

Revolutionary Rites: Political Demonstrations at the Place de la Nation, Paris

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Résumé de l'article

Les historiens qui se sont intéressés aux lieux de mémoire ont mis en évidence l'incertitude entourant le sens donné à ces lieux. Celui-ci varie en effet selon le contexte politique qui influence à la fois la manière dont ces lieux sont perçus et l'utilisation qui en est faite. Ayant pour objet d'étude la Place de la Nation de Paris et le monument *Le Triomphe de la République* de l'artiste Dalou, cet article démontre que les manifestations publiques dans les rues de Paris ont joué un rôle important dans la manière dont ce lieu de mémoire parisien a été compris et interprété. Il étudie plus particulièrement quatre événements ayant marqué l'histoire de ce lieu de mémoire : l'inauguration de la statue de bronze le 19 novembre 1899, les manifestations ayant marqué la formation du Front populaire le 12 février 1934, la démonstration « sanglante » du 14 juillet 1953 ainsi que la manifestation organisée contre Jean-Marie Le Pen et le Front national le 1^{er} mai 2002. Bien que le contexte politique dans lequel chacune de ces manifestations a eu lieu ait été différent, tout comme les participants et leurs objectifs, ces manifestations ont donné lieu à une répétition des traditions révolutionnaires françaises, avec une référence toute particulière à la commune de Paris. La nature transitoire ainsi que les objectifs spécifiques de chacune de ces manifestations ont néanmoins limité la capacité des protestataires à modifier la signification du monument. Cet état de chose n'a jamais été plus évident que lors de la démonstration algérienne du 14 juillet 1953, qui s'est terminée par un massacre, rapidement oublié.

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IAN GERMANI

Abstract

Historians who study sites of memory emphasize the fluidity in meaning attached to those sites. The meaning of monuments is dependent upon changes in political context, which affect both how they are perceived and the uses to which they are put. With specific attention to the Place de la Nation in Paris and to Dalou's monument, Le Triomphe de la République, this article argues that street demonstrations have played an important role in creating meaning for Parisian sites of memory. It focuses on four events in the history of the Place/monument: the inauguration of the bronze statue on 19 November, 1899; the demonstration marking the formation of the Popular Front on 12 February, 1934; the "bloody" 14 July demonstration of 1953; and the demonstration against Jean-Marie Le Pen and the National Front on 1 May, 2002. While the specific political context of these demonstrations varied, as did the character and purpose of the actors composing them, they all provided an occasion for the rehearsal of France's revolutionary traditions, with particular reference to the Paris Commune. The transitory nature and specific purposes of particular demonstrations, however, restricted their ability to alter the monument's significance. This is painfully apparent in the case of the Algerian demonstration of 14 July, 1953, which ended in a quickly forgotten massacre.

Résumé

Les historiens qui se sont intéressés aux lieux de mémoire ont mis en évidence l'incertitude entourant le sens donné à ces lieux. Celui-ci varie en effet selon le contexte politique qui influence à la fois la manière dont ces lieux sont perçus et l'utilisation qui en est faite. Ayant pour objet d'étude la Place de la Nation de Paris et le monument Le Triomphe de la

République de l'artiste Dalou, cet article démontre que les manifestations publiques dans les rues de Paris ont joué un rôle important dans la manière dont ce lieu de mémoire parisien a été compris et interprété. Il étudie plus particulièrement quatre événements ayant marqué l'histoire de ce lieu de mémoire : l'inauguration de la statue de bronze le 19 novembre 1899, les manifestations ayant marqué la formation du Front populaire le 12 février 1934, la démonstration « sanglante » du 14 juillet 1953 ainsi que la manifestation organisée contre Jean-Marie Le Pen et le Front national le 1^{er} mai 2002. Bien que le contexte politique dans lequel chacune de ces manifestations a eu lieu ait été différent, tout comme les participants et leurs objectifs, ces manifestations ont donné lieu à une répétition des traditions révolutionnaires françaises, avec une référence toute particulière à la commune de Paris. La nature transitoire ainsi que les objectifs spécifiques de chacune de ces manifestations ont néanmoins limité la capacité des protestataires à modifier la signification du monument. Cet état de chose n'a jamais été plus évident que lors de la démonstration algérienne du 14 juillet 1953, qui s'est terminée par un massacre, rapidement oublié.

I. Introduction

The fascination with monuments lies in the contrast between the illusion of permanence and solidity they create and their actual vulnerability to time and circumstance. Changes of political regime are often accompanied by the destruction or replacement of monuments. Even when they survive such transformations intact, changes of political context may also alter the meanings attached to them. As Peter Carrier writes, “The meaning of monuments is not inherent in their forms alone, but dependent upon the context of their production and reception.”¹ The politicians who commission them, the artists and sculptors who design them, the people who participate in their ritual reception, and the media who represent them to a wider audience all have a hand in shaping their significance. Monuments are conveyors of social memory, a reminder of past events. But they also acquire a history of their own. The rituals and demonstrations focused upon them simultaneously revive and create historical memory. Despite their particular and unique agendas, the participants in

such demonstrations legitimize their own claims and actions by emphasizing, through symbols, words, and gestures, continuity with the past.

Interest in monuments as signifiers of collective memory and as sites where, in the words of Karen Till, “notions of identity (such as race, class, gender, and the nation) are performed and contested,”² has blossomed since the publication of Pierre Nora’s seminal work *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.³ This collective enterprise, involving contributions by 120 leading scholars, provided a comprehensive survey of French memory sites, extending its range far beyond physical monuments to include incarnations of national memory such as schoolbooks, dictionaries, and national holidays. Nevertheless, given its focus on the concepts of the Republic (volume one) and the Nation (volume two), *Les Lieux de Mémoire* duly acknowledged the centrality of Paris and of Parisian monuments as signifiers of republican and national identity. An important essay by Maurice Agulhon surveyed the politically significant sites of the French capital, noting the tendency of the political right to invest the sites of western Paris, principally the Arc de Triomphe, the Place Vendôme, and the Invalides, with symbolic significance. For the left, it was the sites of eastern Paris — the Panthéon, Hôtel de Ville, Père-Lachaise Cemetery, and the triangle formed by the Places de la Nation, République, and Bastille — that held equivalent (and rival) symbolic import.⁴

Subsequent studies have further explored the symbolic confrontations embodied in the monumental landscape of Paris.⁵ Particularly noteworthy for its consideration of the relationships between Parisian monuments, state power, political ritual, and public memory is the work of Avner Ben-Amos, which focuses upon the use of public funerals to propagate the republican idea since the time of the Revolution. Ben-Amos borrowed from the work of anthropologists, notably Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz, in emphasizing the need for polities to establish sacred centres to serve as a focus for rituals affirming the essential values of the community. In Paris, argues Ben-Amos, the quadrilateral formed by the Panthéon, the Invalides, the Arc de Triomphe, and Notre-Dame Cathedral, also containing the centres where political power was located (the Elysée Palace, the Luxembourg Palace, and the Palais Bourbon), defined that “sacred

centre.”⁶ He notes that, although the physical landscape changes more slowly than the political one, the meanings attached to such sacred centres shift according to circumstance. They are also open to rival interpretations. Ben-Amos states that mainstream republicanism did not completely prevail in imposing its interpretations upon the sacred sites of the French capital, which were also revered by the anti-republican right. Furthermore, the left-wing opposition also “tried to subvert the official use of Parisian space, either by offering another reading of the republican centre or, more often, by establishing an alternative one.”⁷

The alternative “sacred centre” of the left was based on the monuments and sites of eastern Paris identified by Agulhon. The Panthéon, the Hôtel de Ville, the Mur des Fédérés, and the Bastille-Nation-République triangle within the historic faubourg Saint-Antoine collectively enshrined the memory of France’s revolutionary traditions. These sites were also contested territory, admitting of “official” as well as of oppositional interpretations. Most importantly, they also served as the focal point for identity-affirming rituals in the form of left-wing political demonstrations.

This paper considers the relationship between political demonstrations and one of the most important of these French republican sites of memory: the Place de la Nation. Originally titled the Place du Trône, the site was renamed and endowed by the republican municipality of Paris with Jules Dalou’s plaster sculpture representing *The Triumph of the Republic* in 1889. In the year that celebrated the centenary of the French Revolution, the city fathers self-consciously brought together in a single *lieu de mémoire* signifiers of the two enduring concepts — Nation and Republic — which Pierre Nora and his team identified as central to French identity and public memory. Dalou’s monument was the ultimate of five “Great Parisian Proclamations” honouring the Republic — each of them a bronze female allegory — inaugurated between 1880 and 1889.⁸ Its location in a site identified with the Nation gave it particular significance, implicitly establishing the inseparability of Nation and Republic. The history of this place of memory since its inauguration demonstrates the importance of political ritual — in this case, political demonstrations — in conjuring the symbolic power invested in monuments. It

also demonstrates, however, that some movements are more effective than others in taking control of these sacred sites and imposing their own meanings upon them. Throughout the twentieth century, Dalou's monument evoked and transmitted the revolutionary heritage of republican France. Demonstrations focused on it enlisted the symbols, chants, and slogans of the revolutionary past to fight new political battles. By means of frequent repetition of the rites of revolution, from the moment of its inauguration through the demonstrations of the Popular Front in the 1930s, the parties of the French left laid claim to the monument's interpretation. Other groups, notably the Algerian nationalists whose demonstrations culminated in the "bloody 14 July" of 1953, were less successful. Insofar as this event was assimilated to the monument's history, it was incorporated as part of the martyrology of the left, the national identity of the Algerians who were killed and the cause for which they demonstrated quickly forgotten. Race and the rights of immigrants were the main concerns of those who participated in the anti-Le Pen demonstration of 1 May, 2002. By this time, as Maurice Agulhon has argued, Dalou's female allegory of the Republic had diminished in significance in the hundred years since its inauguration, "degraded" and even "infantilized" as "Marianne" was supplanted in official iconography by the personal symbols of successive presidents or became an increasingly familiar figure, taking on the features not of an impersonal deity but of familiar film stars.⁹ Even this demonstration, however, echoed the theme of republican defence that had characterized the demonstrations of the Popular Front in the 1930s and the bronze sculpture's inauguration in 1899.

