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H-Diplo ROUNDTABLE XXI-55

Serge Audier

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H-Diplo ROUNDTABLE XXI-55

Stephen W. Sawyer. *Demos Assembled: Democracy & The International Origins of the Modern State, 1840-1880.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018. ISBN: 9780226544465 (cloth, \$45.00).

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INTRODUCTION BY CHERYL B. WELCH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

This roundtable appears during a pandemic that has shifted the terms of global political discourse in at least three ways. First, the lethal threat and massive economic disruption posed by the novel coronavirus have refocused attention on the justification and limits of the emergency powers inherent in the right of a democratic government to guarantee the people's welfare. Second, national responses to the pandemic have brought to the forefront questions about the inclusiveness of the democratic welfare project. The deeply unfair burdens borne by citizens who are economically interconnected but socially unequal prompt a rethinking of the relationship between collective and individual well-being. And finally, given the challenges faced by formerly colonial societies which are crippled in their responses to the pandemic by past exploitation, the ominous legacy of European nineteenth-century imperialism is newly relevant. Stephen Sawyer's ground-breaking new book, then, could not come at a more opportune moment. Though it was written with other issues in mind, *Demos Assembled* deeply engages with just these themes. When everything depends on the ability of democratic states to rise to existential challenges, a nuanced investigation of past efforts to do so compels attention.

Sawyer enters these contemporary conversations indirectly by illuminating a neglected period of political theory and practice: the attempt to establish a stable liberal democracy in mid-nineteenth-century France. Chapters on Alexis de Tocqueville and the less well-known French political figures, Lucien-Anatole Prévost-Paradol, Edouard Laboulaye, Adolphe Thiers, Jenny d'Héricourt, and Louis Blanc focus on how each of these thinkers creatively reassembled theoretical resources to address new problems inherent in a polity that was increasingly defined by a foundational commitment to democracy. Sawyer labels these problems *inequality, equality, emergency, necessity, exclusion, and terror*. He argues that his protagonists did not draw exclusively on French sources in thinking through these issues, as many contemporary French intellectuals assume, but rather were part of "the broader history of an international democratic turn" (4).¹ The thread connecting the efforts of Sawyer's chosen exemplars and their foreign interlocutors is a shared commitment to conceptualizing a robust and positive, rather than weak and defensive, role for the democratic state. As he states in his contribution to this roundtable, they were implicitly preoccupied with the following question: "[h]ow was democratic state capacity to be created, expanded and consolidated in the name of a self-governing demos?" Their replies, Sawyer argues, demonstrate that those who find inherent contradictions between "liberalism," "republicanism," "democracy," and "socialism" are ignoring a rich and instructive history that recognized no such barriers to conceptual cross-fertilization.

The distinguished contributors to this roundtable are for the most part well-disposed towards Sawyer's project. To use the language he retrieves from d'Héricourt, they are intellectual *amis*: friendly antagonists who convey vectors of interrogation and debate, rather than enemies who question the legitimacy of his hope to make historical reconstruction relevant to continuing democratic predicaments.² Sawyer's first substantive chapter on Tocqueville, which Michael Behrent rightly praises as "particularly original," illustrates the fortuitous symbiosis of historical investigation and contemporary concern. Sawyer insists that Tocqueville is important not merely for adopting and popularizing the notion of democracy as a new social form that posed dangers to freedom, but also for establishing and justifying the legitimate powers of the new democratic state. This claim that Tocqueville was a democratic state theorist implicitly calls into question a whole wave of Tocqueville scholarship, which appropriates him mainly as an intrepid foe of big government and critic of political centralization. Sawyer retrieves a fascinating and relatively unknown discussion of old regime administrative courts to support his argument that Tocqueville was fundamentally concerned with how the demos should administer itself. This

¹ As Jennifer Pitts notes, however, for the most part the international chorus is limited to French, English, and American voices. This broadening of the conversation is still important, since Sawyer unearths dialogues that challenge parochial discussions in both Francophone and Anglophone political theory.

² Serge Audier, for example, appreciates the ways in which a seemingly "innocent" historical inquiry can unveil or subvert superficial contemporary dichotomies. Michael Behrent flags the book as a "meticulous and original study of intellectual history" that is also an intervention in current democratic debate. And Jennifer Pitts admires the work as a "recuperative" project with normative contemporary implications.

conclusion might also be bolstered by an attentive reading of both *Democracy in America* and Tocqueville's parliamentary writings during the July Monarchy. As he wrote in the 1840 *Democracy*, "[i]t is at the very same time necessary and desirable that the central power that directs a democratic people be active and powerful. It is not a matter of making it weak or indolent, but only of preventing it from abusing its agility and strength."³ During his political career, Tocqueville was convinced that France's parliamentary governments were abusing their agility and strength by ruling through new forms of corruption, but his suggested corrections involved not weakening but activating state power: increased government regulation and measures to professionalize the bureaucracy. Although the title of Sawyer's Tocqueville chapter is "Inequality"—a clever counterpoint to the next chapter on "Equality," especially since applying the labels in this way challenges common perceptions of both Tocqueville and Prévost-Paradol—it could as well be named "Corruption," which perhaps prompted more practical ideas about democratic administration than did inequality.⁴

The question of which concrete problems called forth new thinking about the democratic state also raises questions about the interaction between political theories and state practices. Serge Audier wants to know more about how the theorists Sawyer analyzes influenced constitutional design and practice in the Third Republic. Behrent cautions that Sawyer's account is a study of certain arguments that writers have made *about* the democratic state, rather than a history *of* the democratic state. All the reviewers also raise what might be call the boundary issue: why these theorists and not others? Once we shift our focus, adopting Sawyer's compelling new perspective, why not enlarge the lens to inspect both previous and subsequent thinkers? Jennifer Pitts wonders whether earlier theorists like Benjamin Constant and Simonde de Sismondi might usefully be considered as fellow travelers in building a conceptual model of the democratic state, rather than as theoretical foils. Audier suggests that more could be said retrospectively about the liberal Doctrinaires who developed a robust theory of the state in the 1830s and 40s and prospectively about Third Republic neo-Kantians who influenced theorists like Elie Halévy and his progeny into the twentieth century. Sawyer's convincing recuperation of a lost thread of nineteenth-century thought, then, pushes readers to ask both how it influenced practice and how it might transform our understanding of predecessors and successors, questions that he welcomes and that will apparently orient future research.

Let me turn now to the themes that I signaled at the beginning of this introduction: the role of emergency powers in conceptualizing the authority of the democratic state, the imbrication of democratic state regulation and social equality, and the often-tragic colonial implications of European democratization.

Disasters—wars, invasions, terrorist attacks—occasion a flurry of theoretical interest in the "law of exception," in which normally limited constitutional regimes cede temporary emergency powers to the executive. As I write, the news cycle is full of debate over the possible damage to democracy by populist leaders' misuse of emergency power. In the United States Donald Trump has inconsistently and controversially invoked the inherent powers of the presidency to address both the health crisis and popular protest, even as state governors use emergency gubernatorial decrees to contain the spread of COVID-19. What sets Sawyer's discussion of emergency power apart from the more usual legal and constitutional analyses of specific historical moments is his genealogical perspective. How, he asks, did assuming emergency powers during a series of existential challenges shape the emergence of modern democratic power and executive authority from the 1789 Revolution to the 1871 Paris Commune? How did thinkers navigate the ambiguities of recognizing an unlimited authority

³ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Historical-Critical Bilingual Edition of *De la démocratie en Amérique*. ed. Eduardo Nolla, trans. James T. Schleifer, 4 vols. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010) 4:1265. And compare this formulation from a discarded draft: "[a] strong and intelligent central power is one of the first political necessities in centuries of equality. Acknowledge it boldly." (4: 1255, note p).

⁴ Tackling inequality, as Behrent points out, is only tangentially related to Tocqueville's commitment to creating effective democratic government. For an excellent discussion of Tocqueville's preoccupation with corruption and how this fit into his larger view of the democratic social state, see William Selinger, "'Le grand mal de l'époque': Tocqueville on French Political Corruption," *History of European Ideas* 42:1 (2016): 73-94.

of the demos to preserve itself while at the same time denying it any absolute right to transcend certain ambiguous but real moral limits?

One unexpected finding is the singular importance of an American example—the presidency of Abraham Lincoln—to European discourse on this issue. Lincoln’s adoption of emergency powers to preserve the union fascinated Europeans who were trying to re-think the model of Roman republican dictatorship within modern democracy, i.e., attempting to institutionalize unrestricted emergency power that would subside after a crisis.⁵ Another compelling thread is Sawyer’s discussion of the ways in which liberals accommodated themselves to democracy precisely by recognizing the overriding claims of the demos in a crisis while trying to tame and delimit those claims when the emergency had passed. The chapters on Laboulaye and Thiers, for example, analyze creative (and sometimes tortuous) variations on this theme. Sawyer concedes that Thiers’s account of a justified use of emergency power is thin, lacking a description of the temporal limits of such power, the criteria for invoking it, and an analysis of how to judge its legitimacy. Given this anemic account, one might be pardoned for suspecting that Thiers’s twists and turns owed more to self-interested opportunism (as many of his contemporaries thought) than to a theoretically innovative use of the rule of law (as in Sawyer’s more charitable interpretation).⁶ One could raise similar questions about the more principled Blanc, who sometimes justified the French revolutionary terror with dicey logic.⁷ If Laboulaye, Thiers, and Blanc do not always escape a certain casuistry in defending historical invocations of emergency power in France, however, they do identify a certain kind of scrupulosity that alone can justify its use. In different ways, they suggest that a proper invocation of unrestricted power to meet a national crisis requires a reliance on the best facts and evidence available, a strenuous effort at impartial judgment, and an acceptance of accountability. In an age of reflexive partisanship and rampant social media distortions, these nuanced warnings about how to judge claims of emergency—in real time and in retrospect—are worth heeding.

