Robert Bruno, *Steelworker Alley: How Class Works in Youngstown* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999).

At the 1999 North American Labor History Association Conference, the first meeting of the new Labor and Working-Class History Association was held. The meeting was an attempt to begin to institutionalize changes that already were occurring in labour history over the last quarter century. Simply put, these changes can be characterized by the increasing attention by labour historians to working-class life and culture, working-class agency, and the intersections of class with the other identities.

The development of LAWCHA is part of a broader multi-disciplinary intellectual movement that has been termed New Working-Class Studies. Its participants have been drawn from such traditionally diverse academic disciplines as cultural studies, history, American studies, geography, labour studies, media studies, music and art. New Working-Class Studies involves an attempt to understand working-class culture, history, language, stories, bodies, spaces et al. In essence, all forms of working-class knowledge that have been largely excluded from institutional constructions and epistemologies.

In part, the development of new working-class studies was a reaction to a post WW II consensus that largely denied the very existence of a working class in America and the decline of traditional theories of class as an analytic tool within academe. Put differently, the myths of the middle class, including class mobility or classlessness, resulted in the academic community turning to other analytic frameworks that included race, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. This was especially true in sociology and political science were Weberian models became dominant and where class was defined simplistically in terms of income. *Steelworker Alley: How Class Works in Youngstown*, by political scientist and labour educator Robert Bruno is an example of how new working-class sociology has attempted to show how the working-class has resisted the acceptance of middle-class values, sensibilities, and culture.

Bruno is the son of a Youngstown, Ohio, steelworker who leaves his hometown to pursue a doctorate at NYU. When illness strikes his family, he returns and tries to construct meaning of his family life while subconsciously questioning his own ambivalent middle class values. In the process, the author begins to explore the formation of working-class consciousness and identity. Using numerous interviews with former steelworkers, his own childhood memories of growing-up in a working-class neighborhood, and Ira Katznelson's theoretical constructs of social development, he finds that working-class identity is socially constructed in both the workplace and working-class neighborhoods and institutions. Further, he finds that working-class consciousness has been deeply engrained and that the working class has often resisted the acceptance of middle class sensibilities and values.

He finds in Youngstown that spatial and temporal patterns throughout the century have played a significant role in shaping working-class consciousness.

The proximity between the steel mills and worker housing linked work and home life. Time spent working with other steelworkers often mirrored with time spent at home or in the local community. Simply put, steelworkers shared work, home, and community spaces.

If spatial and temporal patterns helped create working-class consciousness, social interactions strengthened and deepened that consciousness. These social interactions were both unmediated and mediated. The sheer proximity to other steelworkers and their families resulted in unmediated interactions such as direct residential visiting, sitting on the porch sharing work or families stories with neighbours, working or riding together to work, sharing recipes, or neighbour home canning or wine making. At the same time, churches, unions, local political parties, ethnic social clubs, women's auxiliaries, and taverns to name a few organizations, created social spaces were working-class families could come together to share experiences. Dances, festivals, card playing and bingo parties, labour rallies, bowling, drinking, Christmas parties, and various outings all played a role in building working-class identity.

The author also found that the relation between work and home was reciprocal in other ways. For example, workers often "reinvented" their workplace to mirror their home and community life by stealing time and space from production. Cooking, eating, and games all were integral to mill life. Be it playing ringers or cards or misusing heating devices to cook-up onions, peppers, and sausages, steelworkers tried to transform dangerous and physical workplaces "into places where they could meet their social needs."

"Hard Times" also played an important part in creating working-consciousness. Throughout the postwar era until the mill closings in Youngstown in the 1970s, local steelworkers suffered economic instability due to periodic strikes and economic slowdowns. During the periods of instability, families, communities and local businesses all helped each other to weather the economic hardships.

The instability also resulted in the widespread use of consumer credit, which often resulted in high levels of family debt. While seeking the trappings of middle class life, steelworkers were often one paycheck from poverty. Consequently, steelworkers would work extended overtime, holidays, and, often, would hold second jobs or work during vacations. Overwork only accentuated feelings of economic inequality among steelworkers. As the author suggests, "If anything the experience of fighting to hold on to hard-earned symbols of success and prosperity increased worker cohesion."

While the home and community were important sites of social formation, the author argues that it was the workplace and the production process that was central to the development of working-class consciousness. Here fundamental class struggle and antagonism were played out. "The mill was fertile ground for emerging hostilities, and workers' resistance to employer's authority was expressed in a melange of coercive confrontations and subtle indirect assaults."