II. The Place de la Nation and Dalou's "Triumph of the Republic"

It was the decisive consolidation of the Republic at the end of the 1870s that led both to the renaming of the Place du Trône as the Place de la Nation and the establishment in its centre of Dalou's sculptural group representing the *Triumph of the Republic*. The decision to sponsor a competition for a monument representing the Republic was taken by the Municipal Council of Paris following the



Dalou's *Triomphe de la République*

(Photo: Germani).

resignation of Marshal MacMahon as President of the Republic on 1 February 1879. Although Dalou did not win the competition for a statue to be placed in the newly named Place de la République, his baroque allegory of a phrygian-bonneted Liberty bestriding the globe attracted critical and popular acclaim. Sculpted by a former Communeard who had been forced into exile following the Commune's suppression, Dalou's figure of the Republic — Marianne — was markedly more radical than those of other entrants in the competition. With her right breast bared and her phrygian bonnet clearly visible, Dalou's Republic is a youthful and dynamic figure. The globe which she dominates is carried upon a chariot drawn by lions, which are shown the way by a muscular, torch-bearing Genius of Liberty. The chariot is also pushed forward by allegories of Labour and Justice, while the female figure of Peace follows behind, distributing fruits and flowers signifying Abundance. Although rejected by the jury, on the grounds that it failed to meet the requirements of the competition and was unsuitable for the location it was expected to occupy, Dalou's radical design won favour from the new Prefect of the Seine, as well as from the Municipal Council of Paris.

While the jury decided that the Morice Brothers' more conservative figure of the Republic would grace the Place de la République, a few weeks before that statue was inaugurated on 14 July 1880, the Municipal Council approved the acquisition of Dalou's statue and decided that it would be located in the Place du Trône, where it would stand as a revolutionary counterweight to the Arc de Triomphe and its evocation of military glory. In the words of Ulysse Parent, "On the Place de l'Étoile, a Triumphal Arch has been dedicated to military and conquering France; is it not appropriate to raise at the opposite end of the capital, an imperishable monument that will recall a national glory more pure, if you consecrate it to the Spirit of the French Revolution and to the Republic which came from it?"¹⁰

At the same time as it decided on the acquisition of the monument, the Municipal Council also decreed a name change for the Place du Trône, which would henceforth be known as the Place de la Nation. The old name was unsatisfactory because it evoked not the Republic, but the Monarchy, the Place having been named for the throne that was placed there on 26 August 1660 for the ceremonial

entry into the city of Louis XIV. The two columns that marked the eastern extremity of the Place, surmounted in the 1840s by the figures of Louis IX and Philip-Augustus, were also signifiers of the monarchical past. Although they remained in place, the figure of Dalou's Marianne, striding toward the city centre with the columns at her back, would signify the historic progression from monarchy to republic.¹¹ The inauguration of a plaster version of Dalou's sculpture, on 21 September 1889, a date which corresponded to the centenary of the Revolution, as well as to the anniversary of the Convention's abolition of the monarchy (the proclamation of the Republic came the following day, on 22 September 1792), represented the culmination of a concerted program by the Municipal Council of Paris to republicanize Paris.¹² Nevertheless, it was the inauguration of the bronze statue in 1899 that established the monument's identity as a focal point for demonstrations of political unity in defence of the Republic.

III. 19 November 1899

The second inauguration of Dalou's statue, on 19 November 1899, confirmed the victory of the left in the most intense and divisive of all French political crises, the Dreyfus Affair. In 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus had been convicted of espionage and imprisoned on Devil's Island. When the authenticity of the evidence and the integrity of the military tribunal that had convicted Dreyfus were later called into question, French opinion became polarized between those who advocated a revision of Dreyfus's sentence and those who insisted upon upholding the original verdict. The affair galvanized French politics and society, creating new political alignments and generating new forms of political organization and expression. The anti-Dreyfusard cause, opposing revision of the original sentence, brought together an uneasy alliance of anti-semites, Catholics, monarchists, plebiscitary republicans, and nationalists of various persuasions. A right-wing populism emerged which manifested itself in new organizations such as the Ligue des Patriotes and the Ligue de la Patrie Française. On the Dreyfusard side, academics, parliamentary republicans, socialists, workers, and anarchists just as uneasily put aside their differences and

joined in the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme.¹³ The Place de la Nation itself became a theatre for the conflict between Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards. On 23 February 1899, Paul Déroulède, leader of the anti-Dreyfusard Ligue des Patriotes, together with a handful of supporters, intercepted the military guard returning from the funeral procession of President Félix Faure, as it traversed the Place de la Nation. Déroulède urged the commanding general to join him in marching on the Elysée to bring down the government.¹⁴ The general refused, eventually arresting Déroulède and conducting him to the nearby barracks at Reuilly. Although tried and acquitted in May, Déroulède and many of his co-conspirators went on trial again in November 1899 before the High Court of the Senate. In the interim, the affair had reached its height, with the assault by anti-Dreyfusard demonstrators on President Loubet at the Longchamp race course on 4 June and with the second trial of Alfred Dreyfus at Rennes in August and September. Dreyfus was again found guilty, despite revelations that the case against him had been based at best on circumstantial and at worst on forged evidence; but this time he was granted a presidential pardon. It was against the backdrop of these events that the decision was taken to inaugurate Dalou's monument. Originally supposed to coincide with the anniversary of the Republic's foundation (22 September), political circumstances required its deferral to 19 November.

The socialist newspaper *La Petite République* took the lead in shaping the inauguration into an event that was at once a demonstration of support for the Republic, a celebration of victory for the parties of the left over the forces of clericalism and militarism, and an expiation of Déroulède's attempted coup. Léon Gérault-Richard, the newspaper's editor, insisted from the beginning on the expiatory function of the occasion: "At this Place de la Nation, sullied by the criminal action of the *césariens*, a trembling people would swear to defend liberty and ensure its triumph over the coalition of its enemies."¹⁵ Noting the successful mobilization of the mass demonstration in defence of the Republic on 18 June 1898, when demonstrators had marched from the Place de la Concorde to Longchamp to protest the assault on President Loubet, he went on to insist upon the national character of this new demonstration. "At

Longchamp, it was Paris that protested against the audacity of the *chevaliers du roi*.¹⁶ At the Place de la Nation, it is necessary that the whole of France swear an oath of fidelity to republican principles,¹⁷ which would be accomplished by inviting the participation of all the communes of France. Overall, the resulting festival would be, Gérard-Richard claimed, an assertion of the values of the French revolutionary tradition, “a formidable affirmation of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.”¹⁸ Over the coming weeks, Gérard-Richard kept this vision of the inauguration before the eyes of his readers and did his best to encourage its realization. He also insisted that the festival should be working class in character. Too often, he argued, republican festivities had been dominated by officials in frock-coats. This time, it should be workers, wearing the distinctive costumes of their trades, who would predominate.¹⁹ By making common cause with bourgeois liberals in defending the Republic from “monarchists, clericalists and *césariens*,” the working class was defending the instrument of its own emancipation: “Surrounding the masterpiece of Dalou, we will swear the oath to defend the Republic of today, which, fertilized by the proletariat, will give birth to the social Republic.”²⁰

La Petite République continued to insist upon the inauguration as a celebration of revolutionary traditions and ideals. On 21 September, it published a letter from a correspondent which affirmed the link between the site chosen for the monument and the revolutionary traditions its inauguration was meant to evoke: “It is necessary that Great Revolutionary Paris convene on the Place de la Nation before the monument to the *Triumph of the Republic*, close by the faubourg Saint-Antoine where the Bandits and the Traitors assassinated the representatives of the people who defended the Republic, whom the Judas Bonaparte had enticed into an ambush.”²¹ Here was a pointed reference to the events of 2 December 1852, when the deputy Baudin was killed on a barricade as he sought to resist the *coup d'état* whereby Louis Napoleon Bonaparte snuffed out the life of the Second Republic. The precedent was obviously perceived to be of particular relevance to the circumstances of 1899, when the Third Republic was itself threatened by “reactionaries” of all sorts and when the Place de la Nation had been the site of another coup attempt. Another revolutionary referent was the Festival of Federation of

1790, which was identified rather anachronistically as “a republican festival ... before the Republic.”²² On 16 November, *La Petite République* reported the recommendation by the Municipal Council that primary school teachers prepare their pupils for the inauguration by familiarizing them with the “fine pages” devoted to the Festival of Federation by Michelet in his history of the Revolution.²³ While insisting upon the unprecedented scale of the crowd mobilized for the inauguration, which he estimated at half a million,²⁴ Gérault-Richard himself affirmed the affinity between the two demonstrations: “It was the same Paris, gay, good-hearted, spiritual, ready for every sacrifice, totally devoted to saving what it loves: republican liberty.”²⁵

The display of flags symbolizing the revolutionary heritage — notably the red flag that had flown over the barricades of the revolution of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871 — was an important and much commented on aspect of the demonstration. On the morning of the demonstration, *La Petite République* took great care to explain the regulations governing the display of flags and emblems. Citing the law of 15 February 1894, which prohibited the public display of flags other than those displaying national colours, it explained that banners and flags of any colour might legitimately be carried, provided they bore a visible representation of the name of the organizations to which they belonged.²⁶ In his description of the march, Gabriel Bertrand wrote in *La Petite République*:

In endless columns along the broad avenues, the workers' unions proudly reveal their numbers and their strength. Red flags wave in their hundreds. New flags which bear witness to our incessant conquests. Old flags, worn, faded, tattered flags which were in the hardest battles, sustained furious charges and heroic defences and which for the first time freely display their glory. It is a display which, in the distance, makes the narrow horizon of the avenues completely red.²⁷