The second theme that dominates Sawyer’s discussion of the growth of democratic state power comes closer to his own commitments. Here it is not the democratically inclined liberals but the liberally inclined social democrats that take center stage. Blanc and d’Héricourt both abandoned any lingering abstractions associated with the language of natural rights in favor of the Durkheimian notion of the “social individual.” The emergence of citizens with the capacity to exercise democratic rights and to fulfill democratic duties, they argued, depends on the existence of a democratic state that empowered them equally through the provision of education, economic opportunity, and social support. This conception that the fundamental purpose of modern democracy is to create the conditions in which all individuals can flourish and develop their talents gives a direction to democratic state power and can lead to a more expansive view of democratic deliberation. D’Héricourt emerges as an important voice in articulating how the demos should deliberate, using the fulcrum of gender to raise the issues of standing and mutual recognition in democratic debate. Repelled by the sterility of voting under the French Empire and attracted to the widespread education and freedom of association she saw in the United States, she developed an appreciation for inclusive discursive practices as well as for liberal guarantees ensuring that no voices would be suppressed. These early French discussions of the need for social equality as well as for differentiated and mutually

⁵ This focus on Lincoln supports the perceptive examination in Helena Rosenblatt’s recent *The Lost History of Liberalism: from Ancient Rome to the 21st Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), chap. 5: “Caesarism and Liberal Democracy: Napoleon III, Lincoln, Gladstone, and Bismarck,” 136-193.

⁶ Behrent also raises reasonable questions about motivation. Merely invoking Washington (as Laboulaye did in praising General Louis-Eugène Cavaignac, who brutally repressed the June Days uprising in 1848) or Lincoln (as Thiers did when he violently repressed the Commune in the name of French unity) may be more rhetorical than theoretical.

⁷ Blanc notes, for example, that many English liberals justified their government’s violent actions in response to the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion, while denying such legitimacy to French Revolutionaries like Robespierre. Blanc seems to be saying that if the English get a pass for doing things that were arguably much worse than those done in the Revolutionary terror, then the French should not be so readily condemned (177). But this comment hardly addresses the question of whether either of these uses of emergency “terror” was a morally or politically acceptable use of power to save the demos.

respectful voices in debate are surely worth revisiting at a time when both are endangered by toxic forms of democratic politics.

Finally, Stephen Sawyer reminds us that all his protagonists—save for Jenny d’Héricourt, who did not discuss the French overseas empire—envisioned democratizing projects that explicitly justified imperialism and subordinated colonial subjects to the political needs of the metropole. Sawyer gives us a good sense of the array of defenses of this subordination and of the different and complicated ways in which these defenses intersected with other analyses: of international competition, of the legitimating power of parliamentary law, and of the emergence of an international law regime. Pitts, who has taught us so much about these topics,⁸ asks the key question raised by the striking fact that in these discussions of empire, all roads consistently led to Rome: to what extent was the imperial impulse internal and constitutive of modern democratic politics and what is its legacy? Our answers to that question will influence the way we think about twentieth and twenty-first century constructions of international regimes that may implicitly carry on traditions of subordination. As the pandemic progresses in formerly colonial spaces, and as questions of the distribution of medical equipment, expertise, therapies, and prophylactic vaccines loom larger, the inheritance of a particular kind of structured international inequality becomes more obvious and its causes more crucial to understand.

Stephen Sawyer notes that political idioms associated with the conception of democracy are “devilishly diverse” (3). I have indicated a few of the lines of inquiry raised in his impressive new book that seem to me particularly salient to our present moment, but there are many more that could be pursued. One place to begin to explore this broader territory is with the thoughtful and probing reactions of the reviewers. But I hope that the readers of this roundtable will be intrigued enough to grapple directly with Sawyer’s complex, insightful, and provocative account of how the modern demos constituted and constitutes its rule over itself.

Participants:

Stephen Sawyer is Professor of History and Political Science at the American University of Paris and Chair of the International Comparative Politics Department. He is also author of *Adolphe Thiers, La contingence et le pouvoir* (Armand Colin, 2018) and has co-edited numerous volumes including *In Search of the Liberal Moment: Democracy, Antitotalitarianism and Intellectual Politics in France since 1950* (Palgrave/Macmillan, 2016); *Pierre Rosanvallon’s Political Thought* (Bielefeld University Press, 2018); *Michel Foucault, Neoliberalism and Beyond* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019); and *Boundaries of the State in US History* (University of Chicago Press, 2015).

Cheryl Welch is retired Senior Lecturer in the Department of Government at Harvard University. She is the author of *Liberty and Utility: The French Idéologues and the Transformation of Liberalism* (Columbia University Press, 1984) and *De Tocqueville* (Oxford University Press, 2001), and the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Tocqueville* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). Welch has also published numerous articles on liberalism, on nineteenth-century conceptions of social science, on utilitarianism, and on the works of Alexis de Tocqueville.

Serge Audier est un philosophe français. Il enseigne actuellement à Paris IV Sorbonne avec le statut de maître de conférences. Spécialisé en philosophie morale et politique, il écrit et enseigne sur l’histoire du libéralisme, le républicanisme et le socialisme, ainsi que sur les théories contemporaines issues de ces multiples courants. Il est l’auteur de nombreux ouvrages, parmi lesquels *La Pensée anti-68* (La Découverte, 2008), *La pensée solidariste : Aux sources du modèle social républicain* (Presses universitaires de France, 2010), et *La société écologique et ses ennemis* (La Découverte, 2017) qui a obtenu en 2018 le prix de la Fondation pour l’écologie politique. Il est également membre de l’Institut universitaire de France (IUF).

⁸ See Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) and Pitts, *Boundaries of the International: Law and Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

Serge Audier is a French philosopher. He currently teaches at the University of Paris IV Sorbonne as a *maître de conférences* and is a specialist in moral and political philosophy. He writes on and teaches the history of liberalism, republicanism, and socialism, as well as contemporary issues relating to various currents. He is the author of numerous books, including *La Pensée anti-68* (La Découverte, 2008) ; *La pensée solidariste: Aux sources du modèle social républicain* (Presses universitaires de France, 2010) ; and *La société écologique et ses ennemis* (La Découverte, 2017), which won the 2018 prize of the Fondation pour l'écologie politique. He is also a member of the *Institut universitaire de France* (IUF).

Michael C. Behrent is Associate Professor of History at Appalachian State University (North Carolina, United States).

Jennifer Pitts is Professor of Political Science and the John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. Her new book, *Boundaries of the International: Law and Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2018), explores European debates over legal relations with extra-European societies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She recently co-edited, with David Armitage, *The Law of Nations in Global History* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

Faute de pouvoir ici restituer le livre important de Stephen Sawyer dans toute sa richesse et sa complexité, je me bornerai ici à suggérer, en quelques points, pourquoi il mériterait d'être rapidement traduit pour le public français. Je dis bien « traduit », car ainsi va la vie intellectuelle dans notre pays qu'on y lit assez peu les productions étrangères, surtout quand elles concernent la France, et surtout quand elles vont à contre-courant des représentations dominantes. Bien sûr, il y a des exceptions, mais il existe un certain monopole de la vision sur la France par quelques intellectuels français. Pour ne prendre qu'un exemple, le remarquable livre de Philip Nord sur le « moment républicain » en France,¹ malgré sa traduction, est passé totalement inaperçu des médias, alors que la moindre publication de sur la France et la République apparaît comme un événement. Et ce monopole de quelques intellectuels français sur « l'essence » de la France ou de ce qu'on appelle le « modèle français » est le symptôme d'une forme de curieux exceptionnalisme : les Français se veulent souvent les porteurs de l'universel...mais les porteurs exclusifs – et une élite d'intellectuels français ses seuls vrais dépositaires. On pourrait multiplier les exemples, y compris autour des questions aujourd'hui brûlantes de la place de l'Islam en France. Ainsi, un des écrivains en France les plus entendus et « médiatiques », Alain Finkielkraut, a lancé une mode intellectuelle, soutenue par plusieurs de ses proches, selon laquelle la France serait un pays absolument unique par la place accordée aux femmes depuis l'Ancien Régime : la « galanterie » française inclurait les femmes dans la vie intellectuelle et publique, et cette caractéristique aussi admirable qu'unique ferait qu'il y aurait culturellement, dans l'ADN de la France, une manière de poser l'égalité des sexes d'une manière introuvable ailleurs. Le même Finkielkraut croit que la France est la seule « patrie littéraire ».² Quant aux influences des autres pays sur la France, en particulier américaine, elles sont généralement passées totalement sous silence dans l'idéologie française, aussi incroyable que cela puisse paraître...

Les thèses sur l'essence du « modèle français » sont ainsi souvent portées par une poignée d'intellectuels célèbres hantés par « l'identité nationale », ou le « génie français » non contaminé par les influences extérieures. Plus largement, les débats même académiques sont souvent très liés à des clivages idéologiques depuis des décennies. La manière dont le XIXe siècle politique et intellectuel a été interprété au XXe et en ce début de XXIe siècle est en effet largement tributaire des batailles idéologiques liées à la fois au contexte de la guerre froide, à l'hégémonie communiste puis à sa fragilisation et disparition, à la montée de courants alternatifs tels que le « libéralisme », et le « républicanisme ». D'où des représentations souvent caricaturales de cette période et ses clivages.

Or, un des grands mérites du livre de Stephen Sawyer est de montrer que beaucoup des dichotomies idéologiques et des représentations du « modèle français » sont au mieux superficielle, au pire – souvent – fausses. Et il le fait « innocemment », car ce n'est pas son objet, qui est plutôt de comprendre comment la pensée politique française des années 1840-1880 a pensé de façon novatrice les contours de la démocratie moderne et le rôle actif, positif et constructif de l'Etat – pour le meilleur et parfois pour le pire, avec par exemple la colonisation ou certaines répression du mouvement social – dans cette démocratie. Son domaine d'investigation reste d'ailleurs peu étudié en France : il se situe chronologiquement après le moment des « Doctrinaires » qui connurent l'accès au pouvoir sous la Monarchie de Juillet, et avant le moment des théoriciens les plus connus de la IIIe République. A part Tocqueville, ce corpus reste très insuffisamment étudié en France et dans le monde, et l'apport de Sawyer pour la connaissance de ce « moment » est inestimable. En outre, ce faisant, il fragilise bien des représentations convenues encore aujourd'hui dans le monde intellectuel français. Et il apporte une autre lumière sur l'influence américaine en France – extrêmement importante, plus même, à certains égards, que celle de l'Angleterre – que celle récemment apportée par Jonathan Israel dans sa fresque *The Expanding Blaze: How the American Revolution Ignited the*

¹ Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

² Alain Finkielkraut, *Qu'est-ce que la France ?* (Paris: Stock, 2007).

