



The Running Logic of Jacobin Dictatorship from the Perspective of Emotional History

Zhaoyang Xu

Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, Shanghai, 201620, China

Email: 1296784117@qq.com

Abstract. During the Jacobin dictatorship, French society gave birth to a new emotional system and social trust system, but under the revolutionary situation, the external framework composed of these two can not stabilize the emotional experience of the emotional community. Social events promote each major emotional community to produce more and more extreme emotional experience, and these emotional experience will also be expressed in extreme ways. During this period, the fear of conspiracy and the desire to preserve the revolution among the populace and revolutionaries reached an unprecedented level. The violent repression of June 1793 to July 1794 was the result of the emotional imbalance of the emotional community of the revolutionaries and the populace, the consequences of which were ultimately borne by French society as a whole. When the anger and passion finally gave way to the fear and anxiety of the violence, the Thermidor coup duly occurred and prevented the revolution from turning into complete terror. The Jacobin dictatorship came to an abrupt end, but the emotional roots of the Red Terror remain buried in almost every subsequent revolution.

Keywords: Jacobin Dictatorship, emotional humanity, emotional refuge, revolutionary regime

1 Introduction

The Jacobin dictatorship, also known as the "Reign of terror" period, refers to the period of the French Revolution in which the Jacobins ruled France under Robespierre from 1793 to 1794. During this period, the social structure that had a decisive effect on emotions changed greatly, and the emotions in the historical context also changed across the ages. For this period of history, this paper tries to start from the perspective of emotional history, not only affirming the decisive role of objective social factors on emotions, but also taking emotional factors as one of the main influencing factors for the emergence of Red Terror in Jacob's dictatorship. Using William M. Reddy's "emotional regime" and Barbara Rosenwein's "emotional community" and other theories, from the external framework of the revolutionary period, The emotional expression of each main emotional group and the emotional origin of the Jacobin dictatorship are three parts, and the operation logic of the reign of terror under the vision of emotional history is reorganized from a relatively macro perspective.

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2 The external framework of the Jacobin dictatorship from the perspective of the history of emotion

The theory of "emotional system" was put forward by William Reddy, professor of history and anthropology at Duke University in the United States. It refers to a set of rules for experiencing and expressing emotions formulated by a dominant group in a society or community to maintain the existing order or achieve a specific goal, as well as the ceremonial and punitive measures taken to implement these rules. [1]

During the revolution, along with the collapse of the feudal political system, there was also a strict feudal emotional system, which was replaced by the emotional system with "emotionalism" as the core developed during the Great Revolution. During the Jacobin dictatorship, this emotional system was forcibly extended to the whole society by the Jacobin government in a strict way, and all citizens were forced to sincerely express their feelings of love for the motherland and loyalty to the revolution. [2] After establishing a unique emotional system in the revolutionary period, the people gained relatively full emotional freedom, which was not only reflected in emotional expression, but also allowed them to experience the revolution with more real emotions. This promoted the people to have the main emotional experience of joy and love in the early days of the Revolution. But as a series of specific events took place, by the time of the Jacobin dictatorship, the emotional system of the revolutionary period was gradually forced to be imposed on members of society in a more severe way.

With the advent of the Age of Enlightenment, various social institutions such as literary salons and residents' clubs appeared in French society. These social institutions played the role of "emotional refuges" under the strict emotional system, providing a place for people to experience and express their true emotions. These "emotional refuges", which began to have both social governance and political functions, were spread more widely and gradually became an important part of the emotional system in the revolutionary period. In such groups, any participant gained unprecedented emotional freedom, and there was a trend of emotional convergence in many groups, and participants in these groups were increasingly inclined to express individual emotional appeals through the group. Under the influence of the community, the negative information in the society, after being digested by the community, can often have a more profound impact on individual emotion. The united individuals weaken the class distinction, and they can gradually increase their individual emotion to the group and obtain the recognition of other groups through mutual identification.

