

shopkeepers' collective identity was forged. Such considerations are necessary to understand the wide variation in shopkeepers' economic strength and organizational capacities between cities and countries, and the author's expert unraveling of Milan's development provides a model of analysis.

Less convincing is Morris's depiction of the shopkeepers' ideological evolution. Despite his pains not simply "to interpret the *esercenti* political experience as merely a progression from left to right," (p. 289) the rightward trajectory is clear. As evidence of the shopkeepers' independent and potentially variable course, Morris describes their opposition to the party of the large landowners and their admittedly halfhearted and ill-fated support for the "centre-left" administration of 1900-1905. But what drove them to the right was the emergence of a well-organized workers' movement that, even at its early stages, challenged the *petite bourgeoisie's* control over small workplaces (and particularly over hiring) and disputed its self-perception as the rightful spokespersons for the *menu peuple*. With the growth of a powerful and increasingly revolutionary workers' movement, it is not possible to do as Morris asks and "distinguish between anti-Socialism and support for the right" in early twentieth-century Milan. Was there no logic to anti-socialism in this context? From the evidence presented, the tide of class politics simply seems to have carried the shopkeepers in its wake. In short, Morris asserts a *petit bourgeois* autonomy, but increasing the choice was between workers and capital; it is difficult to agree that the "respect of property and the social order, through which the *esercenti* distinguished itself from the working class, did not demand an uncritical acceptance of the bourgeoisie" (p. 298), at least not in the electoral field.

In fact, the author's conclusions are forced onto the narrative. While shopkeepers clearly did have some autonomy, they moved inexorably into the camp of the right-wing party they had earlier criticized. Morris's case might be stronger if he could have elaborated upon the elements of a specifically *esercenti* world view and argued that, in some form, it had survived. Yet the shopkeepers' ideology, beyond a passing reference to Garibaldi and Mazzini in their newspaper and a general opposition to "privilege" is not well addressed. It is difficult not to contrast this with Geoffrey Crossick's rich portrayal of the social fabric of the British lower middle class predicated on anxieties and ambitions often at odds with broader economic developments. No doubt there is an issue of sources; this is perhaps not the kind of information that is easy to glean from the shopkeeper's organ *L'Esercente* or from reports of their federation. But this is crucial to understanding the *petit bourgeois* experience and (with due respect to Morris's concern about a teleology that assumes shopkeepers were inevitably fascists) will help explain their drift in that direction. This is not to say that there are not elements of fascinating social history here, as in his discussion of credit or *il fido*. Shopkeepers could claim credit for sustaining destitute working-class families and communities, although the institution seemed to control them as much as they it.

The lower middle class is a frustrating object of study, although made more so by attempts to follow too stringently Mayer's original dictum to study it in its "own right." This is not to denigrate studies of the *petite bourgeoisie* nor to suggest that we should assign it the status of a residual category of less interest and importance than capital and labour. In fact, the social values we might ascribe to the *petite bourgeoisie* have had (and arguably continue to have) a currency

beyond the economic weight of this sector and need to be understood. But, it would be more useful, I would argue, to take a leaf from E.P. Thompson and view class as nothing if not a social relationship. Throughout this narrative, the *esercenti* are constantly renegotiating their relationship with the other social classes of industrializing Milan. Often Morris is cognizant of what this meant for the shopkeepers' social identity and examines the role of their newspaper in consciously shaping it by seeking common concerns while eschewing discussions that could divide an already heterogeneous social group. While his attempts to claim substantial autonomy for shopkeepers in this process are strained, he addresses issues of concern to all historians interested in changing relations of class in the industrializing city.

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**Teaford, Jon C. *Cities of the Heartland: The Rise and Fall of the Industrial Midwest*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993. Pp. xii, 300. 22 black and white plates, tables, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth.**

Jon Teaford has written a sprightly history of the network of large industrial cities in the states of the Old Northwest (Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin) in the last two centuries. He focuses primarily on what he saw as a common pattern of growth, development and decline in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis (with some discussion of smaller midwestern cities), and uses a biological metaphor of birth, maturity, and aging to study the "urban life cycle" (p. vii).