Paris and the Right in the Twentieth Century
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements · vii
List of abbreviations · viii
Introduction · 1

JESSICA WARDHAUGH

Part I: The Right, The Street and The People · 17

Chapter One · From Thoissey to the Capital via Fashoda: Major Marchand, Partisan Icon of the Right in Paris · 18
BERNY SÉBE

Chapter Two · Fighting for the Streets of Paris during the Popular Front, 1934–1938 · 43
JESSICA WARDHAUGH

Chapter Three · The Front National and Paris · 64
ELISABETH DUPoirier

Part II: Authority and Control · 85

Chapter Four · One Nation, One State, One Television: Making Sense of de Gaulle’s Broadcasting Policy · 86
JEAN K. CHALABY

Chapter Five · Controlling the Streets in May 1968 · 104
DANIEL A. GORDON

Chapter Six · Municipal Reform and Political Enterprise in the 1980s: Jacques Chirac and the Paris–Marseilles–Lyons Law · 122
MELODY HOUK
Table of Contents

Part III: Paris Imagined · 147

Chapter Seven · "Entre le Louvre et la Bastille":
The Topology, Sociology and Mythology of Paris
in the Works of Charles Maurras · 148
  BRUNO GOYET

Chapter Eight · Robert Brasillach and Paris:
Paradise Lost · 169
  PETER TAME

Chapter Nine · L'Épuration:
The Intervention of Simone de Beauvoir · 193
  IMOGEN LONG

Chapter Ten · "Du Côté de chez Blondin":
The Imaginary Paris of the Hussards · 211
  NICHOLAS HEWITT

Bibliography · 233

Contributors · 249

Index · 252
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book originated in a two-day conference on “Paris and the Right in the Twentieth Century”, held at the Maison Française d’Oxford on 8–9 July 2005 as part of a joint initiative between the Maison Française and the Modern European History Research Centre of Oxford University (MEHRC). The conference was made possible by the generous sponsorship of the Institut Français, the Maison Française d’Oxford, the MEHRC and the Oxford University History Faculty. I would like to thank those colleagues who supported the project from the outset with their advice and encouragement, especially Alexis Tadié, Martin Conway and Robert Gildea; and I am grateful to the administrator at the MEHRC, Teena Stabler, for her patience and good humour. It is also a pleasure to express my thanks to Andy Nercessian and Amanda Millar at CSP for their help with the manuscript. I am, above all, deeply grateful to my husband Benjamin for his generous assistance at every stage of this project: for his technical expertise, thoughtful advice and dedicated proof-reading, and for his unfailing love and support.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDR</td>
<td>Comités pour la Défense de la République</td>
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<tr>
<td>CGT</td>
<td>Confédération Générale du Travail</td>
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<tr>
<td>CGTU</td>
<td>Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNE</td>
<td>Comité National des Écrivains</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNI</td>
<td>Centre National des Indépendants</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNR</td>
<td>Conseil National de la Résistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNRS</td>
<td>Comité National de la Recherche Scientifique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPE</td>
<td>Contrat Première Embauche</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRS</td>
<td>Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>Délégation à la Protection et à la Sécurité</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENA</td>
<td>École Nationale d’Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Front National</td>
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<tr>
<td>FNJ</td>
<td>Front National de la Jeunesse</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDF</td>
<td>Île de France</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCR</td>
<td>Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEP</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNR</td>
<td>Mouvement National Républicain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organisation de l’Armée Secrète</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORTF</td>
<td>Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACA</td>
<td>Provence–Alpes–Côte d’Azur</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCF</td>
<td>Parti Communiste Français</td>
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<tr>
<td>PML Law</td>
<td>Paris–Marseilles–Lyons Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPF</td>
<td>Parti Populaire Français</td>
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<td>PS</td>
<td>Parti Socialiste</td>
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<td>PSF</td>
<td>Parti Social Français</td>
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<td>PSU</td>
<td>Parti Socialiste Unifié</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>RG</td>
<td>Renseignements Généraux</td>
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<tr>
<td>RMI</td>
<td>Revenu Minimum d’Insertion</td>
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<tr>
<td>RPF</td>
<td>Rassemblement du Peuple Français</td>
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<td>RPR</td>
<td>Rassemblement pour la République</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTF</td>
<td>Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCA</td>
<td>Service d’Action Civique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFIO</td>
<td>Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>Sûreté Générale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOFIRAD</td>
<td>Société Financière de Radiodiffusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name in French</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STO</td>
<td>Service du Travail Obligatoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDCA</td>
<td>Union de Défense des Commerçants et Artisans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>Union pour la Démocratie Française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDR</td>
<td>Union des Démocrates pour la République</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMP</td>
<td>Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle</td>
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Certain images of Paris have become icons for the left: the birth of the Popular Front amid demonstrators on the Cours de Vincennes in February 1934; the euphoric crowds at the Liberation; the Existentialists debating in the cafés of the Boulevard Saint-Germain; and the youthful rebels of '68 on the barricades of the Quartier Latin. Yet the associations between Paris and the right have received far less attention. How have right-wing leaders, militants and writers described the history and people of Paris, organised or portrayed their supporters in the streets, and claimed the city as their own?