World, 1775-1848.³ En effet, Istraël néglige la période, mais aussi les thèmes, étudiés par Sawyer, et il serait très intéressant de confronter les deux livres.

Une des plus prégnantes oppositions idéologiques en France, que le livre de Sawyer fait s'effondrer en grande partie, est l'opposition entre un « modèle français » viscéralement « républicain » et une « démocratie » typiquement américaines. Un des intellectuels français dont l'édition et les magazines sont le plus friands, l'ancien guévariste Régis Debray, a énormément contribué à fixer cette dichotomie dans les années 1980-1980. Il y aurait d'un côté la (bonne) « République », d'essence française, avec son Etat vertical et centralisé, et sa laïcité, et d'un autre côté la (mauvaise) « démocratie », d'essence américaine, individualiste, horizontale et anti-étatiste. Alors que le libéralisme de Tocqueville était réhabilité, depuis les années 1970, par l'historien libéral et antijacobin François Furet, son adversaire Régis Debray croyait pouvoir situer l'auteur de *De la démocratie en Amérique* du côté de la (mauvaise) « démocratie » américaine.⁴ Or toute l'investigation de Sawyer fait voler en éclats ces schémas grossiers, en montrant notamment comment Tocqueville a pointé l'importance du « regulatory power » de l'Etat administratif – et d'autres « libéraux », tels Edouard Laboulaye, iront plus loin encore dans ce sens, en dépassant les craintes toquevilliennes. Ainsi, dans la justification intellectuelle de l'Etat démocratique et son rôle actif et positif, des « libéraux » français largement oubliés, de Lucien-Anatole Prévost-Paradol à Laboulaye, ouvriront sous des modalités différentes, parfois contradictoires, des voies novatrices en s'inspirant de l'Angleterre et surtout des Etats-Unis.

Impossible ici de restituer le propos riche de Sawyer, et nous espérons être excusés de nos simplifications. S'esquisse en particulier, avec ces « libéraux » soucieux d'accompagner la démocratie, l'idée que la croissance de l'Etat peut se déployer au service des individus et de la société. Cette approche est stimulante tant elle bat en brèche des représentations convenues du « libéralisme » français. On se souvient ainsi que, dans un texte célèbre d'introduction aux œuvres de Benjamin Constant de la fin des années 1970, Marcel Gauchet parlait de « l'illusion » originaire du libéralisme quant au rôle de l'Etat dans l'émancipation de l'individu.⁵ Les libéraux français, dans leur anti-étatisme viscéral, auraient opposés l'individu à l'Etat, ne comprenant pas que le second était l'agent de libération du premier. Or, Sawyer montre très bien que chez des libéraux post-toquevillien, cette « illusion » dénoncée par Gauchet n'est pas présente, en tout cas pas de cette façon. Elle l'est d'autant moins qu'ils ont réfléchi au rôle du pouvoir exécutif en état d'urgence, fortement nourrie d'une méditation de l'histoire américaine et de la guerre de sécession. Impossible ici non plus de restituer la richesse du propos de Sawyer. C'est en tout cas une des grandes vertus de ce livre de montrer à quel point les Etats-Unis, à travers en particulier la guerre de sécession, ont fait figure de référence dans cette construction intellectuelle française de l'Etat républicain. Celle-ci porte toutefois aussi ses ambivalences et ses zones d'ombres, du colonialisme à la répression des contestations, notamment ouvrières.

C'est dans ce cadre que prendre place un autre point extrêmement intéressant du livre de Sawyer qui concerne la figure de Thiers, comme historien, penseur politique et acteur historique. Alors que Thiers fut souvent vénéré ou admiré par les partisans de la IIIe République, sa réputation reste des plus mauvaise en France, puisqu'il reste perçu comme le « boucher de la Commune ». Cette vision reste très prégnante aujourd'hui dans la gauche intellectuelle française. Personnellement, même après la lecture de Sawyer, je garde une profonde répulsion, comme tant d'intellectuels de gauche, vis-à-vis de Thiers. Mais comme chercheur et historien des idées, je ne peux que saluer le très grand intérêt de la reconstruction par Sawyer, qui analyse les raisons qui ont fait de Thiers le tristement sanguinaire bourreau de la Commune de Paris. Comme le rappelle Sawyer, l'historien de la Révolution française qu'était Thiers avait choqué Tocqueville dans sa justification de la Terreur. Celle-ci donne des clés essentielles pour comprendre comment, s'inspirant là aussi de la situation américaine, Thiers justifiera sa répression de la Commune de Paris au nom d'une vision renouvelée de l'état d'exception et d'une nouvelle conception de l'Etat républicain. Si sa répression reste tout autant choquante et mêle terrifiante, il est intéressant d'en

³ Jonathan Israel, *The Expanding Blaze: How the American Revolution Ignited the World, 1775-1848* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

⁴ Régis Debray, « Etes-vous démocrate ou républicain ? » *le Nouvel Observateur*, 1989.

⁵ Benjamin Constant, *Écrits politiques*, Édition Marcel Gauchet (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).

scruter les légitimations paradoxalement « démocratiques » et qui se voulaient réfléchies. Il y aurait d'ailleurs à creuser ce point en analysant comment l'institution de la dictature a été théorisée depuis Machiavel au moins.

Cette face d'ombre de la théorie libérale de l'Etat démocratique, on ne la trouve pas chez deux autres auteurs qui sont au cœur de l'enquête de Sawyer : le socialiste républicain Louis Blanc – qui d'ailleurs lui aussi légitimera les acteurs de 1793...et ne sera pas un soutien de la Commune de Paris – et la féministe Jenny d'Héricourt, tous deux protagonistes fondamentaux de la démocratisation de l'Etat républicain, en accompagnant la cause du mouvement ouvrier et celle des femmes. Sur Blanc, si souvent caricaturé à droite et à gauche, c'est l'occasion pour Sawyer de subvertir – sans le dire non plus ! – un autre clivage idéologique qui hante l'idéologie française entre le « libéralisme » et le « socialisme », présenté comme d'essence radicalement différente. En France, nous avons un idéologue à la mode – presque autant que Régis Debray –, du nom de Jean-Claude Michéa, qui a vendu beaucoup de pamphlets hâtifs sur cette opposition absolue entre un (mauvais) libéralisme et un (bon) « socialisme originel », et qui frémit de dégoût à la formule même du « socialisme libéral ». ⁶ Tout cela relève pourtant encore d'une idéologie bien française qui masque la complexité de notre histoire, et que le livre de Sawyer a le mérite de révéler. La dette de Blanc vis-à-vis de la conception de l'Etat et de la liberté chère au libéralisme de John Stuart Mill (qu'il admirait) est en effet bien mise en évidence, tout comme sa vision de l'individu social qui participe de l'histoire de la sociologie et du socialisme, et justifie de nouvelles tâches de l'Etat dans l'émancipation (économique, sociale, mais aussi existentielle et spirituelle) des individus. Quant à d'Héricourt, dans sa polémique avec l'antiféminisme de Proudhon et dans sa vision pluraliste et conflictuelle du politique, elle me paraît anticiper, beaucoup plus que Chantal Mouffe – à laquelle se réfère à mon avis trop Sawyer – la féministe beaucoup plus subtile et intéressante qu'était Iris Marion Young. Ces développements admirables de Sawyer sur d'Héricourt subvertissent d'ailleurs aussi, toujours sans le dire, un poncif de l'idéologie française qui ne connaît, en matière de théoriciennes pionnières du féminisme, que Olympe de Gouges, George Sand et quelques autres, avant Simone de Beauvoir. C'est là encore un chapitre important de l'histoire intellectuelle de la pensée de l'Etat démocratique, à travers la cause des ouvriers et des femmes, qui est ici écrite par Sawyer.

Le livre présente donc le grand mérite de faire ressortir l'importance cruciale d'une période considérée parfois comme charnière dans la construction intellectuelle de l'Etat démocratique. Pour préciser les choses, je voudrais soulever quelques questions de méthodologie et suggérer des prolongements possibles de ce travail qui fera date. Tout d'abord, comme Sawyer tient bien à le préciser, à travers ses cinq auteurs de prédilection – Tocqueville, Prévost-Paradol, Laboulaye, Thiers, d'Héricourt et Blanc – il ne s'agit certainement pas de tracer les contours d'une « école » de pensée politique cohérente dans ses différentes sensibilités, mais plutôt d'examiner comment la démocratie a soulevé de nouvelles questions ou des questions renouvelées autour de grands thèmes, de l'égalité à l'état d'exception en passant par la discrimination, et surtout autour du des nouvelles tâches de l'Etat. Ce sont davantage des « coups de sonde » autour d'enjeux fondamentaux qu'une fresque idéologique – l'auteur se méfie d'ailleurs, à juste titre, des grandes catégories de « libéralisme », « républicanisme » ou même « socialisme ». Mais en même temps, il suggère que certains de ces auteurs ont contribué à l'édifice constitutionnel de la IIIe République. On aimerait mieux savoir, au fond, quelles furent les « influences » les plus prégnantes sur cet édifice – et s'il y en a d'autres, et lesquelles. On aimerait savoir aussi quels autres auteurs Sawyer a été tenté d'introduire comme essentiels à son investigation et auxquels il a renoncé – et, si oui, pourquoi. Une autre question pourrait porter sur « l'avant » et « l'après » de son corpus – soit avant 1840 et après 1880. Concrètement, on aimerait savoir comment la phase qu'il étudie de la construction intellectuelle de l'Etat démocratique s'articule à la précédente – c'est-à-dire aux Doctrinaires, qui accordaient (déjà !) une place très importante à l'Etat –, mais aussi à la suivante – c'est-à-dire aux penseurs républicains qui sont allés davantage dans le sens d'une légitimation de l'Etat social, suivant davantage les indications de Louis Blanc que celles de Prévost-Paradol. Il me semble d'ailleurs que, pour des raisons notamment de contexte – mais pas seulement ! Un certain idéalisme kantien a joué son rôle –, bien des penseurs républicains ont construit ensuite une théorie de l'Etat qui évacue en grande partie le froid réalisme d'un Thiers et sa justification de la Terreur (en témoigne leur critique de la « raison d'Etat ». Une dernière question porterait sur la manière dont le corpus passionnant étudié de première main et souvent pionnière par Sawyer, après un très long purgatoire, a connu une renaissance certes partielle, et à la faveur de quel contexte. Je pense en particulier à la manière dont Elie Halévy, dans les premières décennies du XXe siècle, a maintenu en

