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Republican Repair of a Burnt-Out and Brutalized Post-War Society: The Case of the French Revolution

The democratic republic is a fragile regime that does not stand up well to war. In this lecture, I would like to show how the experience of the French Revolution as a republican and democratic experiment in the grip of external war and pockets of civil war, corroborates this fact. The counter-revolutionary war caused the most enthusiastic revolutionaries to lose heart and faith in the impossible. It led to the transformation of a democratic republic into a conservative one and to the rise to power of a great military leader. Without going into this well-known story, I would like to explain how the revolutionaries themselves experienced these difficulties and how they tried to remedy them in a republican and democratic way in a final revolutionary sequence that was nonetheless imbued with all the revolutionary experience of 1789 to 1794 and, no doubt, even before, with the Old Regime.

First of all, I would like to try and explain how difficult it is to talk about a post-war period, given that the revolutionary wars seem so continuous, but on the revolutionary people side, each victory makes him envisage the end of the fighting and for a while living in a post-war or post-conflict period.

We need to understand how this tumult of times works, if we are to grasp the reasons why the revolution has run out of breath.

This breathlessness was present from the depths of the winter of 1794 and was radical after the factional struggle. From then on, society was burnt out, and we need to understand what caused the revolutionaries to lose their enthusiasm and sensitivity. Finally, we need to ask whether it is possible to repair a society that has been so disrupted, and to describe how the revolutionaries embarked on this fundamentally republican and democratic process.

1. Post war : tumult of times , broken line of utopias , shortness of breath

So what is this 'post-war' period that I'm going to try to explain to you?

1.1 The interweaving of concussions

There is no clear line separating a before and an after, as can be seen in the aftermath of the Second World War, for example. It's a series of lines that break down each time on the resumption of war.

The revolution was hoped to be short and victorious.

Some thought it would be as soon as the three orders were united, but de-pacification returned, and the post-conflict period resumed the form of the conflict, without enough time to enjoy the revolutionary victory.

Admittedly, after the defeats, the victories resumed with the capture of the Tuilerie in 1792, the trial of the king and his death in 1793, and military victories in the Vendée and abroad, but adversity was never-ending, the European coalitions against the revolutionaries were increasingly powerful, and within the revolutionaries the ardour was wearing thin. No sooner had everyone recovered from one shock than another followed.

The revolutionary people need to take a breather, to mend his fences, but he has to get back into the fight. The feeling of victory, and the possibility that it will settle down as confidence in the future, does not find the necessary space and time.

Every revolutionary experienced a subjective break between a time before - the time of tyranny - and a time after - the time of freedom. But freedom never ceases to cost lives and energy. This 1789 times caused an exciting subjective shift, but it 's not lasted. The feeling is often that nothing has changed sufficiently in relation to the subjective event and the expectations it raised.

With the assassination of Marat, the people were "terrorised" by their enemies. Procedures had to be found to move on, from the feeling of being "destroyed" to the feeling of being "angry". But accelerating revolutionary justice too quickly could jeopardise the structure of social ties. The Law of Suspects of 17 September 1793 had slowed down the process, perhaps deliberately, by filling up the prisons. The aim was to re-unite society through a sense of justice, not to dissolve it in a bloodbath.

Remember that: in war, justice means destroying the enemy; the revolutionaries wanted to avoid this and try as far as possible to redeem their adversaries or those who had gone astray in order to rebuild society. This dual movement of destroying and redeeming is, moreover, at the heart of terror as a cycle of revenge. This cycle opens,

begins effective and must to be closed when the society is reunited. It's the heavy difficulty that revolutionaries have always had to face.

1.2 Trying to put an end to it.

On 8 Ventôse year II (26 February 1794), Saint-Just, explains that revolutionary government wanted to put an end to this cycle of public revenge. On the one hand, Saint Just announced the implacable judgement of enemies who would no longer be held in prison but executed or acquitted and released. On the other hand, it is about a loop of time that should allow the reconstruction of the republican people exhausted by five years of Revolution. "*Let the law be rigid towards the enemies of the fatherland, let it be gentle and maternal towards the citizens*". That's why the events in this sequence are so intertwined.

