

properly into the avant-garde of the Italian intelligentsia. Between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., Ciocca was carving out the so-called Third Way, the path of corporativist-fascist Italy: “Technological realism dictates a state that steers a middle course between liberal statelessness and communist statism, between hypertrophic individualism and hypertrophic collectivism, between the pursuit of material prosperity and that of spiritual grandeur” (p. 55). One of his other major ambitions, the guided roadway, was a similar attempt to marry the qualities of the railroad and the automobile, each representative of collectivism and individualism. To Ciocca and his fascist colleagues, the answer was in Italy’s brand of corporativism, as described by Third Way theorist Ugo Spirito: “It is a hierarchical communism that denies both the levelling state and an anarchic individual; that opposes bureaucratic management but bureaucratizes the nation; that resists private management and assigns a public value to the work performed by individuals. Wills unite to a single will; multiple goals coalesce to form a single goal. All social life is rationalized” (p. 42).

Here is the theme on which Ciocca (and Schnapp) proceed. Seemingly each of Ciocca’s projects carries this common theme of total rationalization. His proposed Theatre of the Masses for Milan would seat 20,000 (compared to La Scala’s capacity of 2,200), which meant lower costs per seat and therefore more spectators. Lest we should think Ciocca’s scheme philistine, Schnapp emphasizes the aesthetic and dramaturgical considerations of the project, which has a stage visible from all sides to allow for a three-dimensional set and realistic stagings. When his critics complained there was no repertoire for such a theatre, Ciocca responded by saying his building would inspire new types of plays for the masses.

The guided railway and the Theatre of the Masses will have to stand as shorthand for other projects, which included a pig palace hotel, a “fast house” for farm workers, and entire urban planning projects that continued to have as their theme the total rationalization and maximum efficiency of daily living. In a book entitled *Building Fascism, Communism, Liberal Democracy*, Schnapp waits until the very end to pronounce judgement on the political nature of Ciocca’s work. The mere fact that Ciocca has been influential in all three fields leads to the conclusion that “Politics was ultimately for him ... less a matter of rival goals than of rival methods to achieve a similar end” (p. 166). In exonerating Ciocca of his fascist connections, which seems fair, Schnapp’s political conclusions leave unanswered the larger philosophical questions about someone who wanted to bring total rationalization to the human sphere.

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WANG, Di — *Street Culture in Chengdu: Public Space, Urban Commoners, and Local Politics, 1870–1930*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003. Pp. 251.

This is a book about happiness and pain, freedom and restriction, protest and suppression of almost one million commoners in a Chinese inland city in the course of

the turbulent decades from the late Qing to the early Republic. As Di Wang claims, the people who dominate this book are “‘nobody’, ‘anyone’, ‘everyone’, the ‘ordinary man’, or even the ‘dangerous class’ ” (p. 17). Their everyday life in the newly constructed urban public space and their interaction with the new pattern of urban administration in the early twentieth century is so far largely unknown to historians. To map common people urban existence, Wang switches his focus from elite clubs and municipal offices to “the city’s most visible and highly utilized public space” (p. 13) — the street. The street functioned as a work place for people to eke out subsistence life. It was also an information centre, or a scandal mill, to update people with possible business opportunities and gossip. In times of local festivals, the street was a ceremonial space that carried out the function of fostering and exemplifying a sense of communal unity and identity. Finally, when reform and revolution disrupted the normal rhythm of urban life, the street became an open space for common people to express political dissent.

Wang’s research examines a crucial period of Chengdu’s modern history, during which social reform, cultural enlightenment, political chaos, and urban construction left indelible marks on people’s everyday experience. He pinpoints four stages of such a dramatic transformation. Prior to the 1890s, due to the city’s rather isolated location from regions that had either been devastated by peasant rebellion or invaded by foreign powers, Chengdu and its people enjoyed a relatively peaceful time. The imperial bureaucratic control did not reach the neighbourhood community, which left common people with considerable autonomy. As in many other imperial cities in the same period (for example, Hankou and Suzhou), local elite filled the power vacuum and ran various civil organizations to “maintain social stability and civil order outside the official justice system” (p. 101).