⁶ Jean-Claude Michéa, *Les Mystères de la Gauche: De l'idéal des Lumières au triomphe du capitalisme absolu* (Paris : Flammarion, 2013).

partie la flamme de la pensée de cette période – notamment en raison de ses liens familiaux avec Prévost-Paradol –, suivi ensuite par Raymond Aron, jeune disciple admiratif d’Halévy, et qui dès les années 1940 allait à sa manière prolonger et « réhabiliter » Prévost-Paradol et Tocqueville. On a là, peut-être, une clé d’une certaine singularité du libéralisme français au XXe siècle, qui fut tellement minoritaire et à contre-courant, et extrêmement éloigné d’autres versions européennes, telles que celles des Autrichiens Ludwig von Mises et Friedrich Hayek.

REVIEW BY SERGE AUDIER, UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-SORBONNE [TRANSLATED]

As I am not able to present Stephen Sawyer's important book in all its richness and complexity in the confines of a review, I will confine myself to suggesting a few reasons why it deserves to be quickly translated for a French audience. I do indeed say "translate," for the intellectual life of my country is such that foreign books are not often read, particularly when they concern France and particularly when they run against the grain of dominant views. Of course, there are exceptions; but even so, a few French intellectuals hold a monopoly on how France is seen. To cite but one example, Philip Nord's remarkable book on the French "republican moment" was, despite being translated, completely overlooked by the media.¹ And yet the most insignificant publication by Pierre Nora, Marcel Gauchet, Régis Debray, Mona Ozouf, or Alain Finkielkraut on France and the Republic is deemed a major event. And this monopoly of a few French intellectuals on France's 'essence' and what is known as the 'French model' is symptomatic of a curious form of exceptionalism: the French aspire to be the embodiment of universalism, but want to be its *exclusive* embodiment; moreover, an elite of French intellectuals see themselves as its only legitimate custodians. There are many other examples, notably relating to such burning questions as the place of Islam in France. Thus one of France's most visible and media-friendly writers, Alain Finkielkraut, launched the fashionable idea, which some of his friends have supported, that France is completely unique in the role that it has given to women since the time of the old regime: French 'gallantry' incorporates women into intellectual and public life, and this admirable and exceptional trait means that culturally, in France's DNA, a form of equality between the sexes exists that cannot be found elsewhere. Finkielkraut also believes that France is the sole 'literary nation' (*patrie littéraire*).² As for other countries' influence on France, particularly the United States, the French ideology for the most part completely ignores them, unbelievable thought this may seem.

Claims about the essence of the 'French model' are often advanced by a handful of famous intellectuals obsessed by 'national identity' and a 'French genius' uncontaminated by external influences. More broadly, even academic debates have, for decades, been closely tied to ideological divisions. The way in which nineteenth-century politics and intellectual life have been interpreted in the twentieth and early twenty-first century is, to a considerable degree, the consequence of ideological battles connected to the Cold War, Communist rule and its subsequent decline and disappearance, and to the rise of alternative political affiliations such as 'liberalism' and 'republicanism.' Hence the often caricatural representations of this period and its divisions.

One of the great merits of Sawyer's book is to show that many of the ideological dichotomies and representations associated with the 'French model' are at best superficial, and at worst—and often—false. He does so 'innocently,' as this is not his goal, which is, rather, to understand how French political thought from the 1840s to the 1880s came to conceive the contours of modern democracy in innovative ways and to theorize an active, positive, and constructive role for the state—for better and at times for worse, as in the case of colonization and the repression of social movements. His domain of study is, moreover, rarely examined in France: chronologically, it is situated after the Doctrinaires, who had access to power under the July Monarchy, and before the better-known theorists of the Third Republic. With the exception of Alexis de Tocqueville, this literature remains insufficiently studied in France and elsewhere, and Sawyer's contribution to our understanding of this 'moment' is invaluable. Along the way, he undermines many assumptions that are still widely accepted in the French intellectual community. And he offers a different perspective on the American intellectual influence on France—which is extremely important, even more so, in many respects, than the English—than that recently proposed by Jonathan Israel in

¹ Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

² Alain Finkielkraut, *Qu'est-ce que la France ?* (Paris: Stock, 2007).

his panoramic *The Expanding Blaze: How the American Revolution Ignited the World, 1775-1848*.³ Indeed, Israel overlooks the period as well as the themes that Sawyer studies, and a comparison of the two books would prove very interesting.

One of France's most significant ideological oppositions, which Sawyer's book does much to explode, is that between a viscerally 'republican' 'French model' and 'democracy,' which is typically conceived as American. One of the French intellectuals of which publishers and magazines are particularly fond, Régis Debray, who was Che Guevara's former companion, contributed enormously to establishing this dichotomy in the eighties and nineties. For Debray, there is, on the one hand, the (good) 'Republic,' which is essentially French, with its vertical and centralized state and its secularism, and, on the other, (bad) 'democracy,' which is essentially American, individualistic, horizontal, and anti-statist. Even as Tocqueville's liberalism was, beginning in the seventies, rehabilitated by the liberal and anti-Jacobin historian François Furet, his adversary Debray classified the author of *Democracy in America* on the side of (bad) American 'democracy.'⁴ Sawyer's study explodes/demolishes these gross dichotomies, notably by showing how Tocqueville identified the importance of the 'regulatory power' of the administrative state—and how other 'liberals,' such as Edouard Laboulaye, would go even further in this direction, overcoming Tocqueville's concerns. Thus largely forgotten French 'liberals,' from Lucien-Anatole Prévost-Paradol to Laboulaye, paved the way for an innovative intellectual justification of the democratic state and its active and positive role, in different, often contradictory ways, drawing inspiration from England and especially the United States.

As noted, it is impossible to reconstitute here Sawyer's rich argument, and we hope that we will be excused for our simplifications. In particular, he lays out how these 'liberals,' who were concerned with supporting democracy, advanced the idea that the state could grow while serving individuals and society. This approach is stimulating in the way that it pushes back against conventional views about French 'liberalism.' One remembers how, in a famous introduction from the 1970s to the works of Benjamin Constant, Gauchet spoke of liberalism's foundational 'illusion' concerning the state's role in individual emancipation.⁵ French liberals, with their visceral anti-statism, contrasted the individual to the state, failing to see how the latter could be the former's agent of liberation. Sawyer, however, shows very clearly that for many post-Tocquevillian thinkers, the illusion denounced by Gauchet simply did not exist, at least not in this way. This illusion was all the more absent given their attention to executive power's role in states of emergency, which was highly informed by American history and the Civil War. Once again, the richness of Sawyer's argument is impossible to reconstruct here. In any case, it is one of his book's great merits to show the extent to which the United States, notably through the Civil War, was a reference point in the intellectual construction of the French republican state. Yet the latter also has its share of ambivalences and dark corners, from colonialism to the repression of protest, particularly by workers.

It is in this context that one must situate another extremely interesting point that Sawyer's book makes, which concerns the figure of Adolphe Thiers, as an historian, political thinker, and historical actor. Though Thiers was often revered and admired by the Third Republic's champions, his reputation remains terrible in France, where he is still seen as 'the butcher of the Commune.' This view is still widely held by the French intellectual left. Speaking personally, even after reading Sawyer's account, I remain, like so many left intellectuals, deeply repulsed by Thiers. But as a scholar and an historian of ideas, I can only salute the great interest of Sawyer's reconstruction, which analyzes how Thiers became the Commune's regrettably bloodthirsty executioner. As Sawyer recalls, Thiers, as an historian of the French Revolution, shocked Tocqueville with his justification of the Terror. This argument provides the key to understanding how, inspired by the situation in the United States, Thiers justified the repression of the Paris Commune, in the name of a reinvented understanding of the state of exception and a new vision of the republican state. While this repression still remains shocking and terrifying, it is interesting to examine how he sought to legitimate it in paradoxically 'democratic' and considered terms.

³ Jonathan Israel, *The Expanding Blaze: How the American Revolution Ignited the World, 1775-1848* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

⁴ Régis Debray, "Etes-vous démocrate ou républicain ?" *le Nouvel Observateur*, 1989.

⁵ Benjamin Constant, *Écrits politiques*, Édition Marcel Gauchet (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).

It would have been interesting to enrich this point by analyzing the institution of dictatorship as it has been theorized at least since Machiavelli.

