



Feeling Political on Armistice Day: Institutional Struggles in Interwar France

Karsten Lichau

Paris, 11 November 2011: just months before the end of his term, French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced a new law proposing to turn Armistice Day, the *Jour de l'Armistice*, into a day of remembrance for all French soldiers who had died in service.¹ Traditionally devoted to the commemoration of the First World War and its soldier victims, the annual event on 11 November would now include those of the Second World War, the Algerian War, and more recent conflicts in Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mali. In an ensuing controversy, French historians, veterans' associations, and local politicians spoke against lumping all wars together, asserting the importance of not forgetting the specific history of the First World War. The historian Nicolas Offenstadt, a prominent voice in the debates, warned that the threat of oblivion loomed large. Not only was the 'singularity of the conflict at risk of being dissolved', but there was also a risk of erasing the cultural achievement of the veterans after a 'fierce struggle' in 1922 for 11 November 'to be made a national holiday honouring their fallen comrades'.² Offenstadt's complaint that the new 2011 commemoration was not 'a moment favouring acknowledgement and reflection, but the exaltation of emotional sentiments only', however, was

¹ Throughout this chapter, the French term *Jour de l'Armistice* is used in order to distinguish it from the British Armistice Day tradition, which differed in substantial ways.

² Offenstadt, 'Singularité', unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

likewise at risk of downplaying the central role emotions had played in that ‘fierce struggle’.³ As this chapter will show, that struggle was fought with emotions, but was also a struggle over emotions.

In France, it was some years after the end of the First World War before a public commemoration ceremony found its way into national memory culture. In the disputes over the most appropriate way of commemorating this war and its soldier victims, emotions were both a driving force and were themselves at stake. Agreement on the overall design of such a ceremony, including the date on which it should be held and the emotional templating it should adopt, was not reached until 1922, and it was not until 1928 that the model was generally accepted by all major institutions involved in memory politics. In Britain, by contrast, the model for a commemoration ceremony on Armistice Day was introduced in 1919 and by 1920 had become firmly established. Its key elements—the observance of two minutes’ silence, the cenotaph, and the cult of the unknown soldier—immediately resonated with the population.

French memory politics in the interwar period have been routinely characterized as embracing what Antoine Prost has famously called a ‘patriotic pacifism’, that is, a widely shared, though not unanimously accepted mingling of anti-militarism, internationalism, humanitarianism, and a belief in the universal dimension of French republican values.⁴ His emphasis on the allegedly apolitical character of ‘patriotic pacifism’ has recently been challenged, especially its association with ‘civic action’ values, which purportedly represent a historic ‘French allergy to fascism’ that served as a kind of ‘immunity’ among veterans.⁵ Nevertheless, his groundbreaking and detailed studies of French veterans’ associations and their memory culture have deeply influenced research on ‘Great War’ remembrance in France and beyond.⁶

³ Chaverou, ‘11 novembre’.

⁴ Cf. Prost, *Mentalités*, 77–119.

⁵ Dobry, ‘Thèse immunitaire’. For a summary of the critical discussion, see Millington, *Victory*, 9–12. Critics rightly point to the collapsing of members and leaders of veterans’ associations and their distinct political positions into a single, unified veterans’ identity, and the alleged lack of seriousness of their political demands. These were not as naive as Prost and others have repeatedly claimed. On the contrary, ‘[i]n casting doubt on the capability of republican institutions and parliamentarians to represent the national interest and in posing themselves as the true representatives of these, the veterans undermined the perceived legitimacy of the regime’ (Millington, *Victory*, 18).

⁶ Cf. Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, 14–18; Dalisson, *11 novembre*; Julien, *Paris*; Eichenberg, *Kämpfen*.

Prost has explicitly pointed to patriotic pacifism being first and foremost a ‘powerful feeling’.⁷ Yet this emotional dimension originates not only, as Prost has claimed, in war experience itself or in the nineteenth-century cultural traditions that shaped it.⁸ Rather, the feelings feeding into ‘patriotic pacifism’ also owe their existence to a process that took place in the early interwar years and was driven by a rivalry between three powerful institutions: the state, the veterans’ organizations, and the church.⁹ If emotions were drivers of this conflictual process, they were fuelled by the competition or confrontation between the previously mentioned institutions traditionally engaged in war remembrance. This chapter will therefore show that the attitude of ‘patriotic pacifism’ and its emotional style were anything but obvious from the beginning. The emergence of this style spanned several years and can only be understood if the historical dynamics of the conflict between these institutions and their divergent, sometimes irreconcilable ambitions are given due attention.¹⁰ Their views diverged widely, not only on what date would be most appropriate, but also which emotions. The quarrel was spurred by the fact that all three institutions found themselves confronted in the interwar years by problems either pre-dating or brought about by the war. As a consequence, they each underwent a process of transformation or crisis, which impacted both their influence in memory politics and their societal role more broadly.

⁷Prost emphasizes that ‘more than an opinion or an ideology, it’s a powerful feeling. Though it doesn’t lack rational justifications, its force comes from somewhere else. ... If we want to understand it, we must therefore not only analyse it as a theory; prior to this, we must find its traces in the affectivity of the *anciens combattants*’ (Prost, *Mentalités*, 78).

⁸For the first, cf. Prost, *Mentalités*, 78–85. Prost revised his earlier position when arguing against Mosse in ‘The Impact of War on French and German Political Cultures’.

⁹Julien (*Paris*, 12) also conceives of collective memory as ‘an interaction between lived or transmitted experience, and institutional elaborations ...; it remains susceptible to permanent evolution. [It is] an effect of the past, and at the same time a reconstruction commanded by the imperatives of the presence, and a result of negotiations between different actors.’ Cf. also Delporte et al., *Guerre*.

¹⁰The term ‘emotional style ... stresses the synchronic interactions between “dominant and subordinate” emotional styles’, which ‘encompass ... the experience, fostering, and display of emotions, and oscillate between discursive patterns and embodied practices as well as between common scripts and specific appropriations. ... This is essential for focusing on coexisting modes of thinking about, handling, generating and showing emotions’ (Gammerl, ‘Emotional Styles’, 162–63).

While illustrating the crucial role of institutions for understanding the emergence of political feelings, this chapter also demonstrates how, conversely, emotions can be key to understanding the historical emergence, evolution, and transformation of institutions. By showing that the institutional history of the French veterans' movement followed not only legal and ideological, but also emotional dynamics, we can account for the historical and political power of emotions and their potential to template institutions.