After the initial establishment of the regime, revolutionaries were able to grasp the public opinion and media, and they were able to quickly convey information to the society through internal correspondence and newspapers. Some of these messages were negative and false, but they easily aroused the emotions of the public, who were willing to believe them. While this perpetuated enthusiasm for the revolution, it also created unnecessary confusion. In French historian Georges Lefebvre's book "The Panic of 1789", many of the chaos caused by the grapevine was documented. [3] These complicated news undoubtedly further intensified the emotional fluctuations of people's emotions in the social environment at that time, and became an unstable factor in the emotional system of the revolutionary period.

During the French Revolution, there was no huge power vacuum in the whole country. The system of social trust was in a very fragile state. The people hated the old aristocracy and speculators, but they were also suspicious of the revolutionary parties. This was because the revolution did not completely declare the death of the monarchy at the very beginning. Instead, the national Assembly and the urban and rural self-governing bodies took control of the central government and the local government respectively, and tried to choose a path between constitutional monarchy and democratic republic. However, within the National Assembly alone, there was a lot of debate between the constitutionalists and the republicans, and there were power struggles and political dissensions within these factions. In this process, there was never a new faction reliable enough to gain the confidence of the people and remove the influence of the Bourbon dynasty, and this led to the constant anxiety about the revolutionary situation. Under the influence of this uneasy feeling, the people sought security by ruling with an iron fist, popular leadership, community support and even trial and punishment, while the Jacobins were able to take power in response to the popular demand for an iron fist and punishment for counter-revolutionaries.

The unique emotional system and fragile social trust system in the revolutionary period provided a vessel for emotional intensification for each emotional group. In this vessel, a series of specific events occurred in the society constantly provoked the nervous nerves of participants and pushed their emotional expression to the extreme along with their emotional experience. Then, the interaction of emotional communities became particularly important. Once the collective emotion of one party is out of balance, the whole society will quickly fall into the vortex of reverse emotion, which is where the Jacobin dictatorship emerged.

3 The emotional imbalance of the emotional community during the Revolution

During the Great Revolution, under the new emotional system, there appeared many "emotional refuges" in the form of autonomous groups and clubs. In these "emotional refuges", many "social groups adhering to the same emotional values and ways of expression" were gradually bred, namely the "emotional community" summarized by American historian Rosen Wanen. Many small "emotional communities", in which emotional experience and expression converge, gradually merge into a community based on the same or similar interests and following the same emotional model. Before the Jacobins began their dictatorship, there had been roughly three embryonic forms of emotional communities in the society: supporters of the dictatorship, neutral people and anti-dictatorship people.

The emotional community that supported and maintained the dictatorship generally consisted of part of the masses and members of the Jacobins who had enthusiastic feelings for the dictatorship, including not only the bourgeois revolutionaries of the Jacobins who held the power, but also some passionate citizens and peasants. The former feared retribution from the aristocracy, exploitation by speculators, and invasion by other monarchies, while the latter needed to exclude dissenters, preserve the revolution,

and prevent the unthinkable consequences of voluntary disciplinary action by the populace. In 1793, the two formed an emotional community with a common emotional appeal and occupied a dominant position in society, and subsequently legalized and justified their increasingly extreme expressions of emotion through legislative and executive powers. The Jacobin government continued the emotional system with radicalized "emotionalism" as the core during the Great Revolution and imposed more severe restrictions, and finally took trial and punishment as punitive measures to protect this emotional system. Therefore, the masses with a large base became the subject of the fermentation of extreme emotions, which is also the reason why the reverse emotions expressed by the masses when the Jacobins began their dictatorship were even stronger than those of the Jacobins.

The French social psychologist Gustave Le Bon had this to say about the Jacobin leader Robespierre in his book *The Psychology of Revolution*: "Robespierre suffered from a delusion of persecution, cutting off heads not only because he had an apostolic mission, but because he believed that he was surrounded by enemies and conspirators." [4] The paranoia of persecution that Le Pen refers to is, in fact, a symptom of emotional disequilibrium. The so-called emotional imbalance refers to having a relatively strong tendency to a certain kind or aspect of emotional experience in a specific social situation, and intentionally or unintentionally giving vent to such emotional experience as the main emotion in emotional expression. During the Jacobin dictatorship, this emotional imbalance in favor of fear and anger spread through the emotional community that supported the dictatorship.