The reference to flags that were themselves relics of past revolutionary struggles is itself notable. In the vanguard of the workers' procession were veterans of the barricades from 1848 (only two) and 1851. An elderly militant proudly carried a flag that had itself seen

service on the barricades, dipping it to cries of “*Vive la République!*” as he passed before President Loubet at the reviewing stand. Another group of workers bore a red flag with the inscription, “*Vive la révolution sociale!*” that had been carried at the funeral of Eudes, a prominent Communard.²⁸ Its deployment on that occasion had precipitated a riot, as police intervened to prohibit its display.²⁹ For the inauguration of 19 November, houses along the route of the march were also decorated in red and tricoloured bunting, including the house which marked the location of Baudin’s martyrdom. *La Petite République* noted that the procession halted at this site and hats were doffed in a mark of respect.³⁰ At the Place de la Nation itself, the water of the pool surrounding Dalou’s statue was tinted red and the two columns surmounted by Philip-Augustus and St. Louis were draped and linked by tricoloured garlands interlaced with electric lights: “their appearance beside the triumphant Republic should be a cause for reflection for the few clericalists or losers who persist in wanting to reestablish the monarchy.”³¹

The “clericalists” themselves naturally saw things very differently. The Catholic newspaper *La Croix* acknowledged the significance of the red flags by its headline, “Triumph of the red flag.” “For four hours,” it went on, “the ‘*Ça Ira, les bourgeois à la lanterne*’ resounded and five hundred red banners paraded across Paris, under the protection of the police and the Republican Guard, forced witnesses of this ignoble masquerade.” The demonstration offered nothing more throughout, said the paper, than “anarchic, obscene and blasphematory songs mingled with cries of death to bourgeois and priests.”³² The newspaper insisted that the display of the red flag was “a flagrant violation of the law,” and that the government had committed “the gravest of imprudences” by permitting it.³³

Alongside the ubiquitous red flags, workers from particular trades carried identifying banners and symbols. Sometimes these were also coloured red. Flower-makers, for example, carried an immense red silk bow on the end of a pike, surmounted by a basket of flowers.³⁴ The labourers carrying the flag from Eudes’s funeral also wore red lapel pins bearing a metallic pick and shovel. Another revolutionary symbol much in evidence was the liberty bonnet. *La Petite République* reported that 60 market-women from Les Halles wore this

distinctive sign, as did workers from the municipal rubbish dump and those from the *Association ouvrière de la Seine*. As the delegation from the City Hall advanced into Faubourg Saint-Antoine, it was greeted by young girls wearing red dresses and bonnets of the same colour. *La Croix* again commented negatively on these youthful participants: "Unhappy children were even introduced whose innocent lips repeated the *Ça Ira* and blasphemed Christ and the Virgin."³⁵

Revolutionary references were not all visual. They were audible as well, as "revolutionary songs break out or rumble, filling with powerful echoes the pure air of this delicious November day."³⁶ The *Carmagnole*, the *Ça Ira*, and the *Internationale* were prominent, although there were also new songs pertinent to present circumstances, such as "Au bagne, Mercier!" and "Conspuez Rochefort!"³⁷ At each halt, the refrain was taken up: "Déroulède à Charenton / Tontaine / Déroulède à Charenton / Tonton."³⁸ More formally, the arrival of President Loubet at the Place de la Nation was greeted by massed choirs singing the *Marseillaise*, which was followed by *l'Hymne pour une fête républicaine*. Following speeches by Louis Lucipia, President of the Municipal Council, and by President Loubet himself, the choirs sang another revolutionary anthem, the *Chant du Départ*. The right-wing press deplored the singing of revolutionary anthems. *La Croix* insisted that the *Carmagnole* and the *Marseillaise* had "opposite historical significance." The *Marseillaise* stood for the "heroic defence of the national soil"; the *Carmagnole* was "the refrain of the scaffold." The latter was the choice of the demonstrators, while "the *Marseillaise*, considered a reactionary anthem, was booed, the flag of our victories vilified."³⁹

It was the arrival at the Place de la Nation of the workers' delegations and their sea of red flags which gave rise to the most controversial moment of the event. Newspaper accounts of what happened differ. According to *La Petite République*, there was a "slight disturbance" as two over-zealous police officers intervened to confiscate a red flag from a group representing the fifteenth *arrondissement*. The flag was returned when it was established that it indeed bore the requisite inscription, but the disturbance allowed another group, identified by *La Petite République* as "a handful of corrupt individuals, abhorred by everyone, who are known for editing a blackmailing

newspaper supported by the anti-Jewish fund,” to wave a “black rag” in front of the official tribune. The paper did not report how this incident ended, saying only that it was quickly past. The account provided by *L’Aurore* reversed the order of the two incidents, indicating that two flags had been brandished — one red and one black — near the landau of the president as the latter prepared to depart. The individual responsible was quickly arrested and, according to *L’Aurore*, the incident would have passed unnoticed had it not been for the “absurd intervention” of the police officer who subsequently confiscated the flag of the fifteenth *arrondissement*, which prompted “a serious riot.”⁴⁰

Neither *L’Aurore* nor *La Petite République*, papers of the left which were Dreyfusard in their inclinations and supported the demonstration, connected the arrival of the red flags to the departure of the president. The right-wing press, however, affirmed that President Loubet had precipitately departed the ceremony upon the appearance of the seditious flags. Henri Rochefort’s *L’Intransigeant*, which labelled the demonstration “the triumph of Jewry,” published a mocking account under the headline, “The Flight of Loubet.”⁴¹ Referring to the president as “Panama,” to indicate his complicity in the corrupt dealings of the Panama Affair, Rochefort stated that the appearance of the first red flags “frightened him. He asked to leave.” For a moment his carriage was stuck in the crowd, but then, under way again, surrounded by his escort of cuirassiers, “Loubet breathes; his colour returns. He is safe and ... he saves himself by taking the same road as that by which he came.”⁴² The following day, speaking in the Chamber of Deputies to protest the display of red flags, a deputy of the centre, Alicot, also insisted that the appearance of the flags and the departure of the president were connected, although he spoke in more respectful terms of the latter than did Rochefort. Alicot stated that at the moment the red and black flags appeared, the procession was halted, the president called for his carriage and, “with a tact and a dignity to which I am happy to give homage,” made his departure.⁴³ *Le Figaro* did not go so far as to connect the two events, but it did interpret the departure of the president as marking a divide in the inauguration. The inaugural ceremony which preceded it was described as having “all the rectitude of its official character.”

The demonstration which followed was represented as “tumultuous, disordered and noisy.” A republican festival, said *Le Figaro*, became a revolutionary one.⁴⁴ The right wing papers were determined to separate the official ceremony honouring the Republic from the popular demonstration celebrating the revolutionary tradition. The former was represented as dignified and legitimate; the latter as chaotic and subversive.

For many on the left, however, Republic and Revolution were one. On the day following the inauguration, Jean Jaurès himself commented that the unfurling of the red working class flags was a reward for the refusal of his socialist party to stand aloof from the Dreyfus Affair and the struggle to preserve the Republic: “Because it acted, because with its whole heart it acclaimed the Republic, because it gave up to the wind of joy and battle the many red banners of its groups and unions, it has hastened the moment when the splendid flag of the universal proletariat will be able to fly freely, even throughout the bourgeois Republic.”⁴⁵ Jaurès’s words are a reminder that socialist and working-class support for Dreyfus and the Republic were far from axiomatic. As Maurice Agulhon has demonstrated, socialists of the *fin de siècle* were very much divided in their attitudes toward the Republic and toward Marianne, the Republic’s female personification. There were “Mariannophiles” and “Mariannophobes.” While the former might give the bust of Marianne a place of honour in their meeting places, the latter were just as likely to strike it down.⁴⁶ Jaurès, the *Petite République*, and the demonstration of 19 November affirmed, in opposition to the anti-republican left, that to advance the cause of socialism it was necessary to defend the Republic that was itself the legacy of the Revolution of 1789. Jaurès summed up the significance of the inauguration as a victory for the revolutionary tradition: “It was the triumph of all the militants, of all the thinkers, of all the sufferers, who for a century have understood that the bourgeois revolution must end as the social Republic.”⁴⁷

The most memorable description of the demonstration was provided from the perspective of a participant, Charles Péguy, who recounted how, as Dalou’s sculpture seemed to rise before them, the marchers greeted it with cries of “Vive la République.” To Péguy, the figure of Liberty, triumphant upon her globe and illuminated by the

setting sun, was a vision not of the “amorphous and official Republic,” but of the future triumph of “the social Republic.” Nevertheless, the finest moment of the day for Péguy, “that I will never forget,” came not as he passed through the Place de la Nation, but when he descended into Faubourg Saint-Antoine. “Ignorant though we were of the history of past revolutions, which were the beginning of the coming social revolution, we all know the legendary and historic glory of the old faubourg. We were marching on the cobblestones of that glory.”⁴⁸ His words powerfully convey the sense of the demonstrators that they were marching in the footsteps of their revolutionary forefathers. They also demonstrate how the inauguration and the publicity surrounding it firmly established the link between the memory of the Revolution of 1789 and the Place de la Nation.