In Prost's view, the veterans' movement was characterized mainly by political tensions and institutional divisions that were not bridged until 1927. It was not until ideological and legal structures had become unified that one could observe the 'emergence of a *mouvement combattant*' that was more than a simple reaction to problems, but a coherent, institutionalized 'project' constituting an active movement in its own right.¹¹ If emotions are taken into account, however, the origins of that political unification and institutionalization can be traced back to a much earlier date: the 1922 commemoration of the day of armistice, which in subsequent years would become an emotional template for remembrance that was fervently demanded by a majority of the veterans' associations.

Recalling the aspect of motion inherent to emotions (the term being derived from the French *émouvoir* and the Latin *emovere*, both referring to movement), emotions turn out to be a driving force in building a coherent movement and establishing it as an institution. The (re)negotiation of emotion was central both to the veterans' movement and to the emergence and (re)affirmation of *Jour de l'Armistice* as an annually staged event. As a means of internal communication, such emotional (re)negotiations gave the institution its coherence; as a means of external communication, they were crucial in the pursuit of the institution's political goals and interests. Accordingly, the institutional templating of emotions and the emotional templating of institutions interacted. Such reciprocal templating contains both a synchronic and a diachronic dimension. It works through numerous 'emotional practices' that go beyond mere expressions of feeling, commonly known as emotions.¹² By means of a complex dispositive of sounds, pictures, places, textual, or oral discourses and their distribution via media, a whole range of sensory, kinaesthetic, rational, or

¹¹ Prost, *Histoire*, 111.

¹² Cf. Scheer, 'Are Emotions', 209.

physiological practices is set in motion.¹³ In the context of *Jour de l'Armistice*, feelings of grief, joy, honour, or reverence were produced by huge public gatherings of veterans or civilians, the decoration of streets and monuments with flowers or flags, the erection of temporal or permanent architectural structures, and visual or acoustic practices like illuminations, instrumental or vocal music, minutes of silence, and newspaper articles commenting on them. These and other practices combined to form the templating process, in that they conveyed specific interpretive meanings and demanded a 'requisite bodily disposition' from participants.¹⁴ Importantly, it must be noted that the participants could adhere to these demands, but could also contravene or subvert them.

'LARGER THAN THE COLOSSEUM': THE STATE'S DESIRE FOR TRIUMPHANT GLORIFICATION

Between 1919 and 1922, a succession of different models were put forward for 'celebrating' the war and the armistice that had ended it. Each of the institutions sought to establish a commemoration ceremony that would convey the feelings they deemed adequate. Explicitly or implicitly foregrounding emotions that did not fit neatly together such as joy and grief, or triumphant pride and humble devotion, the proposed models were aimed at staging incongruous political narratives around what the war was about and how it should be remembered, demanding the performance of sometimes irreconcilable feelings. These emotions were not simply there, as an immutable (inner) source for outer expression, but emerged and evolved out of a whole complex of practices that became institutionalized over the years.

State institutions were the first to wield their power over memory politics. As early as November 1918, within weeks of the armistice declaration, members of the lower chamber of the French parliament (*chambre des députés*) launched several propositions to commemorate the war and its end and to celebrate the return of the victorious troops. Some called for 11 November—the date of the armistice—to be made a national holiday.¹⁵

¹³On spatial aspects, see Gammerl, 'Emotional Styles', 163–66; on the media dimension, see Pernau, 'Feeling Communities', esp. 13–17.

¹⁴Scheer, 'Are Emotions', 216.

¹⁵See discussion of legislative proposal no. 5201 and resolution proposal no. 5203 in 'Séance du mercredi 13 Novembre', 3029–30.

Others put forward the idea of a joint ceremony between the Allies ‘in order to glorify the victorious outcome of the war and commemorate the peoples’ liberation’.¹⁶ Most of the proponents were centrist or left-wing politicians, all of them veterans, and a terminology of ‘glorification’ and ‘triumph’ prevailed.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts (*Ministère de l’Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts*), a Commission for the Artistic Design of the Victory Celebration (*Commission de la Décoration artistique des Fêtes de la Victoire*) was established to draw up plans for an official ceremony. After several months of deliberation, however, it was not 11 November that was chosen for the event, but 14 July, as the government had proposed to the chamber of deputies on 27 June.¹⁷ The July date linked the armistice commemoration to a longstanding tradition of glorifying the French Revolution and the Republic it had produced—a tradition laden with feelings of joy, pride, and national enthusiasm. Timed to honour the legendary *Fête de la Fédération* of 1790, this traditional date had been celebrated throughout the nineteenth century. In 1880, it was declared a national holiday and subsequently turned into ‘a new form of national-military representation’.¹⁸ Military parades took centre stage in the public ceremony, augmented by an entertainment programme that included processions, theatre performances, dancing, and fireworks. This attitude of joyous and proud glorification of the French nation, of its republican values and armed forces, was what the government in 1919 desired to convey through its proposed war commemoration ceremony, too, in the hope that memory politics would counterbalance emerging crises in numerous other political fields.

As with many European countries, both victorious and defeated, the French state and its executive and legislative bodies were confronted with various challenges. The war had caused an economic and financial crisis, with a decline in agrarian and industrial productivity and a weak currency. In terms of foreign politics, the question of German reparation and quarrels with allied nations about the redemption of war credits received by France from the US weighed heavily on successive governments. The traditional political and cultural bifurcation into ‘two’ Frances (*les deux France*)—one of which was moderately leftist, secular, and

¹⁶ ‘Séance du mardi 19 Novembre’, 3052.

¹⁷ ‘2^e séance du vendredi 27 Juin’, 3044–49.

¹⁸ Vogel, *Gleichschritt*, 39.

liberal-republican and the other conservative and Catholic—had been mitigated during wartime, when most political forces had joined the Sacred Union (*Union Sacrée*). This appeasement continued after the election victory in November 1919 of the *bloc national*, a term that referred both to the broad electoral alliance of conservative and centrist parties and to the even broader coalitions that took shape between 1919 and 1924. These coalitions claimed to be a continuation of the *Union Sacrée* and at times spanned a political spectrum that was so broad that it included far-right royalists and Catholic conservatives as well as centrist and socialist radicals, excluding only the French section of the Workers' International (*Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière*) and the communist party. Earlier divisions and disputes over secularism and social and foreign politics, however, would soon re-emerge, resulting in the radicals leaving the coalition in 1923.

