

(p. xi), but Smith seems to be offering this work not as fiction but as history. History it is not, unless all standards are to be abandoned. Perhaps we could adopt Alex Haley's term and call it "faction", or perhaps "fictory" would do. But perhaps it's all a joke. That Yale has agreed to publish this work as history is disturbing indeed, for it is of no value as a contribution to knowledge, nor should it be foisted upon any trusting student as an example of the historian's craft.

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Joe William Trotter, Jr — *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985. Pp. xvii, 302.

During the last decade what has come to be called the "race-class debate" has played a central role in the discourse on the past, present, and future of Black America. The fundamental question involved is not difficult to summarize. At issue is the relative weight of race (oppression based on color) and class (exploitation based on extraction of surplus value, or poverty based on chronic unemployment) as determinants of the socio-historical position of contemporary Afro-Americans. The debate has largely taken on historical meanings, because of the effort of William Julius Wilson and following him, a number of others, to trace the causes and consequences of the decline in racial prejudice since World War II and to understand the systemic, structural forces that serve to perpetuate black subordination, even as prejudice lessens.

Both related to this effort at reconceptualization, which has largely been undertaken by sociologists and public policy specialists, and also, within historiography, to the rapidly spreading influence of Herbert Gutman, David Montgomery, and Edward P. Thompson and the generalized variants of contemporary Marxism, there has been another trend in the scholarly literature on black America. This has been the increasing emphasis on understanding the formation of the black industrial working class in northern cities between the Great Migrations from the southern states during the World War I years, through the Depression and the rise of the CIO and war production, to the end of World War II, by which time blacks had achieved for the first time a secure place in American industry. This work is notable not only for breaking new ground, but for its explicit criticisms of the principal paradigm of black urban history, the "ghetto synthesis". This paradigm has adopted the premise, conditioned by early twentieth-century urban sociology and the voluminous social science literature of race and culture contacts, that the central story of black urbanization is the physical rise and spread of the ghetto-slum and the creation of the discriminatory mechanisms that sustain it and the ways of life, stunted or vital and creative — depending on the individual author's perspective, that took root within it. Critics of the "ghetto-synthesis" have rightly pointed out that, in its single-minded emphasis on race, it is not large enough to explain all the structural elements of the black situation, especially the economic integration of urban blacks in industry. They urge that this paradigm must be not so much replaced by, as joined to, a class perspective. Just how race and class, ghettoization and working-class formation, are to be joined conceptually has, of course, taxed many minds for years.

This search for a new paradigm for black urban history has been found most prominently in a number of doctoral dissertations on northern industrial cities. With the publications of Trotter's *Black Milwaukee*, however, the new literature has now begun to appear in extended form in print, where its claims to analytical novelty and comparatively greater explanatory power may be conveniently evaluated. It is quite correct, I believe, to evaluate Trotter's study by such a standard, because his aims, as spelled out in both his "Introduction" and an appendix, "Afro-American Urban History: A Critique of the Literature" are expressly revisionist. Trotter's revisionism is indeed full of possibilities for shifting our perspectives and much of his analysis is admirable. As a theoretical

model for, or empirical study of, Black working-class formation, however, the work is not completely convincing.

The problem certainly does not lie in the author's failure to come to terms with the problem of the degree of representativeness of Milwaukee as a location for studying blacks during the first half of this century. Perhaps the strongest element of Trotter's analysis is his understanding of the significance of Milwaukee's similarities to, and the differences from, such larger industrial cities as Chicago and Detroit, both of which were considerably more attractive points of the settlement for job-hungry southern Black migrants. One of the facts of the city's development is the small size of its black population (10,200 in 1945), which made interracial competition for jobs, municipal services, political power, and housing less intense than elsewhere, impeded ghettoization, and curbed the development of an extensive race market for goods and services, thus blocking the rise of a large and strong group of black entrepreneurs and professionals. Furthermore, the less diversified economy of Milwaukee, with its particularly large concentration of heavy industry in brewing, meatpacking, iron and steel, and machinery, provided blacks with ample opportunities, particularly during wartime labor shortages, to gain a position within, generally at the bottom of, the factory workforce. However, this type of urban economy did not provide many buffers against capitalism's periodic crises nor much industrial employment for black women, who remained mostly concentrated in low-paying domestic and personal, service work. Finally the city's strong third-party's, Socialist and later, 1940s-style Progressive, tradition worked to the political advantage of the relatively small black population by enabling with a strategic opening, in the context of particularly competitive municipal politics, for obtaining patronage, nominations, and municipal resources. Trotter's understanding of these local singularities and of their interplay is excellent, and the comparative perspective he offers throughout the book and in the final chapter on southern and northern cities alike is a useful contribution that should aid in the ongoing conceptualization of both black and urban histories.

