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Danielle Tartakowsky, *Manifester à Paris, 1880-2010*. Paris: Champ Vallon, 2010. 284pp. Tables, figures, notes, bibliography. 25€ (pb). ISBN 978-2-87673-535-4.

Review by Michael Seidman, University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Danielle Tartakowsky has written on many topics of concern to French political historians and has recently become the leading analyst of Parisian demonstrations. This new volume blends her traditional focus on politics with Parisian urban history from the Third to the Fifth Republics. At the beginning of her period, the Impressionists painted a peaceful Paris; in contrast, by the late nineteenth-century, Felix Vallotton's engravings depicted clashing police and protesters of the capital. In any case, the author seems to agree with Louis Aragon who wrote in 1942 that "Paris ... n'est Paris qu'arrachant ses pavés" (p. 7).

The Third Republic severely restricted the right to demonstrate. "Les manifestations sur la voie publique sont soigneusement et durablement exclues des libertés démocratiques que les républicains garantissent alors même" (p. 15). In the Hausmannian tradition, the authorities viewed themselves responsible not only for avoiding disturbances to public order but also for ensuring the free movement of commodities and people in Paris. As Gustave Hervé remarked sardonically in 1910: "Nos généraux et nos colonels n'ont pu empêcher l'armée prussienne de défiler en mars 1871 sous L'Arc de Triomphe jusqu'à la Concorde. Ils ont pris leur revanche, hier, en empêchant les ouvriers de faire le trajet" (p. 19).

The study of demonstrations proves to be an excellent lens into political and urban history. The boulevards which housed major newspapers became rallying points for demonstrators since "les journaux sont jusqu'au tournant du siècle des acteurs politiques de premier plan, qu'un périodique crédite d'avoir 'inventé les meetings et manifestations pour piquer la curiosité des lecteurs et augmenter leurs tirages'" (p. 29). For example, in 1899, to celebrate the inclusion of socialists in the *bloc républicain* which had defeated the anti-Dreyfusards, 200,000 Parisians responded to the call of *La Petite République* and rallied at the Place de la Nation during the inauguration of Aimé-Jules Dalou's monument to the Republic. By 1909, during protests against the execution of the Spanish libertarian, Francisco Ferrer, Parisian demonstrators attempted for the first time to sway the media to provide them with free publicity, rather than attacking hostile periodicals for their editorial positions.

At the end of the nineteenth century, two opposing spatial "triangles" developed. The first was that of the republican Left, i.e. Place de la Bastille-Nation-République; the second was that of the Right, i.e. Place Vendôme, and Étoile-Invalides. The statues of the Republic, which were associated with the ecumenical Left, would eventually be challenged by that of Jeanne d'Arc, inaugurated by the government of *Ordre Moral* in 1874 and eventually identified with the Right. The author characterizes the route from the Place de la Concorde to the Place de l'Étoile as "la chaussée triomphale ou l'espace patriotique" (p.)

World War I inspired homages throughout the city to the Marquis de La Fayette, a symbol of the Franco-American alliance. In the postwar period, the *Bloc National* made the festival of Jeanne d'Arc and 11 November into national holidays and downgraded both 14 July and 4

September (which marked the founding of the Third Republic). The Left, victorious in the 1924 elections, responded by transferring the remains of Jean Jaurès to the Panthéon. Progressives found it difficult to compete spatially with the Champs-Élysées, which attracted both French and foreign war veterans. Its popularity even lured protesters against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927. Police prevented their access to the American Embassy and, consequently, according to the right-wing press, several hundred youths—prefiguring the demonstrations of 1968—“profaned” the Arc de Triomphe.

The Left usually conceded dominance of the “patriotic axis” of western Paris to the Right and continued to move more comfortably in the eastern part of the Paris region. Progressives also exercised hegemony in the streets of the eastern and northwestern suburbs—the fast-growing communes of Saint-Denis, Saint-Ouen, Clichy, and Levallois. On May Day 1928, the Union des syndicats de la Seine declared “les travailleurs ne sont plus à Paris mais en banlieue et que des problèmes de déplacement se poser[ai]ent si l’on maint[en]ait le principe d’une démonstration parisienne, surtout si la TCRP [transports en commun] est en grève” (p. 84).

Tartakowsky offers stimulating insights into the right-wing demonstration of 6 February 1934 during which fifteen died and 1,500 were injured, “la plus grande expression de violence politique à Paris depuis la Commune” (p. 95). For the first time in many generations, both the construction of barricades and *la semaine sanglante* became a common reference for both Left and Right. Following 6 February, Parisian thoroughfares experienced a significant, but ultimately limited, political polarization as hundreds of thousands of demonstrators marched during the major *journées* of the Popular Front (1934–1938). These crowds reconstituted spaces of “*souveraineté populaire*” (p. 130).

