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In October 2001 I had an opportunity to present material from this book as part of a festival of New York history organized by the recently founded Gotham Center in midtown Manhattan. The festival included a documentary film about the city that concluded with the toppling scene, testimony for the World Trade Center in 1971. The period of urban warfare depicted in the film is painted across a cityscape, with the skyline of the Manhattan skyline. Through the film of the World Trade Center, the destruction of the World Trade Center had now reached the city, and I was struck by a deep sense of shock. I was struck, however, by the sense of human purpose and civic challenge which bodes well for a city that has faced with numerous challenges in the past. Since my first encounter with New York City in the summer of 1961 I have become gradually immersed in a project to try to understand better how a modern metropolis able to function, exchanging a series of relationships between urban, civic, and social power. The experience has found me to rethink the boundaries between different fields of urban knowledge, ranging from the voices of grassroots activists to the more abstract domain of research, planning, and urban theory. My discussion with New Yorkians is not from its central city character, most notably the expansion of a sophisticated public sphere with the new energies of a global financial