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Tyler Stovall. *Paris and the Spirit of 1919: Consumer Struggles, Transnationalism and Revolution.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 354 S. ISBN 978-1-107-01801-3.

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T. Stovall: Paris and the Spirit of 1919

Swaths of historians have been scrounging municipal archives as of late in a collective effort to heed the calls from their profession's high priests to reveal how the global manifests itself in the local and vice versa. Tyler Stovall's attempt to combine urban with global history by studying the crossroads of world politics and working-class consumerism in Paris during that fateful year of 1919 does not buck the trend. Although the choice of Paris in 1919 may strike some readers as unimaginative, it is an irrefutably apposite one to analyze the "intersections between local and global life" (p. 18), which is the author's avowed aim. Since the peace conference briefly turned Paris into a world capital of sorts, "global life" was undeniably present. But while there are plenty of studies of 1919 as a global "moment" See e.g. Margaret MacMillan, Paris 1919. Six Months that Changed the World, New York 2003; Erez Manela, The Wilsonian Moment. Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism, Oxford 2007. , the local background of the peace conference has rarely received attention. This is where Stovall, an experienced hand in the history of working-class formation and race in interwar Paris His previous books include: Tyler Stovall, The Rise of the Paris Red Belt, Berkeley 1990; and Tyler Stovall, Paris noir: African Americans in the City of Light, Boston 1996. , makes a most welcome contribution.

Treating 1919 as a half-way hinge between 1871 and 1968, the author deftly demonstrates how local social concerns and economic hardship, fueled by the global conjuncture, nourished working-class consciousness and the city's "revolutionary spirit of 1919" (p. 2). Based on an array of primary sources, mainly from the French Interior Ministry and the Parisian Police Prefecture, he argues that a social revolution may have been less likely in Paris than it was in Seattle, Livorno, or Berlin. Even so, he maintains, the French capital's workers were animated by an "insurgent vision" (p. 2), which had much to do with consumer culture. Implicitly, the book refutes earlier arguments to the effect that a restorative and anticommunist spirit prevailed in much of the Western world at the end of the Great War.

In six well-written chapters, Stovall draws a rich tapestry of the social fabric of the Paris region, granting due attention to the specifics of urban space and to the details of occupational profiles. The unevenness and heterogeneity of the Parisian working class(es), he argues, contributed to an inherent instability that could catalyze unrest and upheaval. Moreover, as the first two chapters outline, the war economy reshaped the city's working class, for instance through the growing feminization of the labor force, and altered some its fundamental socioeconomic lifelines, in particular housing and food. Stovall takes up this thread in the last two chapters (5 and 6), showing how wartime measures to shield consumers against inflation hatched expectations that by the war's end could not be fulfilled. Even as inflation peaked before and after, not in, 1919 (something the author does not fully account for), grievances about la vie chère erupted in a series of radical movements of tenants and other consumers during the year after the armistice. The sixth chapter, providing a thick description of the metalworkers' strike of June 1919, forms Stovall's chief piece of evidence for Paris' "revolutionary spirit."

The book concludes that, even if no social revolution sprang from the movements examined, the moment of 1919 nonetheless had lasting ideological consequences. The untimely foundation of the French Communist Party in the following year, when the fleeting fervor had faded so that the party reverted to electoral politics from the get-go, testified to the momentous echoes of the "spirit" that Stovall captures. Paris, the author convincingly underlines, witnessed a potentially revolutionary situation in 1919 because it "lay at the interstices of a world in turmoil." After all, "local popular struggles in Paris mirrored and interacted with global politics in 1919" (p. 284).

While this argument will win over even the skeptical

reader, the book's two middle chapters to my mind do a less persuasive job in weaving the global dimension into the story. Chapter 3 maintains that gender and race were crucial to working-class formation in Paris in 1919. It reconstructs how both women and non-European workers, who had been recruited to supplant French men drained from the factories to the trenches, were swiftly expelled from the workforce at the war's end. Albeit fascinating in itself, the chapter's connection to the broader picture is a little muddled. While the inherently global dimension of gender remains opaque, the expulsion of colonial workers does not substantiate the cliché that "metropoles and colonies interacted to create each other" (p. 19). As the author admits on p. 123, colonial subjects had never set foot on Paris in significant numbers before 1919-as opposed to the huge numbers of European immigrants, about whom Stovall has disappointingly little to say. The example of colonial workers therefore does not add all that much to the overall storyline about the Parisian working class in 1919.

Chapter 4 treats Paris as a stage on which the city's workers and consumers performed for the audience of world opinion and the assembled leaders from across the globe. Although Stovall produces plenty of interesting examples of locals speaking to a global public, it remains less clear how-indeed, whether at all-the peace conference and Paris' fugacious standing as the world's capital affected the substance of working-class consciousness or politics. A more detailed examination of what Parisian workers made of the Bolshevik Revolution would have been an obvious analytical alternative here, even though it might have taken the author down a more trodden path.

Since Stovall does not follow this route, the book's overwhelming strengths reside more in the local than in the global domain. Pulling the reader away from the Quai d'Orsay, the Hôtel de Crillon, and the famous southwestern suburbs where world leaders concocted a new global order, Stovall excels at providing a socioeconomic snapshot of the city's less glamorous bits. Successfully blending urban labor history with a larger political narrative, the book shows the effects of material hardship, accrued from wartime economies, and of unfulfilled expectations after a period of profound popular sacrifices. Stovall makes a compelling case that, notwithstanding fatigue, consumer conflicts spilled over into peacetime. By 1919, Paris' streets still bristled with revolutionary ferment, in a "spirit" remarkably kindred to that in other great Western cities. Students and scholars interested in the effects of WWI, in urban history, in labor history, and in French history should all take note of this book.

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