

merely a variant of xenophobia but rather a *constitutive* element of these politics that longed for an untainted, whole, unified nation protected from liberated women, homosexuals, colonial subjects, and Jews. Moreover, Sanos insightfully points to the gendering of this racial discourse. Léon Blum for instance “appeared obsessively in their writings because he represented the gender and sexual disorder that far-right intellectuals wanted to undo,” a disorder wrought in the social body. Only a framework of analysis that considers race and sexuality together can account for how Blum could embody either masculinity or femininity, or even “hermaphroditism” (219), and for how, more generally, pathological sexualities came to stand for pathological politics.

Finally, Sanos makes a persuasive claim for the centrality of fantasy in politics and in history. In Sanos’s narrative, the social body and the nation operate as a fantasy of something that is lost and must be recovered—a fantasy expressed in a specifically gendered and racialized language. Sanos turns to the concept of abjection, a term that she historicizes and that allows her to tie together “self and bodies to the social and nation in a political discourse clamoring for regeneration” (12). She argues that Jews and colonial subjects were “imagined to threaten and contaminate self and nation” and thus demanded “the fantasized recovery of a normative masculinity said to have been under assault” (4). Fantasy here does not signal what does not exist or what is simply imagined but, rather, is the very precondition of social reality.

Most important, with this exciting book Sanos proves how valuable the analysis of gender and race can be to intellectual history. Here, gender and race are not empirical objects per se but methodological tools that can allow the historian to discern the construction and the logic of political meaning and social formations. This kind of intellectual history is far from abstract or disengaged. Rather, it is critical history at its best.

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Memories of May '68: France's Convenient Consensus. By *Chris Reynolds*.

Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011. Pp. viii+189. \$160.00 (cloth); \$30.00 (paper).

One of the peculiarities of postwar French history is the extent to which the narratives of an otherwise marginal far-left have often taken pride of place in the collective memory. Nowhere is this more apparent than in discussions surrounding the protests of May–June 1968. Seen through a historian’s lens, these began as a student movement for improved living conditions and a more egalitarian university system, before extending outward to significant parts of the French workforce, who engaged in spontaneous strikes, occupations, and protests. There were highly symbolic moments of contestation at the heart of the French capital—barricades on the Boulevard Saint Michel and the occupation of the Sorbonne—but also a much larger number of smaller events and demonstrations all across France. A wide variety of actors, the overwhelming majority of whom were not *gauchiste* students, sought to mobilize the generalized climate of protest in order to achieve diverging aims. Some of these succeeded but, at a national level, the consequences of May–June 1968 were significant: despite winning a landslide election in late June, de Gaulle’s power had been compromised; he resigned the following year and, in 1974, the Gaullist party lost its stranglehold on power. Even if the protests themselves did not appear to achieve a great deal, they marked the beginning of a profound systemic change in French politics and administration, which almost certainly means they deserve to be called a “revolution.” Indeed, one could easily argue that 1968 was the 1848 of the twentieth century.

It is not surprising, therefore, that 1968 continues to provoke intense debate in France. What is more surprising is that the narrative of the *gauchiste* extreme-left should continue to dominate the popular perception of 1968. As a result, we still hear more about student activities and less about labor strikes; and the streets of Paris get far more prominence than the myriad (provincial) locations that were also sites of protest. This bias is what Chris Reynolds calls the “convenient consensus.” According to Reynolds, this consensus has served the purposes of two important constituencies in French politics: former *soixante-huitards*, many of whom are members of today’s Socialist Party, and who see 1968 as the heyday of true, radical protest; and the French state, which has preferred to emphasize the unrepresentativeness of *gauchiste* student radicalism in an attempt to downplay the importance of 1968.

As Reynolds makes clear, this was not a conspiracy. It was a product of political circumstances in which it served the interests of both parties to reduce the protests of May–June 1968 to little more than youthful left-wing student posturing. And yet this consensus has clearly percolated through French society. Using school history textbooks and results from a fascinating survey conducted among French university students across France, Reynolds demonstrates just how much today’s generation have been influenced by this limited interpretation of what May–June 1968 was all about. There is a clear recognition that 1968 was “important,” but many of those surveyed could not say exactly how, except to note that education was a major issue.

This collective amnesia has been reinforced by those who argue that May–June 1968 was a self-indulgent celebration and the root cause of all France’s contemporary ills (for instance, Nicolas Sarkozy famously announced in a speech he gave in 2007 that it was time to “liquidate” the legacy of 1968). But this negative view has obscured the very real diversity and seriousness of protest at the time. In the penultimate chapter, Reynolds gives a useful overview of what happened in May–June 1968 in the cities of Brest and Strasbourg, and shows how important these events were for local and regional politics. He argues convincingly that, for many protesters in the provinces, the events in Paris were little more than a starting point, even if the subsequent “convenient consensus” has marginalized this vibrant story of provincial political engagement.

