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978-1-107-00938-7 - Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics

Sidney Tarrow

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Strangers at the Gates

Movements and States in Contentious Politics

This book contains the products of work carried out over four decades of research in Italy, France, and the United States, and in the intellectual territory between social movements, comparative politics, and historical sociology. Using a variety of methods ranging from statistical analysis to historical case studies to linguistic analysis, the book centers on historical catalogs of protest events and cycles of collective action. Sidney Tarrow places social movements in the broader arena of contentious politics, in relation to states, political parties, and other actors. From peasants and Communists in 1960s' Italy, to movements and politics in contemporary Western politics, to the global justice movement in the new century, the book argues that contentious actors are neither outside of nor completely within politics, but rather that they occupy the uncertain territory between total opposition and integration into the polity.

Sidney Tarrow (PhD, University of California, Berkeley, 1965) is Maxwell M. Upson Professor Emeritus of Government at Cornell University. His recent books are *Power in Movement* (Cambridge, revised and updated edition 2011); *Contentious Politics* (with the late Charles Tilly 2006), *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge 2005); *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (coedited with Donatella della Porta 2004); *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge, with Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly 2001); and *Contentious Europeans* (with Doug Imig 2001). He is currently researching the relations among war, rights, and contention.

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For Jonathan, Owen, Gabriel, and Jamie

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SIDNEY TARROW

Cornell University



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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book assembles and reflects on work I carried out over four decades in Italy, France, and the United States, and in the territory between social movements, comparative politics, and historical sociology. Because of its heterodox pedigree, I do not expect all of my readers to be equally engaged by everything in the book. Time has also not been on my side. Consider: while Chapter 2 draws on work I did in Italy when Communism was still a living force there, the final chapter was written when that country was being fleeced by a vain huckster with an implanted hairline and a taste for young women. Readers will have to search deep and hard to find continuity in these essays.

Moreover, the book gives short shrift to general intellectual developments in the social sciences as the work collected here was done – such changes as the impact of rational-choice theory and constructivism, historical institutionalism, and path dependency. Had I stopped to place it in these broader developments, the book would have been twice as long and more ponderous. But it was deeply influenced by events in the periods in which it was done. The Berkeley Free Speech movement that raged outside my window at the University of California in Berkeley influenced Chapter 2; the Civil Rights Movement affected my thinking about American contentious politics in Chapter 3; state breakdown, insurgency, and terrorism in the post–Cold War world led me to return to the French Revolution in Chapter 4; the 1968 movements triggered my analysis of policy impacts in Chapter 9; the current era of globalization affected how I studied the transnational movements examined in Chapters 11 and 12; and the explosive events in the Middle East in 2011 shaped the reflections in the coda. The book also reflects changes in how contentious politics and social movements have been studied since the 1960s, when there was a paradigmatic shift from a tradition that assessed the influence of structural cleavages on social movements to new and more “political” paradigms.

Yet the reader searching for continuity will find it in the relationships the book records among social movements, political parties, and political institutions. That triangular relationship affects how activists think and act, so it should also shape how analysts examine their trajectories. If they are to

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prosper, activists balance trying to bring about change with operating in what Gramsci called the “trenches and fortifications” of existing society. The history books are full of tales of those that do not make this adjustment, but those who survive succeed in negotiating the tensions at the gates of the polity. This book explores various facets of the basic ambiguity of being outside of institutional politics but working within the polity.

No scholar who studies contentious politics for more than four decades walks alone. Although I cannot mention all my fellow travelers, a few colleagues and collaborators cannot go unrecognized. As the late David Apter was introducing me to the challenges of comparative analysis, his friend Joseph LaPalombara was exposing me to the intricacies of Italian politics. These two teachers, future colleagues and friends, were the dual guideposts for a sometimes disoriented traveler as he labored on his first book, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*.

A colleague – like me, of a certain age – once remarked that it is somehow embarrassing for mature academics to continue to pride themselves through the number of books and articles they publish; better, he argued, to think in terms of the quality of the young people they have worked with. I fully agree: the privilege of collaborating with young scholars of the quality of Bill Ascher, Jeff Ayres, Donatella della Porta, Antonina Gentile, Jennifer Hadden, Doug Imig, Ariel Levite, David S. Meyer, Tsveta Petrova, Sarah Soule, Sonia Stefanizzi, Alan Stern, and Mary Frase Williams was a high point of my career. All have gone on to bigger things.

If this book has anything to contribute to the study of France it is due to the guidance of the late Annick Percheron, and to Guy Michelat and René Mouriaux, all of CEVIPOF (The Center for the Study of French Political Life), which served for years as a magnet for students of France. In Italy, the late Alberto Spreafico and Aris Accornero helped me keep my feet in the churning currents of Italian politics. In Berkeley, Jack Schaar introduced me to a richer brew of American politics than the thin gruel I had encountered in the *American Political Science Review*. In New Haven, Robert Dahl and Fred Greenstein showed me that American politics has a great deal to teach a comparativist, while at Cornell my colleagues in comparative politics reminded me that Western Europe is not the only place in which contentious politics flourishes. As I dipped into the murky waters of transnational politics, my friends Peter Katzenstein, Bob Keohane, and Kathryn Sikkink were patient guides.

My not-so-silent partners in exploring the byways of political contention were and remain Doug McAdam and the late Charles Tilly. When I would reach a particularly dicey patch in preparing this book, I often felt Chuck looking over my shoulder from beyond the grave; and when Doug read what I had produced, I treasured his typically gentle but pointed comments. As I reached into the uncertain territory of transnational politics, a frequent companion was Donatella della Porta, who transmuted from student to junior colleague to senior scholar as I watched in awe.

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Too many people read and commented on individual chapters in this book for me to recognize them all. Eitan Alimi, Lew Bateman, Breno Bringel, Valerie Bunce, della Porta, Lars-Erik Cederman, Hadden, Steve Hellman, Jeff Isaac, Ira Katznelson, Mark Lichbach, McAdam, David Meyer, and Martin Shefter were the kind of nonfinicky critics an author treasures. Ryan Morfopoulos prepared the bibliography with unflagging attention to detail.

Susan Tarrow never failed to believe that work that sometimes seemed too all-over-the-place might some day come together. She read every word in the manuscript of this book – often more than once – and responded to my errors with patience and understanding. Only she can know how much she means to me.

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