

The accumulated evidence is too slender to bear much interpretation, and one always suspects parental guidance of the child's pen.

While the quality of the individual contributions is generally high, there are a number of odd and frustrating omissions. The shadow of the postwar slump looms large over the book, but the fortunes of the economy receive no systematic treatment. A chapter on economics, perhaps comparing the rocky transition of 1919 to the smoother one of 1945, would have been welcome. Among the wartime intrusions on everyday life, perhaps none was more controversial than prohibition, which was enacted at the national level during the war and abandoned piecemeal by the provinces, starting with Quebec in 1919. Yet this topic is ignored. Nor is there any treatment of one of the war effort's most problematic features, the internment of "enemy aliens," which remained in force until 1920. And while 1918 may have seen the end of combat on the Western Front, 4,000 troops took part in the Siberian intervention into 1919, an aspect of Borden's effort to boost Canada's stature and autonomy. This is not even mentioned.

Despite these quibbles, this is an illuminating collection, which should inform both the student of the period and the general reader. It is well produced by UBC Press, with apposite illustrations from the collections of the Canadian War Museum. (But surely Laura Brandon's fine piece on the Group of Seven and the Burlington House exhibition deserved full-colour reproductions rather than black and white.) There is no finer place to start in order to learn about the beginnings of the transition from Borden's Canada to that of Mackenzie King.

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POPKIN, Jeremy D. – *A New World Begins: The History of the French Revolution*.
New York: Basic Books, 2019. 627 p.

This detailed and lively survey of the French Revolution provides a summary of modern scholarship aimed at a popular audience. It is in the same genre (and has a similar length) as Simon Schama's *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (1989), but the focus and intent of Jeremy Popkin's book are very different. Popkin seeks to move beyond older interpretations and provide a balanced assessment of the period as the beginning of modern democratic society. Moreover, as an eminent authority on the revolution's history in both metropolitan France and the Caribbean, Popkin attempts to fully incorporate recent research on the struggles over women's rights and the colonial questions of race and slavery into the wider narrative of the French Revolution. The fact that every chapter addresses these issues is the book's most impressive accomplishment.

The first five chapters examine French society on the eve of revolution and the developments behind the crisis of the Old Regime. In discussing the Enlightenment, Popkin includes the diversity of opinion on questions of women's rights and racial

equality. The threat of bankruptcy led Louis XVI's government to propose sweeping changes to the kingdom's fiscal and administrative organization. If the Assembly of Notables resisted royal reforms, the resulting political ferment encouraged the expression of more radical hopes. In 1787, Jacques Pierre Brissot founded the *Société des Amis des Noirs*, a group dedicated to the abolition of slavery, which Popkin terms the first revolutionary club because it provided the model of political activism for the Jacobins. Financial collapse in 1788 forced the monarchy to concede elections for an Estates-General. Questions regarding its composition and operation ignited conflict between the privileged orders and the Third Estate that Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès identified with the nation. Popkin notes that the *cahiers de doléances* included calls for women's equality and slavery's abolition. Chapters 6 through 9 trace the shift in the Revolution of 1789 from the elite resistance of Third Estate deputies in the Estates-General, who declared themselves the National Assembly and swore to give France a constitution, to the popular revolution that included the storming of the Bastille in Paris, peasant revolt in the countryside, and the women's march to Versailles. While sympathetic to the people's revolution, which consolidated the National Assembly's success and led the deputies to abolish privilege, Popkin recognizes the ambiguity of popular violence. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen proclaimed universal principles of liberty and equality, but the distinction between active and passive citizens based on wealth provoked radical opposition. Olympe de Gouges and other female activists protested women's exclusion from active citizenship. Popkin also examines colonial slavery's survival and how its contradiction with revolutionary values posed a continuing dilemma for the National Assembly.

Chapters 10 through 12 examine the developments that brought about a second revolution. If fear of the *émigrés* and the proliferation of political clubs radicalized the revolution, Popkin emphasizes the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and the imposition of the clerical oath as dividing France into hostile camps. Women were as deeply divided as men over church reforms that included the abolition of religious orders. Louis XVI's attempted flight on June 20, 1791, provoked a crisis: although the National Assembly rejected demands to remove the king, the Constitution of 1791 faced strong dissatisfaction when it was implemented in September. While some deputies in the new Legislative Assembly hoped to make the constitution work, patriots demanded war with Austria. Popkin argues that the declaration of war on April 20, 1792, rendered political conflict explosive. Metropolitan revolutionaries were also confronted with a colonial crisis: a massive slave revolt had erupted in Saint-Domingue. On August 10 a coordinated insurrection in Paris forced the Assembly to suspend the king and to call elections for a National Convention. Chapters 13 through 15 address the new Republic, the threats to its survival, and the Terror. Before examining the factional struggle between Girondins and Montagnards, the widening war, or popular discontent, Popkin emphasizes the importance of the Legislative Assembly's final decrees creating the *état civil* and legalizing divorce: these marked a shift from a religiously oriented society to one in which the individual's relationship to the state was primary. In the context of political conflict and provincial rebellion in metropolitan France, a crisis in Saint-Domingue on June

20, 1793, opened an historic breach in the colonial slave system: beleaguered civil commissioners offered freedom to slaves who would defend the Republic. A new insurrection in Paris on September 5 compelled the Convention to take extreme measures against enemies, adopt economic controls, and create a Revolutionary Government. Along with harsh repression of rebels, the ruling committees ordered the closure of all women's clubs. Popkin places the Terror within the improvisation of institutions to mobilize the nation's resources and defend the revolution, but he acknowledges that it was also intended to instill fear to transform society. Not part of this agenda, but the result of an unexpected intervention by a delegation from Saint-Domingue, the National Convention abolished slavery throughout the French empire on February 4, 1794. The Revolutionary Government destroyed populists on the left and moderates on the right, but frightened revolutionaries overthrew Robespierre on July 27, 1794.

The book's final four chapters examine efforts after 1794 to consolidate the Republic and its demise at the hands of Napoleon Bonaparte. The dilemma facing the Thermidorians who ousted Robespierre was how to exit from the Terror without undoing the Republic. Popkin is not sympathetic to these conservative republicans, who crushed the revolution's final popular uprisings in Paris, but he acknowledges that they reaffirmed the abolition of slavery. The Directory created by the new Constitution of 1795, facing opposition from left and right, sought to bolster its position through war. At the same time as Bonaparte's victories in Italy demonstrated his political ambition, Black leader Toussaint Louverture was turning military success into political power in Saint-Domingue. When royalists were poised for success in the elections of 1797, the Directory invalidated the results and arrested leading figures on the right with the army's support. This encouraged a surge of republican militancy, but in 1798 the government overturned the election of Jacobin candidates. The republican elite's refusal to be replaced constitutionally set a precedent. A final coup d'état in 1799 overturned the Constitution of 1795 and elevated Bonaparte to First Consul. What kind of regime would replace the Directory was not clear initially, but Popkin presents both Bonaparte's failed attempt to reimpose slavery in Saint-Domingue and his successful restoration in the Civil Code of husbands' authority over their wives and fathers over their children as retreats from revolutionary values.

The creation of the Empire in 1804 confirmed this trend, although the Napoleonic regime was not simply a return to the past. Ultimately, Popkin's balanced defence of the period as the beginning of democracy is effective and welcome. The French Revolution, however, was complex and ambiguous. If the revolutionaries often contradicted principles of liberty and equality, in the Terror they also created a model of revolutionary dictatorship for twentieth-century totalitarianism.

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