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Virgile Cirefice, Grégoire Le Quang, and Charles Riondet, eds., *La part de l'ombre: Histoire de la clandestinité politique au XXe siècle*. Ceyzérieu: Champ Vallon, 2019. 305 pp. €27.00. (pb). ISBN 979-10-267-0832-2.

Review by Daniel A. Gordon, Edge Hill University.

I used to think that edited collections were the scholar's equivalent of the pre-streaming music fan's compilation album—a much maligned genre which nevertheless gave me much pleasure in my youth. Whereas the journal article as “seven-inch single” or the single-authored monograph as “studio album” tend to be acquired with some foresight of the contents, with multi-authored edited books as “compilation album,” there is always an element of lucky dip. Generally acquired in the knowledge either of only a minority of the contributors or the general theme, contained within is potential for both the joy of serendipitous discovery of the unknown and the critical reviewer's clichés of uneven quality and incoherence.

The unusual circumstances of 2020, however, led me to wonder whether edited books are rather the equivalent of a “live album.” After all, most owe their births to conferences—the “festivals” of academe. This is an open secret, but one of which edited books often appear unnecessarily ashamed, perhaps sensitive to the cynical publisher's view that conference proceedings have a market largely limited to participants at the conference concerned, and must therefore instead masquerade as a self-contained finished product.

Yet when conferences cannot take place in person, might we appreciate more the “conferenceness” of the edited book? Appropriately, given the theme of clandestinity of a book published just before the pandemic, in a sense now *nous sommes tous des clandestins*, with a stronger sense of what clandestinity meant for historical actors for whom mass gatherings were also dangerous. Just as much political activity worldwide suddenly went virtual-only between the March wave of lockdowns and the explosion of Black Lives Matter, so the standard circuits of scholarly exchange, normally so vital for historians of France thinly spread across anglophone academia, were (when not abandoned altogether for more pressing concerns) replaced by a furtive virtual dance of cameras being turned on and off. While many filled the gap with online conferences, during a long convalescence from complications of COVID-19 I turned, thanks to publishers' online paperback sales, to reading edited collections from past conferences I had not attended or even knew existed—and dreamed myself away, imagining the conference-that-dare-not-speak-its name.

At their best, conference books dare to take on the provisional character of conferences, the rough-and-ready collision of ideas between researchers working on disparate topics, and open them up for critical dialogue beyond the walls of the conference hall. It is therefore to the credit of Virgile Cirefice, Grégoire Le Quang, Charles Riondet and their co-collaborators that something of this character comes across in *La part de l'ombre*, a book with some twenty-two authors if we include the short preface-type contributions, notably Donatella Della Porta, doyenne of comparative European social movement studies. Eight chapters are by doctoral researchers; most of the rest are by recent PhDs; the conference origins of the book are acknowledged (albeit tucked away in small print on p. 307). There is much zig-zagging across time and space; the four parts of the book are structured neither chronologically nor geographically, but thematically, if not always convincingly.

La part de l'ombre is united less by the theme of violence than by that of clandestinity. Although in practice most of the book is about people who were both clandestine and violent (it would perhaps have been good to have more on people who were clandestine, yet non-violent), the clear focus on clandestinity neatly avoids getting bogged down in more well-trodden conceptual debates around terrorism, resistance, and so on. The clandestinity problematic is applied across a lively variety of situations in contemporary history. While outlying contributions range from revolutionaries in Tsarist Russia to 1930s anti-colonial struggles in Western Samoa and the 2002 Thierry Meyssan affair around 9/11 conspiracy theories in France, the collection is weighted towards mid- to late-twentieth century western and southern European experiences. Reflecting the fact that the relevant conferences were held between 2015 and 2017 at Paris-8, Bologna, and Paris-1 respectively, there is a definite Franco-Italian flavour to proceedings: eight chapters deal with French material and five with Italian material. Chronologically, there is a heavy focus on the period between the 1960s and the 1980s, with nine chapters covering this.

