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Jean-Paul Bunet, ed. *Immigration, vie Politique et Populisme en Banlieue Parisienne.* Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995. 400 pp. ISBN 978-2-7384-3499-9.

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If the history of immigration is not as developed as in the US, it has become, during the last fifteen years, an important field of French historical research. A serious history of immigration is all the more crucial in the political and social context of the last ten years, because of the rise of the Front National and the spread of xenophobic ideas. The immigrants are often blamed for causing unemployment, urban violence and the deficit in social security. Beside immigration and its political impact, suburbs have attracted the attention of journalists. Contrary to their Anglo-American counterparts, the French and most of all Parisian suburbs seem to embody social difficulties, a town-planning devoted to exclusion, and social segregation. The 'cites' where many foreign people live, largely unemployed, and often in terrible conditions of housing, appear the urban evil of modern times.

If suburbs are at the heart of political discourse, they are also at the center of much sociological or historical research. This book, which is the publication of the papers presented at a conference organized in 1994 by the University of Paris-VIII-Saint-Denis, meets both themes by analysing the links between immigration and political life in the suburban context. The disciplinary backgrounds of the authors are varied. Most are historians, but there are five geographers, one sociologist, and one political specialist. But there is no intellectual mix when dealing with a theme. For instance, populism does not seem to have interested the historians, with the exception of Jean-Paul Brunet, for whom 'this poorly identified object' (p. 19) refers to any political movement which aim at seducing the people by developing simple and often demagogic political ideas. But the present populism this book deals with is the far right political movement.

The title is classic–it could have given to students as an exam subject- and the theme appealing, but the book is a bit disappointing. The conference is said to be the result of one year of common research, but more than a collective reflection, it sounds like a collection of points of view, however interesting they are. The structure of the book distinguishes the theme of immigration from the theme of politics (communism and populism) but with the exception of the last part, the bridges between the two themes are rare. The geographical context is actually the common denominator of the papers, but suburbs are too often an empty box in which immigration or political life takes place, as though the specificity of suburban space did not play any role. Suburbia sometimes does not even appear (or appears very little), as in the case of Benjamin Stora's paper about the Algerians.

These critics may seem severe especially when one knows the difficulties in setting up a conference, and the natural tendency of the speakers to forget the general problem and treat their own subject of research. Furthermore, the themes developed by the authors are very often most interesting when they shed light on important aspects of immigration or political life in the suburbs of Paris. Let us look at that more precisely.

The book is divided into two main themes, the most important one dealing with immigration. The first part reminds us that the growth of Parisian suburbs at the end of the last century was mainly due to migrations but not mainly to foreign immigration. In the XIXth century, the foreigner was the one who did not come from the same village or the same province. Alain Faure shows the place of the Parisian stream in populating of the suburbs (about twenty percent of the suburban population was born in Paris and if we could take into account the number of the persons born outside Paris, but who lived there before settling in its suburbs, the percentage would be far higher). On the contrary, Jean-Claude Farcy insists on the importance of provincial immigration, showing that, while Paris attracted migrants mostly from the southern part of France, the suburbs attracted northern migrants. This difference cannot be explained by occupational reasons. While these two articles present a general painting of migrations, going further with what had been already been developed in Alain Faure (ed.) *Les Premiers Banlieusards. Aux origines des banlieues de Paris (1860-1940)*

Paris, Creaphis, 1991).

Jean-Paul Brunet develops in the next paper a monographic example: the industrial suburb of Saint-Denis and the provincial group of the Bretons. On the whole, the migrants who settled in the Parisian suburbs at the end of the XIXth century seemed to have melted into suburban society, but the Bretons formed a very tight community, whose members were unskilled, miserable, lived in very bad conditions, and showed a strong resistance to integration. At the beginning of the XXth, this resistance started to diminish due to trade-unionism and political activity. This would have deserved more than the half page Jean-Paul Brunet wrote. It was at the heart of the subject. On the whole, politics does not appear in this part and it would have been interesting to put the paper of Claude Pennetier after these three articles. Indeed, he does show the role played by the political and social fights in the integration of the provincial migrant into the suburban society. Particularly, there was no correlation between the political and socialrepresentations of the native region and the political activity in the suburbs. Political ideologies and more precisely socialism and communism, succeeded in destroying the strength of regional identity.

The result of the first part is the idea that foreign immigration must be understood in the context of the intense migration to the suburbs and may not be very different in nature. The second and third part of the book concentrate on the foreign immigration.

