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Making the Amalgamated: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the
Baltimore Clothing Industry, 1899-1939 (review)

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of sunbelt America, convincingly arguing that it holds much in common with Los Angeles and other modern cities of the South and Southwest.

This extended essay offers a number of vivid snapshots, from the city's late eighteenth-century, politically-driven founding to "Washington at 2000." However, the individual pieces never come together to form a coherent narrative. Abbott's prolific powers of suggestion maintain interest, but in the end, he only sketches the outlines of his argument. *Political Terrain* confronts many of the obstacles facing works of synthesis but does not fully succeed in overcoming them. Abbott builds on the extensive secondary literature on Washington's history while also attempting to engage a number of far-flung literatures. This interdisciplinary work speaks partially to debates in political science, gender and labor history, geography, and urban sociology. Further, Abbott makes extensive use of literary evidence, ranging from Henry Adams' *Democracy* (London, 1882) to Tom Clancy's *Patriot Games* (New York, 1987). So many different types of evidence and so many debates are brought together that the book's argument, at times, loses focus.

Political Terrain's claim that Washington is "the closest the nation has to common ground" (131) comes across in this intriguing book not in the form of an insistent patriotism, but with a sense of the fragility and, at times, emptiness of that common ground. Born in a regional no-man's land, built amid enduring regional and sectional conflicts, the nation's capital has often stood not as a vibrant common ground but as a space apart.

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Making the Amalgamated: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Baltimore Clothing Industry, 1899–1939. By Jo Ann E. Argersinger (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) 229 pp. \$39.95

Making the Amalgamated is a rich case study of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' efforts to organize and exercise a measure of control within the men's clothing industry in Baltimore during the first four decades of the twentieth century. Argersinger combines an interest in institutional history with an appreciation of the complexities that gender and ethnicity made for work life and labor organizing in the industry.

Organized chronologically, successive chapters examine the rise of the men's clothing industry in Baltimore, the emergence of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, the maturation of the union in Baltimore, the place of women workers in the union's activities, the changing fortunes of the Amalgamated during the recession of the Baltimore garment industry in the 1920s, and the remaking of the union during the Depression. An epilogue briefly chronicles the decline of the men's clothing industry and the union in Baltimore since 1940.

Making the Amalgamated weaves numerous connections to larger economic and social processes at work in the garment industry across urban American during the early twentieth century. Many of them are reminiscent of contemporary developments in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston. Competition between progressive loft manufactories and contract sweatshops and the conflict between would-be industrial unionists among garment workers and the old-guard leadership of the United Garment Workers, which was extremely powerful in New York City and Chicago, are evident in Baltimore before 1920. A move toward the establishment of permanent arbitration was strikingly parallel to the "Protocol of Peace" adopted slightly earlier in New York City. The need to deal with Baltimore's runaway shops in the 1930s resonates with accounts of Amalgamated campaigns in rural Pennsylvania during the same period. Thus, analysis of the Baltimore experience offers parallels and insights that should prove useful to scholars interested in wider national patterns affecting the garment industry in these years.

Argersinger provides a healthy blend of institutional trade-union history and the new social history. She offers detailed discussions of union conventions, programs, and publications, but also examines ethnic and gender conflict and cooperation within the union. She draws no sweeping generalizations from the analysis, but acknowledges both the unequal treatment accorded to women within the union and the willingness on the part of many women leaders within the organization to place class interests above women's interests in their union work. She also thoughtfully treats the ethnic divisions and conflicts within the union. Hers is a balanced account that presents the conflicts and contradictions in the Amalgamated without judging the participants or taking sides.

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The Triumph of Ethnic Progressivism: Urban Political Culture in Boston 1900–1925. By James J. Connolly (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1998) 304 pp. \$45.00

For students of urban political history, Connolly has retrieved the rich diversity of progressivism in turn of the century Boston. Rather than attribute progressive reform solely to the political activism of an aroused WASP middle class, Connolly shows that progressive rhetoric provided a "plastic" public language that "became a powerful formula for political action along many social axes" (12).

In late nineteenth-century Boston (as throughout the eastern states), political parties dominated public life. "Ward, party, and faction, not ethnicity or class, were the basic categories of political action" (36). During the 1890s, political activism began to take new forms. Interest-