



**Streetlife: The Untold Story of Europe's Twentieth Century**  
by Leif Jerram  
(OUP, £12.99)

Leif Jerram's intriguing premise is that the history of 20th-century Europe is essentially urban: "cities have revolutionised every aspect of Europe's history over the last century or so". This is history as it unfolds at street level, on the public squares, in the bars, in cinemas, factories and offices, as well as in private urban spaces, from over-crowded fin-de-siècle tenements to suburban living rooms. *Streetlife* is richly researched and wonderfully detailed. It views history through five lenses: how the politics of the street have been profoundly shaped by cities; how the city was experienced by women, from east London's Match Girls to the public humiliation of the "Tondues" - the shaved women - in post-war France; how pop culture was created and consumed in uniquely urban spaces, from music halls to discos and football stadia; how the city shaped sexual identity; and the role played by town planning, the "triumph and tragedy" of the 20th century. Jerram's heartfelt final message is: "we must learn to love our cities". **PD Smith**