The anti-authoritarian emotional community included not only feudal nobles who opposed the republic, but also speculators who were resented and revolutionaries who were suppressed with other factions. They were usually in a suppressed position in the revolution and were severely punished after a biased trial. Fear and insecurity constituted their main emotional experience at this time. At this point, their actions were closer to survival than self-defense. However, both flight and sabotage can stimulate people's already unbalanced emotions, creating more negative feedback.

As for the neutral emotional community, its main body is made up of ordinary people. In this community, the individual emotions are the most unstable, and the members are also mobile. The individuals tend to think from their own interests, but they are also very vulnerable to external propaganda and the influence of the situation turbulence. At the same time, they tend to express strong concerns about the events related to their interests in the revolution. Therefore, under the emotional system of the Jacobin dictatorship, their personal emotional expression was more bound to submit to the emotional community that supported the dictatorship, and their concerns about the revolutionary situation and social chaos were forced to hide. These hidden worries and panic will not be eliminated automatically, but will continue to grow and spread with the intensification of the Red Terror.

The composition of the social emotional community during the Jacobin dictatorship is very unique: the three main emotional communities are all faced with life-and-death crisis and complex social environment, and the resulting emotional imbalance further intensifies social contradictions and makes each party more inclined to take extreme measures to achieve the purpose of protecting themselves.

4 People's emotional appeals and the Jacobin Dictatorship

When the French Revolution began, the people welcomed it with such strong positive feelings that they were shocked by the fact that for the first time they had defeated their oppressors with their own hands. Under such circumstances, the revolutionary government tried to build up the emotional system with "emotionalism" as the core mentioned above. They tried to guide the people's emotional power to construction rather than destruction through revolutionary legislation. However, in the process, the Revolutionary parliament failed to respond to the people's fears in the right way, nor did it prevent mass violence. The September killings marked the loss of the Revolutionary Assembly's mediating role between the revolution and the masses, and the people, once again aware of their own great power and the right to exercise that power, chose to take justice into their own hands and express their passion and anger in violent ways. [5] In this situation, the people need a revolutionary government that will help them to complete their punishment, or they will take their growing anger into their own hands. The Jacobins then duly responded to the needs of the people, on the one hand raising the will of the masses to punish the nobles and speculators to the will of the state, and on the other hand justifying their exclusion of dissenters. Through trial and execution, the emotional community of the dictatorship greatly weakened the counterrevolutionary forces, and at the same time achieved the goal of avoiding the decline of the popular revolutionary enthusiasm and the distortion of the revolutionary purpose.

At the early stage of the dictatorship, these measures undoubtedly saved the revolutionary order and helped the people to vent their extreme contrarian emotions in a relatively orderly way to some extent. In the process, however, the subversive activities of the dictatorship brought even more serious emotional imbalance to the Jacobins. Thus, in order to further defend the revolution, the Jacobins raised the platform of pure violence and revenge. In 1794, Robespierre forced the National Convention to pass Georges Auguste Couthon's new decree "Punishing the enemies of the People" on June 10, transforming the policy of terror into a brutal and bloody law of terrorism. [6] Since then, the French society during the dictatorship has been trapped in a vicious circle of reciprocal and intensified emotions. No one can stay safe from the increasingly harsh dictatorship, until the people's fear and aversion to the dictatorship overrode the desire for retribution and revenge. When the Thermidor coup took place on July 27, 1794, just as the Jacobins responded to the desire for retribution and revenge, the Thermidorians responded to the urgent feeling of the people for a return to normal revolutionary order. Since then, the Jacobins' rule has been overthrown and the French Revolution has entered a new phase.

5 Conclusion

More such emotional shifts during the Revolution often took place in a few short months, but this one took hundreds of years to accumulate. When the long years of exploitation and exploitation had built up the anger of the people to an unbridling level, it only took a moment for the people themselves to overthrow the palaces built by blood

and sweat. However, after that, how to channel the passionate emotions of the people has become one of the most important propositions of the revolutionary regime. The Jacobin dictatorship was in fact a direct consequence of the revolutionary government's failure to channel the emotions of the people. By analogy, it is not difficult to find that such a problem exists in almost every revolution in modern times, and how to deal with this problem after the revolution becomes the key to whether the revolution can develop in a less socially destructive form.

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