

formed very often from the relatively circumscribed localities within which specific industries or even producers are found. There are often high degrees of putting-out to tiers of specialized supplier companies. This aggregation of customers and suppliers focusing on a relatively narrow range of science-based production and stretching from Santa Barbara in the north to San Diego in the south is what Scott dubs the southern Californian technopolis.

The key question for the future is, of course, given the dependence on defence spending in an era when massive reductions are being made in military budgets, can the technopolis survive? Scott tackles this in policy terms by referring in the last chapter, perhaps more apocalyptically than elsewhere in the book, to the manifest fact that southern California's defence-led economy is now at a critical turning point.

That economies as mono-industrial as southern California's have effectively disappeared in the past is testified to in Scott's references to various historical cases from elsewhere. He calls for state intervention, but apart from the obvious and massive state subventions that constituted a large part of this economy from the outset, Scott notes that the economic culture of the region is cut-throat competitive, unregulated and wage-cutting with open-shop and right-to-work rather than codetermination to the forefront. The industrial districts of the technopolis are sites of vulnerability and insecurity for owners and workers alike.

It is difficult, but not impossible, to envisage the public authorities taking a lead to seek to encourage developments in technologically innovative directions. Environmental regulations have been tightened up, especially regarding clean air requirements, and these can help give regional industry a competitive edge, as happened notably in the Ruhr Area of Germany. Interestingly, Scott calls for the kind of institutional concertation structures found in innovative German regions to assist the industrial restructuring of southern California. It is curious to conclude, as this excellent and thought-provoking book encourages this reader to do, that the archetype of the Sunbelt may still have crucial lessons to learn for its future economic development from the example *par excellence* of an apparently doomed Rustbelt such as the German Ruhrgebiet.

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Despite its title, Christian Topalov's book is not an analysis of the historical evolution of unemployment or its emergence as a reality, but a work on the birth, at the turn of the twentieth century, of the representation of a long-standing reality: the lack of work for those who have to work for a living. The problems of the wage-earning class and social issues are the focus of increased attention by French historians and sociologists today, as the latest book by Robert Castel, *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale, une*

chronique du salariat (The metamorphosis of social issues, a chronicle of the salaried class), shows.

Christian Topalov describes the birth of the representation of the unemployed worker over a relatively short period of time, since he limits his investigation to the three decades from 1880 to 1910. He has researched in an extremely detailed, precise and comparative way the emergence of the representation of the unemployed worker, which becomes progressively distinct from that of the poor or of the precariousness of the salaried class (his book includes 200 pages of explanatory notes and bibliographical references). Stemming from the milieu of social reformers, in each of the three countries studied — France, Great Britain and the USA — the representation of the unemployed worker is initially laden with a moral dimension, more or less repressive, of the visions of poverty and pauperism at the end of the nineteenth century.

In the first part of the book, Topalov emphasizes to what extent the modern concept of the unemployed worker is linked to the development of industry and of the salaried class. The idea of unemployment is more a means of changing reality than describing it. The labour market therefore needs to be organized in such a manner as to respond to the needs of modern industry, supplying it with a stable and regulated workforce, and thus breaking away from traditional methods of hiring. A rational organization of the workforce can only be achieved with the disappearance of popular districts of cities where the inhabitants have a strong sense of solidarity, where all sorts of debauchery are deemed to develop and where it is possible for the inhabitants to find seasonal jobs allowing them to survive without the more durable salaries of manufacturing — all reasons for distancing the poor from city centres and placing them closer to factories.

Topalov goes on to describe the formation of networks of social reformers, their origins and progressive professionalism. He reveals the characteristics common to French, English and American groups working on the issue of unemployment; these include non-specialized notables, academics and political figures from progressive parties. Following this, Topalov analyses how notions of the unemployed worker and unemployment began to appear in their new sense in popular vocabulary and dictionary definitions. Although French and English vocabularies have very different histories, the simultaneous linguistic transformation in all three countries, illustrated in bilingual dictionaries of the time, is particularly striking. Topalov also describes the continuity of classificatory works in the milieu of organized charities. The obsession with making a distinction between the good and the bad poor runs counter to the reality of unemployment. This is why, between 1880 and 1910, a series of surveys were carried out, using methods of classification and accounting common to all three countries, in order to list those people without employment, the 'unemployed', and to distinguish them from the worrying mass of the poor. According to the author, such classifications cease when the definition for new means for the separation and treatment of the truly unemployed allows an objective assessment of unemployment as a social phenomenon. A detailed account follows of the different statistics used to establish the unemployment situation, by locality and profession. The work concludes with the assertion of unemployment as a social fact, notably with the publication in 1909 of William Beveridge's *Unemployment: a problem of industry*. The transformation in the perception of unemployment resides in the way it is progressively viewed as a problem related to the industrial world, as a social reality whose victims cannot be held morally responsible for their situation.

The achievement of Topalov's *La naissance du chômeur* lies in its comparative study of the origins of the representation of the unemployed. The comparison between France, the USA and Great Britain is clearly presented and allows us to grasp, on the one hand, the similar way in which poverty and vagabondage were treated in different countries in the nineteenth century and, on the other, the interconnections in social reform, which give the strange impression of a globalization of social problems before its time. Thus, we see

the simultaneous emergence of ways of combating instability in employment relations and different forms of workforce mobility, of parallel networks of reformers in France, Britain and the USA, of transformations in the vocabulary used to describe unemployment to include the involuntarily unemployed, of surveys to classify the poor, etc. All these variables, analysed one by one with respect to each country, reveal the similarity of concerns and underline the ideas held in common by those involved. The dexterity with which the author emphasizes the paralleling of ideas and the influence exercised by different groups of reformers on one another testifies to the advantages gained by comparisons in relation to social issues.

Topalov's book contrasts strongly with Robert Castel's latest work, which paints a vast picture of employment relations from the thirteenth century to the present day, and which is very useful for placing ideas within a larger historical context. While Topalov's book seems to be more or less aimed at those readers familiar with social problems and those of the welfare state, in *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale (The metamorphosis of social issues)*, Robert Castel studies the transition in French society from the idea of tutelage of the workforce in a strongly hierarchical society to one of contracts and class war. In a society organized around contractual practices, he examines the evolution of employment relations, the entitlements related to the appearance of the welfare state and, finally, the present-day reformation of social issues. This work enables the reader to gain an insight into the general evolution of employment relations in France.

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