This book addresses the relationship between Paris and the right in the twentieth century, a relationship that had a decisive influence on not only the political life of the French nation, but also its intellectual and cultural development. Firstly, as the seat of the government and as the capital of a highly centralised state, Paris has witnessed at their most intense both the rhetorical swordplay and the physically violent confrontation of political opponents. In the streets, as in parliament, the boundaries between left and right have been constantly challenged, and the survival of the government has at times—notably in 1934 and 1968—been dependent upon control of the streets. From the late nineteenth century onwards Paris has also been both a particular focus for the development of the extreme right in theory and practice, and the theatre for its uneasy relationship with its conservative counterparts, culminating in the contemporary rivalry between Jacques Chirac and Jean-Marie Le Pen. Secondly, as an industrialising city with an increasing share of the nation’s population, Paris has offered a fertile field for popular mobilisation, and successive waves of migrant and immigrant workers swelling the suburbs have provided the right with both targets and scapegoats, influencing both electoral tactics and political rhetoric. Thirdly, as a centre of intellectual and cultural exchange, Paris has provided both subject and framework for the writings of such controversial authors as Charles Maurras and Robert Brasillach, whose personal and intellectual trajectories were to become inextricably entwined with France’s destiny during the German Occupation.

Paris and the Right in the Twentieth Century is a Franco–British collaboration spanning history, literary studies and political science, examining how the right has influenced Paris, and how Paris has influenced the right. The
genesis of the book came with the observation that, despite the enduring interest of scholars in the history of Paris and in the history of the French right, the question of the relationship between the two had received little direct attention. One reason for this may be that histories of Paris and histories of the right have pursued essentially distinct lines of enquiry. It is noticeable, for instance, that histories of Paris in the modern period have focused on the physical transformation of the town and its population, rather than on its political characteristics. Thus, Bernard Marchand’s *Paris: Histoire d’une ville XIX–XX siècle* examines the disproportionate expansion of the population of Paris in the last two centuries, as well as the tensions provoked by the dual identity of the city as state capital and industrial town;¹ and Louis Chevalier’s historical and documentary works reflect concerns at the rapid and profound changes in population and architectural character.² Likewise, Philippe Nivet and Yves Combeau note in their *Histoire politique de Paris* the lack of political studies of the capital, and provide a valuable synthesis of recent published and unpublished research on its municipal history. Their own agenda is very specific: to weigh the political impact of Paris on national history and to chart the development of political forces in the capital, rather than documenting the political events that took place there. Street demonstrations in Paris are thus deliberately accorded little space.³ Certainly, the long and dramatic history of Paris is a challenge to those who wish to record it, and as Charles Rearick emphasised in the special edition of *French Historical Studies* devoted to “New Perspectives on Modern Paris” in 2004: “the underlying premise is that Paris in all its vastness and heterogeneity calls for many kinds of historical treatment.”⁴ That collection gives precedence to studies of considerable chronological or thematic breadth, including a number of articles on the planning of Paris and the legacy of Haussmann, as well as contributions to a more neglected field of Parisian history: the *banlieue*. Politics is not the principal concern of the collection, but a study by Danielle Tartakowsky of the Place de la Concorde in the last century suggests significant paths for future research. Providing a

valuable postscript to Maurice Agulhon’s hypothesis of an east–west political division of the capital corresponding broadly to left and right, she demonstrates that the Place de la Concorde is difficult to characterise so neatly, having been claimed by a diverse range of political groups in the course of over a century, from workers’ and students’ organisations to right-wing and nationalist groups.

Tartakowsky’s study of the Place de la Concorde is an important challenge to established patterns of historical research, in that histories of Paris with a strong political dimension have often focused predominantly on the left. Jean-Paul Brunet’s Saint-Denis, la ville rouge: socialisme et communisme en banlieue ouvrière 1890–1939 provides a detailed analysis of the growth of Communism in one specific area of the “red belt” of Paris, although with the expressed intention of taking Saint Denis as a microcosm of the French working class rather than as a means of studying the implantation of a political party in this particular suburb. Indeed, although the study includes some discussion of the right-wing Parti Populaire Français (whose leader, Jacques Doriot, was the mayor of Saint-Denis), little consideration is given to the violent clashes between Communists and members of the PPF. The “red belt” of Paris is also the subject of studies by Annie Fourcault and Danielle Tartakowsky, although in this instance they focus more on the myths and mobilisation of the left than on those of the right. So far, histories of Paris devoting significant attention to the political culture and imagination of the right have done so within a limited timescale, for example Christophe Charle’s Paris fin de siècle, and Évelyne Cohen’s Paris dans l’imaginaire nationale de l’entre-deux guerres. Although the relationship between Paris and the right is not in either case the primary concern, both histories suggest the importance of exploring the political imagination of the city in general.