At the end of Germinal, the time when courage was reborn after disappointment or fear seems long gone. What recurs like a leitmotif is the feeling that other greats have taken the place of the first and that we have merely changed tyrannies. Revolutionary doubt is imbued with the anxiety of a reversible revolution. There is nothing mobilising about this form of time. Thus Saint-Just, on 23 Ventôse An II: "If the people love virtue and frugality, if civil servants bury themselves in their chambers in order to do good, if you give land to all the unfortunate [...], I recognise that you have made a Revolution. But if the opposite happens, (...) If the vices triumph, other greats have taken the place of the first, the torments do not pursue all the conspirators. There has been no Revolution, there is no happiness or virtue to be hoped for on earth". The negations that follow express the discouragement of the "shattered utopia" left by five years of revolutionary struggle.

Sensitivities were shaped by what we might call, in an anachronistic vocabulary, traumatic experiences. They only seem to leave crumbs. Time, far from being linear, runs out of steam from broken line to broken line, with its lively surges and its brutal collapses. But this time, can the momentum be regained? This spring, the question is becoming more and more acute, as everyone feels that the violence we have witnessed has undermined the Republican promise. There have been too many concussions. We are no longer in a replica but in an aftermath-afterthought.

1.3 the aftermath, the afterlives

This notion of the aftermath could be understood as a simple 'sequel', but I think it is more interesting to try to work with the psychoanalytical notion.

For Freud, the notion certainly concerns a long time, the time when the trauma comes knocking on the door of the subject or society, sometimes with an interval of several generations, but the density of revolutionary time allows us to grasp this aftermath over the shorter time of the revolution in a winding of experiences and shocks produced since the Ancien Régime, still active of course in the psyches and imaginations. Time loops in vivid and complex movements between the traumas of the Ancien Régime and those of the present.

In this temporal chain of aftermaths, the traumatic event breaks the timeline, implanting a message that remains enigmatic.

A verse from the revival of *Ça ira*, after the King's flight in 1791, bears witness to this process, where a sensitive experience expresses this enigmatic part of the lived experience. The joy of the federation in July 1790 had become sadness in July 1791, but the imbroglio of the situation made it impossible to immediately understand what was at stake. The word treason is therefore posited as a hypothesis for an eternal time.

Ah ! comm'ça va (ter)

I don't understand where the sadness comes from

Ah! comm'ça va (ter)

Will we always be betrayed?

Messages like these abounded during the French Revolution, which was a time of hopes and disappointments experienced in temporal shortcuts that could be as short as a day, a week or a month, a permanent upheaval in the timeline. These messages are doomed to successive attempts at elucidation in a dialectic of time that is constantly fed by the density of accumulated experience.

From Ventôse An II to Thermidor, the revolutionaries courageously attempted to elucidate and examine the "precedents that each moment reactivates", in the desire to repair the social body and rediscover the power of the early days of the Revolution. The aim here is to shed light on the aftermath not only of the Terror, but of everything that produced trauma before and during the Revolution. Thinking in terms of the long term, as Freud does, means going back to the traumatic effects of life under the Ancien Régime. It means taking seriously the idea of a society in which time rushes forward, is broken, then wound up, but now also stands still.