IV. 1934–1938: The Popular Front

The demonstration of 12 February 1934, consciously emulated the inauguration of 1899. It was the socialist newspaper *Le Populaire* that made the appeal for a mass demonstration at the Place de la Nation. The leader of the Socialist Party, Léon Blum, reminded the newspaper’s readers, “In the same place, nearly 35 years ago, all of socialist and republican Paris massed itself to signify its will to the nationalist reaction.” The purpose of the 12 February demonstration, he said, was to resist “the same danger.”⁴⁹ The newspaper’s “Appeal to the people of Paris” declared, “Thirty-five years ago, the population of the capital assembled in the same places for the triumph of the Republic. Today, it is for the defence of the Republic.”⁵⁰ The perceived threat to the Republic was that posed by the right-wing leagues whose bloody confrontation with police on the Place de la Concorde on 6 February had resulted in the deaths of 15 people and the collapse of Edouard Daladier’s recently formed government. The riposte from the left manifested itself first in a Communist demonstration around the Place de la République on 9 February, which led to more fighting and more fatalities. The demonstration of 12 February, to coincide with a day-long general strike, was an initiative of the Socialist Party, but the Communists were invited. Although it

was not intended as a demonstration of left-wing unity, the symbolic merging of their forces around the monument in the Place de la Nation would, retrospectively, be perceived as the first step in the formation of the Popular Front.⁵¹

Accounts of the demonstration of 12 February 1934, varied considerably and reflected the differences in attitude of rival political movements toward the Republic and the revolutionary heritage, as well as toward the people and popular demonstrations. As Jessica Wardhaugh has demonstrated, the Revolution of 1789 was a key reference point for both left and right. On the left, Radicals, Socialists, and Communists differed significantly in their attitudes toward street violence. Radicals were much less ready to endorse it than Communists; Socialists were somewhere in between. Nevertheless, they shared a view of the people in the street as a rational, triumphant, and sovereign force, constantly reasserting a legitimacy rooted in the Revolution of 1789. On the right, movements such as the Action Française also sought to mobilize the street and the people, but they perpetuated a contrasting view of 1789 and of the crowds mobilized by their opponents. In the accounts of the right-wing press, which echoed the language of the revolution's nineteenth-century critics, such as Hippolyte Taine, the crowds of the Popular Front were reduced to corrupted, irrational mobs, manipulated by demagogues and baying for blood.⁵²

Press descriptions of the demonstration of 12 February 1934, reflected these contrasting viewpoints, although tensions between the leftist parties were reflected in the virtual silence of the Communist Party's newspaper *L'Humanité*. The papers of the Radical and Socialist Parties both insisted upon the orderly, disciplined nature of the demonstration. The Radical newspaper *L'Œuvre* insisted upon the massive deployment of police, cavalry, and firemen, who collectively barred the way to the city centre. Behind them, the streets leading to the Places de la Bastille and République were "ominous, deserted by vehicles, with the cafés closed, shops shut, iron grills lowered, the windows of lower floors covered by their shutters."⁵³ The city's periphery, however, belonged to the crowd: "Not one guard, not one policeman from Père-Lachaise or Vincennes to the [Place de] la Nation." The newspaper described the crowd, estimated by the left to

be over 150,000 strong, as it marched along the Cours Vincennes toward the Place de la Nation, rehearsing its protestations for the benefit of the film cameras: “hundreds of demonstrators, flourishing roses, decorated by flags, fists clenched, arms extended, hats aloft, chant together and with conviction, ‘Chiappe, to prison!’⁵⁴ and ‘A United Front!’ Then they sing the *Internationale*, which is echoed nearly everywhere.”⁵⁵ Its numbers swelled as it approached the Place de la Nation, joined by various groups including uniformed postmen and veterans of the Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants (ARAC),⁵⁶ the crowd was described as generally good-humoured. At the Place de la Nation, said the paper, “the monumental bronze group of the peaceful Republic was as smothered in children as a Mother Gigogne,”⁵⁷ as demonstrators sought to affix their flags and slogans: “At the end of the demonstration, she has one flag at her ear, another at the end of her arm. And on her head, a banner, with the slogan of insurgents from an earlier time, ‘Live working or die fighting!’”⁵⁸ According to *L’Œuvre*, two rings of demonstrators circled the monument, socialists on the inside, communists on the outside. Demonstrators confronted the security forces guarding the avenues leading away from the Place, but the intervention of the “Young Guard,” “Big lads and young girls, with hands linked,” preserved order: “Brought to order, the crowd moves on.”⁵⁹

The account in *Le Populaire* varied somewhat. According to the Socialist Party newspaper, the march was led by the socialists, with the communists following behind. As they approached the Place de la Nation, the two groups split, one passing to the left and the other to the right, “and, once they arrived face to face, melted into one another amidst cries a thousand times repeated of ‘Unity! Down with fascism!’”⁶⁰ Léon Blum, leading the socialist column, evoked the tension of the occasion as well as his relief that the convergence of the two forces resulted not in conflict but in fraternization.⁶¹ Writing in *Le Populaire*, Blum insisted above all on the orderly nature of the demonstration, the discipline of the crowd and its refusal to react to the provocations of the security forces: “Because the most admirable thing about this admirable day, the fact on which one cannot place too much emphasis, was the perfect order which did not for a minute cease to rule and which the proletarians imposed upon themselves.”⁶²

Barred from advancing into the heart of the city, the demonstrators had instead followed the rue des Pyrénées and the rue de Ménilmontant towards the Place Gambetta, in the working-class suburb of Belleville. "This human sea, orderly, admirably disciplined, carrying spectators along with it," wrote *Le Populaire*, "unfurled for a long time through working-class Belleville. In the fief of the communards, the revolutionary flame, which yesterday burned low, suddenly burned with a brilliant light."⁶³

The description of the 12 February march in the right-wing Action Française was very different. In its pages the disciplined crowd described by the left gave way to a disorganized and lawless mob. This crowd "invaded" the Place de la Nation, where "various meetings were improvised The disorder was at its height Every animal uttered its own cry. It was the triumph of individualism."⁶⁴ In an article by Georges Gaudy titled "The Reds in the Street," the newspaper emphasized the subversive and violent intent of the Communist demonstrators: "Authorised by the government to defend the Republic, its worthiest representatives occupied that sector of Paris where the revolutionary echoes of the past century still resonate. Encircled by the police, but free to lash out, they bestir themselves with a dark fury." The crowd circling Dalou's statue, said Gaudy, was the very image of "the shrew born in the filth and blood of hideous revolutions."⁶⁵ Both left and right insisted on the demonstration's connection to the revolutionary tradition, therefore, but that tradition meant liberty and progress for the left, while it implied anarchy and disorder for the right.

The demonstration of 12 February 1934, was the first major street demonstration of the Popular Front. In those that followed, including the Bastille Day parades of 1935 and 1936, as well as the march to protest the assault on Léon Blum, on 16 February, 1936, the Place de la Nation again figured prominently, although its exact significance varied according to the circumstances. Each event added new significance to the location. As *Le Populaire* noted in its account of the Blum demonstration, the Place de la Nation had come to signify the place "which witnessed the birth, two years ago (two years and four days), of the Popular Front and where, for the first time, the people swore the oath, 'Fascism will not pass!'"⁶⁶ Although each

demonstration reflected the particular political issues of the day, they were all, in general, occasions for rehearsing the rites of the Revolution. An editorial by Gaston-Martin on 14 July 1935, affirmed the identity of the Popular Front as the fulfilment of the revolutionary tradition. Gaston-Martin evoked a triptych of 14 July events: the storming of the Bastille in 1789; the Festival of Federation of 1790; and the demonstrations of 14 July 1791, which culminated in massacre three days later. Notably, he gave pride of place to the third of these events, which had led to the people appropriating the red flag of martial law as a symbol of revolution. That was why, he concluded, “today it is appropriate that, intermingled and fluttering in the same wind of hope, tricoloured flags and red flags traverse together the sacred way which leads from the demolished Bastille to the reconstituted Nation.”⁶⁷ The Popular Front was thus represented as a natural fulfilment of the events of the Revolution.

On the occasion of the Bastille Day demonstration of 1935, it was the Revolution that took precedence over the Nation. This priority is apparent from the account of the demonstration provided by *Le Populaire*. Like its radical counterpart *L'Œuvre*, the socialist newspaper identified the Place de la Bastille and the statue of Baudin — not the Place de la Nation — as the symbolic focal points of the demonstration.⁶⁸ The front page of its 15 July edition carried photographs of the crowd massed beneath the July Column and of the placard bearing the anti-fascist oath close to Baudin’s statue. An entire column was devoted to describing how, “before the statue of Baudin, at the corner of the avenue Ledru-Rollin and the rue de la Traversière, very close to the rue du Faubourg Saint-Antoine — a few metres away — the innumerable procession swore the oath of loyalty to the French Revolution, mother of democratic freedoms.”⁶⁹ The column went on to explain the significance of this “eminently symbolic” site, recounting the story (which it admitted to be apocryphal) of how Baudin went to his death on a barricade uttering the words, “You will see how one dies for twenty-five francs a day.”⁷⁰ The newspaper also reminded its readers of the rediscovery of Baudin’s tomb by the republican opposition to the Second Empire, in November 1868, and the subsequent trial in which Gambetta famously defended Delescluze, one of the leading republicans. Even dead, said the paper,

referring both to 1868 and to 1935, Baudin continued to serve the Republic and the Revolution. In contrast to this emphasis on sites evocative of the revolutionary and republican heritage, the newspaper made little reference to the Place de la Nation. The many photographs it published of the demonstration did not include a single one of this site. The closest it came was a photograph of the crowd massed in the Cours de Vincennes, with the twin columns of the Throne visible in the distance.⁷¹ The route of the march may have identified the crowd with Republic, Revolution, and Nation. Léon Blum may have insisted that the demonstration represented a victory for “Paris and the whole of France,” claiming, “The people of France felt rising within them, all at once, the revolutionary sap.”⁷² All the same, image and text combined to place the emphasis very firmly upon the Revolution.