Why is it that, conversely, histories of the right have paid only passing attention to the relationship between the right and the capital? This omission can be explained partly by a concern to write national rather than local histories of the right, but it must also be traced to the nature of historical debate on the right in France, which has, from the publication of René Rémond’s influential La

Introduction

Droite en France de 1815 à nos jours in 1954,\(^8\) tended to focus strongly on the themes of definition and ideology. The particularly controversial question of whether or not the French extreme right of the late nineteenth and twentieth century can be defined as “fascist” has often reinforced this emphasis, with Zeev Sternhell’s argument for the French origins of fascism focusing mainly on right-wing writers rather than political groups or movements,\(^9\) and with his opponents denying that French groups of the extreme right attained the mass mobilisation of their German and Italian counterparts.\(^10\) Both single-author overviews and collective works on the French right in the twentieth century have continued this emphasis on definition and ideology. French studies such as La Droite en France de 1789 à nos jours\(^11\) and L’Extrême Droite en France, de Maurras à Le Pen\(^12\) provide concise overviews of the development of political doctrine, and a detailed consideration of the tensions between different tendencies within the right, but do not consider either the rivalry between left and right or the relationship of political parties and movements with particular localities. Recent general studies of the French right in English have similarly offered valuable overviews of doctrinal development, as well as of the continuing controversy over the nature of French fascism. Such studies include the collections of essays edited by Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallet,\(^13\) and by Edward Arnold,\(^14\) as well as Peter Davies’ The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the present.\(^15\) The recent collection edited by Brian Jenkins on France in the Era of Fascism provides a further selection of challenges to the “immunity thesis”, and a detailed study of the riot of 6 February 1934 by Michel Dobry, but again with a view to defining notions of French fascism and political crisis, rather than with reference to the

\(^{8}\) René Rémond, La Droite en France de 1815 à nos jours (Paris: Aubier, 1954).


\(^{11}\) Jean-Christian Petitfils, La Droite en France de 1789 à nos jours (Paris: PUF, 1994).


\(^{15}\) Peter Davies, The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the present (London: Routledge, 2002).
specifically Parisian setting of these challenges to the republican regime.\textsuperscript{16} The path taken by such debate has thus tended to divert attention away from the study of the intellectual topography and political culture of right-wing Paris, although important local studies have been made of the extreme right in the provinces, such as Kevin Passmore’s analysis of the Croix de Feu/Parti Social Français in Lyons between the wars, and Paul Jankowski’s discussion of the influence of Marseilles on Simon Sabiani’s branch of the Parti Populaire Français.\textsuperscript{17}

Since the political dimension is often lacking from studies of twentieth-century Paris, and since the history of the French right focuses more on definition and ideology than on political geography, culture and symbolism, 	extit{Paris and the Right in the Twentieth Century} offers a contribution at the intersection of two existing fields of research, while, it is hoped, adding a further dimension to each of them. The book is structured in three parts, examining firstly the relationship between the radical right, the street and the people; secondly the strategies of control employed by the conservative right in the capital; and finally the real and imaginary Paris of right-wing novelists in the twentieth century. Each section represents a collaboration between British and French researchers, with a number of the French contributors here publishing in English for the first time. The interdisciplinary nature of the book acknowledges the importance of different approaches in illuminating the different facets of the relationship between Paris and the right. Several questions, however, thread their paths through all three sections: questions of continuity and change, of definition and identity. How have the districts and images of Paris claimed by the right evolved in the course of the twentieth century? Where have boundaries been established between left and right, and between the conservative and extreme right? What role has Paris played in the construction of right-wing leadership? How do the Parisian symbols appropriated by the right relate to areas of right-wing influence and mobilisation? How have the images and myths of Paris constructed by the literary and militant right converged and diverged? Is it still possible to describe the intellectual topography of the French capital?


The Right, the Street and the People

As an investigation of the dialogue between the right and the people in the street, the first section of the book presents some of the most contentious political movements in the twentieth century, from the leagues of the Belle Époque to those of the interwar years, and finally to the Front National of Jean-Marie Le Pen. The aim is to describe the dynamics and structures of popular mobilisation, and so to investigate the changing intellectual topography of the capital, and the locations of areas contested between right and left.

Within this context, Berny Sèbe’s chapter highlights a little-known aspect of the life of Major Jean-Baptiste Marchand (renowned in imperial history as the leader of the French Congo–Nile mission): his political career in Paris. Sèbe’s research into the police archives of the Belle Époque reveals that Marchand presented, as icon of the anti-Dreyfusard right, a far greater political challenge than has hitherto been acknowledged. The anti-parliamentary right was keen to find an effective successor to Boulanger, and Marchand’s embodiment of the authority and uprightness of the army appeared the perfect antidote to the alleged treachery of Captain Dreyfus. Sèbe’s analysis of Marchand’s political aspirations reveals not only the dense, interlocking networks through which he achieved renown and preferment, but also his controversial nature as a colonial icon, claimed by the government as by a wide variety of groups within the right—from the anti-parliamentary leagues to the monarchists, both traditional and neo-royalist. Sèbe deliberately allows Marchand to remain an enigmatic, even elusive figure, thus to serve as a reflection of the many and conflicting aspirations of his supporters. Major Marchand became, for instance, an unexpected point of reconciliation between colonialists and formerly anti-imperialist nationalists; and while members of anti-parliamentary leagues looked to his lead in orchestrating a coup d’état, he was also fêted by mainstream republicans, and on his return to France in 1899 he became the hero of a triumphal procession through the capital, as the government endeavoured to bask in the glory of his success. Contrasting this triumphal itinerary with the Parisian districts in which Marchand sought support as a candidate in the elections of 1906 suggests two distinct nationalist images and geographies of the capital. Major Marchand’s political appeal and aspirations thus provide, through Sèbe’s interpretation, an insight into the mobilisation and imagination of the right in the Belle Époque.