2. A Burnt-Out and Brutalized society

2.1. A society with no civil confidence is apathetic

The radical French revolutionaries noted in the spring of Year II that civil confidence and revolutionary ardour had disappeared. "The revolution is frozen, all principles have been weakened, all that remains are the red bonnets worn by intrigue". A frozen Revolution. Saint-Just, a member of the Committee of Public Safety and a member of the Convention, wrote this statement in his *Fragments d'institutions républicaines* (Fragments of Republican Institutions). It has remained in the collective memory. Something that would taste like death. He also used the metaphor of "palates jaded by strong liquors". Saint-Just attributed this fatal loss of sensitivity to "wicked oppression", to "its contagious example which, from degree to degree, from the strongest to the weakest, establishes dependence". Where freedom was supposed to reign, relationships of domination gave rise to ice. The revolutionary actors do indeed seem "burnt out" and therefore "deactivated", "apathetic". They have lost their enthusiasm, and perhaps their faith in the impossible. With these metaphors, a despairing discovery unfolds: revolutionary sensibility can be lost. Apathy was what Robespierre feared most. On 5 Nivôse An II (25 December 1793), he stated that "if you had to choose between an excess of patriotic fervour and the nothingness of uncivilisation or the stagnation of moderatism, there is no choice. A vigorous body, tormented by an overabundance of sap, leaves more resources than a corpse". On 26 Germinal, Saint-Just spoke of a "state of agony". They have to avoid revolutionaries becoming zombies, the living dead who wonder whether they will ever feel anything again other than the powerful sensation that they no longer feel anything. According to Patrice Loroux, faced with the spectacle of the intolerable and the unbearable, people lose their sensitivity and thus become potentially indifferent and, by extension, wicked if you like, incapable in any case of resisting oppression. This impassivity that he theorises evokes a "petrification of affects", a capacity to no longer feel. He argues that this anaesthesia is linked to the fact that we no longer represent what we see being done or what we are in the process of doing. In his view, the representation of the unbearable can hurt and cause suffering, and if we want to avoid it, if we don't want to suffer, sympathise or act, we have to want hardening, in other words the loss of human tenderness.

And without human tenderness there can be no civil trust.

The trusting social bond is based on reciprocal freedom, we can say without domination, it induces a system of familiarity where everyone acts with others without fear of danger. Civil trust leads to numerous solid links within social institutions and creates the possibility of peaceful democratic conflict.

On the other hand, the absence of trust divides and fragments the social body, fanning the flames of conflict which, if left unresolved, can easily tip over into civil war. The people are then torn apart and become effectively apathetic or aggressive.

Civil war breaks out wherever forces work, knowingly or unknowingly, to unravel this civil social bond, to render this trust labile.

Without civil trust, people flee from each other and can no longer believe that they are free because they form a bond; they end up believing that others are always obstacles to their freedom. The result is a war of all against all, or generalised civil war, a guerrilla war fought on a daily basis, without a front and with underhand weapons. Civil war is not a confrontation between two determined and clearly visible blocs. It's more like Hobbes' imagination: it's simply the state of war undermining the state of civility. The very nature of this civil war is to destroy the concept of freedom in reciprocity on which revolutionary civility is based.

Civil war would be the set of social and political practices that destroy freedom as reciprocity, the foundation of equality, and lead to a state of war, that is to say of relations of force and not of law.

The war of freedom against tyranny, a war that is inextricably civil and foreign, has led to the loss of this human tenderness and all hope.

The reception given to the Ventôse decrees bears witness to this.

"Let Europe learn that you no longer want unhappy people or an oppressor on French soil; let this example bear fruit on the earth; let it spread the love of virtue and happiness! Happiness is a new idea in Europe". This happiness is based on a better distribution of land, wealth, their implementation and social protection as mutual aid. In this respect, what Saint-Just is announcing is a new political economy that should become the basis of public happiness.

But this proposal came up against the inertia of the social body; there was no support for this project in a society already damaged by the open war between revolution and counter-revolution which had never ceased since 1789.

The external war and the civil war, inextricably linked for the counter-revolutionaries, prevented the revolution from taking place. In the sequence stretching from the winter to the summer of 1794, French society seemed to revert to Old Regime mores as a point of inertia. The revolutionary effort had to be constantly resumed.