Starting with the first period of immigration (until the 1960s), we meet three groups: Italians, Spanish and Algerians. The authors study the processes of immigration and integration into French society very precisely but they do not really discuss the role of political activity. Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaleard points out the interesting example of two Italian communities in the eastern suburbs of Nogent-sur-Marne and Montreuil, two communities which revealed two different ways of integration. On the one hand, the Italians of Nogent, concentrated in a few streets (but it was not a ghetto), formed a very close community. At Montreuil, on the contrary, the Italians spread into the city and the prevailing impression is that of social mixing with the French population. Yet, in both communities, the process of integration, which was so far slow and difficult, seemed to accelerate on the verge of World War I. Politics started to play a role between the wars, with the coming of the refugees fleeing fascism. But each community seemed to melt into the municipal context. Nogent was a conservative suburb; Montreuil socialist and then communist, and their Italian communities shared these dominant tendencies.

While the acme of Italian immigration took place between WWI and WWII, Spanish immigration became massive in the middle of the 1960s. MASSIVELY SETTLED DOWN in the industrial suburbs of Saint-Denis or Aubervilliers, the Spanish immigrants were also numerous in bourgeois suburbs such as Neuilly, where the women worked as maids. We would like to know more about this "golden age" immigration. Throughout this book, we only encounter the industrial suburbs and the more or less unskilled workers. But all immigrants did not settle in the industrial suburbs and all the immigrants were not workers. Maisons-Laffitte, for instance, attracted many British jockeys and trainers.

Since the 1970s, new stratums of immigrants settled in the suburbs, coming mainly from Black Africa. With them appeared what is called 'foyers,' which could be translated as 'homes' but which looked and still look more like segregated houses (the 'foyers' were put in place to provide housing and meals to individuals from the foreign communities, with no possibility to move in with one's family). Living in community shanties, Portuguese immigrants shared this experience of isolation. Yet, they did not want to be lodged in shelters and tried to prevent the destruction of their homes between 1966 and 1974 (Marie-Christine Volovitch-Tavares). Christian Poiret and Marylene Car study the immigration of Black Africans, showing that their concentration in 'foyers' or community shelters (which are places to sleep, but also to live in and socialize, with shops and services) permit the survival of cultural and social practices even if it looks like a segregative phenomenon.

For the urban historian (or at least for me), the second main part of the book, 'political life and populism' is less interesting and I will go quickly through this topic. The interest of historians in the Red Belt of Paris, as it was called, is very old. Let us note the work of Jean-Paul Brunet *Saint-Denis la ville rouge. Socialisme et communisme en banlieue ouvriere 1890-1939*, (Paris, Hachette, 1980), or Annie Fourcaut *Bobigny, banlieue rouge*, (Paris, Les Editions ouvrieres - Presses de la Fondation nationale des Sciences politiques, 1986), and *Banlieue rouge 1920-1960. Annees Thorez, annees Gabin: archetype du populaire, banc d'essai des modernites* (Autrement, serie Memoires, octobre 1992). We can even say that the interest of French historians in the suburbs came from their study of communism. This is a main difference from the Anglo-American historiography on suburbs.

Jacques Girault draws a link between the social structures and the political realities (read the working-class

population and the Red suburbs) but he discovers that no perfect determinism can be found, the suburban reality being complex. That's good news! We just wonder what role the immigrants played in the constitution of this Red Belt. Did they share this social ideal? Or was it built to oppose them (especially in the context of the economic depression of the 1930s)? If the example of Montreuil does not give us the answer, the paper of Beatrice Giblin-Delvallet, offers some interesting ideas. The political tradition of Gennevilliers, a Communist industrial suburb, was to refuse to distinguish the foreigners from the French. But by encouraging the permanence of their original culture and identity and denouncing the French colonialism, the left militants made it more difficult for the young Maghrebins to assimilate the values of the country which had become theirs.

The last papers deal with the tendency towards populism (meaning far right vote) in the red suburbs, a tendency directly linked to the size of the foreign population. Through the example of the working-class suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois where very poor immigrants, who often do not speak French, form about one third of the population, Assia Melamed shows perfectly well how the communist mayor, willing to stay on power, had to change his (or at least pretend to change) xenophobic ideas. But far from the simple idea that huge concentrations of immigrants push the French population living nearby to vote for the far right, Henri Rey, through the example of the department of Seine-saint-Denis, shows that the linear correlation between the importance of immigrants and the importance of the far right vote has become significant but is fragile. For instance, the municipalities which form the upper quartile of the Front National vote in 1994 have, in general, less immigrants than the rest of the department. Once more reality flees determinism…

On the whole, the richness of the analyses, the variety of the examples, the diversity of the scientific approaches make of this book an important opening to the complexity of the Parisian suburbs and its population. It is worth looking at.

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