The Occupation sparked courageous demonstrations against the German presence in France. The first occurred on 11 November 1940 when, in response to an appeal from Radio Londres, students left flowers at Georges Clemenceau’s statue at the roundabout of the Champs-Élysées and marched west to the Arc de Triomphe. This demonstration began a tradition which endured throughout the Occupation, in which passersby posed tricolor bouquets on monuments at major national holidays. On 14 July 1945, a military parade which began at the Cours de Vincennes and ended at the Bastille symbolized the Liberation’s reconciliation of the army and the people. In this period, the geography of protest became mixed. Traditionally rightist elements displayed themselves in eastern Paris at the end of World War II, whereas leftists paraded in the western part of the capital throughout 1945. The rupture with past practices showed a renewed, but ephemeral national unity. Tartakowsky offers a reading of Charles de Gaulle who attempted—like Napoléon Bonaparte—to unite national and popular sovereignty in his own person. “Le 11 novembre [1945], les cérémonies officielles sont conçues pour que ‘tout Paris [soit] espace de commémoration,’ trois jours durant. Le départ du général de Gaulle du gouvernement met un terme à cette migration sans précédent des cérémonies officielles dans l’Est parisien” (p.127).

The divisions among the Left during the Algerian War reflected the different paths and goals of their anti-war demonstrations. Their divergences anticipated those of the 1960s when student protests against insufficient scholarship funding, high rents, and sexual segregation replaced venerable *monômes*. In general, in the new post-World War II mass university, leftists (Communists and a variety of *gauchistes*) dominated student politics, over which rightists (such as the Camelots de roi) had previously exercised hegemony. In 1968, students and workers demonstrated mostly in the Latin Quarter and in eastern Paris, whereas supporters of de Gaulle’s government and regime once again took to the Champs-Élysées.

The post-1968 period saw a *banalisation* of demonstrations (p. 181), which included both protests and officially sponsored events (marathons, music festivals, et cetera). The number of

the latter seems to have exploded during Valéry Giscard's and especially François Mitterrand's presidency. These official festivals "desacralized" the Champs-Élysées which became a site of popular spectacles, such as the Tour de France, the Monte-Carlo rally, et cetera (p.197). The breakdown of the Left's progressive theory of history led to an increase in the number of demonstrations which targeted specific grievances. At the same time, Paris became "la scène de l'opéra politique" attracting *manifestations* which addressed both French regional and international issues (p.186). *Les fêtes* became less spontaneous and more official, although the celebration of the election of Mitterrand organized by Jack Lang on 13 May 1981 was a mixture of both. During the latter years of Mitterrand's presidency (1981-1995), *droit-de-l'hommeisme* was adopted as the semi-official ideology, and it stimulated a number of public displays and name changes in the Parisian landscape. Post-modernity brought a heterogeneous mixture: the bicentennial celebration of the Revolution in 1989; a Champs-Élysées which a farmers' association (Centre national des jeunes agriculteurs) converted into a wheat field in 1990; the celebration of the French victory in the World Cup of 1998; annual Gay Pride marches; Paris-Plage; ad infinitum, if not ad nauseum.

The most recent decades witnessed both a general liberalization of the right to demonstrate and the gentrification of eastern Paris which led to its relative decline as a site for *manifests*. The latest suburban revolts or riots "se sont jusqu'à ce jour cantonnées dans une manière de 'non-lieu,' spatial et historique, présentant, à cet égard plus de similitudes avec les émeutes urbaines américaines qu'avec le répertoire d'action collective constitué depuis plus d'un siècle, en banlieue parisienne y compris" (p. 271).

Although this is a very rich and worthy text, I do have a few reservations. The author tends to conflate *la culture prolétarienne* (p. 85) and *l'identité prolétarienne* (p. 93) with the political Left, especially the Parti Communiste Français. *L'Humanité's* announcement of a *foule immense*, (p. 87) which turned out to number only 1,500 demonstrators, is accepted without comment. On the other side, the conservative or authoritarian French Right is too easily identified with an undifferentiated fascism in the chapter mistitled "Espaces du fascisme et de l'anti-fascisme." The latter is seen as purely defensive (p. 109), a judgment perhaps more understandable in France than in Spain or other western nations. Paradoxically, this defensive antifascism was nevertheless "l'expression légitime d'une histoire qui se veut l'héritière des révolutions de Paris" (p. 111). The author might have reflected more deeply on the ambiguities, if not contradictions, of an antifascism which defended a conservative French republic in the 1930s. Furthermore, it is hard to accept without qualification that the Communist demonstration of 14 July 1942—in which Henri Krasucki, future head of the Confédération générale du travail, participated—"rappelait le Front populaire" (p. 124) since demonstrations from 1936 to 1938 often had government backing. Following the war, de Gaulle may have attempted a symbolic Bonapartism, but he was certainly much more democratic than either Napoleon.

This is not a book for beginners. The moderately famous or even little known personalities are left unidentified and without complete names. Certain demonstrations are listed, but the reasons behind them are insufficiently elucidated (p. 37). Foreign scholarship might have been employed to prevent the book from having, despite its subject matter of a great cosmopolitan city, a francocentric and insular feel. The author's use of Michel de Certeau's distinction between *lieu*—"configuration instantanée de positions" (p. 8)—and *espace*—"lieu pratiqué" (p.8)—obscures as much as it illuminates. A list of acronyms and an index would have aided the reader.

Despite these relatively minor limitations, Tartakowsky has made a major contribution to the study of Parisian political, urban, and cultural history during a period of many transitions, as well as substantial continuity. In numerous ways, her work can serve as a model for historians and social scientists who research demonstrations in any major world capital.

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