There are important exceptions to this rule, notably three contributions on the French Resistance. Tiphaine Catalan's local study of Spanish Republican resisters in the Limousin uses oral testimony on non-militarised and non-masculinised forms of resistance outside the *maquis*. Catalan argues that continuity between the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War has been exaggerated as a motivation for resistance among Spanish exiles. Male resisters sometimes valorised the Resistance in France much less than events in Spain, or had a more pacifist outlook than in dominant representations. Meanwhile female resisters tended to downplay their Spanish war memories, in contrast to the widespread image of *milicianas* depicted in the media between 1936 and 1939.

Zoé Grumberg's study of Yiddish-speaking resisters is an outstanding example of how the final part of this volume tackles the thorny issue (also present in Charles Riondet's study of Resistance memorialisation in Paris before and immediately after the Liberation) of how people leave clandestinity—more neglected in historiography than how they enter it. Effectively bringing together a wide variety of primary sources, Grumberg shows how Jewish Communists needed no lessons on clandestinity from the Union des Juifs pour la résistance et l'entraide in 1943 because they already had long lived the experience of clandestinity: as Communists in interwar Poland, immigrants with insecure status in late Third Republic France, and volunteers in the International Brigades in Spain. After the Liberation, old habits proved hard to shake off, from pseudonyms to never turning one's back to the entrance when in a restaurant. In some cases, veterans even concealed their Jewish origins altogether: here Grumberg maintains an open mind

on an old debate, stemming from a 1974 essay by Annie Kriegel[1], as to whether this was due to antisemitism within the Communist Party.

However—with the occasional exception such as Vivien Bouhey’s stimulating chapter on French anarchism between 1880 and 1914—there are slim pickings on anything before 1940. Skirting around the rather rampant political clandestinity characteristic of larger swathes of interwar European history, and lacking chapters on Balkan politics or the classic clandestine anti-colonial movements of the 1940s and 1950s such as in Algeria, this volume hardly amounts, as the subtitle seems to promise, to an overall *Histoire de la clandestinité politique au XXe siècle*. Rather, those readers to whom this volume will likely be of more extensive use are specialists, postgraduates and advanced undergraduates working on various aspects of Europe’s “long 1968.” The focus on that period runs the risk of implying that clandestinity peaked at a time of relative freedom, at least in much of Western Europe, when surely this was a fertile time and place for more conventional forms of political activism on the part of much larger numbers of people than the relatively small clandestine groups featured here. Nevertheless, significant new insights are offered on these atypical militants of the shadows: hence the rest of this review will provide a guide to those chapters.

Pauline Corre offers a comprehensive account of the development of clandestinity among West German student revolutionaries between 1964 and 1972. Corre argues that the semi-clandestinity pursued by the “Sunday terrorists” of the Revolutionary Cells, who kept one foot in legal political activity and paid more attention to maintaining their anonymity, was more effective than the brazenly confrontational approach of the Red Army Faction, epitomised by the Spring Offensive of 1972 which simply resulted in their arrest.

Similarly, while much writing on 1970s political violence in Italy is dominated by the Red Brigades—not surprisingly given the intense national trauma sparked by their 1978 kidnap and murder of former prime minister Aldo Moro—here we begin the discussion of Italy instead with Andrea Tanturli’s essay about the lesser known Primea Linea. Although this could be confusing because Primea Linea only began in 1976, some seven years after the Red Brigades, Tanturli argues that Primea Linea were significant, and not simply the dilettantes that some journalists have painted them to be. Primea Linea’s strategy of semi-clandestinity was less purist than that of the Red Brigades, permitting a wider degree of overlap with overt activism amongst Italy’s extensive extra-parliamentary left. It was also, in a sense, more honest than the dual-level practice characteristic of Autonomia Operaia, most of whose activists were unaware of the attacks being carried out by its various clandestine armed wings. In contrast to the Red Brigades’ rather more obvious “striking at the heart of the State,” in Tanturli’s account Primea Linea sound almost like the world’s first Foucauldian or post-structuralist terrorists.[2] With a complex understanding of the diffuse nature of power in modern society, propounding a “microphysique du pouvoir” (p. 101), the Prima Linea deemed drug dealers or psychiatrists to be abusing their power, making them supposedly legitimate targets. However, the decline of the “Movement of ’77” and then the Moro affair forced a move towards more conventional terrorist clandestinity, as the semi-clandestine model proved impossible to maintain over the long term.

