

sense of literary history, as well as of nineteenth-century Edinburgh, for years to come.

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Andrew Lees and Lynn Hollen Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750–1914* (New Approaches to European History). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. xii + 300pp. 24 plates, 6 maps. 6 tables. Bibliography. £14.99 pbk.
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In this survey of modern European urban history, two highly profiled urban historians have pooled their resources and their profound knowledge to undertake the ambitious endeavour of highlighting the contribution of cities towards the 'Making of Modern Europe'. The book, which will work well as a textbook for students of urban history and scholars interested in a general introduction to the field, answers many questions and displays a wide scope in its coverage. However, it is also somewhat limited in a number of respects: the Europe presented by Lees and Lees is at best the 'Europe of the Nine' – i.e. after Britain joined the EEC – not the Europe as is currently discussed and developed after the end of Cold War. The narrative of urbanization, of discourses about urban problems in a very wide sense and of the urban solutions developed, has a strong focus on Great Britain, France and Germany and their large cities, particularly London, Paris and Berlin. Other west and south European cities are occasionally referred to but eastern Europe and large parts of southern Europe are conspicuously absent. This goes to the point that in Appendix B, listing 'General works on individual cities' cities like St Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, Gdansk, Cracow, Prague or Sofia are not even mentioned. This exclusion of the eastern European urban experience somewhat undercuts the claims of the title 'Making of Modern Europe'.

The authors justify this restraint on the 'urban leaders' and the great nation states of that period on the grounds that their aim is to focus on cities as 'the places where modernity began and where it reached its zenith' (p. 2). Cities are seen as 'a window that enables us to look at and bring into focus many of the most important aspects of European history during the period between the pre-revolutionary "old regime" and the outbreak of the First World War' (p. 2). In looking at cities as torch-bearers of modernity, Lees and Lees focus on the very large cities, those numbering 250,000 and more inhabitants in 1910 and located west of the (then) Russian Empire.

The book basically falls in two parts, divided chronologically at 1850, the mid-nineteenth century constituting a 'water-shed'. Whereas in part one, covering the years 1750–1850, the period is characterized as 'an era of disruption' with structures of the ancien regime in terms of society, economy and politics in dissolution and under attack by new forces of industrialization, liberalism, nationalism and urbanization, part two, analysing the period roughly from mid-century to World War I is presented as 'an era of reconstruction'. Here the emphasis is clearly on the largely successful responses by industrial cities and societies to cope effectively with problems of public health, poverty and the political and cultural participation of the urban masses. The 'plot' of the book thus points towards a 'success-story': the awe-inspiring array of urban problems, not unfamiliar to those versed in the

history of urbanization, presented in part one, is successfully addressed, albeit not altogether resolved in part two. Lees and Lees argue that 'there are reasons to regard urbanization between 1750 and 1914 as a process that contributed overall, at least towards its end, to the prosperity and the wellbeing of the Europeans who experienced it' (p. 7). Now while this contention cannot be disputed on a general level, what is missing in this book is a sense of the dialectic of progress behind these processes: the civilizing influences undoubtedly exerted by cities and urban life before 1914 obviously have not sufficed to prevent many European societies from descending into violence, barbarism and genocide in the period of the two World Wars, a fact which deeply disturbed internationally minded and peace-loving urban progressives at the wake of World War I. Similarly, the fact that the gradual mastery of urban environmental problems such as unhealthy water, polluted air and dirty streets was achieved at the cost of transferring pollution and its effects out of the city into the countryside or out of the country altogether is scarcely recognized. Urban environmental history as a sub-field of urban history is almost completely missing; major works which could well have helped to flesh out the picture presented, such as Platt's *Shock Cities* (comparing the environmental problems of Chicago and Manchester), or Mosley's *The Chimney of the World* (a study of the discourses around smoke in Manchester), are completely absent. The book has clear strengths in presenting the emerging problems of Europe's cities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, discussing issues of demography, economic structures, social hardship and relationships between cities. It is also very convincing in elucidating the discourses on poverty and crime and linking them to contemporary religious cultures as well as liberal or conservative thinking. A further clearly positive feature is the inclusion of a chapter on 'Imperial and colonial cities', systematically reflecting on relationships and transfers between European metropolises and cities in the colonies (and semi-colonies) acting as entrepôts and bridgeheads. Less convincing, however, are the parts where technology or city planning are discussed. Technology is simply treated as an instrument at hand to solve practical problems; there is no sense of the problems of selecting one technology over the other, or of the social construction of technological systems with reference to a city's conception of its mission and development perspectives. And while the rise of planning is generally highlighted, it is surprising not to find the names of eminent planners and urban thinkers such as Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes, Josef Stuebben or Camillo Sitte in the index.

Much of the book is written from what might be called a 'bird's-eye-perspective'. This allows generalizations and valuable comparisons of urban developments across Lees and Lees' Europe; in this respect the book clearly has reached a new level of substantiated transnational comparisons in regards to urban processes. What, however, is sacrificed by this approach is a more vivid sense of the urban drama, the intensity of urban conflicts, the fierceness of urban competition, the personality of urban leaders. Cities are, overall, presented as stages and arenas in which the processes of modernization with their manifold aspects are played out, rather than as actors in their own right which pursue strategies, attempt to create a sense of identity and project images. Despite these reservations, the book will clearly figure as a standard reference survey for modern urban history in western Europe for the years to come.

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