The Action Française did not dispute the demonstration’s claim to embody the revolutionary heritage, but it vehemently denied its association with the Nation. The only “national” aspect of the 14 July commemoration, stated the paper, was the military parade along the Champs Élysées and the attendant ceremonies at the Arc de Triomphe. 14 July, it affirmed, was a “festival of hatred and of blood.” Interestingly, given the absence of any image of the Place de la Nation from the pages of *Le Populaire*, the Bastille Day issue of *L’Action française* featured a caricature by Ralph Soupault of Dalou’s Republic. This Marianne, features coarse and eyes heavy with mascara, was depicted as a prostitute. She was also adorned with a masonic triangle and surrounded by a gesticulating, red-bonneted throng, brandishing bloodied Communist sickles.⁷³ The newspaper’s account of the Popular Front demonstration both minimized its size, estimating a mere 50,000 participants, and emphasized its “habitual disorder.” Once again, bestial imagery was used to dehumanize the crowd. A racist vocabulary was deployed to deny its identification with the Nation: “So many Levantines, so many Jews, and people whose origins one would have trouble to discover.”⁷⁴

The Bastille Day celebrations of 1936 were likewise focused on the revolutionary heritage, but this time they placed a greater emphasis on the identification of that heritage with the French nation. In its issue of 14 July, *L’Œuvre* explained the significance of the route to be

followed by the Popular Front march, from the Place de la Bastille to the Place de la Nation. The linking of the two Places, it said, marked “the reconciliation of the two tendencies that our internal struggles, one knows not why, had seemed to render incompatible: the one aiming toward the progressive emancipation of the workers, the other seeking to reinforce the national idea.”⁷⁵ *En route*, as it passed through Faubourg Saint-Antoine, “bedecked with the colours of the Republic and of France,” which it reminded its readers were the same, the people of Paris and of the provinces, “fraternally assembled,” would renew the anti-fascist oath of 1935 before the statue of Baudin. This linking of Revolution and Nation was an important aspect of the Popular Front message in 1936. Having taken power, it was incumbent upon the Popular Front government to insist not just upon its republican and revolutionary ideals, but also upon its identification with the will of the nation. Furthermore, by insisting upon the indissoluble bonds linking the nation to the revolutionary and republican traditions, the Popular Front affirmed its opposition to the claims of the right to embody a nation separate from and opposed to the Revolution.

In its account of the demonstration itself, *L'Œuvre* estimated over a million participants. Once again, it affirmed the significance of the route and its principal stations, insisting on the revolutionary associations of the Place de la Bastille and Faubourg Saint-Antoine. The Nation, however, received as much emphasis as the Revolution. It is notable that the image dominating the front page of *Le Populaire's* 15 July issue was of the Place de la Nation, contrasting with its focus on the Place de la Bastille a year before.⁷⁶ At the Place de la Nation, national unity was affirmed by the flags of the historic provinces. Also notable were provincial delegations, “even those from North Africa.”⁷⁷ The celebration was truly national, declared *Le Populaire*, “because Paris has thus echoed, with all its republican and revolutionary heart, the vibrant faith of the French provinces which profess the cult of Freedom.”⁷⁸ The revolutionary commitment of the provinces was symbolized in the march by delegations such as those from the department of the Isère, which was dressed in revolutionary costume and carried a representation of the Château de Vizille, where the Estates of Dauphiné had helped prepare the Revolution in 1788.

As ever, the right-wing press disputed the Popular Front's identification of itself and the Republic with the Nation. Maurice Pujo, writing in *L'Action française*, compared the Popular Front Bastille Day demonstration of 1936 unfavourably to the celebration of 1919, when France had celebrated its victory in World War I. Both events were victory celebrations, he said, and the Places de la Bastille and de la Nation were embellished in similar ways, but they differed in that the march of 1919 celebrated victory over a foreign enemy while that of 1936 stood for "the victory of certain Frenchmen over others."⁷⁹ The Popular Front's definition of the nation was as exclusive as that of the Jacobins, he said: "Let us be in no doubt: the *indivisible Republic* of the Popular Front leads naturally to civil war and the guillotine, just as the *indivisible peace* of the Jew Blum leads straight to general war."⁸⁰ There was also a suggestion in *L'Action française's* account of the demonstration that there was "little enthusiasm" shown by the Parisian public specifically for the Popular Front. Rather, it reserved its applause for the costumed provincial delegations, which were deemed to be imitative of the processions honouring Joan of Arc. The latter were, of course, favoured by the right-wing leagues.

The Place de la Nation was again the focus for the Popular Front's Bastille Day demonstration for 1937. By this time, the realities of government had caught up with the Popular Front. Its revolutionary program of social reform had run into difficulties and political crisis had led to the replacement of Léon Blum by Camille Chautemps as prime minister. The government was also confronted by darkening horizons on the international scene, with republicanism embattled, most notably in Spain. As the threat of fascism loomed larger, the contradictions between its anti-fascist and pacifist tendencies threatened the unity of the Popular Front. Although the Bastille Day demonstration of 1937 was perceived as a reaffirmation of that unity, it was also seen to express a new insecurity. Four columns of marchers converged on the Place de la Nation from the boulevards of Beaumarchais, Voltaire, and Ménilmontant, and from the rue Saint Antoine. Elaborately decorated vehicles commemorated the revolutionary heritage and connected it to the political struggles of the present. The reporter for *L'Œuvre* described the delegations from

particular trades unions, veterans' organizations, and pacifist groups that began their march from the Place Voltaire, in front of the *mairie* of the eleventh *arrondissement*, where, he reminded his readers, the guillotine had been burned by the Communards in 1871.⁸¹ Taking up the rear of the column were the typesetters for the Messageries Hachette. On their vehicle was placed "a fair and delicate Marianne with blue eyes, coiffed with the phrygian bonnet" accompanied by "a brunette Republic, draped in the Spanish colours." The reporter explained that the point of "this charming and symbolic group" was not only to emphasize the revolutionary heritage of the Popular Front, but also to connect the defence of republicanism in France to the civil war in Spain, where republican forces were at that moment under siege in the capital of Madrid. "This Parisian crowd," the writer concluded, "knows that its fate is being played out, in part, before Madrid."⁸² The four columns of marchers converged on the Place de la Nation, where the *Marseillaise* and the *Internationale* preceded two hours of speeches. Finally, the marchers filed away on both sides of the official tribune. *L'Œuvre* described the crowd as an elemental, natural force: "limitless ... constantly reborn, and which came from the very earth." Gathered within the embrace of the grey buildings surrounding the Place, said the paper, this crowd symbolized the presence of "the whole city," while Dalou's statue, "by a gesture of its extended arm, seemed, after having pacified this crowd, to reassure it as to the future, to promise that it will be protected."⁸³ In the uncertain circumstances of 1937, Dalou's statue thus became a beneficent deity offering reassurance to the Nation that it would be protected against the international menace of fascism by its Popular Front government.

The Bastille Day march converging on the Place de la Nation was repeated in 1938, but by 1939 the Popular Front was no more. The unity of the left had foundered on the contradictions of its social foundations and its foreign policy. It is notable that in this year, which was also the 150th anniversary of the Revolution of 1789, the government of Daladier chose to focus its official celebration of national unity in western Paris, on the hillside of Chaillot. The republican monuments and the streets of the eastern, working-class *faubourgs* were therefore spurned for the bourgeois *arrondissements* in

the west of the city. Although there was still a march from Bastille to Nation, this time it was limited to supporters of the Socialist and Communist Parties. The radical Party's newspaper, *L'Œuvre*, made no mention of it.⁸⁴ The Communist newspaper, *L'Humanité*, however, estimating a quarter of a million participants, once again insisted on the demonstration's evocation of the revolutionary heritage:

No, this is no platonic and cold homage to the past! These costumes, these uniforms, these flags of '89, these sayings of the great revolutionaries, all this is throbbing with life. At a critical epoch, the people exalt within themselves the still beating heart, the ever vivacious spirit of the ancestors whose path they follow.⁸⁵

Political unity may have collapsed, but for the Communist paper the Place de la Nation still signified the unity of the French people as well as the people's identification with the principles of the Revolution.

V. 14 July 1953

The demonstrations of the Popular Front reaffirmed the significance of the Place de la Nation as a site of memory, which was associated with the left, politically, and which evoked the unity of the French people, its revolutionary heritage and its republican identity. In 1953, however, an event occurred which might have inflected or unsettled this identification. The Bastille Day march for that year was a shadow of its former self, bringing together, according to the government estimate, only 10,000 marchers under the direction of the Communist Party.⁸⁶ Near the rear of the march, however, was a group of Algerian demonstrators, comprised of somewhere between 4,500 to 15,000 persons, organized by the Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques (MTLD).⁸⁷ They bore banners and placards with slogans calling not just for better working and living conditions for immigrant workers, but also for Algerian independence.⁸⁸ As the marchers disbanded at the Place de la Nation, a violent confrontation took place between demonstrators and police in which seven people, six of them Algerians, were killed by police bullets. Dozens more were injured. A police report identified a total of 45 civilians, the vast

majority of them Algerians, who were hospitalized, including 33 who had been injured by gunshots.⁸⁹ One hundred and twenty-four policemen also received medical attention. Relatively few of them were seriously hurt, although some had knife wounds. Only one policeman was shot and his condition was described as “not very serious.”⁹⁰ It remains unclear what prompted the police to open fire on the demonstrators. The minister of the interior claimed that the police were victims of an unprovoked attack by demonstrators. Wounded policemen, he said, told him that they had been attacked by men “who had hate in their eyes,” some of them with knives in their hands. The police had therefore acted in legitimate self defence.⁹¹ An eyewitness account published in *L’Observateur* insisted, on the contrary, that the demonstration had been orderly and the action of the police was unprovoked.⁹² The testimony of another witness implicated a group of soldiers from a regiment of parachutists as stirring up trouble for the demonstrators. The soldiers, who had been drinking following the military parade on the Champs Élysées in the morning, were overheard expressing their hostility to the Algerian demonstrators, declaring their intention to “give them a hiding” and “to nick a banner or a flag.” The witness saw the same men again later, in the midst of the fleeing crowd, some of them bloodied and others in possession of a captured flag.⁹³ The report in *Le Monde* suggested that the fusillade resulted from a misunderstanding as demonstrators, anxious to escape a sudden rain shower, rushed a barricade defended by police; the latter, “saw coming towards them men who were perhaps only fleeing the rain. But how to distinguish flight from attack?”⁹⁴ Whatever the massacre’s initial cause, the Place de la Nation quickly became a devastation of shattered glass, broken barriers, burnt out vehicles and dead and injured bodies.