It was in this respect that Saint-Just, Billaud-Varenne and Robespierre thought that French society had indeed been burnt by the war, a war waged for the sake of honour against the emigrants, but which had led to measures that called into question some of the principles of republicanism in terms of the subordination of executive and military power to legislative power, and made the people forget that they were the sovereign in a republican regime.

2.2 Republican principles in disrepair

The return of the love of the leader, stratocracy

The first danger for a democratic republic at war is that of the executive and military powers taking precedence over the legislature. The king had foreign troops at his disposal, but was he justified in using them as he saw fit, particularly against the people, when they were paid for by the nation? Mirabeau asked as early as 1789. In fact, on several occasions the King chose to use the army against his own people: by surrounding Paris in July 1789 with French and foreign royal troops, by attempting to join forces with the emigré armies with the support of General Bouillé of the Nancy regiment when he fled to Varennes in 1791, by not giving the order not to fire on 10 August 1792 before leaving the Tuileries castle.

Furthermore, while war had not yet been declared, from November 1791 to April 1792, he had used his royal veto on the two protective decrees that could have prevented war, the one against the threatening émigrés by setting up a military camp south of Paris and the one against the refractory priests who associated with the royalists and were to be exiled.

As early as 1791, after the King's flight, Billaud-Varenne asked "how long will you remain free with a leader who is impatient to bind you, and who will combine as means the ascendancy of sovereign power, all the springs of intrigue and seduction, and the effects of the weakness of the people? Billaud-Varenne considered that "there is no nation truly free except that which knows only the law as its master" and that this freedom is only true if no one can break it with impunity. When war is the focus of

attention and the leader can be a victorious warrior full of glory, the danger of *stratocracy* increases. The war king endangers the very desire for a democratic republic in the constitutional sense. War concentrates powers on a leader and on the executive. In December 1791, Robespierre also denounced the preparations for a war that risked giving full powers to the king and to potentially treacherous ministers.

War could only endanger the democratic future of the French Republic.

In 1794, this monarchical imaginary clouded understanding of the workings of the revolutionary government and the Terror. Counter-revolutionary propaganda portrayed Robespierre as a new army commander, a new king and a new tyrant. However, the division within the committee and between the committees was based on the concept of legitimate war, a war of defence or a war of conquest.

The radical revolutionaries clearly stated that "we are marching not to conquer but to defeat tyranny and return to peace". The figures of the military leader and the speeches full of enthusiasm for victories without affliction for the fallen worried these revolutionaries.

Corruption

War also breeds war profiteers and therefore the corruption of generals and civil servants.

When Dumouriez betrayed his country after conquering Belgium, Danton criticised him for having established a financial system in Belgium. Robespierre denounced him as an authoritarian prevaricator: "Dumouriez had made enormous loans; he had secured his fortune and his treachery; he took possession of the public treasury after having had its guardians imprisoned; he scorned those to whom the law entrusted the care of it" "[...] then he declared war on the National Convention [...]."20

In 1793-1794 (year II), Saint-Just was very often on mission to the armies to control expenditure and provide for the needs of the army and the strategy. He severely criticised the separation between the Treasury and the War Ministry. In his opinion, an army based on mass mobilisation and patriotism was much healthier than professional public servants who were used to all sorts of tricks. Accountants were corrupt; tasks had to be entrusted to the authorising officers, who had to keep an eye on military ambitions.

Civil servants love luxury and abuse their powers. Saint-Just deplored the fact that citizens were rapidly becoming accustomed to watching the officials instead of

maintaining their status as political actors who had a sovereign right to be on the stage. On 8 Ventôse, he explained that "in popular societies, the people are spectators of civil servants rather than judges of them. [...] The more the officials put themselves in the place of the people, the less democracy there is. When I am in a working-class society, and my eyes are on the people applauding and taking second place, what thoughts distress me! He describes those who usurp the sovereign word as "shameless".

Disgust for the revolution

But above all, according to Saint-Just and Robespierre, the war and its financing concern the functioning of a society turned upside down by the political and social changes brought about from within and without.