Given France's traditional preference for deliberative democracy in which politicians were only loosely bound to parties—a legacy of the nineteenth century—rapidly changing governments were a source of political instability. At that time, the government was still conceived of as a parliamentary government, encompassing both the executive and legislative organs.¹⁹ Yet political tensions between them had emerged in the later war years, when the government had acquired an unprecedented influence it was loath to relinquish. After the war, efforts towards 'modernization' and a stronger executive reignited these tensions, and in terms of memory politics, political divergence between the executive and the parliament surfaced repeatedly.

Of particular relevance for memory politics were the hardships of both the war and the years immediately afterwards. The immense loss of lives during wartime and repeated mutinies of soldiers fed up with the mass killing (which for some in the French army ended in military trials and executions within the French army²⁰) had called governmental war politics into question. There was also the difficult task of re-integrating huge numbers of ex-soldiers into society, especially the rustic, simple infantrymen known as *poilus*, as well as a strengthening of radical left-wing movements who were increasingly engaged in violent confrontations with far-right political groups. In sum, though France had been among the

¹⁹ Cf. Roussellier, 'Gouvernement', 253–54.

²⁰ Cf. Offenstadt, *Fusillés*.

nations who ‘won’ the war, the political, economic, and cultural situation did not feel like victory.

This is why the government, and in particular its executive branch, wanted the armistice celebrations to refasten the political bond that had been formed between the government, political parties, soldiers, and the population under the *Union Sacrée*. The 14 July ceremony was therefore to embrace an emotional attitude privileging joy, thankfulness, pride, and honour. As for the overall design of the event, several proposals were submitted to the Commission for the Artistic Design of the Victory Celebrations for examination. To the vexation of some of its members, however, its president, Jean d’Estournelles de Constant, declared in its first session that he had decided to only present one of the proposals—the one favoured by the government. There followed a minor scandal, with a delegation led by Jules Simyan, a deputy member of the Commission, protesting against these proceedings.

One of the proposals not presented to the commission was from the reputed architect Alexandre Marcel, who had been responsible for the renovation of the Panthéon. His design was praised in a report by a sub-committee of the Commission, whose members were finally permitted to see his and one other proposal. The report noted that ‘his adornment of the Panthéon and of the Rue Soufflot for a funeral ceremony is remarkable and merits special recommendation to the attention of the administration’. Marcel’s ideas were nevertheless dismissed on the grounds that it was ‘difficult, due to their character and composition to amalgamate them with those of the official project, which is conceived according to an entirely different feeling’.²¹

Upon closer inspection of the government-preferred proposal that was ultimately selected by the Commission, this is hardly surprising. Authored by a group of architects and painters including Gustave Jaulmes, André Mare, and Louis Süe, it consisted of two parts that effectively separated the commemoration of the dead from the celebration of victory. Its plan was as follows: on the night of 13 July, a huge cenotaph bearing the illuminated inscription ‘To those who died for the fatherland’ was to be erected under the Arc de Triomphe and saluted by the veterans. The following day would be dedicated to the living, with a joyous celebration of the victory and a huge parade of troops along the central axis of Paris:

²¹ ‘Rapport de la 2e Sous-commission chargée de l’examen du Projet du Gouvernement’, Archives de Paris, VK³.0200, 2.

‘The Place [de l’Étoile] and the Arc de Triomphe constitute the main attraction of the overall composition. It will be the first time victorious troops parade under the arches of this grandiose monument.’²² This was anything but original, a criticism that was raised during the parliamentary discussions of 27 June. As deputy Jean Bon put it, ‘We are disappointed, and we are perhaps not the only ones. We hoped, and everyone with us, for something great and, above all, something new. To me, the programme offered to us seems a bit simple; it follows the beaten track in every way.’²³

Indeed, the proposal was more or less a continuation of the traditional military parades of 14 July, only magnified to gigantic proportions. An accompanying plan envisioned the construction of a ‘vast amphitheatre, the volume of which will harmonize with that of the Arc de Triomphe and will provide an imposing frame for it’. This enormous edifice was to accommodate the crowds watching the parading troops, and some deputies even ‘cherished the dream of a variant which covers the whole Place by an amphitheatre larger than the Colosseum’.²⁴

Though this ‘dream’ would ultimately not come true, and though the amphitheatre had to be reduced in size due to practical constraints, the mass participation of the wider population represented a minor innovation compared to the military ceremonies established in the 1880s. Spectators had previously been limited to the local and the national ‘elite committed to the state and the public sector, but whom the organizers considered the proper audience’.²⁵ Undoubtedly, however, the emotional layout of the newly proposed event was in line with this tradition—and with the government’s wish for the *Fête de la Victoire* to glorify the triumph of the French army. This expectation of a jubilant ceremony is reflected in other sources, too. In a December 1918 proposal to the municipal council of Paris, M. F. d’Andigné requested that a preparatory commission be set up, confessing his concern about potentially frenzied crowds: ‘I’m worried, not about the “actors” of the piece which will be performed before our enchanted eyes, but about the “spectators”, both because of their number and because of the frenetic enthusiasm by which, for good reason, they will be overwhelmed.’²⁶

²² *Ibid.*, 4.

²³ ‘2^e séance du vendredi 27 Juin’, 3045 (Jean Bon).

²⁴ ‘Rapport’, 4.

²⁵ Vogel, ‘Militärfeiern’, 206.

²⁶ M. F. d’Andigné, ‘Proposition relative à la constitution d’une Commission chargée d’organiser les fêtes qui précéderont et accompagneront le retour à Paris des troupes victo-

Joy and enthusiasm not only prevailed in the anticipated visions of the event, but also in its retrospective depictions by the newspapers, which became conduits for the joyful and triumphant emotional attitude of the ceremony.²⁷ The author of the conservative *Le Gaulois*, for example, embraced a hyperbolic tone typical of the period and genre:

I have lived through an epic hour. I won't try to describe it: words will betray my thoughts. Everything was so prodigious, so sublime, that human measure fell short of it. Joy, emotion, elation, frenzy, millions of beating hearts captured by the same frisson, millions of voices shouting out the same happiness and the same pride, seven kilometres of enthusiasm!²⁸

Similar reports appeared in other newspapers.²⁹ Remembrance of soldiers' death and suffering was not totally absent from the celebrations of July 1919, however. It was granted some importance, not only in the evening salute in front of the cenotaph, but also in the leading position taken by facially disfigured servicemen (*gueules cassées*) in the huge veterans' parade. Nevertheless, both the date and the overall atmosphere of the 14 July ceremonies prevented feelings of grief and mourning from gaining the upper hand. They were not absent, but subordinated to a primary emotional attitude of joy, pride, glorification, and honour. The humble reverence that would become characteristic of 'patriotic pacifism' was still a long way off.

