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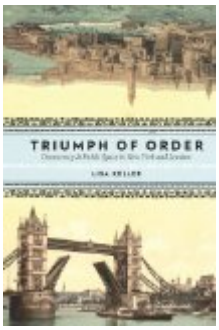

Lisa Keller. *Triumph of Order: Democracy and Public Space in New York and London.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. xvii + 338 pp. Illustrations. $45.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-231-51847-5.

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How do a city's parks, squares, and boulevards enable democracy, and how does the local state negotiate the sometimes fine line between free expression and havoc? These are questions that Lisa Keller takes up in *Triumph of Order: Democracy and Public Space in New York and London*. The book's focus is on the nineteenth century in both cities, a period in which the extension of voting rights to most of the male populace in the United Kingdom, and the rapid growth of industrially powerful cities in the United States, led citizens to increasingly congregate in public for reasons other than amusement, spectacle, or celebration. On the most basic level, as Lisa Keller points out, public spaces became the "drawing rooms" of the working class, literal spaces in which groups without other recourse would come together to discuss, debate, and plan in their collective self-interest.

The first part of the book discusses the context in which this historical inquiry is undertaken--the evolution of rights to free speech and assembly that were developed as part of British common law, and enshrined (although not guaranteed) in the U. S. Constitution. It also outlines the contours of urban life in the 1800s, focusing on spatial divisions along lines of class that extended beyond housing into public space of thoroughfare and park. Part 2 covers London, reviewing contestations over the use of public space for political purposes throughout the nineteenth century. Keller covers a series of watershed events, including the Chartist uprisings of the 1830s and 1840s, the 1855 Sunday Trading Bill riots, and the Black Monday and Bloody Sunday riots of 1886-87. In each of these different events, economic privation led masses of laborers, petty merchants, and populists to confront the authority of the London police, with various degrees of violence ensuing. While periods of oppression punctuated the century, overall what emerged was a municipal tradition that saw wisdom in tolerating political gatherings.

In New York City, the subject of part 3, the hand of the police was heavier, although the sources of collective uprising were, as with Lon-

don, rooted in lack of access to the resources needed for a decent life. The author argues that the 1866 Draft Riots in New York City not only brought racism and class hatred to the fore, but also called attention to the deplorable living conditions of the laboring masses. As the century progressed and the city gradually sanitized under the professionalized public health movement, concerns turned more toward conditions of labor. The constabulary, through trial and error, worked out how to balance the need to protect property and order with the need to allow some room for groups of citizens to express themselves.

Ultimately, Keller argues that London's accommodation in this regard was more respectful of freedom to assemble and speak than New York's. Part of the explanation of this outcome was the United Kingdom's deeper, longer tradition of free speech rights, rooted in its centuries-old common law. The United States, although established upon affirmation of such rights, developed a legal system based on statute, and made complex by the overlay of federal, state and local law that afforded less coherent protection of democratic expression in public space.

In the beginning and end of the book, Keller applies the lessons of the nineteenth century to tensions existing today in London and New York around public protest. Despite London's fame for camera surveillance, it still remains, she argues, more tolerant of political demonstrations than New York. And while both cities have responded to twenty-first century threats of global terrorism by tightening constraints on public assembly, New York's "revanchist" stance has been more punitive, as seen in the lack of space and terrible treatment afforded protesters at the 2004 Republican Convention. What has not been seen in either city is a cultivation of open-space, deliberative democracy over the twentieth century. Stifled on one hand by unprecedented incursions into civil liberties that "national security" now justifies, and guided on the other away from real space to the new terrain of the virtual, the public square is fading as a locus in which to develop political ideas. Too often we see outdoor large-scale protests met with physical force, and multivocal pluralism thereby suppressed. Let us hope that those in all states charged with maintaining order instead recognize the value of allowing the latter to flourish, so as to diminish the chance of the former.

As an environmental sociologist, I found Keller's investigation of the intersecting dynamics of multiple social facts very compelling. Beneath the major inquiry into the tension between democracy and public order are a number of other interesting juxtapositions. How is exterior public space defined in flowing (street) and nodal (park) aspects, and how do these definitions enable movement of, and communication within, groups of people? How are the salubrious qualities of recreation, set amid concerns over public health, to be reconciled with the need for public spaces to allow protest? Is protest unhealthy? Is the order of policing akin to, or different from, the order that sanitation provides? Lisa Keller's meticulously researched book invites consideration of a range of issues concerning the urban environment and the politics of public health that will be of interest beyond her major audience of political historians.

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