It was no longer just a question of stratocracy and corruption, but of a process that would lead to the people becoming disgusted with the revolution.

The financing of the war put the people at the mercy of the cash and food grabbers. Before the war they had to hoard, and during the war they had to spend lavishly on the armies. The army and the people were in competition for food. In both cases, the people suffered and could turn away from the revolution.

Shortages threatened as early as the autumn of 1792, as Saint-Just pointed out: "The war has destroyed the herds, the division and clearing of the communes will complete their ruin, and we will soon have no leather, meat or fleece [...] we no longer have any herds, wool or commercial industry. The industrious are in the armies.

In such a context, the struggle between rich and poor became more critical and, according to Danton, taxes had to be levied on the rich. "Let the rich capitalist pay, since most of the time he is not worthy of fighting for liberty, let him pay handsomely and let the common man march in the Vendée". The war reveals not only the struggle between two noble and non-noble peoples, but also a class relationship that cannot be resolved by patriotic donations alone, which in 1791-1792 made it possible to imagine sharing the honour between everyone, small and large donors alike.

Above all, Saint-Just did not think that the financing of war was a good instrument of social regulation. Without an institutionalised civic community giving rise to a feeling of collective belonging, these financial issues could become a factor of social disruption, where each individual, left to his own devices, would seek his own interests without being sure of finding them.

because social harmony depends first and foremost on political unity. Radical revolutionaries realised that although civil war had generally been kept at bay among revolutionaries, it was nonetheless latent as a danger lurking in a society divided and scorched by the effects of war.

1.3 An increasingly fragmented society

The counter-revolutionary nobility wanted both the foreign war of reconquest and the civil war, whereas the republicans were terrified of it and wanted to avoid it at all costs. But this multi-faceted war, the state of war, divided the French for ever.

First between revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries, then between believers linked to the swearing priests within the framework of the civil constitution of the clergy - and those linked to the refractory allies of the counter-revolutionary nobility. But then there was an active division between believers and atheists. The principle of freedom of opinion, even religious opinion, was flouted.

The division was based on a deleterious political economy

In his report of 26 Germinal Year II, delivered on behalf of the Committee of Public Safety, Saint-Just stated that the aim of the factions was "to make people hate the Republic and to make them very unhappy".

The destruction of moral economic ties had led to what Saint-Just called civil federalism, a federalism "where each town, each commune would isolate itself from interest. In Germinal, he declared: "This is what is happening at the moment; everyone is keeping their goods within their own territory, all production is consumed on the ground [...] We must therefore prevent anyone from isolating themselves de facto". Withdrawal into one's own interests alone leads to indifference to the needs of other members of the national community, and demonstrates the defeat of revolutionary reciprocity. "Federalism has not been destroyed, and it is even more hideous than civil war, if that is possible. There were no longer any social relations between town and town, between village and village. A division more "hideous than civil war" says Saint-Just, perhaps simply another kind of civil war as a "struggle between two classes". The division is then called "federalism" for the Committee of Public Safety and reproduces a latent civil war, a phantom of civil war.

"Federalism consists not only in a divided government, but in a divided people. Unity consists not only in the unity of government, but in the unity of all the interests and

relationships of the citizens." Here, like his British counterparts of the seventeenth century, he conceives of a society that exists independently of government and is alarmed by the disappearance of this society through the loss of links between citizens, even between those who are not yet aware of being citizens. For Saint-Just asserts that "in any State, there is only a very small number of men who care about anything other than their own interests and their own homes". But even so, if they are connected, they are members of a people. On the other hand, isolated, they are nothing more than collections of indifferent, even apathetic, beings.

This isolation should not be confused with individual independence, which does not prevent human beings endowed with affects and needs from seeking to bond. Affects would thus be like money; they would enable the circulation, not of objects of commerce, but of people. In *De la nature*, Saint-Just asserted that it is the natural affective skills of human beings that make them live in society: "the feelings of the soul" are, he said, "the present of nature and the principle of social life".