'CAN THERE BE A CELEBRATION FOR MEN WHOSE HEARTS
ARE HEAVY WITH GRIEF?' THE VETERANS' CAMPAIGN
FOR THE *JOUR DE L'ARMISTICE*

Placing the memory of the recent war in the tradition of joyous, celebratory parades for a 'nation in arms' was not what most veterans had in mind for a commemorative ceremony. They generally shared the desire for their victorious efforts and exploits to be publicly commended, but also wanted recognition for their suffering during the war and subsequent, continuing distress. Reducing commemoration to joy and pride in victory was neither

rieuses', Archives de Paris, VK³.0200, 2.

²⁷ Cf. Pernau, 'Feeling Communities', 13–17.

²⁸ Meyer, 'Une heure'.

²⁹ Cf. Leygues, 'Fêtes de la victoire'; 'La Journée'; Feuquières, 'Apothéose'.

sufficient nor appropriate as it represented neither the traumatizing world of the war experience nor the world of social withdrawal inhabited by veterans in its aftermath. In an article published on 11 November 1922 in the conservative journal *L'Intransigeant* and reprinted the following week in *La France Mutilée*—the organ of France's largest veterans' association, the Federal Union of French Associations of the Wounded, Disabled, Reformed, Veterans of the Great War, Widows, Orphans, and Ancestors (*Union fédérale des associations françaises de blessés, mutilés, réformés, anciens combattants de la grande guerre, veuves, orphelins et ascendants*)—Jacques Péricard described this latter world as one characterized by feelings that were often silenced and suppressed in public, yet incredibly powerful:

The veterans one meets in the streets, cafés, salons, offices, are restrained. They must get on with their families, their relations, their friends, their interests as customers or sellers, employees or employers. They do not shy away from shaking hands with a quitter, with a war profiteer. Once in the company of comrades, however, they become themselves again and reveal the essence of their nature.³⁰

Péricard's article not only emphasized the emotional style that made up this 'nature', but insisted that it could only be understood through the institutional templating established by the veterans' organizations. These were comprised of certain bodily and media practices conveyed through distinctive language and carried out in particular locations, assemblies, and meetings:

One might presume to know the veterans' mental state simply by listening to the dozen *poilus* each of us has heard speak in his own milieu. Even more so, if one has himself been a soldier. One does not know them, however, if one is not familiar with the veterans' associations, if one does not follow their reunions, their meetings, their congresses, if one does not assiduously read their journals and newspapers. For the world of the *anciens combattants* is really a world of its own, with its own morality, language, press, passions, enthusiasms, and indignations; a world of some four million inhabitants.³¹

³⁰ Péricard, 'Combattants'.

³¹ *Ibid.*

It is not by chance that the above-cited text was published on 11 November—the anniversary of the armistice. Cherished by the French veterans, this day was at the centre of their struggle for a commemoration worthy of their suffering. Yet it was not only the date that was important, but also the emotional attitude of the event, which, as Péricard emphasized, could hardly be joyful and gay. To properly articulate the emotional style of the *poilus*' world, the celebration would need to take on a more sober, subdued, and mournful tone:

The veterans' celebration? ... Can there be a celebration for men whose hearts are heavy with grief for so many comrades fallen at their side, the grief of so many destroyed lives, the grief of so many shattered illusions? Look at them. See the gravity on the foreheads of even the youngest ones. See these bitter wrinkles at their mouths.³²

The 'emotional physiognomy' described by Péricard, featuring grief, disillusionment, and withdrawal, but also characterized by lineaments of anger and rage, was anything but compatible with the one typically displayed on 14 July. If it was to become visible and be publicly acknowledged, commemorative events would have to break with the emotional attitude of the traditional state and military ceremony.

Such a break was in line with a general trend in public representations of the military and war, which had undergone a populist turn, or 'populist framing'.³³ Whereas the deeds of the military elites—generals and high-ranked officers—had hitherto prevailed in cultural memory, after 1918 the lowly soldiers who had fought in the trenches of the 'Great War' became key figures as both the subjects and objects of war remembrance, even though they were no longer formally part of the military institution. In France, this was also mirrored by the numerical strength of the veterans' movement, with overall membership close to three million, representing more than 40 per cent of all ex-servicemen. Such a ratio was not reached in any other belligerent nation. In terms of memory politics, the French military establishment was divided into at least two factions. While the elite ranks mostly sided with the government's attempt at glorification, ordinary soldiers and veterans had something different in mind.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Cf. Ziemann, *Commemorations*, 16–19.

Numerical and social strength notwithstanding, the French veterans' movement was also confronted with considerable internal divisions and tensions. For a variety of reasons, the veterans' associations were marked by plurality, fragmentation, and rivalry.³⁴ Founded at different times (before, during, or after the war) and serving particular interests based on medical, military, or professional bonds, they lacked a coherent voice. The most important division was a political one between the two most influential associations: the conservative National Union of Combatants (*Union nationale des combattants*, or UNC), founded on the very day of the armistice, and the Federal Union (*Union fédérale*, or UF), which was close to the centrist and left-wing parties. Both associations were open to all former soldiers (invalids and ex-servicemen), and both were politically aligned to several of the numerous smaller- and medium-sized associations such as the Republican Association of Veterans (*Association républicaine des anciens combattants*), the General Association of War Disabled (*Association générale des mutilés de guerre*), or the National Union of the Disabled and Recovered (*Union nationale des mutilés et réformés*). Even though nearly all veterans' associations claimed to be non-political, most of them were clearly located somewhere on the political spectrum.

Interne political rivalries and historical and professional distinctions hindered veterans' organizations from having their voices heard in politics, even by a parliament that itself was composed up to 40 per cent by ex-servicemen and dubbed the 'blue horizon chamber' (*chambre bleu horizon*), after the light blue of the French uniforms. Prost describes the history of the French veterans during the 1920s as having been motivated by a 'march towards unification', emphasizing that theirs was not a search for a lost unity, but one that had never existed.³⁵ According to Prost, this unity was not found until 1927, with the creation of the 'Estates-general of Wounded France' (*États généraux de la France meurtrie*) and subsequent establishment of a confederation by the same name, which was joined by most of the French veterans' organizations, including the UF and the UNC. Prost's periodization relies on two points: that the veterans' organizations diverged both politically and in terms of their legal, administrative structures.³⁶ Yet if we go beyond this conventional perspective and acknowledge that institutions owe their existence not only to

³⁴ Cf. Prost, *Histoire*, 87–113.

