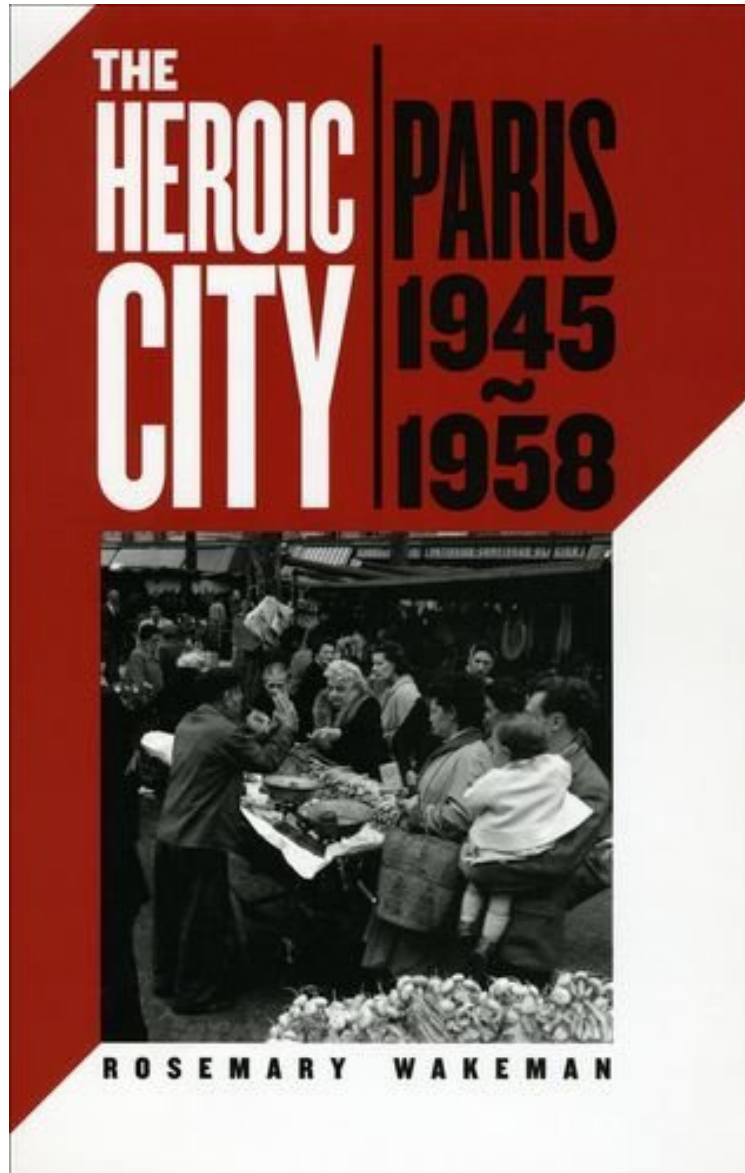


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The Heroic City: Paris, 1945-1958

Rosemary Wakeman

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Rosemary Wakeman : The Heroic City: Paris, 1945-1958 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Heroic City: Paris, 1945-1958:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Heroic WorkBy Tom MitchellRosemary Wakeman's monumental work is a Tour De Force of post war Paris, defining and illustrating the reconstruction of the city in terms of "poetic humanism" in the face of the growing demands of mid-century modernity, and cold war era pragmatism. The spirit and style of her writing can best be described as evocative, and without a doubt, I am a better person for reading it.

The Heroic City is a sparkling account of the fate of Paris's public spaces in the years following Nazi occupation and joyful liberation. Countering the traditional narrative that Paris's public landscape became sterile and dehumanized in the 1940s and '50s, Rosemary Wakeman instead finds that the city's streets overflowed with ritual, drama, and spectacle. With frequent strikes and protests, young people and students on parade, North Africans arriving in the capital of the French empire, and radio and television shows broadcast live from the streets, Paris continued to be vital terrain. Wakeman analyzes the public life of the city from a variety of perspectives. A reemergence of traditional customs led to the return of festivals, street dances, and fun fairs, while violent protests and political marches, the housing crisis, and the struggle over decolonization signaled the political realities of postwar France. The work of urban planners and architects, the output of filmmakers and intellectuals, and the day-to-day experiences of residents from all walks of life come together in this vibrant portrait of a flamboyant and transformative moment in the life of the City of Light.

“The Heroic City is a warm and generous evocation for the Paris of the late 1940s and early 1950s. It is the story of the City of Light at the end of its darkest decade, when it rose—fitfully—from four years of brutal and dispiriting German occupation. Poetic humanism is Wakeman's leitmotiv, and it is brilliantly handled in these lucid and enticing pages. I learned a great deal from this very far ranging and charming book about imagined, poetic Paris, but also about everyday Paris, as the city moved from left to right, from penury to consumerism, from Stalinist Communism to Debord's Situationism, and from historical Paris to Paris as it is today, the capital of world nostalgia.”