The problem with Trotter's analysis lies in his theorization and implementation of the concept of social class. Trotter understands that his particular use of the words "proletarianization" and "proletariat" is a departure from the standard Marxian usage. For blacks, obtaining factory work was a step up from menial, outdoor labor and domestic and personal service, not a step down from independent artisanal pursuits, petty trade, and peasant farming, as is Marx's understanding of the nature of modern industrial working-class formation. But what Trotter seems not to fully grasp is the deeper reality of the Marxian process that has been captured so well by Gutman, Thompson and Montgomery. Proletarianization for Marx does not involve the creation of a category of common occupations with a particular level of material existence or even with a certain relationship to the means of production, though that is the heart of where Marx thought class objectively centred. Instead class formation, i.e. proletarianization, as a deeply subjective process of material transformation becomes conscious of its identity and the wrongful burdens it bears in the social relations in which it is increasingly enmeshed, and out of that consciousness develops a class ideology and politics to challenge those social relations. In this sense of class formation, Milwaukee's black working class never comes alive in Trotter's telling, and thus seems to exist more than anything else as a reified category. The pre-industrial traditions and work cultures and the families, neighborhoods, and institutions of black workers that might have mediated the rise of class consciousness are largely ignored, while working class political behavior whether at the point of production or at the polls, is briefly and episodically analysed. Moreover, the author seems to confound individual strategies for making the best of an exploitive circumstance, with politics, and thus fails to draw the line clearly between political and pre-political behavior. Black workers, moreover, hardly ever have the opportunity to speak for themselves; they are spoken for by higher status Blacks. To some extent, as the author rightly contends, this is a consequence of the fact that racial discrimination and ostracism constantly impelled Blacks of all classes together and ultimately worked to leave higher status blacks in control of race institutions — a caveat, by the way, that puts us back on the road toward understanding the usefulness of the concept of ghettoization. It is more profoundly, however, a problem with the author's question and his understanding of class, and unless, we begin with the premise that racial discrimination and solidarity stunted the rise of a singular Black working class life and politics, with a research strategy that insufficiently developed the bottom-up perspective that lies latent in some of the author's own,

most eye-catching materials. Expanded to take into account the necessity for such a bottom-up perspective, the class formation paradigm, as Trotter desires to convince us, does have the potential to provide the fuller understanding of the black urban experience our historiography requires.

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Norman P. Zacour and Harry W. Hazard, eds. — *The Impact of the Crusades on the Near East*. Volume Five of *A History of the Crusades*, ed. by Kenneth M. Setton. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. Pp. xxii, 599.

Volume V of the distinguished series *A History of the Crusades*, entitled *The Impact of the Crusades on the Near East*, while imposing and informative, is not a particularly useful book, at least not “for general readers and for scholars in many different disciplines” for whom it is designed. It is highly scholarly throughout in the conventional American History Department sense: thoroughly documented, flawless as to apparatus, completed by a Gazetteer and Notes on Maps, and, finally, Index, both of the latter totaling 80 pages of a 599 page book, which is large of size, heavy of weight (in the literal sense), and dull to read.

Because all of the historians involved are admirable as individual scholars, the result of their collective enterprise — so finely printed and illustrated and handsomely bound by the University of Wisconsin Press — is especially disappointing. Volume V purports to examine the impact of the Crusades on the Near East, particularly upon “the daily affairs of the Near East and its inhabitants — Moslems, Christians, and Jews — ... It is about crusades too” (p. xv).

Indeed, except for the splendidly written, insightful, and often evocative essay by the late Philip Khuri Hitti (“The Impact of the Crusades on Moslem Lands”), the primary source portions of the study by the late Nabih Amin Faris (“Arab Culture in the Twelfth century”), and some excellently researched material presented by Joshua Prawar (“The Social Classes in the Crusader States: the ‘Minorities’”) and Josiah C. Russell (“The Population of the Crusader States”), the volume is primarily about the crusaders and tells too little about “the daily affairs” of Near Eastern people of the time. The intent was there, the performance was below expectation. And not from any lack of expertise or critical theory, but due to the narrow focus of the series itself, the Crusades.

The general readers, who will probably never buy such a densely written and dry book anyway, and the scholars who know the sources well enough not to need further single-volume rehashings, will not find the enterprise particularly memorable. It seems rather isolated and self-congratulatory, somewhat like the work of an academic committee consisting of senior professors who have not budged from their familiar individual postures.

On the Near Eastern side of insularity, Faris’ close reading of his sources, as good as it is, is too often lacking in the “distance” that might make valuable material accessible to the general readers and to scholars unfamiliar with Arabic historiography.

At the very least it can be said the volume is missing a rounded world view. Perhaps this is the problem with any such collection of separately authored essays. It is rarely solved by mere editorial hopes and publishing efficiency. Far more useful to an understanding of the Near East and its inhabitants would be sponsorship of publications of primary sources, of “eyewitness reports of contemporary travelers” (p. 11), and, if assimilated well and aimed at the general reader, authored by one person only, one with literary skills. As one possible model, Roy Mottahedeh’s recent *Mantle of the Prophet* is an admirable work of assimilation and literary art based on years of research and reflection.