



# Sweet Land of Liberty

America in the Mind of the French Left, 1848–1871

**TOM SANCTON**

In *Sweet Land of Liberty*, Tom Sancton examines how the French left perceived and used the image of the United States against the backdrop of major historical developments in both countries between the Revolution of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871. Along the way, he weaves in the voices of scores of French observers—including those of everyday French citizens as well as those of prominent thinkers and politicians such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Victor Hugo, and Georges Clemenceau—as they looked to the democratic ideals of their American counterparts in the face of rising authoritarianism on the European continent.

*Sweet Land of Liberty* counters the long-held assumption that French workers, despite the distress caused by a severe cotton famine in the South, steadfastly supported the North during the Civil War out of a sense of solidarity with American slaves and lofty ideas of liberty. On the contrary, many workers backed the South, hoped for an end to fighting, and urged French government intervention. More broadly, Sancton's analysis shows that the American example, though useful to the left, proved ill-adapted to French republican traditions rooted in the Great Revolution of 1789. For all the ritual evocations of Lafayette and the "traditional Franco-American friendship," the two republics evolved in disparate ways as each endured social turmoil and political upheaval during the second half of the nineteenth century.

**TOM SANCTON**, former Paris bureau chief for *Time* magazine, holds a doctorate in history from Oxford University and is the author of numerous books. He is currently a research professor at Tulane University.

## PRAISE FOR *SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY*:

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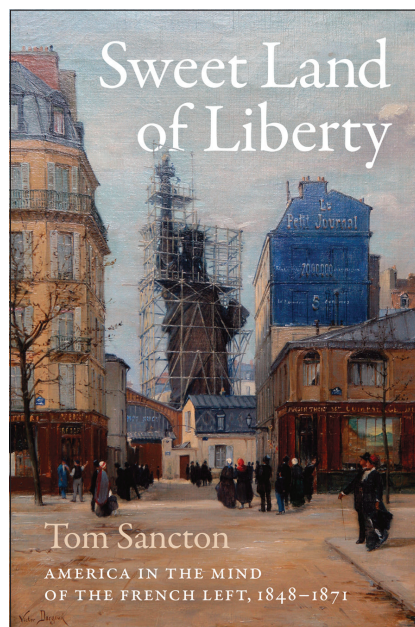
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"In expertly mapping the sudden shifts of left-leaning opinion from the 1848 Revolution through the Second Empire, Tom Sancton tosses in an extra bonus for the general reader—a smart and lucid guide to the forked road of French politics during these confusing years. This is a very fine book."

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