The harmonious state-elite-commoner triangle began to change during the New Policy reform era when the elite initiated social reforms and “launched an aggressive campaign to re-create the city image and reshape its public space” (p. 112). When the elite’s enlightened enterprise infringed upon street life, common people became agitated and mobilized for collective action. Since the watershed of the 1911 Republican Revolution, common people became gradually politicized as a result of the state’s increasingly intruding presence in street life. Again, Wang shares a similar argument with many recent scholars on the state/society relationship in Republican China. His case of Chengdu demonstrates that the state built up its authoritarian control by replacing the local elite’s communal leadership with police disciplinary power. To regain control over the community and protect autonomy in the ever-shrinking public space, common people united with the local elite, and popular protest became a familiar street scene. According to Wang, in the last stage of the transformation of street culture and local politics, elite power declined further, and people experienced a more powerful and exploitive state in the hands of warlords.

If we view Wang’s book as yet another work on local society versus modern state, we risk overlooking his contribution to the fields of Chinese urban history and social history. Methodologically, Wang is trying to retell the history of reform and revolution from the perspective of common people. What concerns him most is not how a particular administrative measure or reform policy was made by the city’s leadership,

but “how changes affected traditional neighborhood life and how Chengdu residents responded to the transformation of society from one having relatively high autonomy, little law enforcement, and a loosely affiliated cluster of neighborhoods to one controlled by a centralized urban bureaucracy” (p. 12). This is why Wang relies heavily upon non-official sources (literature, graphics, field work). This also explains why he emphasizes reading official documents and elite writings critically, with an attempt to filter the cultural bias against the commoners’ public life. This bottom-up approach reminds us that people on the street were not passive recipients of social change; instead, they were active players who were aware that their livelihood and way of life were at stake. By restoring the mass to the central place in the making and interpretation of history, Wang’s book explains why every generation of social reformers and revolutionary leaders considered the project of “enlightening”, “civilizing”, “educating”, and “mobilizing” the masses as an important and indispensable part of their political and social agenda. Since the urban reform and revolution in “modern Chengdu” brought unprecedented contact among officials, elites, and common people, the reaction from the bottom of society, be it supportive or resistant, determined the fate of a particular policy, the legitimacy of political authority, and the position of the elite in the matrix of local politics. When people actively participated in various forms of popular protest, the street became a stage for mass politics, which had gradually become a familiar part of Chinese people’s public life throughout the twentieth century.

Some questions need to be further explored. For example, it seems that Wang portrays the “common people” as a homogeneous group. They lived the similar pattern of street life and shared common interests and stakes when facing official control. But in Chengdu — an inland metropolis — it is highly possible that the bottom of society consisted of various social groups, such as secret societies (gown brothers), religious sects, and Christians, among others, which might not necessarily have responded to the top-down control in the same manner. Thus further study on intra-group conflicts as well as alliances may help add another dimension to the reader’s understanding of street culture and street politics in Chengdu.

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WARREN, Jean-Philippe — *L’engagement sociologique. La tradition sociologique du Québec francophone (1886–1955)*, Montréal, Boréal, 2003, 447 p.

Pour Jean-Philippe Warren, la sociologie est apparue dès la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, période fertile en activités liées de près au développement d’une pensée sociale que l’auteur de l’ouvrage identifie à la sociologie dont il retrace l’institutionnalisation lointaine. Certains questionneront cette assimilation de la pensée sociale à la discipline sociologique alors que Jean-Charles Falardeau parlait plutôt de proto-sociologie.

L’auteur retrace la genèse de la sociologie au Québec des années 1886 à 1955. La coupure retenue de l’année 1955 – date à laquelle le père Lévesque quitte ses fonc-