, reformed prisons and educational systems, as well as the feminization of domestic service, a new family economy, and changing attitudes toward sexuality. His discussion of rural France borrows heavily from the third volume of Georges Duby's and Armand Wallon's *Histoire de la France rurale* and once again rejects Eugen Weber's thesis that French peasants remained comparatively backward in favour of a model of steady but uneven progress toward ''simple commodity production'' (p. 233). The body of the book ends with a survey of ''the social history of ideas'' which stresses the need to understand *mentalités* and ideology as resulting from the dynamic interplay between old and new ideas in changing contexts rather than as ''simply the result of diffusion from above'' (p. 246). Although McPhee's survey strives to be comprehensive, it often neglects the social history of conservative constituencies or tries to cast traditional attitudes and modes of behaviour among working people as forms of resistance. For example, church-going among workers in Nîmes is portrayed as a form of resistance to Protestant bourgeois power, but that tells us nothing about religious practice among workers in Rennes and Lille.

This book is frustrating on a number of levels. First, it fails to maintain a balance between the cacophonous detail generated by specialization in social history and the need to sustain a clearly stated and consistent argument. This is because McPhee's goal is not to rethink French social history but to install a mass of new information on women, homosexuals, ethnic minorities, and popular culture into a traditional conceptual framework, leading him to stretch the limits of his analytical model and lose focus. McPhee complains that the structural approach of social historians like Roger Price and Georges Dupeux is unable ''to convey any sense of a past which

people at the time experienced as the present” (p. 3) and tries to overcome its deficiencies by combining the broad perspective of what Le Roy Ladurie called “parachutists” with the rich variety provided by such “trufflehunters” as Theodore Zeldin. The problem, however, is that the “individual tales of joy and sadness” (p. 279) which help to humanize social history lose their phenomenological status when they serve the historian’s analysis of “the ways in which people in the past expressed themselves” (p. 3) in a world which “was too rarely ... of their own making” (p. 279). The author attempts to bridge the distance between structures and perceptions by relating them to “the social relations of power”, which he defines as “the unequal base from which people acted to change or consolidate their world” (p. 3), but that subordinates social history to political history (as is evidenced by the chronology and chapter headings McPhee has chosen) and undermines social history’s claim to autonomy on the basis of a rejection of the primacy of elites by making the way in which elites resolved questions of power central to the experience of daily life. The problem becomes clear when McPhee assesses the social consequences of the French Revolution and the Revolution of 1848 not by citing well-known statistical data — the author distrusts statistics as too condescending toward the people and too minimalist in the changes they reveal — but by examining shifts in political culture and the “increase in the powers and claims of the state” (p. 98). There is nothing wrong with studying the impact of political upheaval on practices and assumptions, but this is not necessarily the province of social historians alone: the new political and cultural historians are concerned with the same thing. The results yielded by McPhee’s attempt to write a “social history of politics” (p. 3) suggests that scholars who look to political culture and the history of ideas to examine the causes and consequences of the French Revolution are on the right track. McPhee’s own work clearly implies that revolutions create not social change but memories and representations of the political and social world that prefigure the concrete but belated alterations in material reality which social historians have so successfully recorded quantitatively. The category “bourgeois revolution” is not an explanation of the French Revolution but a symbol of the power of revolutions to anticipate the subsequent march of social development.

In bringing together an impressive variety of recent scholarship, McPhee has not only enriched our knowledge of “revolutionary France”, but has raised important questions about the identity of social history *per se*.

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W. Scott Haine — *The World of the Paris Café: Sociability among the French Working Class, 1789–1914*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. Pp. 13, 325.

Scott Haine, editor of *The Social History of Alcohol Review*, offers an exhaustively researched, broadly focused, yet intriguingly nuanced history of the plebeian Paris