³⁵ Prost, *Histoire*, 111.

³⁶ Cf. Prost, *Histoire*, 87–88.

mental convictions and formal, juridical acts of institutionalization, but to complex social processes and practices, especially those involving emotions—then veterans' unity can be detected at a much earlier point. The first indications of unity can be traced back to the 'emotional physiognomy' of commemoration ceremonies and the institutional templating of the *Jour de l'Armistice* established between 1919 and 1922—that is to say, at a time when Prost considers the divisions to have been particularly strong.

This brings us back to the further development of French war commemoration. Veterans' reluctance towards a 'celebration', described in detail by Péricard in 1922, had in fact already been prevalent in 1919. The celebrations of 14 July that year, with their emphasis on the triumphant state and military victory, did not suit the veterans at all. As early as 13 July, the *Journal des Mutilés & Réformés*, their most important newspaper and the only one commercially available, had declared:

Militarism is war, and we are fed up with war. Let us therefore do away with everything that may stir up the militarism in our country. Military ceremonies are the handmaidens of militarism. Let us avoid them. No more bellicose ceremonies. ... No more revues; they are useless spectacles designed to inflame the masses. France needs to take a good hard look at itself.³⁷

Instead, a large majority of the veterans' associations supported various requests by parliamentary deputies to have 11 November declared a national holiday and for a public ceremony to be held on this occasion. This alternative date—the anniversary of the armistice—was to become a counter-model, distanced in both symbolic and emotional terms from the festive, joyful, and glorifying tradition of 14 July.

In the beginning these initiatives did not enjoy much success. On 25 October 1919, long past July, a new law determined that the armistice would be commemorated with a ceremony devoted 'to the memory and the glorification of the heroes who died for France during the Great War'. Yet the proposed date for the ceremony was not the anniversary day of the armistice, but 1 and 2 November, All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, respectively. The sober, pensive, and reverent atmosphere associated with these holy days on the Christian calendar provided a ready-made emotional template that matched the veterans' associations' desire for a more

³⁷ Linville, 'Entre nous'.

humble mood focused on grief, freed from triumphalist bluster. They were not appropriate, however, for meeting the demand for public recognition of suffering, since they located grief and mourning in the private context of the family (All Souls') and the Church (All Saints').³⁸ Large-scale, state-initiated ceremonies were for the most part absent on 11 November 2019. A minor ceremony was held at the *Dôme Les Invalides*—located in the middle of the large veteran hospital and retirement home complex—organized by the local city council of Paris, but it failed to reach a wider public audience or spark much media interest. In the following years, the veterans' associations engaged in a struggle to have 11 November, the day of the armistice, become the date on which the French nation mourned and remembered the dead—not only in private, but by public ceremonial.

Before further examining how the veterans transformed their aspirations into practice, it is now time to introduce the third institution involved in the commemoration process and the templating of its emotional physiognomy: the Catholic Church. Strictly speaking, the 1905 law on the separation of church and state ruled out formal Church participation in a public political ceremony. This law had concluded the secularization process that had run throughout the nineteenth century, which had seen a steady growth in French anticlericalism. With the creation of a 'military-national public sphere' in the Third Republic, of which the July military parades introduced in 1880 were a clear manifestation, the military had 'assumed centre stage in the official national cult, a position the Catholic Church and its subsidiaries had occupied during the Second Empire'.³⁹

In spite of the 1905 law, things had shifted significantly during wartime. A growing demand for mourning rituals and funeral practices enabled the Church to reconquer lost terrain in the area of public ceremonies.⁴⁰ In the early years of hostilities, a rapidly increasing number of dead soldiers led to the spread of local and regional forms of commemorating the fallen. La Marne Day (*Journée de la Marne*), held in remembrance of the 1914 battles at the Marne river that had hindered the German army from conquering Paris, attracted much attention and was well-attended. On this and other remembrance days organized by local or regional

³⁸ On private mourning practices, with attention to France, cf. Damousi, 'Mourning Practices', 361–71.

³⁹ Vogel, *Gleichschritt*, 39.

⁴⁰ Cf. Becker, *Guerre et la foi*; Dalisson, *11 novembre*, 40–41.

administrations but national in character, the Catholic Church was quickly on hand to answer the need for cultural expertise in mourning and remembrance practices, a need that state institutions could not satisfy.⁴¹ Accordingly, commemorative events like La Marne Day often included a mass said by the local bishop. This was often followed by a pilgrimage-like procession led by clergymen in full vestments to former battle sites or nearby monuments, where they held sermons, said prayers, and sang Christian songs, alongside local, regional, or national representatives of the state. These events resonated strongly with the population and the press. By 1915, on a local and regional level at least, the Catholic Church was thus back on the scene in official public ceremonies, bringing with it a centuries-old heritage of commemoration practices laden with grief, humility, and reverence, and not inclined to enthusiastic outbursts of joy and cheerfulness. Unsurprisingly, the re-entry of the Church into public politics caused some unease with state representatives, who repeatedly protested against this violation of the laic principle. The prefect of the Seine-et-Marne region, for example, was puzzled by the ‘importance accorded to the mass celebrated by the archbishop of Reims ... on the occasion of a republican ceremony, and which is only a pretext’.⁴²

Although many others had no problems accepting Church involvement, the emotional reaction and unease of those who protested speaks to the broader controversy sparked by the political renegotiation of the role of the Church. This process of renegotiation had gathered pace during the war years when the *Union Sacrée* broke with the fierce anti-Catholicism of previous decades. After the victory of the *bloc national* in the 1919 elections, a rapprochement between the government and the Catholic Church found support among conservative and Catholic-aligned circles within the bloc. Despite calls to deescalate internal conflict around religious questions, they became a major problem within the *bloc national* and significantly contributed to the ever-deepening rifts between more right-wing conservatives (royalists or Catholics) and partisans of the secular republic (centrists, liberals, and socialist radicals), as well as to the bloc’s ultimate disintegration in 1923.

⁴¹ These ‘days of war’ (*Journées de Guerre*) encompassed a vast panoply of special themes and interests, including Poilus’ Day, the Day of the 75-Cannon, French-Belgium Day, Liberated Regions Day, Army Orphanage Day, and Devastated Regions Day. Cf. Dalisson, *11 novembre*, 32–36.

⁴² Cf. Archives départementales de Seine-et-Marne, M 8198, *passim*.