By resolutely highlighting the role of the affections in creating society, Saint-Just affirms that humanity and humanisation depend fundamentally on the affections. Without affections and without concern for affections, humanity dissolves and sinks into savagery, which is one of the characteristics of civil war, the creation of savage beings in place of human beings. Civil war dehumanises. Hideous in this respect, it is perceived as the work of ferocious beasts, of people who have lost their humanity, i.e. their emotions and their reason, preferring violence and cruelty to the art of making connections.

To repair such a society, we need to rebuild civil, sensitive and emotional ties, drawing on the past of the first revolutionary inventiveness to rediscover the energy that is now lacking.

3. Republican repair

3.1 Political organisation and social organism

Along the way, Saint-Just and Robespierre realised that it was not enough to change the social organisation; the forces of inertia within the social organism also had to be taken into account. It was therefore necessary to combine the slowness of the organism with the living power of the organisation. Let's explain the concepts:

The social organism is the social thing as given outside the laws, "the accustomed ways of being, thinking, doing", in short "mores". The legislator must observe them and

understand how they constitute social life as such, which cannot be reduced to the mere combination of individuals. Sieyès' social organism leads us to distinguish, for example, between French and Anglo-Saxon liberal conceptions of society. In no case are these societies reducible to a situational arrangement of individuals: societies have forms that go beyond individuals. That's why we can't change morals by acting on individuals alone through laws, but by thinking in terms of the social organism and social organisation. Social organisation is a human invention that depends on voluntary, thoughtful thought and action. It is the product of conscious human production - legal, civil and civic. But for social organisation to have an effect on morals, legal forms have to be brought into line with social life. This relationship is not a matter of will, but of facts that go beyond individuals and the clear thinking of social organisation. By combining different types of knowledge, social art must make it possible not only to describe what is, but also to propose what should be, and thus to think about the break with current mores, while building on them.

The ways of dealing with a radical break depend on both the social organism and the social organisation. If we talk in terms of strategy, it is important to realise that it is not enough to change the rules of the game in order to cushion the blow, but that it is also necessary to succeed in implanting these new rules in the social organism.

Political organisation was on the side of the mind; if you want to affect the social organism, you have to be resolutely on the side of the heart.

3.2. An appeal to civil institutions to rediscover zeal and faith

Instituted and instituting "You must create a city, that is to say a people of friendly, hospitable and brotherly citizens". To create morals and harmony, Saint-Just imagines "a deeply combined system of institutions". The central issue is to succeed in creating an antidote to division, and to enable the advent of this longed-for harmony. For Saint-Just, "the purpose of institutions is to bring union into families, friendship among citizens, the public interest in place of all other interests, to restore nature and innocence to the passion of all hearts, to form a homeland". The incorporation of right feelings as the ability to judge with one's body, to form a bond with other citizens, to consolidate the Republic, to create a community of affections.

The appeal to civil institutions rather than laws is thus intended to underpin forms of democratic life that are considered desirable and good, when laws only produced constraint on enemies and projects that all too often remained in limbo.

The forms of life and of political and social education took shape throughout the Revolution, and the aim of the politics of institutions, this spring of Year II, is to consolidate the first normative intuitions, not to negate them with an absolute innovation. We must therefore rely on what came from the initium, popular societies, fraternal societies, ardour, all those feelings that can still arise in places where citizens assemble. But we also need to go back to the evidence of the birth of the Republic, when the Constitution of 1793 was being debated, and grasp the theoretical and practical issues at stake. As awareness of the difficulty of becoming free seems to have become more acute, this policy of civil institutions is really about seeking a second wind that will be a metamorphosis of the new forms of democratic life experienced since the fall of the monarchy, and even before.

It is not a question of a simple return, but of a revival. Repairing, starting again, rebuilding.