The massacre was dismissively described as an “échauffourée” or a “bagarre”⁹⁵ by the mainstream press. Albert Camus protested this use of language, asking whether the press or politicians would have been so off-handed if the demonstrators had not been North-Africans; or, even more to the point, if the police would have fired “with such confident abandon.”⁹⁶ It was not the first time Algerian demonstrators had been fired upon by security forces in metropolitan France. Their participation in May Day and Bastille Day parades had

resulted in violence both in Paris and in provincial cities. Describing the violence that had erupted on the occasion of a May Day demonstration in Valenciennes, *L'Algérie Libre* stated that there had been three deaths and 30 wounded, as well as 68 arrests.⁹⁷ The willingness of the authorities to resort to violence may be explained in part, as Camus argued, in terms of “a racism that dares not speak its name.”⁹⁸ The violence was also symptomatic, however, of a steadily intensifying police repression in the face of an increasingly militant Algerian nationalist movement. With its offices on the Boulevard Saint-Michel and its militants holding sway among the immigrants inhabiting the hotels of the fifth *arrondissement* and the *bidonvilles* of Nanterre, Messali Hadj and the MTLD were at the forefront of this movement. In May, 1952, Messali Hadj was confined to house arrest in Niort. The undeclared war in Algeria began in November 1954, but in the years immediately preceding, colonialist repression had already extended itself to the streets of Paris.⁹⁹

Therefore, 1953 was not the first time Algerians participated in the 14 July march from Bastille to Nation. They had done so since 1950, when they marched carrying the Algerian national flag and banners promising, “The Algerian people will tear down the colonialist Bastilles.”¹⁰⁰ In 1951, according to *L'Algérie Libre*, they marched slowly up the rue du Faubourg Saint-Antoine past bus loads of helmeted police on every street corner. Reaching the Place de la Nation, they were greeted by a dense crowd, “and the repeated cry from thousands and thousands of breasts, ‘We want independence!’”¹⁰¹ In 1952, the MTLD again participated, demonstrating “for the respect of democratic freedoms, for the liberation of all political detainees,” and, above all, “for the liberation of Messali Hadj,” the imprisoned leader of the MTLD.¹⁰² The 14 July celebrations therefore provided an occasion for the MTLD to lay claim to the revolutionary heritage of democratic freedoms and to protest against the violation of those freedoms. In 1952, *L'Algérie Libre* wrote that the thousands of Algerians had come to demonstrate their “attachment to the creator of the Algerian National Movement [Messali Hadj],” to express “their solidarity with the people of Paris,” and to proclaim “their aspiration to freedom, fraternity and equality, just like the revolutionaries of 1789.”¹⁰³ The rites of Revolution were, therefore,

rehearsed; this time, however, by a nationalist movement that identified itself not as French but rather in terms of its aspiration to achieve independence from France.

The 1953 demonstration by the MTLD was in the tradition of those that had preceded it. Once again there were calls for the liberation of Messali Hadj and again there was an affirmation of democratic freedoms common to all. The central banner read: "People of France, by defending your freedoms you defend ours!" Once more, there were overt claims for Algerian independence. "We want independence!" reported *L'Humanité*, was the "leitmotif repeated again and again in their words of order."¹⁰⁴

The more conservative newspapers were in no doubt as to the subversive character of the Algerian demonstration. *Le Figaro* condemned the Communist organizers for choosing their allies — "their shock troops" — from the "avowed adversaries of France."¹⁰⁵ The Algerian demonstrators who invaded the space of the Place de la Nation in the name of the rights and freedoms proclaimed by the French Revolution were thus perceived not to be celebrants of the Nation, but its adversaries. The anti-communist syndicalist paper *La Force Ouvrière* did not even acknowledge the Algerian identity of the demonstrators, referring to them simply as "North Africans," deluded by a nationalist ideology in the service of the Communist Party: "Stalinism and nationalism found themselves conjoined on the Place de la Nation An evil, blameworthy, deplorable conjunction."¹⁰⁶ On the left, too, there was little acknowledgement of the specific claims for Algerian independence on the part of the Algerian demonstrators. *Le Populaire* simply echoed the right-wing press in its identification of the "North African" demonstrators as the "shock troops" of the Communist Party: "It was hoped the blood running in Paris would efface the memory of that which flooded the streets of Berlin," it wrote, in reference to the suppression of the 17 June uprising in East Berlin by the Communist government of East Germany.¹⁰⁷ For its part, the French Communist Party condemned the "racist chauvinism" of the French government and paid tribute to "the Algerian and French dead who mingled their blood on the Place de la Nation in defence of democratic rights,"¹⁰⁸ but this insistence upon working-class unity also glossed over the nationalist ideology that inspired the

MTLD and its supporters. *La Vie Ouvrière*, likewise, emphasized the brotherhood of Parisian and North African workers cut down by the “murderous bullets” of the police and buried “under the same shroud.” As Maurice Rajsfus has insisted, one would seek in vain in this newspaper’s editorial protesting the massacre for any reference to the claims made by these Algerian workers on behalf of Algerian independence.¹⁰⁹

For all its unprecedented violence, this event did not inflect the significance of the Place de la Nation as a site of memory. No monument or plaque recalled the massacre. No anniversary demonstrations took place to honour the victims, such as those held at the Place de la République to honour those killed in February 1934.¹¹⁰ No writer, poet, artist or historian commemorated the event, which was largely forgotten. The Communist press assimilated the Algerians who were killed to the martyrology of the left, emphasizing their identity as workers rather than as Algerian nationalists and virtually ignoring the cause — Algerian independence — for which they had marched.¹¹¹ The right-wing press represented the violence as deliberate subversion organized by the Communist Party, which had recruited North-Africans as its “shock troops.”¹¹² The specific character of the Algerian demonstration and the specificity of the police repression were ignored as both left and right sought to assimilate the event to their interpretations of the revolutionary tradition and its contemporary exponents.

VI. 1 May 2002

On 1 May 2002, the Place de la Nation was again the focal point for a massive demonstration as over half a million people marched in protest against Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the National Front who had surprisingly defeated the Socialist candidate, Lionel Jospin, in the first round of the presidential elections. Much commentary was focused on the unprecedented nature of the demonstration. As one union leader affirmed, “We are no longer in the context of the classical May 1sts.”¹¹³ The participation of young people — often too young even to vote — and of different ethnicities also made this demonstration particular: “Arm in arm, jumping, dancing, swaying,

the *Blacks-Blancs-Beurs*¹¹⁴ and all the young people from the strata of an age-old immigration walked beside their pals from school, university, office, and workshop.”¹¹⁵ The slogans displayed on banners or chanted by the crowd targeted Le Pen and the Front National. “It isn’t the immigrants, it isn’t the people without papers, it’s Le Pen who should be kicked out,” proclaimed one such slogan. Others encouraged voters of the left to cast their votes in the second round of the elections for Jacques Chirac, the centre-right candidate: “Chirac for one day, leftist forever,” or “On 5 May, I sort my garbage, I vote for Chirac.”¹¹⁶ The crowd was so dense that many failed to reach the destination of the Place de la Nation. For those who did, the festival continued late into the night, as they sat in groups, danced on the grass or clambered on Dalou’s monument, covering it with banners and stickers. Finally, around midnight, the police cleared the Place of remaining celebrants and the demonstration came to an end.

The march of 1 May was the culmination of a week-long series of demonstrations. The weekend before, according to *L’Humanité*, over 300,000 people had demonstrated throughout France. In Paris, 100,000, among whom young people were prominent, rehearsed the march from Bastille to Nation. *L’Humanité* emphasized the diversity of the marchers, who included “grey-haired resisters, families, students.” Although they all joined in singing the *Internationale*, it was the music of the new generation that provided the “musical consensus” for this demonstration: “la Mano, Noir Désir, NTM, Ska-P, Lofofora, Zebda, Rachid Taha.”¹¹⁷ At the top of the demonstration’s “hit parade,” reported *L’Humanité*, were Ska-P’s *Resistenza* and the chorus of the Berliner Noirs: “*La jeunesse emmerde le Front national.*”¹¹⁸ The same refrains provided the musical inspiration for the demonstration of 1 May: “Music is unifying. It is the ideal form of expression for a *manif*,” stated a demonstrator-turned-disc jockey. The CNT, an anarcho-syndicalist organization, played “combative” rock music. *Le Monde* cited an anarchist musician as saying, “By my music, I encourage people to vote. But myself, I can’t, it’s not my culture.”¹¹⁹

Did the prevalence of this “new music” represent a renewal of revolutionary idealism or did it instead provide evidence of a desire to break with past traditions on the part of a new generation of

demonstrators? It was the older generation of militants, above all, which sought to connect the demonstrations of 2002 with those that came before. Lise London, a Communist *résistante*, emphasized the continuity of the struggle against fascism. “When I saw the crowds of young people, last week,” she declared, “I said to myself: the young have begun to understand and follow what our generation did to give France its democratic colours: to bar the road to the brown plague [fascism].”¹²⁰ For some participants, the student demonstrations of 1968 were an historical reference point. “The oldest,” reported *L’Humanité*, “already evoked May ’68, a tear in the corner of the eye.”¹²¹

Above all, the demonstrations of 2002 were about identity and about what it meant to be French. *Le Monde* cited the words of a 15-year-old, the son of immigrants from North Africa: “Since we were small, we were told ‘You are French,’” he said. “So if they send us packing, I don’t see what’s left of the country of the rights of man.”¹²² *L’Humanité* cited a young woman, born in Algiers: “The true French people are here, in the street. To be French, is to believe in the republican motto and not simply to have been born here.”¹²³ The American photographer, William Klein, published a photograph of the crowd and of Dalou’s monument in *Le Monde* which, in his view, summed up the significance of the occasion:

There were French, Chinese, Arabs, Armenians, a great French flag brandished by a Black. Le Pen will say: “the immigrants are taking over the Nation.” Me, I say: “the Nation welcomes foreigners.”¹²⁴

The multi-racial character of the demonstration gave new significance to Dalou’s monument and to the Place de la Nation, which came to symbolize, through the medium of Klein’s photography, the Republic’s welcoming embrace of all races. Yet in spite of this new dimension, the demonstration rehearsed yet again the revolutionary rites of old. The tricolour was waved, the *Marseillaise* sung, the revolutionary slogan of “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” proclaimed. The occasion was understood by many in terms of the need for all republicans to put aside internecine rivalries and to unite in defence of the

Republic. The Communist paper, *L'Humanité*, warned, "On 5 May, the worst is possible. That is why in the face of one who brandishes the Pétainist slogan, 'Work, Family, Motherland,' [there must be] no hesitation: it is necessary to choose the Republic, liberty, equality, fraternity."¹²⁵ Despite its many novelties, the demonstrations of 2002 echoed the spirit of republican defence that had characterized those of 1899 and 1934.