Catholic milieus did not distance themselves from the national enthusiasm around the 14 July celebrations in 1919, yet they did not forget to mention what was missing either: ‘From the official decorations, from the solemn program, God was absent.’⁴³ Luckily, there was a perfect opportunity to make up for this lack: the official opening ceremony of the Sacré-Cœur Basilica in October 1919. This became an occasion to hold a Day of Remembrance and Prayer for the War Dead (*Journée des souvenirs des morts de la guerre et de la prière pour eux*), barely two weeks before the remembrance ceremonies due to take place on 11 November. The Catholic Church was not at all opposed to the juxtaposition since it effectively placed the commemoration under its auspices. It is therefore hardly astonishing that Christian religious practices would also, in more subtle ways, seep into the 11 November ceremonies in subsequent years.

FROM NEGLECT TO APOTHEOSIS: INSTITUTIONALIZING THE *JOUR DE L’ARMISTICE*

The French model of war commemoration that took shape in the years between 1919 and 1922 grew out of the confrontation between a state that was reluctant to place mourning at the centre of commemorative events, and a veterans’ movement determined to see such events held on a suitable date and with an appropriate emotional attitude. The Catholic Church sided with the latter. This was a strategic coalition against all odds, for the large majority of veterans’ organizations clung to a secularist position. Nevertheless, in their desire for a humble form of remembrance in which grief and mourning took centre stage, the veterans were able to capitalize on the Church’s expertise, while the latter sought to reconquer lost terrain in public political ceremonial.

In 1920 the government made plans for a huge public ceremony to be held on 11 November, finally giving in to the veterans’ demand for an official commemoration of the armistice. A key challenge was negotiating the incorporation of diametrically opposed moods: solemn, humble mourning and the glorification of victory. Taking advantage of a coincidence, the fiftieth anniversary of the Third Republic was to be celebrated alongside the second anniversary of the armistice. This would enable engagement with a heroic past and the celebration of Republican values, while also attending to the commemoration of the recent war. In order to

⁴³ Franc, ‘Jour de gloire’.

reconcile divergent ambitions with regard to memory politics and their emotional staging, the ceremony would combine two parts: elaborate plans were drawn up to have the heart of Leon Gambetta, a recognized military hero and ‘father’ of the Third Republic, transferred to the Panthéon, and the body of a fallen soldier, to be chosen by a former comrade, disinterred and reburied anonymously at the Arc de Triomphe.

The parliamentary debate held to determine an appropriate resting place for the unknown soldier turned into a fierce struggle. The socialists—and some veterans—rejected the Arc de Triomphe, proposed by the Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts, fearing that it would frame the ceremony with an atmosphere of national glorification and military triumph, endowing it ‘solely with the character of a military celebration’.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, their demand for the soldier to be laid to rest in the Panthéon—side by side with Gambetta’s heart—was heavily attacked by the conservatives: in their eyes, the Panthéon was a republican national temple that was not only unpopular with the people, but ‘besmirched by Zola’.⁴⁵ At the end of a marathon session, which the president of the chamber had to suspend following an incident of verbal slander, the chamber finally agreed on the Arc de Triomphe. This effectively split the ceremony into a dual event, echoing the separation in 1919 across two symbolically and emotionally distinct dates in July and November. The split was further underlined by the distinct vocabulary used in official communications about the event. Whereas state rhetoric referred to the ‘fiftieth anniversary of the Republic’, local administrations mostly described the events as marking the ‘anniversary of armistice’. Despite all attempts at reconciliation, the struggle for the emotional templating of commemoration thus persisted. The Catholic Church, for its part, encouraged services to be held on 11 November, even though it had not been invited to join the official programme. Obviously, this show of benevolence by the Church had less to do with the ceremony itself than with the political situation: the reestablishment of official diplomatic relations with the Vatican was under discussion and was ultimately ratified by the French parliament on 30 November 1920.

⁴⁴ ‘Séance du lundi 8 Novembre 1920’, 3179 (Alexandre Bracke).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 3180 (Léon Daudet). By accusing the militarist, nationalist, and clerical conservative elites for the unlawful jailing of Alfred Dreyfus, Zola became a hero of secular liberalism and a leading figure in what became known as the Dreyfus affair. In 1908, his remains were transferred from the Montmartre cemetery to the Panthéon.

If the veterans' patriotic pacifism can be described as a 'powerful feeling', this was true in two ways. At stake was not only the emotional templating of public commemoration ceremonies. Feelings of discontent, or even anger, that reigned among the *anciens combattants* were themselves a historical force fuelling their political initiatives and were decisive in their determination to make the commemoration a more solemn, mournful event and for this mood to be publicly visible. Veterans' vexation with the dominant memory politics of the state reached a point of climax the following year, when the chamber of deputies introduced a new law on 9 November 1921 declaring the establishment of an annual Celebration of Victory and Freedom (*Fête de la Victoire et de la Paix*), but without making it a public holiday. The justification was that the number of public holidays needed to be kept to a minimum in light of the difficulties facing the French economy. Accordingly, the ceremony would default each year to the nearest Sunday. A proposal to allow the 1921 ceremony, by way of exception, to take place on the actual day of 11 November was rejected at the last minute by the senate on 8 November. The chamber of deputies was thus placed under pressure to rapidly vote in the new law, with immediate effect, and a Sunday celebration was set in stone. Learning about this at very short notice, veterans' organizations of all ideological stripes felt rebuffed and expressed their frustration and anger in numerous letters to national and local political representatives. The Association of Blessed Veterans of the Canton de Salon, for example, sent a telegram on 10 November to 'energetically protest against [the] postponement [of the] Armistice'.⁴⁶

Not to be deterred, from 1921 onwards, veterans reclaimed 11 November all the more resolutely to be 'their day'. The anger they felt about it not being properly acknowledged only strengthened their determination:

Our day, that of the Armistice, is 11 November! Our dignity makes it our duty to commemorate our dearly departed on the anniversary of the day when the infamous slaughter came to an end. On Friday 11 November 1921, we will assemble at 11 o'clock in front of the Monument aux Morts, at the Place de Verdun.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Archives nationales de France, CC//14631, *passim*.

⁴⁷ 'Aux combattants!', quoted after Prost, *Mentalités*, 65.

