Historians of the French Revolution have traditionally emphasized the centrality of violence to revolutionary protest. However, Micah Alpaugh reveals instead the surprising prevalence of non-violent tactics to show that much of the popular action taken in revolutionary Paris was not in fact violent. Tracing the origins of the political demonstration to the French Revolutionary period, he reveals how Parisian protestors typically tried to avoid violence, conducting campaigns predominantly through peaceful marches, petitions, banquets and mass meetings, which only rarely escalated to physical force in their stand-offs with authorities. Of over 750 events, no more than 12 percent appear to have resulted in physical violence at any stage. Rewriting the political history of the people of Paris, Non-Violence and the French Revolution sheds new light on our understanding of Revolutionary France to examine how revolutionary sans-culottes played a pivotal role in developing the democratically oriented protest techniques still used today.

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Non-Violence and the French Revolution

Political Demonstrations in Paris, 1787–1795

Micah Alpaugh

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Contents

List of tables page vi
Acknowledgments vii

Introduction 1

1 Marching in Paris from the Old Regime to the Revolution 24

2 Political demonstrations and the politics of escalation in 1789 48

3 From rapprochement to radicalism, 1790–1791 75

4 War, collaborative protest, and the 1792 republican movement 101

5 Fraternal protest in a time of terror, August 1792 – September 1793 128

6 Reasserting collective action, 1794–1795 156

7 Moderate and conservative marches in Revolutionary Paris 179

Conclusion 204

Appendix: Parisian protests, 1787–1795 211
Bibliography 253
Index 282
### Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-violent and violent demonstrations</th>
<th>page 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Non-violent and violent group street protests</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Threats of violence in demonstrations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Content of political demonstrations</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

What is the most important quality in a revolutionary? Love.
Che Guevara

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