Shaping the courage to be free

This spring's appeal to civil institutions aims to produce a civil and cultural public policy capable of re-educating the thymos, that skill of having the courage to be free in the manner of the ancient Greeks. Educating the thymos means shaping sensitive and moral bodies committed to the Republic. Shaping aptitudes, inclinations, springs, an art of being republican, a sense of citizenship and humanity when everyone is still steeped in the dictates of the Ancien Régime.

For the Greeks, the thymos was the place of sensitive courage. The theatre enabled them to hone their skills by experiencing the sensations and emotions produced by the situations depicted. In Plato, for example, emotions were seen as reactions to the values of goodness, justice and beauty, which they conveyed through action.

Ensuring that affects and emotions do not hinder an individual's morality is a first step in education; but that they support it is a second, and this is the task of the philosopher, the legislator and the pedagogue. What is new from now on is that it will be a matter of mutual education involving magistrates, mayors, members of parliament and art school administrators, who will provide the framework, as well as individuals who will invest

in the development of all sorts of practices and sensitive and artistic objects to ensure that the framework is populated with forms.

Decadal festivals

The decadal festivals promoted by the republican calendar, but also the national festivals and all the activities that involve sensitive reception, will be the places where this thymos is educated. "The public spirit is in people's heads; and as not everyone can have an equal influence of understanding and enlightenment, the public spirit was a given impulse. So have a public conscience, for all hearts are equal in their sense of right and wrong, and it is made up of the people's inclination towards the general good. Honour the spirit, but rely on the heart".

Each festival must enable every human being to internalise the need to be courageous by instinct, but also courageous through the ability to invent new gestures on the soil of historical awareness. Educating the thymos means both providing moral reflexes and ensuring that everyone is capable of assuming the uncertainty of the paths to take and the actions to produce. In this way, we assume the sublime and tragic nature of our common humanity.

3.3 The indispensable local level

a) The social organism presupposes the empirie, the empirie the local

It was felt that only the local level could provide the support needed to achieve the Revolution's goal: the reformation of the sovereign people. While organisation can be described on any scale, the social organism as such can only be empirically understood on this local scale, in very concrete nuclei of sociality. A revolution that becomes part of everyday life first transforms social practices in places where there are already institutions: the family, popular society, the community. The family is undoubtedly closer to the organism, and the political sphere closer to the organisation, but it is through their interpenetration that the organism and the social organisation, of which each human being is the connecting link, come together. We need to politicise the family and, so to speak, make the places of politics familiar. The multiplicity of citizen bodies will then act as mortises and tenons.

Two institutions complemented each other: the commune, which welcomed all the citizens who depended on it, and the political society, which refined political sensibilities and prepared the arguments that were then debated in the communes. Since their creation, the political societies, Parisian clubs and popular societies, sections and fraternal societies have performed an informative and educational function by disseminating the content of laws before they are debated. Political activity was thus conceived as continuous, and was not to be confined solely to exercising the right to vote or to receiving the decrees passed by the Assembly. It was above all an activity of circulating questions, proposals and deliberations. On a horizontal level, it established exchanges between citizens and between societies, by deliberating on legal decisions and the formation of the law, and by corresponding with each other. Revaluing the municipal level does not negate the centrality of legislation, quite the contrary: territorial discontinuity should no longer lead to division.

b) Founding and repairing friendship

Jacques Derrida speaks of a friendship that precedes all friendships, a bottomless friendship that precedes without being linked to a genealogy or a fraternity, even a metaphorical one, because it is based on the possibility of addressing others. "Bottomless friendship", then, is what makes it possible to be in society and to talk to each other, which is why it is so necessary here. It is both proximity and difference, distance and ethical responsibility, foundation and hope.

This friendship is the foundation of the community of communal affections.

The communal assembly thus articulates a natural social organism and an instituted social organisation, thanks to this native and instituted friendship, native and then consolidated by the institution.

