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Michael Schäfer. *Bürgertum in der Krise: Städtische Mittelklassen in Edinburgh und Leipzig 1890 bis 1930.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003. 456 S. EUR 64,00 (kartoniert), ISBN 978-3-525-35688-3.

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Social Class and Social Control: A Tale of Two Cities

In this shortened and revised version of his *Habilitationsschrift*, Michael Schaefer provides a carefully delineated and thereby well-executed comparison of the Leipzig *Buergertum* and the middle classes of Edinburgh, with a particular focus on the areas of local government and associational life as they interacted during the periods before and after World War I. Anyone familiar with the translational and definitional problems of the term *Buergertum* and its use in comparative history will understand the need for such careful delineation in a study that attempts a cross-national view of how these cities' middle classes defined and understood themselves, as well as how they experienced the rupture of 1914 and its aftermath, which are said to have ended both the long nineteenth century and their own political and social dominance.

Schaefer draws first on the definitions of the *Buergertum* that have been laid out by Juergen Kocka and others over the past two decades, which highlight the linguistic and cultural specificity of the term. In addition to the distinctions made between the *Wirtschaftsbuergertum* and the *Bildungsbuergertum* (which the English-speaking world might recognize as commercial/industrial bourgeoisie and educated professionals, respectively), a linguistic connection via *Buerger* between citizenship and social class makes "middle class" or the internationalized use of "bourgeoisie" an inexact translation. Schaefer avoids cross-linguistic difficulty by breaking the category down into specific occupational categories, and by using a few other conceptual tools to define the middle classes of Leipzig and Edinburgh in a way that can produce a meaningful comparison. He employs a generally Foucauldian understanding of discourse, in which speech and written acts can be analyzed as expressions of conceptions of social reality. The source materials on which he draws, including associational and city administrative records, newspapers, diaries, and letters, are well-suited to this kind of discursive analysis.

From Bourdieu, Schaefer borrows *Habitus*, the mental habits and capabilities of judgment and taste that serve to exclude or include in matters of social class, as well as a differentiated understanding of capital (e.g., economic, cultural, social). These analytical tools allow Schaefer to make a broader point about the concept of "civil soci-

ety." This quasi-public space between the private realm of family and property and the political realm of the state is the space of associational life, and describing the in- and exclusivity of bourgeois "civil society"–via discursive self-identification and the tools of distinction– connects Schaefer's study to a larger debate about the relationship between the relative strength or weakness of civil society and the potential for democratic success or susceptibility to authoritarian control. This is a debate with obvious implications for the interpretation of German history in the twentieth century.

Schaefer lays an impressive empirical groundwork for his understanding of how the bourgeoisie was shaped by and shaped the development of each city in the period before 1914, how they experienced the war years, and the effects of political and economic changes after 1918 on the foundations of their identity and social power. The opening introductory chapters establish the value of a comparison between Leipzig and Edinburgh, for reasons of both similarity and difference. For example, the differences in state form between Great Britain and Germany lend support to his primary focus on the aspects of civil society, while the similarities of scale in terms of size and population underpin the feasibility of a comparison that lays claim to a very complex forty years in European history. SchaeferÂ¹s careful description of urban development in both cities during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century is a useful background to the histories of class conflict and cooperation, and the areas of bourgeois activity, that form the basis for the rest of the study.

The book is then organized into two major chronological sections, the first of which focuses on the pre-war period. The years 1890-1914 represent a period of more or less hegemonic control by the bourgeoisie in matters of local government. In Leipzig, a limited franchise and equal representation rules for comittees trumped the numerical superiority of the working class. In Edinburgh, the local franchise was limited to taxpayers, which allowed more inclusiveness (both of the working class and of women). Schaefer lays out the connections between local government and party politics, which expanded during this period. In Edinburgh, the continuing tendency was toward a coalition between Liberals and the working class. In Leipzig, the growth of the workers' movement and the persistence of a restricted franchise produced increasing partisan conflict at the local level. These contrasting developments are key to Schaefer's conclusions about the post-war period. The alliances in Edinburgh forced bourgeois elements to respond to the interests of the working class in a way that their Leipzig counterparts did not.