Meanwhile Grégoire Le Quang provides a usefully succinct analysis, albeit drawing heavily on existing published works and memoirs, of the Red Brigades’ move into clandestinity, arguing essentially that they became violent before they became clandestine, beginning by inserting themselves into confrontations already underway in factories. Although some groups such as the

little known Superclan were producing false papers from 1970 onwards, the Red Brigades' militaristic turn took place only after 1972 and especially after 1974. With the formation of an isolated emotional community revelling in clandestinity, cut off from broader social realities and following a classic pyramid structure, each militant would only know one superior in the organisation to minimise any impact from informers (readers may be reminded here of the scene in *The Battle of Algiers* where the Front de Libération Nationale's pyramid structure is illustrated with chalk marks on a blackboard). Le Quang demonstrates that clandestinity contained the seeds of its own failure, as it proved impossible to square the circle of both maintaining secrecy and establishing contacts with the masses via what were in reality non-existent fronts for prisoners and factory workers.

Drawing on new interview evidence, Paul Cormier surveys the diverse reactions of Turkish left militants to the military coup of 1980, which largely depended on individual trajectories. If most were ill-prepared for the extent of repression that followed, some attempted to operate clandestinely by escaping the cities to rural areas, without much success. However others, on condition that they were fortunate enough to have the necessary clandestine networks and resources, went into exile. Thus some Trotskyists--such as one who escaped, thanks to a fake Tunisian passport prepared by the Palestinian Fatah and obtained via an Iranian comrade in Lebanon--managed to reach France or the UK, where the assistance of the Ligue communiste (LC) or International Marxist Group respectively proved helpful in obtaining employment, housing and refugee status.

Irène Gimenez's contribution on Spanish political prisoners under Franco is better than most when it comes to the concrete practicalities of clandestinity. Using archival and interview evidence alike--including from the LC's Spanish offshoot the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR), then allied to a splinter from the Basque Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)--Gimenez explains how militants adapted to prison with a variety of degrees of clandestinity. These ranged from the semi-legal, such as helping non-political criminal prisoners with literacy, to various types of sabotage and boycott, up to more dangerous activities such as prison escapes or the smuggling out of political writings by prisoners. There was even a clandestine Communist prison radio station, whose scripts were written by inmates of Franco's most notorious prison in Burgos and then broadcast all the way from Bucharest. But not everything clandestine was welcomed by the organisation to which a prisoner belonged: thus two female Maoist prisoners were expelled from their party for having a lesbian relationship in prison, because breaking social norms was deemed too risky for the wider collective. Political organisers' clandestine practices could be exclusionary: what was good for "the Party" was often not good for the individual prisoner. Moreover, the official Communist Party perpetuated gender stereotypes in the tasks assigned to men and women, and Gimenez convincingly argues that the marginalisation of women prisoners also extended to the LCR and ETA.

Ange-Toussaint Pietrera's chapter "La Corse de l'ombre" provides an informative overview and penetrating analysis of the Front de Libération Nationale de la Corse (FLNC) since 1976. Pietrera points to a sharp paradox: for a clandestine movement living in the shadows, the FLNC has proven very good at public relations and communication, making adept use of television, the memory of previous Corsican clandestine movements, folk music (notably the 1978 song "Clandestinu") and, above all, its trademark press conferences. So effective was the tactic of inviting journalists for briefings with their clandestine maquis groups that, by 1996, the FLNC were brazen enough to pre-arrange with the French authorities that they turn a blind eye to a

gathering of more than 500 militants armed with rocket launchers and submachine guns in an obscure village of less than 100 inhabitants, for a press conference to announce a truce. This does beg the question of how far by this point we can really still talk of the FLNC being clandestine, but illustrates well a point relevant to other movements considered in the book.