This dark side of the liberal theory of the democratic state is missing in the other authors who are the focus of Sawyer's study: the republican socialist Louis Blanc—who also justified the actions taken in 1793 and did not support the Paris Commune—and the feminist Jenny d'Héricourt, who were both key protagonists in the democratization of the republican state, through their support for the workers' and the women' movement. Blanc, who is often caricatured by the right and the left, provides Sawyer with an occasion to subvert—without even acknowledging it—another cleavage that haunts the French ideology, namely that between 'liberalism' and 'socialism,' which are viewed as radically different. In France, there is a popular ideologist—almost as popular as Debray—named Jean-Claude Michéa, who has written many hurried pamphlets on the absolute opposition between (bad) liberalism and (good) 'original socialism,' and who shivers with disgust at the very words 'liberal socialism.'⁶ This all belongs to a very French ideology that masks the complexity of France's history, which Sawyer's book has the merit of laying bare. Blanc's debt to conceptions of the state and freedom that were dear to John Stuart Mill (whom he admired) is made evident, as is his vision of the social individual that is central to the history of sociology and socialism and provides justification for further emancipatory projects (social, economic, as well as existential and spiritual) on the part of the state. As for d'Héricourt, in her polemic against Proudhon's anti-feminism and in her pluralistic and conflictual vision of politics, she seems to anticipate not so much Chantal Mouffe—to whom Sawyer too often refers, in my opinion—so much as the far more subtle and interesting feminism of Iris Marion Young. Sawyer's admirable analysis of d'Héricourt subverts, moreover—once again, without saying so—another core assumption of the French ideology, namely that feminism's only theoretical pioneers before Simone de Beauvoir were Olympe de Gouges, George Sand and a few others. Sawyer has in this way written another important chapter in the intellectual history of conceptions of the democratic state, by way of workers' and women's struggles.

The book's great merit is thus to call attention to the crucial importance of a period that is sometimes considered to have been a turning point in the intellectual construction of the democratic state. To clarify matters, I would like to raise several methodological questions and suggest several possible ideas for future and possibly influential work. First, as Sawyer is intent on making clear, his aim, through his six preferred authors—Tocqueville, Prévost-Paradol, Laboulaye, Thiers, d'Héricourt, and Blanc—he is not seeking to trace the contours of a coherent "school" of political thought along with its various sensibilities, but rather to examine how democracy raised new questions or returned to older ones about such important themes as equality, the state of exception, and discrimination, and particularly the state's new responsibilities. What he presents are 'spot checks' pertaining to crucial issues rather than ideological panoramas; Sawyer is rightly skeptical of broad categories such as 'liberalism,' 'republicanism,' or even 'socialism.' At the same time, he suggests that some of these authors contributed to the constitutional structure of the Third Republic. One would like to know who the most significant "influences" were on this structure—and, if there were others, who they were. One would also like to know which other authors Sawyer was tempted to consider essential to his study and which ones he left out—and why. Another question relates to the 'before' and 'after' of his material—before 1840, after 1880. One would like to know how, concretely, the phase in the intellectual construction of the democratic state that he studies connects to the preceding phase—that of the Doctrinaires, who (already!) assigned an important role to the state—but also to the following period—that is, to republican thinkers who went even further down the line of legitimating the social state, following Blanc more than Prévost-Paradol. It seems to me that for contextual reasons—but not exclusively—a certain Kantian idealism plays a role: many republican thinkers constructed theories of the state that largely dispensed with the chilly realism of Thiers and his justification of the Terror (witness their critique of *raison d'état*). A final question pertains to the way in which the fascinating texts that Sawyer examines first-hand and in often pioneering ways, after a long purgatory, have at times experienced a partial resurrection in particular contexts. I am thinking notably of the way in which Elie Halévy, in the first decades of the twentieth century, carried the torch of this period's thought—notably due to his family ties with the Prévost-Paradols—and how he was followed by Raymond Aron, Halévy's young, admiring disciple, who, beginning in the 1940s, would, in his own way, perpetuate and 'rehabilitate' Prévost-Paradol and Tocqueville. Herein perhaps lies the key to the distinctness of twentieth-

⁶ Jean-Claude Michéa, *Les Mystères de la Gauche: De l'idéal des Lumières au triomphe du capitalisme absolu* (Paris: Flammarion, 2013).

century French liberalism, which was such a minority and counter-cultural phenomenon, and extremely far removed from its European counterparts, such as the Austrians Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek.

REVIEW BY MICHAEL C. BEHRENT, APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Demos Assembled is a significant contribution to the literature on French democracy. While Sawyer's book is a meticulous and original study of intellectual history, it is also an intervention in the theoretical debate on the nature of democratic politics that has been underway in France for several decades—a body of literature that Sawyer has explored elsewhere.¹ A central tenet of this conversation, advanced by thinkers such as Claude Lefort and Pierre Rosanvallon, is that democracy's most distinctive trait is its indeterminacy.² Because democracy, unlike monarchy, is “rooted in the impossibility of entirely incarnating social power” (15), it can only be defined by a series of contradictions (equality vs. liberty, popular sovereignty vs. individual rights) that, according to Rosanvallon, are constitutive of “democracy's unmoored meaning” (14). Though seemingly opaque, this perspective results in several practical conclusions. First, democracy's essential problem lies in the ever-present temptation to resolve its inherent indeterminacy by creating a powerful, liberty-crushing state. Second, because even its most democratic regimes have shown a penchant for statism, France is held out as the country whose history best exemplifies the problem of democratic indeterminacy.

In *Demos Assembled*, Sawyer proposes a “critical democratic history” (4) that would free itself of these assumptions. To begin with, the liberal misgivings about the state that inform recent French democratic theory downplay the importance of the mid-nineteenth century, when substantive debates about democracy's merits were laid to rest in order to address the more pressing concern with organizing the state on a democratic basis. Taking the liberal suspicion of the state for granted proves problematic for the period between 1840 and 1880, Sawyer argues, since liberals during these years were warming up to the idea that the state *bien compris* had an essential role to play in democratic society and politics. The mechanics of the democratic state have, in short, been democratic theory's blind spot.³ Moreover, Sawyer challenges the notion that nineteenth-century French political culture remained parochially entrenched in the problems bequeathed by the revolution by showing that French political thinkers were grappling with the same questions relating to democracy's implications for state power as their counterparts in western Europe and North America. Mid-nineteenth-century French reflection on the democratic state was, Sawyer contends, far more cosmopolitan than has generally been recognized, as it engaged with practices and ideas pioneered in Great Britain and the United States.

Each chapter of Sawyer's book is devoted to a political thinker from this period and to a theme that exemplifies their thinking. To a fault, Sawyer's portraits are insightful, thorough, and nuanced. He shows, in granular detail, how these thinkers were less concerned with developing comprehensive political philosophies than with solving practical matters relating to the state's organization at a time when democracy had become (nearly) the only game in town. His chapter on Alexis de Tocqueville is, in this respect, particularly original. Against the commonplace idea that the great French liberal was an inveterate critic of state power, Sawyer reminds us that Tocqueville emphasized police power as a valuable form of public authority—provided, that is, that those exercising this charge never lost touch with the interests of those they sought to assist. This analysis seems, however, only tangentially related to “inequality” (22-51) the theme that Sawyer sees as epitomizing Tocqueville's work. The same could be said of his otherwise convincing analysis of the arguments for an interventionist state made by Lucien-Anatole Prévost-Paradol, the Second Empire liberal journalist, which only occasionally intersect with “equality,” the theme Sawyer assigns him (52-75).

¹ Stephen W. Sawyer and Iain Stewart, eds., *In Search of the Liberal Moment: Democracy, Anti-totalitarianism, and Intellectual Politics in France since 1950* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016).

² “Democracy thus reveals itself to be ... [a] society that, in its form, admits and preserves indeterminacy ...,” Claude Lefort, “La question de la démocratie,” in *Essais sur le politique. XIXe-XXe siècles* (Paris: Seuil, 1986): 17-32, here at 26. Democracy is “the history of an indeterminacy.” Pierre Rosanvallon, *Pour une histoire conceptuelle de la politique* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), 16.

³ It is surprising, in this respect, that Sawyer does not engage more with Rosanvallon's study *L'État en France de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), which deals notably with efforts to conceive the state as a “democratic Leviathan” (17-92).

The problem is not just one of chapter titles, but a forest-tree problem that permeates the book's argument. Sawyer shows that during this period, the establishment and conceptualization of the democratic state raised many problems. Yet he refrains from characterizing the nature of these problems, except in the most tentative of terms. He concludes that during these years, "no distinct definition of democracy emerged," or rather that "there were as many definitions as there were people seriously interested in the question" (186).

This conclusion does not do justice to his incisive portraits of individual thinkers, which suggest that they may well have shared a more focused set of concerns—and perhaps even a "definition of democracy." Part of the problem is methodological: while Sawyer often presents his book as a history of *the democratic state*, it is really a study of *arguments* that intellectuals and writers have made *for the democratic state*. This is true despite the fact that, as Sawyer rightly emphasizes, a number of his figures were directly involved in politics: Tocqueville held positions in the July Monarchy and the Second Republic, while, in different ways, Édouard Laboulaye, Louis Blanc, and Adolphe Thiers participated in the Third Republic's founding. Yet however close they may have been to power, what Sawyer studies, ultimately, is their discourse. And at this level, the arguments made by the six individuals he considers are fairly distinct and circumscribed: the democratic state can mobilize social power (Prévost-Paradol); it is close to the governed (Tocqueville); it embodies the popular will and legitimate authority against the state's enemies (Laboulaye, Thiers); it can create social equality (Prévost-Paradol); it requires an agonistic public sphere (Jenny d'Héricourt); and it promotes the development of human faculties (Blanc). Because he tries to identify problems that inhere in the *democratic state itself* in the pronouncements of his figures, Sawyer downplays the fact that what they in fact illustrate is the emergence of a series of *arguments* in favor of this kind of state.

Moving beyond questions of method, a curious feature of Sawyer's book is the role it attributes to debates about emergency powers in the development of democratic thinking from this period. His discussion of Laboulaye considers the way in which this French liberal made a staunch case for the importance of executive power to modern democracy, yet in a way that, by endorsing the principle of the separation of powers, pushed back against the kind of plebiscitary dictatorship associated with Napoleon III. In particular, Sawyer offers a fascinating analysis of Laboulaye's interest in the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, whom the Frenchman regarded as embodying the ways in which a democratically elected leader could leverage popular power to defend a republic against existential threats. In short, Laboulaye tried to make emergency government palatable to democracy—"a tool for preserving natural sovereignty and the constitution instead of undermining it" (95). The figure most central to Sawyer's argument about emergency power is Thiers, who readily accepted the idea that, in a democracy, exceptional circumstances could justify an excess of state power, citing as historical evidence the French revolutionary government of 1793 and France's colonial conquests in Algeria. During the Paris Commune, however, Thiers insisted that the Communards' actions were illegal and that the restoration of the rule of law required violent repression—a task that, as chief executive of the fledgling republic, he personally directed. Thiers, too, cited Lincoln when employing state violence to crush a secessionist movement. What matters to Sawyer is that Thiers saw repression as temporary and legal: "The Communards would be severely treated, but all justice would be achieved through the pursuit of law" (127).