The second chapter, a study by Jessica Wardhaugh of the battle for the streets of Paris in 1934–8, is also set in a time of intense political conflict and polarity: the years of the Popular Front. Wardhaugh takes as her starting point the divided Paris of 19 May 1935, when the west of the city hosted the annual right-wing celebration of Joan of Arc, while the east witnessed the left-wing
commemoration of the Paris Commune, culminating at the famous Mur des Fédérés in the Père-Lachaise cemetery. From these two celebrations she draws out the rival images of the capital nurtured and propagated by left and right: on the one hand a patriotic Paris fêté in militaristic display; on the other a revolutionary Paris whose legacy resonated in the Communist and Socialist municipalities of the “red belt”. The boundaries of these rival visions of the city were often traced in demonstrations or skirmishes in the streets, at a time when the potential of the people in the street to determine the fate of governments and political coalitions was widely recognised. Having explored the distinctions between these rival images, Wardhaugh then questions the association of the opulent west with the right and the working-class east with the left, and suggests that these associations, although firmly established, were also subject to important challenges in the period of the Popular Front, as both right and left deliberately crossed sensitive boundaries in search of new supporters and new identities. In order to assess the significance of these challenges, she explores three examples of such “boundary crossings”: the attack on Léon Blum on the Boulevard Saint-Germain in February 1936, the Popular Front’s celebration of 14 July 1936, and the riot in the working-class suburb of Clichy in March 1937. From these examples, she demonstrates the left’s ambition to underline its newly patriotic character, and the right’s ambition to appeal to the lower-middle and working-class populations attracted to the Popular Front. The battle for the streets of Paris thus reveals a battle for the political centre ground at a time when the politics of popular representation were very much open to question.

Elisabeth Dupoirier takes the associations between the right, the street and the people into our own time by examining the relationship between Paris and the Front National, and the rivalry between Jean-Marie Le Pen and Jacques Chirac. Despite the traditional flourishing of nationalist, right-wing movements in Paris—as explored in the first two chapters—and notwithstanding Le Pen’s own predilection for the capital, Paris has never been an electoral bastion for the Front National, nor has the relationship between the Front National and the French capital received much scholarly attention. Dupoirier’s chapter is thus a pertinent contribution to existing research on the party, and she explores both the ideological importance of Paris in the speeches of Jean-Marie Le Pen, and the sociological constitution of the Parisian electorate, through which she explains the relative lack of support for Le Pen in the capital. Le Pen’s principal exposition of the Front National’s myth of Paris takes place at the annual celebration of Joan of Arc, during which he salutes the equestrian statue of the national heroine in the Place des Pyramides that was also saluted by Major Marchand in the 1890s, and by Colonel de la Rocque in the 1930s. Although attendance at this annual event is decreasing (the highest level of 50,000 was attained in 1988, when the date of the celebration fell between two Presidential
elections), Le Pen describes the moment as the zenith of the unity of the French people, and the procession is attended by Front National dignitaries from the provinces, as well as by representatives from sympathetic nationalist movements around Europe. Joan of Arc serves Le Pen’s rhetorical purposes not only as a national saviour but also as an example of the honest French people triumphing over their corrupt and blundering elites—a popular theme in the propaganda of the party. Yet as Dupoirier explains, the electoral results in Paris indicate a city impervious to Le Pen’s overtures, characterised by higher socio-economic status than other French towns and consequently less sensitive to Le Pen’s mobilisation of fears of insecurity. Moreover, the “Chirac effect” continues to deprive the Front National of potential supporters on the conservative right, and Dupoirier predicts that even after Chirac’s departure from office, Paris will remain resistant to the appeal of Jean-Marie Le Pen and his successors.

**Authority and Control**

Dupoirier shows the importance of the conservative right as a political force in Paris, and as one which determines patterns of political behaviour at a national level. Paris has, indeed, become a vital theatre for the construction of right-wing leadership, notably for Charles de Gaulle and—self-consciously his successor—Jacques Chirac. The second section of this book examines the exercise of authority and control in and from Paris by the conservative right, with Gaullism as its unifying theme. While the importance of street politics is recognised, emphasis is also placed on Paris as the heart of a centralised state, and on forms of communication and political representation at local level that adopt a particularly national resonance.

Much of the existing research on Charles de Gaulle and the media has centred on the President’s overall communications strategy, particularly his broadcast addresses. Jean Chalaby’s chapter adopts an original approach by integrating de Gaulle’s media policy into his specifically “statist” understanding of government, in which social and political cohesion were to be developed by Parisian media under tight governmental control. At the heart of the state, Paris was therefore central to his strategy. Indeed, the closeness of state broadcasting to the current government was even symbolised by the location of the Minister of Information’s family home—on the top floor of the buildings of the national broadcaster, in the eighth arrondissement of Paris. De Gaulle’s statutes, approved by the National Assembly, maintained a strict state monopoly on public broadcasting, and Chalaby’s chapter analyses the nature of de Gaulle’s broadcasting policy by drawing out its different dimensions. For de Gaulle, he demonstrates, television, radio and state-building were inseparable, and the
government thus maintained a firm attitude towards peripheral radio stations such as Radio-Luxembourg. National television was not so much a response to the needs or desires of viewers as a public expression of a certain idea of French history, unity and identity. To this end, television was intended to find a language and purpose common to all; to seek a *via media* between low-brow entertainment and abstruse educational programmes. Essentially, it was to act as the “voice of France”, not just within the nation but also internationally. And it is significant that this conception of state-dominated broadcasting, centred on Paris, was not contested by the opposition, which specifically opposed control by the government rather than by the state.