This declaration, published at Tarbes in the veterans' journal *Le Combattant*, further announced that 'on Sunday 13 November, the *Fédération des Anciens Combattants* will refrain from participating in any celebration', leaving little doubt that 11 November was the only acceptable date for any proper commemoration.⁴⁸

All this was to result in a decisive final turn in 1922, which saw the emergence of the model that future celebrations of the armistice commemoration would follow; 11 November was finally declared a public holiday and the programme of what was to become a paradigmatic event embraced an emotional script largely in line with the veterans' aspirations. Veterans would gather and march together to a regional or local monument or cemetery (or, in Paris, to the Arc de Triomphe), flowers would be laid, and the names of the fallen read aloud, and all of this would culminate in one emotional climax point: the observance of France's first ever minute of silence. Many newspaper articles and commentaries, as well as numerous personal accounts in letters and diary entries, referred to this 'minute of contemplation' (minute de recueillement), as it was often called as the most important and emotionally arresting part of the day: 'It was the minute that touched me most, reaching down to the depths of my being ... that great, sublime, transcendent minute of silence and contemplation.'⁴⁹

The overall *Jour de l'Armistice* programme of 11 November 1922 and the minute's silence in particular are evidence of the veterans' ultimate success in turning the commemoration of the First World War into a public performance of grief and reverence towards the dead. This was a result of their own grassroots attempts at institutionalizing both *Jour de l'Armistice* as a national ceremony, and themselves as a political movement. The credit for the introduction of this emotional template is not theirs alone, however; it owed much to the strategic, inter-institutional alliance between the veterans' associations and the Catholic Church. It was not just the presence of clergymen and the visibility of religious symbols that gave the event a general Christian imprint.⁵⁰ The minute's silence,

⁴⁸ 'Aux combattants!'

⁴⁹ Pagès, 'Anniversaire'.

⁵⁰ Dalisson is mistaken when he argued that this was explicitly allowed by the *loi du 24 octobre 1922* itself, which stated that 'the law from 13 July 1905 concerning legal holidays is not applied to the celebration of 11 November' (*11 Novembre*, 51); the 13 July 1905 law was not the 1905 law that established the separation of state and church, but another law concerning the conditions for financial transactions on the day before and after a legal holiday.

which tapped into the centuries-old Christian tradition of silent, solemn gestures, and the ringing of Church bells immediately thereafter afforded a religious atmosphere to the overall dramaturgy.⁵¹ This was reflected in numerous personal accounts through metaphors or depictions that were reminiscent of Christian culture and art:

At 11 o'clock—the moment when, four years ago, the cannons suddenly fell mute all the way along the frontline—a short clarion sound calls for silence, hats are removed, the flags lowered A minute passes in that great reverent silence. Then the assembled crowd slowly diverges, and suddenly, the clouded sky clears, and a ray of sunlight makes the tops of the standards shine with light, like an apotheosis.⁵²

As already mentioned, *Jour de l'Armistice* did not become as popular or as widely observed in France as it did in Britain. Nevertheless, it did become established as the central ceremony of French war commemoration until 2011. One of the most striking testimonies of the veterans' success, both in asserting their preferred emotional style for the commemoration and in breaking with the glorifying attitude of the 14 July tradition, came from a voice clearly in favour of the latter. In an article published in *Le Petit Journal* in 1922, political dissent comingled with emotional dissent when author André Billy described his disappointment with the ceremony:

I would also like to repeat what I already said about this celebration of 11 November: it was much too sad, and by far too lacklustre. ... There was no joy in the faces. All the passers-by seemed deflated, having lost the illusions they had had in 1918. The city of Paris bore a funereal physiognomy, as though 11 November was instead the anniversary of Wilhelm II triumphantly leading his troops into the French capital.⁵³

Such reflections left no doubt that the emotional style of the war commemoration ceremony had ultimately been transformed, adopting the style embraced by the veterans' associations.

⁵¹ 'The foreheads are raised, life resumes, all is finished And all the church bells start ringing' (J. L., 'À l'Arc de Triomphe').

⁵² Rigaud, 'Anniversaire de l'Armistice'.

⁵³ Billy, 'Paris'.

The veterans' success notwithstanding, there were also some flaws in the execution of the ceremonies, most of which resulted from poor logistics. At the central ceremony in Paris, held at the Arc de Triomphe, an awkward repetition of the minute's silence was criticized in several newspaper reports. Some blamed high-ranking state representatives for this failure to unify the nation in synchronized silence:

[President] Millerand, accompanied by Monsieur Maginot and Monsieur Raiberti, Ministers of War and of the Marines, inspected the troops, and then went to salute the glorious blessed flags. [The] inspection took a bit longer than was planned, for the cannons' thunder had already sounded and commands for commencement had been given, but the President was still far from the tomb of the unknown soldier. While the enormous crowd, following the command, stood still in the most stirring silence, there was a moment of hesitation among the official representatives. Then the second cannon was sounded, and the final command once again made the air vibrate, without the most honorary representatives having paid their respects to the dead of the Great War, as had been planned. On [Prime and Foreign Minister] Poincaré's intervention, some short commands were given. The bugles were blown once again, and for a minute, the president, ministers, generals, and legates stood still, while the troops presented their arms. And despite this misunderstanding, it was very moving. The whole thing was over by 11:05.⁵⁴

In addition to this gaffe at the central ceremony, other problems with synchronizing participants occurred in some quarters of the capital Paris: the artillery gunfire signalling the beginning of the minute's silence could not be heard in many neighbourhoods. As one observer described, 'The pneumatic clocks show 11 o'clock. All ears are listening, cannon fire is supposed to sound ... But the noise of busses and taxis fills the town ... The clock hands move forward. Waiting, one minute, two minutes ... Nothing.'⁵⁵ Beyond Paris, in many smaller cities, and even more so in rural areas, information about the upcoming ceremonies and the national minute's silence had not arrived in time, which seriously hindered the achievement of solemn, unified contemplation.

⁵⁴ 'L'Anniversaire de l'armistice', 2.

⁵⁵ 'L'Anniversaire: La minute de silence'. For a more detailed discussion of the problems with acoustic synchronization of the minute's silence, see Lichau, 'Soundproof'.