In the manuscript of *De la nature*, Saint-Just in fact refers to affections as "laws of nature" or "social laws". "Needs and affections" act as magnets. Human beings are therefore neither solitary, nor isolated by interests.

Social laws are therefore natural and based on instinct or the unconscious, whereas political laws are based on reason.

So the affections of nature, love and friendship, are the same as the instituted affections. They are already there when we institute them. They are instituted to be valued, thought about and acted upon with conviction, not to be created.

The communal community of affections would achieve what is expected of civil institutions. To make visible the good nature of human friendship, thanks to the republican ideal. The expected friendship is therefore both nature and culture, past and future.

Let's turn to the subject itself.

In the *Fragments d'institutions républicaines*, friendship takes on a public and sacred character. "Every man aged 21 is required to declare in the temple who his friends are, and this declaration must be renewed every year in the month of Ventôse". Anyone who did not believe in friendship or had no friends was banned. This sacredness is also expressed in the close friendship that extends to death: "friends are placed next to each other in battle", "those who have remained friends all their lives are enclosed in the same tomb"; finally "friends will mourn for each other [...] and prepare each other's funerals". It was among the declared friends that the children's guardians were chosen in the event of divorce or the father's death.

Friendship is a public commitment: "If a man leaves a friend, he is obliged to give an account of his reasons for leaving him to the people in the temple. Finally, this social feeling creates a shared responsibility: "If a man commits a crime, his friends are banished".

For Saint-Just, a group of friends is thus collectively responsible for each other's actions. Friendship thus produces reciprocal responsibility, a need for reciprocal virtue, and in this respect, Saint-Just makes friendship a civil institution that creates the reciprocity necessary for the horizontal bond to be solid without the need to resort to external laws of constraint. But then it is the civil institution itself that becomes binding.

This binding reciprocity is reminiscent of the reciprocity that underpins resistance to oppression and the duty of insurrection in the 1793 declaration. Friendship as defined by Saint-Just would even be its guarantee when it is itself the guarantee against government oppression.

In this respect, the community of affections would make it possible to go beyond the Declaration of Rights of 1793. It is precisely because we now know that recourse to resistance to oppression can be falsified that such civil institutions are needed. Friendship constrains the unlimited freedom of opinions and actions within a small human nucleus that can be considered as sworn by the public word expressed in the

temple. But because friendship can be broken, it is not alienation, but emotional and moral support.

Friendship and its rules also enable us to maintain the respect we owe to our principles. These rules force us to reflect regularly on the meaning of our ties, and this very ritual has a religious dimension. Reflecting every year on the list of our friends forces us to consider the importance of the words we exchange and the actions we take, so that we don't waste an affection that is so fundamental and which, if it slips away, can cause the community to implode.

Conclusion

"In the aftermath of major historical upheavals, societies have to invent and articulate private practices, social practices and policies that enable them to reunite or re-found themselves". It's a question of understanding how time wraps itself around lived experiences, recaptured and analysed in the present of the history of each social, political and, for us, environmental shock.

Those who survive the great crimes are condemned to repair them, and this is what is incumbent on those who are going through the most terrible years of the Revolution - to face up to and repair them by relying on the experiences lived beforehand, moments of radical democratic life, cultural experiences, older historical experiences - everything is good to gather, because it is necessary to draw from the past resources to maintain faith in the impossible while fighting against the worst.

The abstraction of inherited and revitalised principles must meet the sensitive experience of the common good to be reinvented as close as possible to each citizen.

Lucidity is the closest burn to the sun. Said the great poet René Char.

But to rediscover the lost city, ardour and heroism are not enough. To escape apathy, you need gentleness, beauty and joy. There is an aftermath to the violence experienced that compels us.

If individuals are well educated, acculturated and therefore regenerated, they will be able to protect their sense of dignity and freedom when danger is present, and they will be able to sound the alarm with courage and live together joyfully. So we need to relearn how to live after we've been exhausted.