Indeed, de Gaulle’s control was contested not so much in the media as in the street, and while recognising the vast literature devoted to the left and May 1968, Daniel Gordon’s chapter adds a novel contribution to the analysis of these events by focusing on the response of the right. The balance in recent research on May ‘68 has been towards a consideration of symbolism and play-acting, and so Gordon’s return to the importance of physical confrontation in the streets of Paris provides a timely counterweight. Based on extensive research in the police archives, this chapter sheds light on the violent tactics employed by street activists of both left and right, with Trotskyists pitted against members of the extreme-right Occident. This comparative approach draws out surprising parallels, not least the important involvement of foreigners in street militancy, since Occident included members of Greek and Armenian origin. Youth militants of left and right also listened to the same jazz music, socialised in the same cafés of the Quartier Latin, and sought supporters from the same proletarian areas of Paris. One of the important contributions of this chapter is a challenge to the argument of a collapse in state authority, and here Daniel Gordon builds on Michael Seidmann’s recent research to explore state strategies for the maintenance of power, notwithstanding certain diplomatic retreats. In fact, the Gaullist counter-demonstration of 30 May 1968 was larger than almost any other demonstration during the events, and de Gaulle’s broadcast of the same day was an inspired political gesture. Gordon analyses this success, and highlights the presence among the Gaullists of many significant right-wing figures of the future, including Édouard Balladur, Charles Pasqua and de Gaulle’s 36-year-old Minister of Employment, Jacques Chirac. In considering the relationship between order, authority and the right in the Paris of 1968, a sharp distinction emerges between the Gaullists and the extreme right, the latter being among those responsible for fomenting disorder. Their ultimate failure underlines the enduring predominance of the right-wing concern to maintain rather than subvert order. Lastly, Gordon examines the place of May ‘68 in the memory of the right, again contrasting conservative and extreme right responses as he juxtaposes Le Pen’s evocation of “la nausée” with Chirac’s more relaxed
perception of the events, a reflection of his role of diplomatic negotiation in 1968 itself.

Jacques Chirac’s construction of leadership has included the ability to benefit from even the most seemingly unfavourable of situations. In her chapter on Chirac’s consolidation of power while Mayor of Paris, Melody Houk examines this ability in the context of the Paris–Marseilles–Lyons (PML) Law of 1982. Conceived by the Socialist government of François Mitterrand, this project of municipal reform instituted a system of district councils and mayors in the three largest cities in France, complementing—and potentially undermining—the authority of the existing mayors. In the case of Paris, where in 1977 Jacques Chirac became the first elected mayor since the Revolution (mayoral powers being hitherto exercised by the Prefect of Police), the law was intended both to undermine Chirac’s authority and also to challenge the power base of his party, the Rassemblement pour la République. Rather than suffering from the new law, however, Chirac contrived to turn it to his advantage, initially by a vocal and televised opposition to this attempted “dismemberment of Paris”, but principally through the strategic choice of candidates for the municipal elections of 1983, which, through successful negotiation with the Union pour la Démocratie Française, secured a right-wing victory in every constituency in Paris. The profiles of those chosen as chief candidates—including established Gaullists, existing allies of Jacques Chirac and those at the outset of their political careers—were such that the new mayors and councillors were less likely to assert their independence and undermine the central Town Hall than to become its successful ambassadors in the arrondissements. Furthermore, the new district mayors were also accorded the status of adjuncts to the Mayor of Paris, together with a number of material benefits, which integrated them within the central municipal government and established a personal link with Jacques Chirac. Both the initial “Appeal to Parisians” and also the creation of personal “feudal links” between Jacques Chirac and the new district mayors and councillors bore the marks of a distinctively Gaullist enterprise, relying closely on the development and expression of charismatic authority. Although creating a new level of representation at the infra-municipal level, the PML Law was so manipulated by Chirac’s political strategy that, far from favouring independence at a district level, it actually tied the new mayors and councillors even more closely to centralised municipal administration.

**Paris Imagined**

In the third section of the book—“Paris imagined”—the focus shifts from themes of mobilisation, authority and control to the experience and depiction of Paris by writers of right-wing sympathies. The intellectual topography of the
city, and its changing portrayal in the imagination of the right, are traced through the successive evocations of Paris of Charles Maurras, Robert Brasillach, Jacques Laurent, Roger Nimier, and Antoine Blondin.