While his analysis is always astute, Sawyer's argument about the place of the state of exception in *democratic* thought is problematic on several counts. First, while Sawyer's works usually contain a superb reading of texts, this claim suggests an inclination to take his figures at their own words. To be on the uptake of utterances, an intellectual historian should have a sense when an argument is disingenuous or forced. Analytic rigor is no excuse not to call 'bullshit' when needed. Sawyer notes that, after the June Days of 1848, Laboulaye compared General Cavaignac, who led the repression, to George Washington—praising the former's "humanity," no less (83). But is such a comparison *reasonable*? Was Laboulaye engaging in profound thinking about the perilous foundations of democratic states, or simply engaging in fairly unadulterated bourgeois propaganda?

Similarly, though Sawyer provides abundant documentation for Thiers's claim that, in repressing the Paris Commune, he was following Lincoln's example, there is a reluctance to ask whether this parallel strains credulity. Sawyer writes that in 1871, Thiers "repeatedly argued that the Parisian insurrection was not a legitimate revolution, but a civil war, in which he was responsible for ensuring the unity of France" (129). He quotes Thiers's own description of his actions: "All attempts at

secession, on the part of any portion of the territory, will be forcefully put down, just as they were in America” (129). Yet was this contention really an attempt to think seriously about Lincoln’s use of emergency powers? Could it not just as plausibly be seen as an ideological redescription of the Commune that suited Thiers’ political agenda? Without even going into the painfully obvious differences between the Confederacy and the Commune, the latter, unlike the former, never saw secession as its primary goal. Conservatives such as the Goncourt brothers, who were not afraid to mince their words, admitted as much: “The newspapers only see, in what is happening, a question of decentralization. What is happening is quite simply the conquest of France by the working population...”⁴

Even if one’s aim is to understand these thinkers on their own terms, one must be open to the possibility that they were, at times, inclined to acts of ideological justification or rationalization. Laboulaye’s and Thiers’s invocation of the use of emergency powers by Washington and Lincoln is a case in point: these arguments seem to be little more than apologies for class warfare that dare not speak their name. Particularly in the case of Thiers, this argument is hardly a stretch: it lines up with the standard historiography of the origins on the Third Republic, which emphasizes its successful mixture of republican institutions and social conservatism.⁵ At least on this specific point, this interpretation of Thiers’ motives seems at least as persuasive as Sawyer’s claim that he was pioneering a new conception of the democratic state.

Sawyer’s examination of his figures’ ideas about state of exception is also, at times, conceptually ambiguous. He notes that Thiers, in his historical writing, was very interested in the “theory of circumstances,” that is, the idea that exceptional situations could justify dictatorial or extralegal power. When reflecting on the 1830 revolution, Thiers embraced what Sawyer calls a “reversed state of exception,” in which “the people had the right to overthrow the regime if it consistently abused its power,” instead of the state having the power “to declare an emergency in a moment of crisis” (113). Sawyer is undoubtedly right about Thiers’s position. One wonders, however, if the idea of a “reversed state of exception” is coherent. The power—and essence—of the conservative German jurist Carl Schmitt’s argument is that the state of exception is a completely non-normative test of sovereignty⁶: if a Parisian revolutionary could declare a state of exception, then, as far as Schmitt is concerned, the question was settled. It is not a “reversed” state exception, but simply the normal kind. The key issue is this: what Schmitt makes clear is that any attempt to justify the state of exception on legal grounds founders in contradiction. Sovereignty in Schmitt’s sense is simply the juridical form of a *decision*. The problem with Sawyer’s analysis is that it works to integrate Laboulaye’s and Thiers’ ideas about emergency powers into their thinking about the democratic *state*. This explains the argument that Thiers made “an original move away from a decisionist reading of the state of exception,” by focusing instead on the “legal and popular legitimacy of the exceptional circumstance” (113). In 1871, Thiers came pretty close to passing the Schmittian test: he called a state of exception and prevailed as sovereign. But this tells us little about what, if anything, he thought of the democratic state, even if it tells us quite a bit about his ability to make political decisions. The late nineteenth-century thinking about emergency powers is fascinating, as Sawyer shows in some of his book’s most intriguing chapters. But it rightfully belongs to a history of political judgment (and perhaps decisionism), not to the story of democratic institutions.

Sawyer describes his project as a “*pragmatic history of the political*” (16). This description captures *Demos Assembled’s* strengths: the book examines the efforts of six figures to think through the major political issues of the day from the vantage point of the role and nature of a state that had been redefined along democratic lines. The history of political thought, Sawyer reminds us, should also be the history of political “problem solving” (13). This is one reason why the period yielded

⁴ Edmond and Jules Goncourt, *Journal*, March 28, 1871, https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Journal_des_Goncourt/IV/Ann%C3%A9e_1871

⁵ See, notably, Sanford Elwitt, *The Making of the Third Republic: Class and Politics in France, 1868–1884* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975).

⁶ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Concepts on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

“no distinctive definition of democracy” and his book offers “no normative or prescriptive definition of democracy” (186). Yet is it possible to tell democracy’s story *solely* from a pragmatic point of view? Are there not *some* norms implicit in the historical process itself, some set of more or less commonly accepted assumptions about the term that define, at a minimum, whether one is for or against it? Part of the problem is that pragmatic understandings of democracy risk, pragmatically speaking, undermining democracy itself: in our own day, executive orders, backroom deals, and the political use of money could all be cited as examples of democracy understood in pragmatic terms. Sawyer makes a persuasive case that pragmatic democracy must be incorporated into democracy’s history. His argument tends, however, to conflate democratic politics with pragmatism as such. Not all pragmatists are democratic pragmatists, as the examples of Laboulaye and Thiers (at least some of the time) illustrate all too well. Speaking of the latter, Sawyer acknowledges, in his conclusion, that “their embrace of democracy remained tepid to the extent that they remained reluctant to give the state entirely over to the demos” (190). Regardless of whether it is normative or prescriptive, “giv[ing] the state entirely over to the demos” is a pretty good definition of democracy, as the title of Sawyer’s book suggests. That figures such as Laboulaye and Thiers were so deeply ambivalent about democracy is something that could have been usefully highlighted and problematized in this otherwise very compelling study.

REVIEW BY JENNIFER PITTS, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Against a standard view of post-revolutionary liberalism as skeptical of government and fearful of the excesses of popular power, in *Demos Assembled* Stephen Sawyer shows that an important group of nineteenth-century liberal figures were committed not to offsetting the risks of democracy by limiting the power of the state but rather to keeping a robust state democratic. These political thinkers and actors—Alexis de Tocqueville, Lucien-Anatole Prévost-Paradol, Edouard Laboulaye, Adolphe Thiers, Jenny d’Héricourt, and Louis Blanc—valued states strong in what Sawyer (following Michael Mann) calls infrastructural power, but also responsive to democratic publics.¹ Sawyer undertakes his reconstruction of this tradition by setting it against both earlier liberal skepticism of state power and what he nicely calls the “political *cul-de-sac* of Bonapartist plebiscitary democracy” (76).

These thinkers, Sawyer suggests, followed in the wake of two developments, one intellectual and the other political. First, they inherited from the political thought of the 1820s and 1830s an understanding of democracy as a social form (“equality of conditions,” in Tocqueville’s famous phrase) as much as it was a political order or regime type.² Equality of conditions was for them both increasingly a fact of social life with which politics had to reckon and also a project to be fostered by the state. Second, their democratic theories were shaped by the foil of Napoleon III’s democratic despotism. Universal suffrage had finally triumphed, enshrined in the 1848 constitution, but this was an anemic, evacuated democratic politics. These thinkers, then, sought a strong state with a public accountability more substantive than Bonapartist popular acclamation and more frequent than elections.

Although Sawyer’s historical narrative is not written in an explicitly normative vein, *Demos Assembled* can be read as a largely recuperative project, as sharing the commitment to the strong democratic state that Sawyer tracks historically. He begins the book with a brief reflection on our own neoliberal moment, one in which state capacity has ballooned in areas such as surveillance, incarceration, and military conflict, while at the same time the state has been hemmed in by forms of economic and private power and become ever less responsive to the public it is meant to serve. The book suggests that for progressives in search of historical resources to theorize a robust regulatory and welfare state, the liberal-democratic tradition is more promising territory than many imagine. Sawyer notes the “sterility of the liberalism-socialism debate,” a Cold-War opposition between supposedly mutually exclusive attachments to freedom versus equality. The normative core of *Demos Assembled* lies in its effort to revivify republicanism as a social theory that can unite liberal pluralism, individual rights, and respect for difference with socialist egalitarianism and redistribution, and Sawyer finds allies in a series of earlier historians and political thinkers, culminating in John Dewey, who likewise found such a combination in the liberal democrats of the mid-nineteenth century.

Sawyer thus sets out to rescue various thinkers from the stereotyped picture of the liberal tradition inherited from Friedrich Hayek and other Cold Warriors. Sawyer’s reading of Tocqueville on pauperism and his worries about industrial aristocracy, for instance, compellingly shows that his views exceeded that standard characterization. He was more consistently concerned with the persistence of inequality under democratic conditions than is thought, and he believed that the state should be invested with robust powers to combat that inequality. This is a useful corrective to a common misperception. But Sawyer suggests not only that the cliché of liberalism as suspicious of both equality and the state is a Cold-War fallacy, but also that, however misleading a picture of liberalism in the roughly forty years the book covers, it is accurate with respect to the post-Revolutionary generation of French liberals. I wonder, though, to what extent it is any more adequate as a description of those earlier liberals: Benjamin Constant, say, or Simonde de Sismondi, who theorized various forms of social

¹ Michael Mann, “The autonomous power of the state: its origins, mechanisms and results,” *European Journal of Sociology* 25:2 (1984), 185-213 at 185.