A second foundation of bourgeois social control, philanthropic and voluntary activity, displayed a certain consistency across national lines. In both contexts, the emphasis was on the cherished bourgeois values of self-help and responsibility in assistance to the poor, and relief was generally measured according to the danger of encouraging dependence (although certain exceptions existed in aid to children). Schaefer also traces the contours of the *Buergertum* in Leipzig and the middle classes in Edinburgh, with the careful empirical detail he has promised. This is the familiar story of distinction by lifestyle and values from other groups–by education, gender socialization, appreciation for the arts, philanthropic activity– but Schaefer notes important differences in the composition of the two cities' bourgeoisies. Leipzig was much more dominated by the commercial and industrial *Wirtschaftsbuergertum*, whose counterpart in Edinburgh shared their influence with the professional middle class. This has partially to do with the educational prerequisites for particular professions (or lack thereof) and the distribution of wealth within the middle classes, which Schaefer treats in great detail.

From 1914 forward into the 1920s, the period to which the remainder of the study is devoted, conditions changed for the bourgeoisie across national lines, a development which makes comparative studies like Schaefer's valuable. At the same time, the differences between the national contexts during the later war years and the post-war period were much more dramatic. The hyperinflation of the 1920s that destroyed the economic stability of much of the lower *Buergertum* in Germany had no equivalent in Scotland, which experienced a much quicker stabilization. The continued democratization of parliamentary and local politics in the UK did not produce nearly the shock that the establishment and repeated fracturing of Weimar democracy (and its reflection at the local level) entailed for those who had formerly enjoyed relatively stable control. This period, 1914-1924, is the crisis to which Schaefer's title refers. For the *Buergertum*, as so many contemporaries noted and so many historians have confirmed, the world turned upside down as their claims to economic, political, and social power faced devastating challenges. Interestingly, Schaefer argues with an impressive array of empirical evidence that the core of the *Leipziger Buergertum* was able to retain or regain one or another form of capital following the relative stabilization of 1924. He concludes that the primary losses they experienced were specifically the influence they held over local government and the adminis-

tration of social welfare, and more generally the sense that *buergerliche* standards were those which ordered the social world. The representatives of the working class took power after the revolution, changing the rules of the game in local administration, and the *Buergertum* withdrew from the field. In Edinburgh, where political transitions were gradual and coalitions had long existed between the middle classes and the working class, the middle class remained engaged and influential throughout the 1920s. The exclusivity that made the core of the German *Buergertum* so cohesive made it virtually impossible for them to share power when the time came and urged their retreat into the realm of civil society.

Schaefer's book is a useful one for historians interested in a variety of questions. An extended and comparative treatment of civil society complicates arguments that it operates as a bolster for democracy. Schaefer's conclusions about civil society's class character in Leipzig, along with Sheri Berman's argument that the robust civil society of the Weimar Republic was actually dangerous to democracy, urges attention to national specificities.[1] Scholars of the bourgeoisie will appreciate the care with which the players are deeply defined in empirical terms, as well as the measured application of discourse theory. Historians of social welfare, who have increasingly looked to close local analyses to understand larger developments, will also find much to interest them in Schaefer's comparison (and particularly in his assessment of developments in terms of modernization or social-democratic models).

I close with two small criticisms. It is not especially clear throughout the text that Schaefer will end up grounding his conclusions in an assessment of the upper levels of the *Buergertum*/middle classes, and this is a bit disappointing in that potential divisions between the upper and lower *Buergertum* seem salient at least in his description of revolutionary upheaval in Leipzig (pp. 225-237). What happened, I wonder, to the teachers and lower civil servants who displayed solidarity with the striking workers rather than with the *Buergerstreik* and what might their experience of the *Krise* tell us? A second problem is the claim to chronological coverage that Schaefer makes, as his study does not really take us beyond the middle of the 1920s–and one has the feeling that the period 1925-1930 might be at least as interesting as the period 1914-1924. These deficits do not, however, compromise the overall value of Schaefer's extended and detailed comparison.

Note

[1]. Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (1997): pp. 401-429.