The paradoxical nature of the relationship between Paris and the literary right emerges very clearly in Bruno Goyet’s study of the intellectual and political trajectory of Charles Maurras. Originally from Provence, Maurras not only made Paris his home but also became fully integrated within the Parisian Republic of Letters; even if he remained distant from many of his contemporaries because of his extreme political views and activism. Paris was celebrated in his literary and political works as the “first village of France” and as the successor to Athens and Rome; but Maurras also portrayed the capital as a carnivorous modern city, seething with foreigners and dominated by Jews. Goyet’s analysis of this ambiguous relationship between Maurras and Paris is structured around three themes. Firstly, he describes the different quarters of Paris that Maurras resided in and frequented in the course of his career: the westward progression of his apartments from the Quartier Latin to the aristocratic seventh arrondissement, and his enduring attachment to the central districts of his bohemian youth. Secondly, Goyet analyses the impact of Paris on Maurras’ ideology, not least the transformation of his concept of the “people”. By analysing lists of participants in such monarchist activities as the “visit” to the mansion of the pretender and the attendance at the commemorative Mass of 21 January, Goyet explores the social composition of neo-royalism, from aristocratic families paying their traditional respect to the monarchy to caretakers and shopkeepers from the more working-class arrondissements, mobilised by energetic local sections of Action Française. Lastly, Paris emerges through the writings of Maurras as a town caught between myth and modernity: on one level, an idealised city, and on another, a rapidly expanding metropolis threatened by both internal and external dangers. The charred reminders of the Commune—not least the blackened walls of the Tuileries Palace—left an indelible impression on the young writer, whose xenophobic and anti-Semitic invective was well-known in the pages of Action Française. Through the experience and writings of Charles Maurras, Paris thus emerges as a series of overlapping cities, real and imagined: as a Republic of Letters, as a focus for monarchist support and activity, and as a New Athens drawing poetry and patriotism from the extreme right.

For Robert Brasillach, at one time a contributor to Action Française, Paris was also a city caught between imagination and reality, and it is his construction and experience of the city that are the subject of Peter Tame’s chapter. Like Maurras, Brasillach was not originally from Paris but made it his home and his destiny, which was played out along the old Meridian line running through the capital. Tame evokes Brasillach’s relationship with Paris in four stages—his
student days, his fiction of the 1930s, his career as a political journalist, and the wartime collaboration for which he was executed—and illuminates in Brasillach’s life and work a common theme of Paris as “Paradise Lost”. The student days of the young Brasillach, observing Paris from the École Normale Supérieure, are portrayed in fiction and memoir as a student Eden, guarded by Saint Michael and blessed with parks and gardens such as the Parc Montsouris and the Jardin du Luxembourg. Paris is also the setting for the search for utopian political schemes, both in fiction and in reality. While arguing that Brasillach cannot be fitted neatly into any well-defined philosophical or theological category, Tame nonetheless suggests that his fiction, notably *Le Marchand d’oiseaux* of 1936, was a means of exploring political problems and solutions: of imagining a community or a society based on faith. He explores Brasillach’s ambiguous relationships with Paris and its inhabitants—his concurrent sympathy for and detachment from the “people”; his vivid evocation of the twisting streets of the old Jewish quarter; and his criticism of Paris as lost in the past, while seeing the dynamics of the future in the youth rallies of Nazi Germany. Tame thus traces Brasillach’s evolution from Maurrassian nationalism to National Socialism, while illuminating the search for political utopia in writing that was to overshadow his destiny during the German Occupation.

The very real consequences of Brasillach’s political writing and imagination were his much-publicised trial and execution in Paris in 1945. The post-war trials—of which Charles Maurras was also a victim—were to have a powerful effect on right-wing literary and political activism in the years that followed, and Imogen Long’s chapter studies Brasillach’s trial through the eyes of Simone de Beauvoir in order to explore the meaning and danger of intellectual engagement in Paris. Organising the purges was a means of consciously effacing the shame of the Occupation, deliberately breaking the associations forged between Paris and the collaborationist right. It was a means of re-establishing the acceptable boundaries of political thought and activity, of imposing a new justice based on criteria different from those of the Occupation. But as Long argues, the trial and execution of writers in a country self-consciously renowned for its elevation of the “intellectual” was of particular resonance, raising important questions about the freedom of thought and the involvement of writers in politics. Indeed, the petition for clemency towards Brasillach attracted many high-profile signatories, including François Mauriac, Albert Camus, Paul Claudel and Jean Cocteau, not all of whom were necessarily sympathetic towards Brasillach himself. De Beauvoir acknowledged the hypocrisy of persecuting writers while allowing economic collaborators to escape unscathed, and yet notoriously refused to sign the petition for clemency, thus underscoring her conviction that “to write is to act”. Ironically, she was in
this respect close to Brasillach himself, who won her admiration for his dignified, even heroic comportment during the trial, accepting responsibility for his ideas and for their political expression. His trial in Paris might strike its observers—including de Beauvoir—as theatrical and hypocritical, yet for Brasillach the consequences of his search for utopia in writing had become real and unavoidable.