All of these problems can be explained to a large degree by the lack of support from a state administration reluctant to fully mobilize public information networks and logistical infrastructure. An article published in *L'Intransigeant* on 13 November 1922 complained that 'the idea of a minute's silence, for example, which was very noble and beautiful, was very poorly executed'. Referring to the logistical failures at both the central ceremony and in the more distant neighbourhoods of Paris, the author explicitly blamed these gaffes on the lack of emotional engagement with the armistice commemoration by state authorities: 'We must say that this celebration of the armistice was tedious. Why? Because no effort was made to stimulate collective feelings, and the public authorities were unable to organize the day in a way that would have been desirable.'⁵⁶

As a consequence, the veterans had to rely on their own logistical capacities and information networks. These were considerable, but not sufficient to establish perfect synchronization. Still, an 'imperfect' commemoration was better than none at all. In an article published in *La France Mutilée* on 19 November 1922, the president of the UF, René Cassin, interpreted the overall mediocrity of the various ceremonies as proof of the veterans' tenacity, dignity, and honour in their arduous struggle for a decent commemoration, which, as he alluded to, echoed their military commitment in 1918: 'On 11 November, we were victorious. Not celebrating this day, even imperfectly, would have meant denying our victory, denying our dead, denying our ideals of law and justice.'⁵⁷

Cassin's critique provides strong evidence of the impact of institutional conflict on French memory politics in the early interwar period and illustrates how, even by 1922, this conflict between veterans and the state was anything but resolved. It was not until 1928, on the tenth anniversary of the armistice, that a resolution was ultimately reached. In that year, the state finally threw itself energetically into *Jour de l'Armistice*, informing local and regional administrations that 'this year, the government has decided to put extra effort into celebrating the national ceremony of 11 November'. At last, the state endorsed the emotional attitude of grief and mourning: 'In every municipality, a minute's silence will be observed, marked by a ceasing of traffic.'⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Wattman, 'Nos échos'.

⁵⁷ Cassin, 'Journée Nationale', 1.

⁵⁸ Archives départementales de Seine-et-Marne, M4163. While hardly any documents relating to a *Jour de l'Armistice* can be found in national, regional, and local French archives

CONCLUSION

By taking an institutional perspective on the emotions involved in the establishment of a public war commemoration ceremony in interwar France, this chapter has shown the close interlinkage between institutional dynamics and the history of emotions. Serving as a model for such an approach, it has also demonstrated how accounting for the interweaving of institutional and emotional histories allows us to challenge existing historical research—in this case, the history of French memory culture—on at least three points.

First, this chapter has illustrated how institutions and their political rivalries shaped the emergence of emotional templates. The political-cultural process that unfolded between 1919 and 1922 and that resulted in the creation of a remembrance ceremony to commemorate the armistice—with a specific emotional physiognomy of humble devotion, grief, and mourning for those who perished—greatly owed its dynamic to the conflict between three powerful institutions: the state, the veterans' associations, and the Catholic Church. If the practices of emotional templating deployed by institutions in this struggle are given their due attention, the oft-cited and widespread notion of 'patriotic pacifism' considered to be so characteristic of French memory politics needs to be revisited. This is because the 'powerful feelings' underpinning it were not only an outcome of direct war experience or pre-existing cultural traditions. They also sprang from the struggle between major societal institutions over what were deemed to be suitable emotions for public remembrance ceremonies. Emotions in memory politics cannot be directly deduced from past experiences, nor are they an unmediated reaction triggered by individual memory; rather, they grow out of long-term social processes in which both individual and social memory are shaped by institutional templating.⁵⁹

Second, just as this analytical model of the institutional templating of emotions sheds new light on ex-servicemen's 'patriotic pacifism', a reverse model—the emotional templating of institutions—allows for a different

for the period prior to 1928 (contrary to other national ceremonies), detailed schedules, maps, and other instructions exist for this and later years. Cf. Service historique de la Défense, 9 N 368; Archives départementales de Seine-et-Marne, M4163, M5880.

⁵⁹The importance for historians of emotions to break with linear conceptions of the emotion-trigger circuit and to conceive of emotional and other sensorial, rational, imaginative, and discursive practices as circular, reciprocal phenomena has also been highlighted in Pernau and Rajamani, 'Emotional Translations'.

periodization of the institutional history of the French veterans' movement. The institution of an 'active movement' of veterans did not need to wait for the legal enshrinement of the General Confederation of Wounded France (*Confédération générale de la France meurtrie*). Applying a history of emotions approach to the history of institutions reveals that the unification and institutionalization of the veterans' movement began much earlier than 1927 or 1928: with the introduction, in 1922, of emotional commemorative practices that would ultimately become the paradigmatic model for Armistice Day celebrations in France. It was in these early years that the political tensions between the centre-left and conservative wings of the veterans' associations were emotionally bridged for the first time. The process through which they asserted their united vision for a humble attitude of reverent mourning, with a public acknowledgement of their suffering at a national level, can be thought of as an emotional templating of institutions. Contemporary characterizations of the veterans' bitterness, grief, and withdrawal as the 'essence of their nature', which they only ever revealed at 'their reunions, their meetings, their congresses', hint at such a templating process.⁶⁰ This may inspire more work on how emotions are an integral, often neglected, part of the history of institutions.

Finally, this analysis of the manifold ceremonial practices that enabled the expression of emotions has highlighted the performative dimension in memory politics. This allows us to challenge yet another widespread assumption in the history of memory cultures after the First World War: the continuity thesis, put forward most famously by Jay Winter. According to his work on architectural, visual, and textual artefacts, war remembrance did not break with tradition and largely followed the pre-existing models.⁶¹ Yet recent studies have emphasized how memory cultures also heavily depend on performative elements and their non-material, temporary, and ephemeral qualities (an aspect foregrounded in later studies by Winter).⁶² The atmosphere of sober, solemn, and public mourning that

⁶⁰ Péricard, 'Combattants', 1.

⁶¹ Cf. Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 7–9.

⁶² A striking example of the reluctance to challenge the continuity thesis can be found in Hettling and Schölz, 'Bereavement', which affirms that '[t]he First World War ... resulted in the propagation of existing forms on a massive scale, but did not generate new ones. In this respect, it marked the climax of the 19th century's civic-national commemoration of the fallen' (4). This claim is based on the alleged separation of the dead's private and political body and a second division between mourning and meaning-making. This ignores the self-contradictory turn when later pointing to two crucial elements in the commemoration of the

veterans of the First World War successfully campaigned for in interwar France was markedly different from the tradition of triumphalist joy that had characterized the nineteenth-century military cult. Though this older emotional style still prevailed in the first remembrance ceremony of 14 July 1919, it had little in common with the ‘funereal physiognomy’ of the *Jour de l’Armistice* that emerged in subsequent years, a shift that was both lamented and hailed by newspapers. The new commemorative tradition established in connection with the 11 November anniversary of armistice, with its emotional climax of the minute’s silence, was a new form of emotional institution that would persist until 2011.

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First World War—its ‘emotionality’ (7) and the new practice of the minute’s silence—and rightly argues that these elements introduce a conflation between the political and the private body, meaning-making and mourning: ‘The private and political bodies of the fallen were reunited through emotional devotion. Thus, the minute of silence reflected an increasing trend in the 20th century: private emotional states found their way into the public sphere and were articulated publicly’ (11).

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