² Tocqueville introduces the phrase “*l’égalité des conditions*” in the opening lines of *Democracy in America*; Alexis de Tocqueville, *Oeuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), vol. 2, 3; *Democracy in America*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Library of America, 2004), 3.

welfare interventions as well as state regulation of the economy. Could an earlier nineteenth-century strand of democratic thinking be recuperated along similar lines: might a prequel to this book reveal earlier thinkers, too, to have been more interested in a robust interventionist and regulatory state than we remember?

Louis Blanc and Jenny d'Héricourt, with their rich, if distinct, ways of thinking about the “social individual,” are those with whom Sawyer evinces the greatest sympathy, for it was they who most successfully forged republicanism as a “third way” between liberalism and socialism” (135). Sawyer’s chapter on d’Héricourt may be the book’s most engaging, in its presentation of her account of “radical individual autonomy within a robust theory of social equality guaranteed by the state” (146). He shows that d’Héricourt’s gender critique, fostered in international feminist circles, led her to a rich democratic theory that required the state to “provide the conditions for each to develop fully his or her individual capacities within society” (144), even as she downplayed the right to vote and abandoned her earlier demand for immediate women’s suffrage. What mattered more than the vote—the emptiness of which had become apparent under Napoleon III’s plebiscitary autocracy—was all citizens’ ability to engage in ongoing political struggle with adversaries who were, by virtue of their equally developed faculties, worthy opponents.

For all his apparent sympathy for the pluralist, egalitarian “third way” represented by the strand of thought he reconstructs, Sawyer’s project is less than avowedly recuperative largely, it would seem, thanks to these thinkers’ support for French imperial expansion, especially in Algeria, an urgent subject of French public debate during the decades in question. Sawyer draws striking connections between these thinkers’ theories of democracy and their support for the French empire. With the exception of d’Héricourt, they were fairly consistent supporters of French ambitions in Algeria, often with similar arguments, despite their different accounts of democracy. Prévost-Paradol’s constructivist notion of equality, for instance, regarded it not as a natural right but as a relationship among citizens that had to be politically created. Such equality was made possible, and maybe even more potent or appealing, by explicit exclusion of designated others, producing what Sawyer calls “an inside and outside of the demos” (55).

Sawyer’s treatment of Algeria across the chapters raises two key questions: to what extent imperial politics has been internal to and constitutive of modern democratic politics, and what lessons the intertwining of democracy and empire in the nineteenth century might have for contemporary politics. With regard to the first question, Sawyer’s book bears comparison with Aziz Rana’s argument in *Two Faces of American Freedom*, which argues that throughout the history of United States, and indeed the country’s colonial pre-history, freedom and equality among the privileged—that is, men racialized as white—was parasitic on the domination of others.³ Access to land and property enabled by slave labor and expropriation of native peoples made it possible to generate an inclusive and egalitarian political community for whites, and, by reducing economic competition, made it possible to welcome some immigrants as new members rather than as competitors. As Rana shows, in that settler-colonial context, imperial forms of domination are clearly constitutive of democratic norms and practices among insiders. For the figures Sawyer discusses, the connection is compatible with but also theoretically less tight than in the American case as Rana presents it.

This raises the question as to whether there might be a consistent contrast between democratic practice in settler-colonial settings versus others. Settler-colonial democracy arguably even possessed a kind of perverse strength to which nineteenth-century French liberals were attracted; certainly Tocqueville can be read as having drawn precisely such lessons from his time in America, however dismayed he was by the injustice and violence of slavery and Indian removal. Or perhaps we should instead conclude that the importance of Algeria to nineteenth-century French politics made France something like a quasi-settler-colonial society, with implications for its politics today, with its longstanding tensions around immigration, Muslim citizens, and a racialized social order that the state refuses to recognize as such. If that is the case, French democracy’s dependence on domination would run as uncomfortably deep as it does in the United States.

³ Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

A related question arises at the margins of the narrative: who are *the people*? Or rather, whom did these figures understand as the people, in a country where political action so often happened mainly in Paris, and where there was, or at least many perceived there to be, a considerable gulf between the people of Paris and everyone else? The book argues that once the battle for universal suffrage was won, and when Napoleon III claimed to rule in the name of the people through universal suffrage, the attention of these thinkers turned away from the people and toward mechanisms of accountability. But was the identity of the people as unproblematic as this argument suggests? In treatments of 1848, commentators often pondered the gulf between Paris and the rest of the country: Tocqueville, and Karl Marx, and John Stuart Mill all had quite different interpretations of this relationship. Tocqueville, who was gratified to be elected by his Norman constituency, saw the countryside as a valuable counterweight to Paris and the elections of 1848 as the triumph of the will of the people of France over the passions of the Parisian working class. Mill and Marx in different ways saw the French outside Paris as not yet capable of acting as a political collective; it was in this context that Marx, in “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” wrote of small-holding peasants as a “sackful of potatoes,” not capable of representing themselves—unlike the “Paris proletariat”—but only of being represented by government as a master.⁴

Finally, Sawyer usefully challenges accounts of French exceptionalism that see the course of nineteenth-century French politics as uniquely a product of post-Revolutionary dynamics and a distinct national tradition of republicanism. He demonstrates the degree to which French thinkers were engaging with Anglo-American counterparts, particularly Lincoln and his deployment of state power during the American Civil War. He is attentive too, as I’ve noted, to the colonial dimensions of French democratic state-building. But given that the book’s subtitle refers to the “international origins of the modern state,” there is less attention than one might expect to the international landscape writ larger. When we speak of the international origins of the modern state, we might look beyond the U.S. and UK domestic models to factors such as the increasing sense among political actors and their publics of the geopolitics of imperial nation-states, and the transnational movement of ideas about liberalism and democracy around and beyond Europe at this time, from Mazzini and ‘young Italy’ to Germany to the young Ottomans. Sawyer’s reconstruction of this liberal-democratic tradition and its complex relation to empire is well-timed for our moment, when the relationship between robust democracy at home, and international dynamics of hierarchy and the transnational movement of capital and people, remains as fraught and urgent as ever.

⁴ Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 608, 601. Mill spoke of the Provisional Government, which had been “made a government, chiefly by the working people of Paris,” as having to rule over those “who had not yet acquired any opinions”; “Vindication of the Revolution of February 1848,” in Mill, *Collected Works*, ed. John M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), Vol. XX, 352, 335.

 RESPONSE BY STEPHEN W. SAWYER, THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PARIS

I would like to thank my colleagues Serge Audier, Michael Behrent, Jennifer Pitts and Cheryl Welch for their insightful and provocative readings of *Demos Assembled* as well as the editors of H-Diplo, who brought this forum together. It is a privileged opportunity to participate in such a stimulating conversation.

To begin, both Pitts and Audier explicitly ask how this study on the period 1840 to 1880 might articulate with what preceded it. I welcome this question all the more since I envision *Demos Assembled* to be the first (though chronologically last) volume of *a critical history of democracy* that will stretch from the eighteenth century to where this volume ends in 1880, with a focus on France from an international perspective. The project advances along two dimensions: first, a critical intellectual history featuring a close rereading of key texts and authors that I suggest read surprisingly differently when one places *democracy*—rather than liberalism or republicanism—at the center of our histories of political modernity. Second, the project turns on a rediscovery and re-prioritization of the variety of substantive and concrete activities, programs, and policies that constituted democratic action throughout this long revolutionary period.

At the heart of this project is the subject of the title, the demos. A historical focus on the demos reorients democratic theory and the history of the political away from biographies of official proceedings, institutional design, or formal abstract rights and toward a more grounded, concrete, and pragmatic investigation of popular magistrature, public administration, and the substantive content of socio-economic regulation. As the proper collective subject of political modernity, the demos highlights that modern social form and social space wherein society's relationship to itself was politically constituted. A history of the demos, therefore, diverges radically from 'civil society' conceptions of the social, that is, from the more depoliticized liberal notions that dominate current histories of modern democracy.

While utilizing several different terms, concern for "the demos" was never far from the center of classical political philosophy and political theory. Early modern and modern political theorists captured this social form through a number of different vocabularies: John Locke referred to it simply as "political society" (which he used as a synonym for civil society); employing the term "civil society" only once in the *Social Contract*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau preferred the term "political corps" or "body"; and Alexis de Tocqueville referred to it specifically as a "democratic society," a term he contrasted to "aristocratic society," both of which he used with much greater precision than "civil society." Thomas Hobbes, Samuel von Pufendorf, occasionally Hugo Grotius, and then Karl Marx, however, explicitly referred to this democratic social form as a "demos." I have settled on this term not only for its historical weight and rhetorical authority, but also because debates on the term itself capture a process at the heart of the construction of modern politics: Far more than a constituent act, being a demos required that the people also govern themselves democratically. In other words, the moment the demos ceased to self-govern, not only were the people no longer living in a democracy – and entering oligarchy, aristocracy or anarchy for example – they also ceased to be a demos.

As a result, instead of understanding modern social autonomy as taking place outside the state, freedom in a demos depends on how a society collectively governs and regulates itself non-arbitrarily toward relative equality. Moreover, since self-rule is no longer grounded solely in the naturalization of a depoliticized set of social or economic relations and hence the history of the expansion of formal protections of that sphere from an invasive state, it sidesteps debates about how far and in what contexts administration can "intervene." Instead, the demos poses a very different question for modern democracy: How was democratic state capacity to be created, expanded and consolidated in the name of a self-governing demos?