The post-war years have sometimes been represented as years of eclipse for the literary right, thrown into shadow by the deaths of Brasillach, Georges Suarez, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle and Charles Maurras. Yet as Nicholas Hewitt argues in his chapter on the “Hussards”, the influence of the inter-war right remained significant, not only in the intellectual topography of Paris but also in the imagination of the city by the new generation of writers. In the Académie Française, the election of such established right-wing figures as Thierry Maulnier and Pierre Gaxotte testified to their enduring status and influence. In the streets, the Quartier Latin was as noisily contested between left and right as it had been in the inter-war years, with Communists vying with royalists (later under the aegis of Jean-Marie Le Pen) for the allegiance of the student population. Close by, the cafés of the Boulevard Saint-Germain that became so indelibly linked with the Existentialists also included the favourite haunts of the young writers of the right, congregating around reviews that challenged the current intellectual and political orthodoxy. For “Hussards” such as Antoine Blondin, Roger Nimier and Jacques Laurent, inter-war Paris also provided intellectual inspiration, and Nimier in particular became trapped in a heavily stylised depiction of high-society Paris in the 1920s. Hewitt also emphasises, however, that the post-war literary right was clearly distinct from its antecedents, not least in its lack of engagement with current social and political concerns. Compared with writers such as Maurras and Brasillach, the Hussards were remarkable for their retreat from reality into imagination. Far from the “mystic realism” of Robert Brasillach, Jacques Laurent’s depictions of Paris eschew thorny questions of political community in favour of playful fantasies on the theme of the metro, a popular motif in the novels of the Hussards. Indeed, Hewitt employs these experimental evocations of underground Paris to challenge the diametric association of left and right with the east and west of the capital, and to suggest that for the Hussards in particular, the imagination of the city was coloured by the interplay between the surface and the hidden depths. Is it possible to trace the decline of a distinctively right-wing Paris? Certainly, Hewitt demonstrates that by the 1970s the intellectual topography of the capital was much less clearly defined than in the 1940s or 1950s, not least because the rejection of post-Liberation orthodoxies by the literary right was never integral to a definite political programme or activism.
Introduction

Taken cumulatively, these thematic approaches to the relationship between Paris and the right reveal discernible patterns in political geography and symbolism. Firstly, in tracing the boundaries of right-wing Paris, this volume explores both the strengths and the weaknesses of the traditional association of the right with the west of the capital, and of the left with the east. Throughout the twentieth century, the grand boulevards and opulent quarters of the Right Bank and the west remained privileged locations for public displays and private support for the conservative and extreme right. The Champs Elysées, the area around the Opéra and the Place de la Concorde have, for instance, witnessed successive right-wing processions and demonstrations. Yet the very fact of the explicit association between the left and the east has made this area the subject of challenges, both in rhetoric and in the streets. Marchand became an official candidate for Belleville-Saint-Fargeau in the elections of 1906; La Rocque and Le Pen have sought and gained supporters in working-class suburbs. Areas on the Left Bank have been hotly contested between left and right, with the Quartier Latin the stage for student skirmishes between Communists and Royalists in the 1930s; between Trotskyites and members of Occident in the 1960s. Hussards as well as Existentialists met in the cafés of the Boulevard Saint-Germain; and Antoine Blondin’s fiction focused closely on the Left Bank, especially the École Militaire, the Invalides, and the Quai Voltaire. Indeed, the Hussards subverted the left-right, east-west division of Paris by creating their own experimental dialogue between the surface of the city and its hidden depths. The post-war literary right also drew its inspiration from the bohemian past and present of Montmartre, poised above the city on the borders between east and west. The symbiotic relationship between left and right often led to borrowings in rhetoric and strategy, from rhetorical constructions of the “people” to tactics of street violence and the involvement of foreigners in groups of young militants. Thus the established boundaries between the Paris of the left and the Paris of the right appear to be important but perhaps insufficient for a full understanding of the political battles of the twentieth century.

Secondly, this volume reinforces the vital importance of the capital as a setting for the construction of right-wing leadership and authority, even when support bases often remained stronger elsewhere. Major Marchand recognised the need for integration within the Parisian networks of power, becoming a hero for the anti-parliamentary right while also being fêted by the government during his triumphal procession. De Gaulle made Paris the centre of a state- and government-controlled communications policy, radiating from the capital a message of social cohesion and channelling television broadcasts into a closely-monitored format. Jacques Chirac, donning the Gaullist mantle of the saviour of Paris, made the capital integral to his consolidation of authority and control as Mayor, building a web of personal allegiances to bolster his position and secure
his political future. Le Pen continues to style himself as a national saviour against a Parisian backdrop, to make Paris the setting for his call to national unity even though the electorate of the capital seems to remain relatively indifferent to his message.

Thirdly, this volume describes the fluid relationship between the political and literary right. Maurras was essentially a man of both worlds, although in the Republic of Letters he endeavoured to draw a clear line between his literary and polemical work. The inseparable connection between literary and political engagement for Robert Brasillach contrasts sharply with the post-war retreat of the Hussards into a largely imaginary and sometimes archaic city, even if the wistful evocations of childhood in the works of Laurent and Blondin echo the theme of a lost childhood paradise also found in Brasillach’s writings. The literary right sometimes appears caught between an engagement with the city of the present and consciously melancholic descriptions of the city of the past, marked by the tensions between a real and an imaginary Paris. Maurras described Paris as bearing the legacy of Greek Antiquity, as the new Athens whose pure air contrasted favourably with foggy London, the unworthy home to the Elgin Marbles; yet he also described the capital as a sprawling modern metropolis, devouring men and overriding family and regional loyalties and identities. Brasillach was careful to record his memories of the medieval streets of the city that were threatened by its modernisation, and expressed in his wartime diary his fears of the imminent destruction of the Paris of his youth. Amid the modernisation of the capital, right-wing novelists delighted in capturing the traces of its more rural past. Maurras evoked the sound of bell ringing in Paris as if in a village; Brasillach celebrated the rural quality of the markets on the Rue Mouffetard; Blondin included in his Paris que j’aime of 1956 a series of photographs of Parisian “villages” such as Bercy, Charonne and Vaugirard. Throughout these chapters there also emerges the sense of Paris as a stronghold and as a homeland, even for those writers who, like Maurras and Brasillach, did not begin life in the city. There is a patriotic, almost proprietorial quality to their writing—Brasillach, for example, described the Quartier Latin as “notre patrie”—so that the city, both modern metropolis and symbolic successor to Athens and Rome, becomes almost a muse, a source of inspiration as well as of fictional characters and topographies.

