

class, shows the development of interracial alliances, and offers comparisons and contrasts in the social history of these varied cities. Black communities diverged in their experiences with racial violence and discrimination and “along temporal, spatial, color, class, and gender lines” (p. xiv). Trotter concludes, though, that several unifying themes emerged. While blacks “faced racial hostility from whites and class, color, and social cleavages among themselves,” they also built “bridges across such social chasms and creat[ed] new communities . . .” At “the forefront . . . was the transformation of southern agricultural workers into a new urban working class” (p. xv).

Trotter offers thoughtful comparisons of four black communities along a common waterway. Some gaps appear, though. Trotter rarely mentions racial violence after 1861. Whites’ roles in ameliorating racism need more attention, as do differing population trends. For example, Evansville’s black population, like that of all lower Ohio towns except Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, declined between 1900 and 1910 and remained flat until World War II. The book’s chief limitation, however, is not the author’s fault. There are relatively few historical studies of African American life in the Ohio valley.

This book should be a catalyst for further research on urban experiences since 1945, smaller cities and towns, and the dynamics of race and community-building on either side of the river. Also Trotter’s “proletarianization” thesis needs more careful scrutiny. If Evansville is a case in point, many African Americans had been employed in Kentucky tobacco factories and distilleries before migrating after 1863. Trotter has offered a solid beginning for that quest.

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*Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago, 1864–97.* By Richard Schneirov. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998. Pp. viii, 390. Notes, illustrations, index. Clothbound, \$49.95; paperbound, \$21.95.)

Richard Schneirov’s *Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago, 1864–97* stands as another recent example of the skill and insight that labor historians bring to considerations of the history of the United States. As a title in the University of Illinois Press’s Working Class in American History series, Schneirov’s book offers a history of labor and workers in Gilded Age Chicago and presents an important argument about the development of modern liberalism in the United States. In his own words, Schneirov contends that “class formation among late nineteenth-century workers had a profound and transformative impact

on the urban political system" (p. 3). This impact, however, amounts to more than the various manifestations of labor and socialist parties during this period. Rather, Schneirov argues that by looking beyond the "formal outcomes of elections" to the processes of coalition-building, electoral appeals, policies of local government, and the relationship between labor leaders, politicians, and officeholders, one can see a more enduring political effect of class formation within the Democratic and Republican parties, especially after 1886. In this process, organized labor, the labor question, and pro-labor policies attained political credibility, electoral appeal, and legitimacy in respectable discourse. By the end of the nineteenth century, a transformed liberalism became "America's 'via media,' great compromise, or merger between market liberalism and socialism" (p. 10).

The book's structure works well to demonstrate Schneirov's basic argument. It begins with a reconstruction of the basic setting of Chicago following the Civil War and captures nicely extant organization and consciousness of the city's workers during this period. After detailing the development of party politics after the war, Schneirov discusses the Great Upheaval of 1877 and the rise of the Knights of Labor in Chicago, including an interesting account of the organization's segmented and ethnic characteristics. Perhaps the most insightful section of the book deals with the dissolution of machine politics and the Knights, under the pressure of calls for liberal and radical reform through the Eight-hour-day movement and the Haymarket tragedy, and eventually, the rise of "modern" trade unions. Schneirov uses the final chapters of the text to substantiate his argument concerning the transformation of liberalism in the aftermath of Haymarket and the development of three new elements of liberal reform, namely, a revised conception of social ethics, a new-found acceptance of class legislation, and limited public support for the regulation of the market by associations of capital and labor.

In all, Schneirov's well-researched and well-written *Labor and Urban Politics* gives cause for historians of American politics during the Gilded Age to reconsider the labor issue outside of the threadbare question of "why no socialism?" As such, Schneirov's work contributes to the new institutionalist turn in the literature that seeks to retain the richness and conceptual insights of the "new history" without sacrificing careful consideration of organizations and leaders that contributed so much to the historical possibilities of the past. Instead of a golden past, or in Schneirov's words "a tragedy of lost opportunities," *Labor and Urban Politics* focuses on what occurred in the political arena and, more importantly, what endured.

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