Aurélien Dubuisson's lively intertwined analysis of the French Action Directe (AD) and the Belgian Cellules Communistes Combattantes (CCC) shows how these "Johnny-come-latelys" of the post-68 left Euro-terrorist scene, appearing in 1979 and 1983 respectively, were viewed at the time through the prism of conspiracy theory (also much in evidence in Romain Legendre's chapter on Italian Mafia trials and inquiries of the 1980s and early 1990s). Far right accounts drew on real links between some European leftists and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine to present a much-exaggerated account of a wider causal link between Middle Eastern immigration to Europe and terrorism, alongside Cold War concerns about Soviet influence. Yet, in reality, the CCC rejected attempts to set up an international federation of like-minded groups. So anchored were they in the local Belgian context that they even travelled by public transport, thinking they could rely on a sympathetic Belgian public opinion. The French far right newspaper *Minute* even accused, implausibly, the Mitterrand government, and Lionel Jospin in particular, of connivance with AD. Meanwhile some accounts on the left, from *Le Nouvel Observateur* via the German filmmaker Rainer Fassbinder to Belgian Maoists, presented Euro-terrorism as a false flag operation by NATO's secret Stay Behind networks set up to counter a Soviet invasion--rumours not helped by some of the CCC's more absurdly counter-productive attacks, such as when in 1985 they blew up the car of one of Belgium's leading peace campaigners.

The transnational element of Dubuisson's analysis is welcome as, with limited exceptions (for example Pietrera's discussion of the influence of the Algerian FLN and Irish Republican Army on the FLNC), much of the book tends to present a series of national case studies laid end to end. More extensive comparative international discussion, perhaps drawing on discussions at the three conferences, could have shed further light on the overall theme of clandestinity.

However, some indications of where a more transnational history of clandestinity might progress are to be found in Monica Lanzoni's chapter on Italian exiles in 1980s France. Drawing on interviews, as well as newly opened state archives from the Mitterrand era, Lanzoni suggests that for five years before the famous "Mitterrand Doctrine" was officially pronounced in 1985, as many as a thousand Italian far leftists on the run were already being sheltered in France. Lanzoni invites us to consider a collective history, of which famous examples like Cesare Battisti are only the tip of the iceberg. While the Giscard government took a dim view of the likes of Primea Linea, who started to arrive in 1979, the *alternance* of 1981 led to a distinction between "une trentaine de terroristes actifs et implacables" (p.253) and the rest. Moreover, the exiles used their time abroad as a way of escaping the logic of armed struggle and clandestinity, as well as of their own sectarianism: Lanzoni points to the role of specific sites like the Centre international de culture populaire in how the relative political openness of France fostered dialogue between former bitter rivals. French state policy, led by Pierre Mauroy's advisor on human rights, Louis Joinet, was effectively trying to foster a kind of peace process in Italy, based on the fundamental precept that clandestinity was the worst of all worlds: this policy had at least some success in preventing a resurgence of armed attacks. Perhaps it was possible to emerge from the shadows after all.

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NOTES

[1] Annie Kriegel, “Les communistes français et leurs Juifs” in Annie Kriegel, *Communismes au miroir français. Temps, cultures et sociétés en France devant le communisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), pp. 177-196.

[2] This aspect would seem hard to explain without explicit reference (absent in this chapter) to the intellectual influence of Toni Negri on the wider milieu from which 1970s Italian left terrorists came: see Tobias Abse, “The Professor in the Balaclava: Toni Negri and Autonomist Politics,” *What Next?* 22 (2002).
<http://www.whatnextjournal.org.uk/Pages/Back/Wnext22/Negri.html>

Daniel A. Gordon
Edge Hill University
gordond@edgehill.ac.uk

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