How will Paris inspire the writers, leaders, and parties of the right in the twenty-first century? Will the right reject or retrace the paths of its predecessors? This book will, I hope, promote future research in the areas here studied, and already the twenty-first century offers new scope for such research: the Parisian militancy against the European constitution of 2005; the strategies employed to control the suburbs in response to ongoing violence and discontent; and the contemporary mobilisation of Action Française—its organisation of
pupils and students, and the commemoration of its past. Léon Daudet, Charles Maurras’ friend and collaborator, observed in his own reflections on the capital city that “Paris [is] like the inclusion of a crowd of novels—the story of the families who live there—in a very great drama: its own history.” In describing this drama and in telling these stories, Paris and the Right in the Twentieth Century encourages further exploration of a city whose images, myths, and opportunities for political mobilisation have inspired politicians, writers and researchers alike.

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October 2006

PART I:
THE RIGHT, THE STREET AND THE PEOPLE
Major Jean-Baptiste Marchand (1863–1934) has remained famous for his meeting in Fashoda (now Kodok) with the Sirdar Kitchener, then commander-in-chief of the Anglo–Egyptian Expeditionary Force to the Sudan, on 19 September 1898. The face-to-face meeting between the two men was the most symbolic and perilous event of the Franco–British confrontation in the upper Nile (and even in Africa), and has since been mentioned in nearly all studies of modern European imperialism or diplomacy. In Britain, Fashoda—and consequently Marchand—have fallen into such oblivion that a recent book on the Congo–Nile mission bears the title *The Unknown Frenchman*.  

In France, Marchand is still remembered in certain post-colonial and nationalist circles as the “Hero of Fashoda” (see Figure 1.1), and historians have carefully analysed his role as the leader of the French Congo–Nile Mission.  

Little has been said, however, about his celebration as an icon of the anti-republican right in Paris following his return to France at the end of May 1899. In a detailed study of the French colonial party, Charles-Robert Ageron simply stated that:

> When Marchand returned, some Republicans feared he would become a “second Bonaparte returning from Egypt” … But Marchand discouraged the troublemakers. The nationalists did organise a “Marchand day” in Paris, but it soon became a popular feast.

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Although Marchand was, as a good officer, averse to any illegal move, new evidence suggests that the situation was more serious than Ageron argued, particularly in the summer and autumn of 1899. The historiography to date has not taken account of the short-lived, but nonetheless real, hopes raised among

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the ranks of the nationalists and the monarchists by Marchand’s return to Paris in May 1899. Most of the studies in English of the Fashoda incident either overlook Marchand’s potential role as a nationalist leader, or simply mention it in passing. His action as a colonial lobbyist and officer thus overshadows the political figure which he briefly became, notably under the impulse of various nationalist movements. Marc Michel, who does mention the episode at the end of his study of the Marchand Mission, believes that the Major ended up being a nuisance to the anti-parliamentarian group. Such an analysis tends to obscure the fact that Marchand was perceived for at least half a decade as a potentially strong partisan icon of the anti-parliamentarian, anti-Dreyfusard right, both by the Government and also by the ligueurs and other anti-governmental elements. In a country torn apart by the Dreyfus affair, the anti-Dreyfusards saw in Marchand the embodiment of the righteousness of the Army, setting an example against what they considered to be the counter-example par excellence: Captain Dreyfus. Marchand’s attempts at a political career—mainly in Paris—in the decade following Fashoda have been equally overlooked, mainly because most of them failed. Using unpublished primary sources, this chapter seeks to throw light upon this little-known aspect of Marchand, to show how the Major cut an original figure on the French political scene and to describe how he was perceived by informers of the Sûreté Générale, both on his return from the Sudan in 1899 and also during his attempted entry into politics in 1904–6.

The case of Marchand reveals the centrality of Paris in the creation of political networks and careers. It is also, however, deeply revealing of the relationships and tensions between different elements within the Parisian right. Marchand became, for example, an icon for nationalists who had hitherto been strongly anti-imperialist, thus providing an opportunity for collaboration between different facets of the right. Equally, Marchand’s political trajectory demonstrates the complex relationship between the right and parliament: members of anti-parliamentary leagues looked to him as the potential author of a coup d’état, and yet he also won the support of mainstream nationalists and of republican politicians. Indeed, the government had no choice but to try to claim the Marchand legend as its own during his triumphal procession of 1899. Comparing the itinerary of this triumphal procession with the constituencies in which Marchand was considered as a possible candidate in the 1906 elections also unveils two different nationalist geographies of Paris. Marchand’s participation in politics—hitherto neglected by historiography—thus provides a valuable insight into the relationship between the nationalists, the right, the street and the people in the early years of the Third Republic.

5 E.g. Patricia Wright, Conflict on the Nile. The Fashoda Incident of 1898 (London: Heinemann, 1972), 216.
6 Michel, La Mission Marchand, 249.