Of course, it is possible to overplay the idea of a “convenient consensus” and, at times, Reynolds seems to push his idea too far. If anything, the sheer diversity of texts and opinions he himself is able to bring together suggests that there is a great deal more complexity to French public opinion, and it soon becomes apparent that the “convenient consensus” has been produced by—and for—a Parisian elite. Moreover, university students’ lack of knowledge need not always be interpreted as an example of the “convenient consensus” in action. It could simply be a product of political preferences, with those on the left more knowledgeable about 1968 and those on the right less interested. In fact, it is a great shame that Reynolds’s survey did not ask a question about the political orientation of respondents: I suspect his results would have been more revealing had they been subdivided into categories of “right,” “left,” and “center.” Finally, Reynolds underplays the crucial intellectual shifts that have taken place since 1968. His interest is clearly much more in social and cultural history, but the book would have benefited from a more sustained consideration of how the transformation of the French left, the collapse of Marxism, and the rise of anti-totalitarianism have affected attitudes toward 1968. If there is a “convenient consensus,” it has almost certainly arisen from a reconfiguration of France’s intellectual landscape.

Nevertheless, Reynolds’s pithy and provocative book suggests an important—if entirely undeveloped—avenue for future historical research, namely, a study of May–June 1968 in France from the perspective of nonparticipants. I suspect that such a study would reveal that a key causal factor in explaining the rise of the “convenient consensus” has been,

not so much the elegant polemics of former *gauchistes* or the omnipotent narrative of the state, but the shrugged shoulders of the millions of French people who never thought that 1968 was really anything that special in the first place.

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The French Way: How France Embraced and Rejected American Values and Power.

By *Richard F. Kuisel*.

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011. Pp. xiv+487. \$49.50 (cloth); \$49.50 (e-book).

In no country since World War II has the growth of American economic and cultural power in Europe aroused greater passion than it has in France. And no historian has done more to explore why this has been the case than has Richard Kuisel. In his previous, landmark book on the subject, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*, Kuisel argued that French anti-Americanism, strident in the late 1940s and the 1950s amid the polarities of the Cold War, temporized in the 1960s when de Gaulle's assertions of French independence helped "exorcise the American demon" and enabled the French to embrace American-style habits of mass consumption with less fear of becoming "American."

In this masterful sequel, Kuisel pursues the subject through the 1980s and '90s, two decades that crucially, in his account, straddled 1989 and the end of the Cold War. He focuses on three domains—international relations, economics, and popular culture—to probe why a France with citizens who so embraced American icons, products, films, and shows like *Dallas* remained such a hotbed of anti-Americanism, and all the more so after the Cold War was over. Kuisel argues that even as the French adapted adroitly to late twentieth-century globalization, they did so by using the United States as a "foil"—that is, as "a model to be emulated or avoided" (xii) and, especially after 1989, as a hegemon to be "tamed" (210), all in the effort to protect a distinctive French "path to modernity" (xvi) and French prominence in international affairs.

Key elements of this argument emerge in each of Kuisel's three domains. In international relations he draws a contrast between the 1980s and 1990s. During the former decade presidents François Mitterrand and Ronald Reagan, though ideological opposites, got along famously and shared a desire to check Soviet power. But with the end of the Cold War French leaders sought "to curb the unilateralist instincts of the hyperpower" (270), a United States they came to regard as an "overbearing, unreliable and impetuous ally" (210) blocking France's rightful place on the world stage. The Bosnian war best captured the dynamic. After France had finally succeeded in getting the Americans to intervene militarily, the Clinton administration humiliated the French by shunting them aside in negotiating the Dayton Accords. Subsequent French efforts to create a European defense pillar within the European Union, something Americans supported in principle but not in practice, came to naught, as did most French attempts to influence American policy in the Middle East, Iran, Iraq, Cuba, and Kosovo. Taming the hyperpower proved elusive, making the 1990s, in Kuisel's view, largely a decade of foreign policy disappointment.

Kuisel reports better results in the economic and cultural domains. Leaders of the moderate Right and Left in the 1990s deployed a rhetoric of anti-Americanism—castigating Anglo-American "hard capitalism"—as cover for carrying out their own neoliberal reforms "by stealth" (282): deregulating markets, privatizing public enterprises, trimming the state budget to shepherd the country to the euro. (Kuisel might have made more of the