VII. Conclusion

In defining its significance as a site of memory, the decision to rename the Place de la Nation was as important as the decision to locate Dalou's sculpture of the Triumph of the Republic at its centre. For the municipal councillors who made these choices, they asserted a principle that was far from axiomatic to many of their compatriots: that the Republic and the Nation were inseparable. Each new demonstration was in effect a reaffirmation of this principle. Yet the relationship between the site and the demonstrations which temporarily occupied it was paradoxical. On the one hand, the demonstrations achieved a certain transcendence by their association with the Place, regardless of their specific character or claims. Thus, for Péguy, the immediate concerns of the Dreyfus Affair — "Mercier au bagne!" — fell away as the demonstration approached Dalou's sculpture, to be replaced by a vision of historical destiny encapsulated in the social Republic and in the cry of "Vive la République!" Demonstrations also derived legitimacy from their association with the revolutionary foundations of the Republic. By taking to the streets, demonstrators laid claim to a popular sovereignty that had already been claimed and reclaimed by successive generations of revolutionaries. Hence, the self-conscious revival of revolutionary slogans, songs, flags, and emblems.

On the other hand, each demonstration, while employing the Place/the monument to affirm its own identity and sovereignty, also imposed its own interpretations upon this site of memory. In 1899, the parade of red flags was a means for the workers of Paris to wrest ownership of Dalou's "Marianne" from the frock-coats on the reviewing platform and to redefine the official Republic as the "social Republic" of Péguy's and Jaurès's imaginations. In the 1930s, the

Popular Front imposed a new interpretation upon her as a reassuring bulwark against the threat of fascism, both at home and abroad. In the 1950s, although more preoccupied with “Bastilles” than with “Mariannes,” — “Powerful Bastilles remain on our pathway to nationhood,”¹²⁶ — Algerian nationalists sought to impose the most challenging reinterpretation of all. They went beyond affirming the republican identity of the French nation to insisting that such an identity on the part of one nation was incompatible with the same nation’s colonialist oppression of another. Finally, in 2002, Dalou’s triumphant Republic became the welcoming Nation, gathering multiple ethnicities within her embrace.

Such reinterpretations did not go uncontested. As we have seen, the right-wing press consistently challenged both the legitimacy and the significance of these demonstrations. It sought to separate at least the Nation, if not the Republic, from the revolutionary tradition celebrated in the chants, symbols, and slogans of demonstrators. That the left was so successful in imposing its own meanings upon this site of memory was a function not only of the size and frequency of its demonstrations, but also of their media impact. Mass participation in the annual 14 July marches, as well as the ritualistic manner in which they were celebrated in party newspapers, cemented their place and that of the sites where they took place in the collective memory. In this respect, the Algerian demonstrations were clearly disadvantaged. Although *L’Algérie Libre* followed the model of the Communist press in representing MTLD militants as a massive and triumphant force as they deployed their banners in streets across Paris and France, its exaggeration of numbers was unconvincing; nor could it compete with the mass circulation papers, which greeted the Algerians’ affirmation of separate identities for French and Algerian nations with nearly universal hostility and incomprehension. The massacre of “bloody July 14th,” dismissed as an “échauffourée,” quickly passed from memory. That it did so surely facilitated its repetition, on a much grander scale, in the now notorious but also long forgotten “Battle of Paris” in October 1961.¹²⁷

The number, frequency and variety of political demonstrations in Paris has grown exponentially in recent decades. The demonstrations of the left have to compete for attention with a multiplicity of

organizations and causes; these express themselves in new ways using new media. It is possible that this has contributed to a declining significance for the Place de la Nation as a site of memory. The inseparability of Republic and Nation, so controversial at the time of the Third Republic's foundation, has become virtually uncontested under the Fifth. Allegories of the Republic have altered since Dalou sculpted his triumphant Marianne. The place of an aloof, dignified goddess signifying an idealized Republic has been taken by a familiar figure with the traits of contemporary film stars and stands instead for France or the Nation as it really is.¹²⁸ Although Dalou's statue has not changed, perceptions of its significance have. William Klein, in describing his photograph, referred to the Nation but not to the Republic, unconsciously acknowledging an important shift in the public perception and reception of the monument's significance. The demonstrations of 2002 focused less on the Republic and more upon the Nation, with the question of who belonged to that Nation coming to the fore. All the same, the identification of the Place de la Nation and Dalou's monument with the libertarian and socialist ideas stemming from the French revolutionary traditions remains. The mass demonstrations which take place there last long in the memory. So long as those ideals exert a power over the imagination and so long as those memories remain, the Place de la Nation will continue to be a theatre for the rites of revolution.

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Endnotes:

- 1 Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the Vél' d'Hiv in Paris and the Holocaust Monument in Berlin* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), 38.
- 2 Karen Till, "Places of Memory," in *A Companion to Political Geography*, eds. John Agnew and Gerard Toal (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 289–301, 297.
- 3 Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de Mémoire, vol. 1, La République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984); *ibid.*, *Les Lieux de Mémoire, vol. 2, La Nation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986); *ibid.*, *Les Lieux de Mémoire, vol. 3, La France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992). A selection of essays from these works have been published in English, also in three volumes. See L.D. Kritzman, ed., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, vol. 1, Conflicts and Divisions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); *ibid.*, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, vol. 2, Traditions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); *ibid.*, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, vol. 3, Symbols* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
- 4 Maurice Agulhon, "Paris, la traversée d'Est en Ouest," in Nora, ed., vol. 3, 2nd ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 589–624.
- 5 For example, see Richard D.E. Burton, *Blood in the City: Violence and Revelation in Paris: 1789–1945* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), in particular the chapter entitled "Marble Versus Iron," which considers the juxtaposition of the Eiffel Tower, symbol of secular revolutionary modernity, and the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur, symbol of counter-revolutionary Catholicism, 174–205.
- 6 Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789–1996* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 310–19. See also *ibid.*, "Monuments and Memory in French Nationalism," in *History and Memory* 5, 2 (Fall-Winter 1993): 50–81; and *ibid.*, "The Sacred Center of Power: Paris and Republican State Funerals," in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22, 1 (Summer 1991): 27–48.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 318.
- 8 These "Grandes Proclamations Parisiennes" are discussed by Agulhon. The four monumental allegories of the Republic that preceded Dalou's were those of: 1. Soitou, originally sculpted in 1848, but taken out of storage and placed before the Institut de France in 1880; 2. the Morice Brothers, inaugurated in the Place de la République (formerly Place du Château d'Eau) in 1880 (in plaster) and 1883 (in bronze); 3. a version of Bartholdi's famous Statue of Liberty, reduced in scale and inaugurated on

- the Pont-de-Grenelle in 1889; and 4. Jules Coutan's *Fountain of Progress*, located during the Universal Exposition of 1889 in the Place de la Bastille before being moved to Parc Montsouris, which represented France as a bronze female figure wearing a liberty bonnet, standing aboard the ship of Progress. See Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne au Pouvoir: L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1880 à 1914* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989), 70–80. On the statues by Soitou, Morice, and Dalou, see also Janice Best, *Les monuments de Paris sous la Troisième République: contestation et commémoration du passé* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), 61–94.
- 9 Maurice Agulhon, *Le Métamorphoses de Marianne: L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1914 à nos jours* (Paris: Flammarion, 2001), 140–68, 185–204. See also Raymond Huard, “Les Chances de Marianne?” in *La République en Représentations: autour de l'Œuvre de Maurice Agulhon*, eds. Maurice Agulhon, Annette Becker, and Evelyne Cohen (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2006), 11–23; and Anne-Marie Sohn, “La trilogie des Mariannes: relecture de l'idée républicaine,” in *ibid.*, 33–42.
 - 10 Ulysse Parent, *Rapport présenté par M. Ulysse Parent au nom de la 5ème Commission, sur l'acquisition d'un groupe allégorique de Jules Dalou, dont l'esquisse a figuré à l'exposition du concours pour l'érection d'une statue monumentale de la République* no. 85 (Paris, 1880), 2–3.
 - 11 Best, 88.
 - 12 *Ibid.* See also Daniel Imbert and Guénola Groud, *Quand Paris dansait avec Marianne, 1879–1889* (Paris: Musée du Petit Palais, 1989), 2–61.
 - 13 See Ruth Harris, *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2010), 217–72.
 - 14 *Ibid.*, 302–3.
 - 15 *La Petite République* (16 September 1899).
 - 16 The reference is to the *camelots du roi*, supporters of the right wing Action Française.
 - 17 *La Petite République* (16 September 1899).
 - 18 *Ibid.*
 - 19 This suggestion was made by a socialist deputy on the Paris municipal council, but was clearly endorsed by *La Petite République*. *Ibid.* (12 October 1899).
 - 20 *Ibid.* (4 November 1899).
 - 21 *Ibid.* (21 September 1899).
 - 22 *Ibid.* (16 November 1899).
 - 23 *Ibid.*
 - 24 *Ibid.* (21 November 1899). Estimates of the numbers of participants in Parisian demonstrations are notoriously unreliable. Evidently, papers