It was through workplace experiences (outright oppression, indignities, inequalities or discrimination), participation in workplace struggles, and the community of memory of past struggles, such as the Little Steel Strike in Youngstown, that was the wellspring of an oppositional consciousness ("us vs. them") and the need to resist. That resistance took many forms – from participation in economic and wildcat strikes to petty theft. But for most steelworkers in the Youngstown area, especially those interviewed by Bruno, that class consciousness did not translate into militant collective action when the mills closed.

Overall, Bruno has provided a very compelling discussion of how class works in Youngstown. But the book has several flaws. First, class does not work in one way. For example, working-class consciousness was the basis for participation in a struggle to save the mills for some steelworkers in Youngstown. While unsuccessful, this struggle established, as nowhere else in the nation, that community resistance to capital decision was possible. Further, the struggle in Youngstown led to the establishment of elementary plant closing legislation, the increased community use of eminent domain involving brownfield sites, and a retired steelworkers movement to protect pensions and health benefits (Solidarity, USA).

But where were the steelworkers that Bruno interviewed? It was not enough for the author to suggest that they feared forfeiture of company and government benefits or that the International union showed little enthusiasm for the community buyout. His inexplicable silence about working-class consciousness at this critical moment is telling. Is it that his steelworkers had middle class sensibilities or, perhaps, working-class consciousness is more varied and complicated than he would like to admit.

Bruno's discussion of the intersections between race and class is also lacking. New labour historians have developed a more critical analysis of worker agency and white supremacy as creations of the working class. This is especially true in the steel industry where everyone from labour historians such Bruce Nelson to filmmakers as Tony Buba, have documented widespread support for discriminatory practices within the mills by the white male working class and USWA. These discriminatory practices corresponded to division within working-class communities.

Where there corresponding practices in the workplaces and neighborhoods that the author studied? While acknowledging that job occupancy was associated with ethnicity and the shift from multi-ethnic to racialized neighborhoods over time, Bruno argues that "It was not that black and white workers didn't willfully separate, but the separation rarely added up to exclusion." This is simply not believable in a city that urban planner David Rusk has called one of the "most balkanized" he had ever seen.

Finally, the book would have benefited from a chapter involving interviews of the sons and daughters of Bruno's steelworkers. Has there been an

intergenerational transmission of working-class and/or oppositional consciousness as younger workers found employment in the auto and service industries that now dominate the Youngstown area? Given the high profile struggles of autoworker and electrical workers at GM (Lordstown) and Packard Electric, and the widespread organization of professional and service employees in the area, there is a good bit of evidence that oppositional consciousness continues to exist among both the working and middle class in Youngstown. Regardless, it is certainly worthy of additional study and could be an important sequel to this book.

Overall, despite its flaws, *Steelworker Alley* is an important contribution to new working-class studies. Not only is it worker-centered, but it attempts to deal with the contradictory expressions of class in America. The book should be of interest to labour historians and educators, social scientists, and cultural geographers. Further, it can be easily used in a variety of classroom settings to facilitate discussions of class in both the workplace and community.

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Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Creating Born Criminals* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

Coinciding with a number of contemporary entanglements – particularly debates over IQ testing, welfare policies and applied genetics – a large body of critical work on early twentieth-century eugenic discourse has surfaced in the last two decades, addressing and undermining our familiar distinctions between "nature" and "nurture." While eugenics typically evokes a pallid legacy of sterilization laws and genocide, the historical trek of "the wellborn science" has influenced the logic and practice of more institutions than we might care to acknowledge. As such, the most worthwhile accounts of twentieth century eugenics refuse the lure of posing it as a disqualified field of knowledge against which contemporary science and public policy have been thoroughly inoculated.[1] Instead, certain varieties of eugenic thinking were folded into to the ideological mainstream of Progressive social science, which crafted an ideal of "artificial selection" to slice between the chaotic abandon of *laissez-faire* economics and the roaming perils of mass democracy. While the full flourish of old-school eugenics no longer registers to the degree it did nearly a century ago, its unpleasant echoes remain as both warning and invitation. Noting, for instance, the continuing appeal of biological theories of crime – and the dearth of literature on the legacy of "eugenic criminology" – Nicole Hahn Rafter warns that "if we demonize turn-of-the-century eugenicists, or dismiss them as