Demos Assembled therefore traces how, between 1840-1880, different sides of the political spectrum fashioned a modern conception of the democratic state. On the one hand, liberals slowly reconciled themselves with the idea that the demos was a subject of political modernity, meaning they began to pose the question of how to democratize administration (Alexis de Tocqueville), government (Lucien-Anatole Prévost-Paradol), constitutionalism (Edouard Laboulaye) and executive authority (Adolphe Thiers). On the other hand, social democrats (Jenny d'Héricourt and Louis Blanc) slowly shifted from a utopian early socialist ideal of the 1830s that had previously turned its back on politics as a site for fashioning collective and

individual freedom and came to embrace a politically constituted understanding of social power, in which public authority necessarily mediates society's relationship to itself. This attachment to democracy pushed a new state into the center of European politics, thought, history, and, by the end of the century, sociology and political science. For this new generation of theorists and politicians, the state—and its attendant popular foundations, responsibilities, and accountabilities—became the centerpiece of political life. Slowly, the liberal critique of the state inherited from the eighteenth century and the relentless wariness of organized popular power that so marked liberals of the postrevolutionary generation was on the defensive. A new, more widespread—and necessarily ambiguous—conception of the modern state was formed in the second half of the nineteenth century. Upstream of the moment discussed in this book was a fear of the demos and the state shrouded in the dark shadow of absolutism, terror, and Napoleonic centralization; downstream was the emergence of a new social progressivism rooted in democracy that placed the modern state at its heart.

So Pitts rightly poses the question of the previous generation when she asks “to what extent it is any more adequate as a description of those earlier liberals: Benjamin Constant, say, or Simonde de Sismondi, who theorized various forms of social welfare interventions as well as state regulation of the economy.” A thorough response to this question sits at the heart of the next volume on the period 1810-1850. Suffice it to say for now, however, that democracy was certainly reinvented in practice and theory in the wake of the French Revolution, and especially from the early years of Napoleon's empire through the 1840s. This however does not mean that everyone embraced democracy, or that those who embraced democracy have necessarily been read the most carefully for their contributions to a specifically democratic history. Moreover, my concern in this book was also with the way the historiography has reinvented post-revolutionary liberalism as a privileged site for fashioning a liberal critique of the totalitarian tendencies of revolutionary democracy. Ira Katznelson highlighted precisely this point when he described the core group of postwar intellectuals who collectively “faced a task not unlike the one articulated by Madame de Stael after the Terror.”¹ While this “discovery” of post-revolutionary liberalism was extremely fecund and has profoundly deepened our understanding of political thought from the first half of the nineteenth century, the most important contribution of these studies has not necessarily been to provide a more robust history of democracy *per se*. This is not meant as a critique: the reason these studies have not necessarily expanded our understanding of nineteenth-century democracy is largely because it was not their ambition in the first place.

Pitts also raises poignant questions about the uneasy but consistent relationship between democracy and empire during this period. As suggested above and in the book's introduction, *Demos Assembled* is written as a critical history. By this, I mean that democracy in this period emerged not as a solution that would overcome all injustices if finally realized in its fullness. Instead, it provided a means of solving problems with all the profound failings such solutions could and did in some cases entail. In other words, a critical history of democracy seeks to understand how democracy has historically provided the grounds for a critique of itself. The theme of empire that runs throughout the book is an essential part of this critical history. In short, if you understand your democratic politics to emerge from a demos, a number of consequences come forward. Perhaps most importantly, since a demos cannot be world-wide, it necessarily implies an inside and an outside. The challenge is in coming to understand how those within the demos are chosen, what keeps them together and how they are able to elaborate a collective future. There are a whole number of ways that this distinction between those inside and those outside the demos have been naturalized. For example, as Prévost-Paradol shows, the distinction can be racialized (as it also was in the United States or Australia for example). Prévost-Paradol embraced a positive theory of democratic government while opening the door to a naturalized distinction between those who were governed democratically by the republic and those who were not, depending on their ethnic, territorial, or religious origins. Similarly, as d'Héricourt shows, the inside and the outside of the demos was also established along gender lines. In d'Héricourt's case, overcoming the exclusion of women from the political is not about expanding their formal right to vote as much as it is about challenging the fundamental boundaries between who is and who isn't a member of the demos. If you deny access to participate in a politically saturated notion of the social – for racial, gender, ethnic, or religious reasons – then you have effectively limited the ability of the demos to govern itself by allowing the demos to govern those who are not a part of it in spite of its principle

¹ Ira Katznelson, *Desolation and Enlightenment: Political Knowledge after Total War, Totalitarianism and the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 24-25.

of self-governance. In terms of both empire and gender, excluding individuals who are ruled by the demos therefore sows the seeds of a potential civil war.

Constituting society as a demos, has other important consequences as well. Michael Behrent notes that the problem of emergency, necessity, or state of exception runs throughout the book. He is absolutely right to foreground this theme and to suggest that my account runs counter to some of our traditional conceptions of exception, especially those inspired by Carl Schmitt. Behrent therefore wonders whether the history of emergency powers and necessity that I present doesn't "rightfully belong to a history of political judgment (and perhaps decisionism), not to the story of democratic institutions"? The first element of response is to point out that Schmitt's idea of exception is primarily a product of theory rather than history. Carl Schmitt – and more recently Giorgio Agamben – have grounded their theories of exception in highly stylized, generalized, episodic – and mostly conventional – historical portraits and constitutional moments. Exploring the state of exception from the perspective of the modern democratic state, on the other hand, exposes the limits of the notions of formal law, bureaucratic statecraft, and liberal politics that so frequently preoccupy discussions of exception and emergency governance. *Demos Assembled* examines the historical processes as well as the constitutional moment of the early Third Republic from a very different perspective, setting aside formal or abstract notions of right and decision. One of the central lessons a more pragmatic history of democratic power has to teach us is that there are no clear limits to what the demos can do to itself when faced with internal, external, or existential challenges no matter how small or great. *Demos Assembled* seeks to explore how emergency circumstances and necessity served as technologies for massively expanding the infrastructural power of the state to solve collective problems. As I show in the case of Thiers, managing and regulating emergencies and necessity may be one of the most common ways that democratic states exercise power every day. Within a demos – again, a body that must continuously self-govern in order to remain a demos – the problems of administration are constant and the exception becomes decidedly less exceptional.

Behrent further raises the problem of ideological "redescription," arguing that "even if one's aim is to understand these thinkers on their own terms, one must be open to the possibility that they were, at times, inclined to acts of ideological justification." The question of "ideological justification" is complex, to say the least, and not only because the notion of ideological context has enjoyed tremendous fortune in political and intellectual history for almost a half-century now. As stated in the book, I explicitly seek to sidestep the questions of ideology or ideological context. My doubts about the potential of using "ideology" or some variant to structure a history of democracy in the nineteenth century are multiple. But for the purposes of this discussion, I'd like to highlight one rather straightforward quantitative problem. The method of ideological context was deployed with greatest effectiveness on the political thought of the early modern period. Indeed, it may be possible to determine the ideological context of a given authorial intention by Niccolò Machiavelli or Hobbes. After all, how many serious contemporary interlocutors did Machiavelli or Hobbes realistically have? Once one has constructed an ideological context through the set of possible solutions to any given problem at a given moment, then one may deduce authorial intention based on how one builds, contradicts, or adapts their ideas within such a context. As possible as this may have been in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, however, it seems to me impossible to determine any circumscribed ideological context along the same lines within the period when Tocqueville, Thiers or d'Héricourt were writing without going about an extraordinary reductionism. By the 1880s, the development of the press for the masses, their direct participation in government, and the internationalization of ideas had all grown exponentially, making the determination of specific, delimited set of problems or answers impossible to determine.

I have attempted to propose a somewhat different approach, what I refer to as a "pragmatic history of the political." The democratic process of investigation discussed here is pragmatically defined. Such an approach reverses the methodological proposition inherent in the notion of "ideological context" by arguing (perhaps at first counterintuitively) that for the figures discussed here, the context emerged from the problem, not the reverse. A pragmatic history of democracy is by definition suspicious of establishing any determined formal relationship between ideas and facts, ideology and context, the symbolic and the real, or the political and politics since even the very nature of these relationships is matter for constant political debate. As a social and political project, the demos remains profoundly undetermined even as it seeks solutions to the problems generated within it. To this extent, democracy is rooted not in a transcendent set of questions and potential answers but as a persistent set of untidy problems and partial solutions; that is, its history.

Audier asks in the conclusion of his review about the legacy of this period, which, he points out, was kept alive in particular by Élie Halévy. Audier's astute observation touches on an essential argument in this study. Intellectual historians interested in Halévy have placed him in a lineage that stretches from Alexis de Tocqueville to Raymond Aron and then François Furet. Jacques Julliard sets him "next to de Tocqueville and Raymond Aron."² Christophe Prochasson has similarly proposed that Furet belongs to "this family of like-minds" which "begins with Tocqueville," and then "in the following century, Élie Halévy and Raymond Aron."³ Biographer Nicolas Bavarez has similarly situated Halévy "between Tocqueville and Aron."⁴ However, within this "liberal" legacy, one can't help but notice a missing link. Tocqueville born in 1805; Halévy in 1870; Aron 1905; Furet in 1927. Visibly, in this inheritance, one generation is absent: the one born around 1830. Such a gap is not without importance in the reconstitution of the history of democratic political thought in France. The "democratic" generation of thinkers from 1840 to 1880 have indeed been largely eclipsed from our history of the modern state as we have preferred to focus on the rise of liberalism in the first half of the nineteenth century and the emergence of the welfare state toward its end. And yet, if Tocqueville clearly placed democracy at the center of his understanding of political modernity, the generation represented by Prévost-Paradol (born in 1829) directly confronted the question of organization, government, and a democratic state and opened the path to modern governance and the disciplines that have studied it. Tracing the elaboration of this democratic state is the central ambition of *Demos Assembled*.

² Jacques Julliard, "Élie Halévy, le témoin engagé," *Mil neuf cent*, vol. 17 (1999), 44.

³ Christophe Prochasson, *François Furet. Les chemins de la mélancolie*, (Paris, Stock, 2013), 10.

⁴ Nicolas Bavarez, préface, in Élie Halévy, *L'ère des tyrannies*, 1938, *Œuvres complètes*, tome II (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2016), édité par Vincent Duclert avec la collaboration de Marie Scot, *Œuvres complètes*, tome II, 273.