- supporting the demonstration tended to exaggerate the size of the crowd; those that were unsympathetic tended to minimize it. *L'Aurore* estimated 250,000 participants; *La Croix* admitted only 80,000. *L'Aurore* (20 November 1899); *La Croix* (21 November 1899).
- 25 *La Petite République* (21 November 1899).
- 26 Ibid. (19 November 1899). On the history of the red flag, see Maurice Dommanget, *Histoire du Drapeau Rouge, des origins à la guerre de 1939* (Paris: Éditions Librairie de l'Étoile, 1966). Dommanget provides the full text of the prefectural regulation pertaining to the display of flags, 240–1.
- 27 *La Petite République* (21 November 1899).
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 *Le Temps* (9 August 1888); Dommanget, 226.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 *La Croix* (21 November 1899).
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 *La Petite République* (21 November 1899).
- 35 *La Croix* (21 November 1899).
- 36 *La Petite République* (21 November 1899).
- 37 General Auguste Mercier, the minister of war at the time of Dreyfus's conviction, subsequently orchestrated the cover-up of the trial's irregularities. Henri Rochefort was the editor of the right-wing newspaper *L'Intransigeant*.
- 38 *La Petite République* (21 November 1899). The verse expressed the wish that Déroulède would be put in an insane asylum.
- 39 *La Croix* (21 November 1899).
- 40 *L'Aurore* (20 November 1899).
- 41 *L'Intransigeant* (21 November 1899).
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 *Journal Officiel* (21 November 1899), 1872. See also the account in Dommanget, 260–4.
- 44 *Le Figaro* (20 November 1899).
- 45 *La Petite République* (23 November 1899).
- 46 Agulhon, *Marianne au Pouvoir*, 295–306.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Charles Péguy, “Le triomphe de la République,” (1900). Présentation par Danielle Tartakowsky. Available at <<http://users.dickinson.edu/~klinem/fr236/Symboles/Marianne/peguy.pdf>>, (viewed 2 January 2011).
- 49 *Le Populaire* (12 February 1934).

- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Jessica Wardhaugh, *In Pursuit of the People: Political Culture in France, 1934–39* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 40.
- 52 Ibid., 24–35.
- 53 *L'Œuvre* (12–13 February 1934).
- 54 It was the decision by Daladier's government to replace Jean Chiappe, a sympathizer of the right-wing leagues, as prefect of police that precipitated the crisis and demonstrations of 6 February. See Wardhaugh, 36.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 "Republican Veterans' Association."
- 57 The reference is to Mother Gigogne, a marionette representing a large woman with many children attached to her skirts.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 *Le Populaire* (13 February 1934).
- 61 Léon Blum in *Le Populaire* (12 February 1950). Cited in Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending democracy, 1934–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5.
- 62 *Le Populaire* (13 February 1934).
- 63 Ibid. (14 February 1934).
- 64 *L'Action française* (13 February 1934).
- 65 Ibid. (16 February 1934).
- 66 *Le Populaire* (17 February 1936).
- 67 *L'Œuvre* (14 July 1935).
- 68 Ibid. (15 July 1935).
- 69 *Le Populaire* (15 July 1935).
- 70 Baudin was supposedly referring to his salary as a deputy in the National Assembly.
- 71 *Le Populaire* (16 July 1935). Simon Dell also emphasizes the central importance of the Place de la Bastille in the demonstration of 14 July 1935, and in the media representation of that event, notably the photomontages of Marc Réal. See Simon Dell, *The Image of the Popular Front: The Masses and the Media in Interwar France* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 70–84.
- 72 *Le Populaire* (16 July 1935).
- 73 *L'Action française* (14 July 1935).
- 74 Ibid. (15 July 1935).
- 75 *L'Œuvre* (15 July 1935).
- 76 *Le Populaire* (15 July 1936).
- 77 Ibid.

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- 78 Ibid.
- 79 *L'Action française* (17 July 1936).
- 80 Ibid.
- 81 Of course, nobody on the left cared to remember that the Place de la Nation had itself been the site for the guillotine in Paris during the final days of the Terror, from 13 June to 28 July 1794, following the Law of 22 Prairial, and that 1,306 people had been executed there.
- 82 *L'Œuvre* (15 July 1937).
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 Ibid. (15 July 1939).
- 85 *L'Humanité* (15 July 1939).
- 86 The Communist newspaper, *L'Humanité*, disputed this estimate, insisting that there were in fact “dozens of thousands” of participants. *L'Humanité* (15 July 1953).
- 87 Danielle Tartakowsky, *Les Manifestations de Rue en France, 1918–1968* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1997), 634. The estimate provided by *L'Algérie Libre*, of 40,000 Algerians alone, seems implausible. *L'Algérie Libre* (24 July 1953).
- 88 Maurice Rajsfus, *1953, un 14 juillet sanglant* (Paris: Agnès Viénot Editions, 2003), 48–9. Whether the Algerian delegation was at the very end of the march is not clear. Tartakowsky affirms that it was, but the *L'Humanité's* account insists that delegations representing the 20 *arrondissements* of Paris followed behind the Algerians. *L'Humanité* (15 July 1953).
- 89 Archives de la Préfecture de Police (hereafter APP), HE 3, 14 juillet 1953, Défilé Bastille-Nation: Manifestation du 14 Juillet, état des civils blessés hospitalisés au 15 juillet à 10h.30; Liste des personnes blessés, le 14 juillet 1953, Place de la Nation.
- 90 Ibid., Défilé Bastille-Nation: 14 juillet 1953, liste nominative des grades et gardiens de la paix blessés au cours de la manifestation place de la Nation; 15 juillet 1953, 2ème additif.
- 91 Cited in *Le Monde* (18 July 1953). See also the official communiqué of the minister in *Le Figaro* (15 July 1953).
- 92 Cited in Rajsfus, 50–2.
- 93 APP, HE 3, 14 juillet 1953: Défilé Bastille-Nation: Marcel Auvigne, conducteur auxiliaire Rapport, le 16 juillet 1953. The parachutists were also held responsible by the socialist newspaper *Libération*. See its issue for 15 July. Also cited in Rajsfus, 90–1.
- 94 *Le Monde* (16 July 1953).
- 95 Various translated as “fight,” “clash,” “scuffle,” “skirmish,” or “brawl.” For example, see *Le Monde* (16 July 1953). *France-Soir* used

- the expression “émeute” (riot) in its issue of 16 July; “bagarres” in that of 17 July.
- 96 *Le Monde* (20 July 1953).
- 97 *L'Algérie Libre* (7 August 1953). Tartakowsky states that the massacre at the Place de la Nation brought to at least ten the total number of deaths resulting from Algerian demonstrations in France since 1950. See Tartakowsky, 634.
- 98 *Le Monde* (20 July 1953).
- 99 Pascal Blanchard, et al., *Paris Arabe* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2003), 106–7. See also Pascal Blanchard, et al., “L’immigration: l’installation en métropole des populations du Maghreb (1946–1961), in *Culture coloniale en France: De la Révolution française à nos jours*, eds. Pascal Blanchard, et al. (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2008), 461–70.
- 100 *L'Algérie Libre* (1 August 1950).
- 101 *Ibid.* (23 July 1951).
- 102 *Ibid.* (20 July 1952).
- 103 *Ibid.*
- 104 *L'Humanité* (15 July 1953).
- 105 *Le Figaro* (15 July 1953).
- 106 *La Force Ouvrière* (17 July 1953).
- 107 *Le Populaire* (16 July 1953).
- 108 *L'Humanité* (16 July 1953).
- 109 *La Vie Ouvrière* (22 July 1953); Rajsfus, 109.
- 110 On this commemoration, see Ian Germani, “Taking Possession of Marianne: the Place de la République as Political Battleground,” *Canadian Journal of History/Annales canadiennes d’histoire* 45 (Autumn 2010): 299–333.
- 111 See the analysis of the press response to the massacre by Maurice Rajsfus. Rajsfus, 69–96.
- 112 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 113 *Le Monde* (2 May 2002).
- 114 The expression evokes the mix of races, the terms “Black” and “Beur” indicating African and North African identity.
- 115 *Le Monde* (3 May 2002).
- 116 *Ibid.*
- 117 *L'Humanité* (29 April 2002). Translation: “Youth pisses off the National Front.”
- 118 *Ibid.*
- 119 *Le Monde* (3 May 2002).
- 120 *L'Humanité* (4 May 2002).
- 121 *Ibid.* (2 May 2002).

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- 122 *Le Monde* (3 May 2002).
- 123 *L'Humanité* (29 April 2002).
- 124 *Le Monde* (7 May 2002). The adoption of republican values by Moslem immigrants and their descendants, as well as the adaptation of republican imagery — including the figure of Marianne — to accommodate a multi-ethnic population, is an important contemporary development. See Alec C. Hargreaves, “Marianne musulmane: de l'exclusion (post) coloniale à l'intégration républicaine,” in Agulhon, et al., *La République en Représentations*, 59–68.
- 125 *L'Humanité* (1 May 2002); cited in *Le Monde* (3 May 2002).
- 126 *L'Algérie Libre* (31 July 1953); cited in Rajsfus, 116.
- 127 On this event, see Jim House and Neil McMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Jean-Luc Einaudi, *La bataille de Paris: 17 octobre 1961* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1991).
- 128 Agulhon, *Les Métamorphoses de Marianne*, 190.