

# In Search of New Direction

## Labor History in an 'Era of Trump'

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### **Introduction**

The 2016 presidential election upended the political establishment in the United States. Many commentators, from both the media and academia, argue that support from white blue-collar workers gave Donald J. Trump the momentum to win the race. They point out that Trump successfully harnessed worker resentment of the well-educated and wealthy establishment—which the campaign framed as being epitomized by Hillary Clinton and thus estranged them from Democratic Party. In fact, at a campaign stop in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, Trump confidently identified himself as “blue-collar worker.”<sup>1</sup> Each aspect of Trump’s life, from class and family background to education and property ownership, demonstrates how little he actually has in common with blue-collar workers. Nevertheless, many working-class people, especially white males, voted for Trump instead of Clinton.

Trump, who had been regarded as a longshot candidate at best during the initial stages of the race, managed to keep his key demographic approval ratings steady. As his popularity grew, the media turned its attention to white blue-collar workers and began to discuss why they were supporting him. After Trump defeated Clinton, newspapers and magazines published a torrent of analyses, reviews, and opinions focusing on this demographic. Many of these articles cited the vehement anger

and frustration the working-class has been accumulating over the last few decades, especially since the late 1990s; hypothesized why Democratic Party failed to understand this dissatisfaction; and blamed the party for its inattentiveness to the white working-class.

The articles described the increasing number of white, male, blue-collar workers, who, distressed by their economic problems, resent the enormous wealth flowing to a handful of establishment scions. These post-election critiques, although delivered belatedly, do shed light on different aspects of white working-class experiences. What they lack, however, is a broad historical perspective contextualizing this frustration with being “left behind.” This is not a new phenomenon. White, male, blue-collar resentment has played a significant role in presidential elections throughout American history. Moreover, not all white, male, blue-collar workers voted for Trump in the 2016 election, and all of those who did do not necessarily support him wholeheartedly. News articles written in the months leading up to the election portrayed the complexity of the workers’ stories: some people held ambivalent or conflicted feelings about Trump, and others were resigned and had no expectations that their lives would change, no matter who won.<sup>2</sup>

To understand this intricate and elusive state of being, it is necessary to track down the detailed life histories of white, working-class men: when and where they were born, where they were raised, how old they are, their level of education and type of occupation, what religion they practice. However, in addition to narrating their life and employment stories, analysts must place white, blue-collar males into their broader political context. Labor history is one of the most effective disciplines for tackling this kind of work.

In this article, I argue that methods from labor history are crucial for analyzing and contextualizing workers’ choice. First, I review the development of the field, as well as discuss some of the problems plaguing the new labor history. Then, I analyze how labor history techniques may be

used to describe the state of workers in this confused moment.

## **The Rise of the New Labor History, and its Significance and Limits**

Influenced by the methods of European historians, a new style of history emerged in the United States in the early 1960s. British historians such as E. P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm focused on subjects hitherto neglected by traditional historians, like the impact of class consciousness on people's daily lives. Innovative approaches were developed by French historians such as Marc Bloch, Lucien Febver, and Fernand Braudel, and spread throughout Europe, championed by the Annales school. These scholars examined the everyday lives of ordinary people, and galvanized American historians who had been brought up in the conventional academic style.

Herbert G. Gutman, in particular, was greatly stimulated by these works. Embracing the European historians' new methods, he looked into the lives and labor of various working people, including immigrants, African Americans, women, and non-union workers. This, in turn, inspired the young researchers following Gutman to explore the lives and communities of ordinary people who had never been regarded as valuable historical subjects. Their works proliferated. Their vivid descriptions of the popular rituals and disciplines in the age of industrialization revealed the histories, unique lives, and autonomy of little-known folk.

The American History Project, founded at The City University of New York Graduate Center in 1981 by Gutman and his colleague Stephen Brier, furthered the education not only of graduate students but also the public. The Project published seminal textbooks, including *Who Built America?: Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture, and Society* (two volumes printed in 1989 and 1992), exhibited historical materials, produced documentaries and online projects, and held lectures.

Gutman, together with David Brody and David Montgomery, edited the series *The Working Class in American History* for the University of Illinois Press in the 1970s. This series continues to publish many outstanding books covering a wide range of issues related to working-class people. Gutman, his contemporaries, and the young students coming after them, released historians from the straitjackets of the Wisconsin School and the Marxists, which had clung to institutionalized approaches based on rigid theory.

The new labor historians pioneered numerous useful approaches to the discipline. However, Melvyn Dubofsky pointed out some of the field's failures in his review of *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the Twentieth Century Struggle* (1980) and *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (1979), written by his contemporary colleagues, David Brody and David Montgomery respectively.<sup>3</sup> Dubofsky undoubtedly recognized the significance of the new labor history, and, in fact, four years earlier he had lauded Gutman's book *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (1976),<sup>4</sup> noted Gutman's four achievements for historical scholarship.

First, he has made it impossible hereafter to neglect the story of those Americans who did not belong to labor organizations or did not participate in notable industrial conflicts. Second, he has shown us how it is possible to explore and comprehend the beliefs and behavior of common folk—those too often dismissed as inarticulate or unworthy of scholarly attention—through conventional literary sources as well as census manuscripts, city directories, and other more numerate sources. Third, he has forced historians to realize that the values of twentieth-century industrial America did not always prevail and that they came to dominate society only after a long and hard struggle. Fourth, and in some ways most important, he has demonstrated how local history, the study of small communities, can shed bright light on the most perplexing issues in American history.<sup>5</sup>

However, in "Hold the Fort," Dubofsky identified two main weaknesses inherent in the new labor history: it did not refer to power or

the balances of power, and it lacked an analysis of state actions or politics. Dubofsky insisted that class conflicts between workers and employers affected the whole lives of workers, and he criticized Gutman for missing that point. Invoking workers' experiences during the Progressive Era, World War I, and the New Deal, Dubofsky stressed the importance of focusing on power struggles and innovative changes on the shop-floor, where scores of new laws enacted by the government functioned as imperatives to impose order on the relations between workers and employers. Dubofsky claimed that as American state power became more powerful, the dependence of employees and workers on state policies steadily deepened.

Dubofsky concluded that the state had tremendous influence on the history and movements of workers in the United States after World War II. Having obtained substantial material gains, unionized workers were concentrating their efforts on increasing their wages and enhancing fringe benefits for themselves and their families.<sup>6</sup> As not only Dubofsky but also Gutman himself later noted, the American unionized workers' increased apathy about outside events in a sense mirrored the attitude of the new labor historians, and their problematic tendency to ignore political power. Furthermore, as the number of works based on the new labor history perspectives burgeoned, the more these scholars were inclined to retreat into closed spheres in which they performed little analysis of peoples' relations to state power.

## **Controversy over Whiteness Studies**

Labor historian David R. Roediger's controversial book, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, was published in 1991 to great acclaim—but it also elicited harsh criticism. The main reason for this sensational reaction was Roediger's introduction of a new term: "whiteness." Roediger used "whiteness" to analyze the process by which a

“white” race consciousness among immigrant workers, especially the Irish in the antebellum North, was created. Roediger analyzed a wide variety of cultural sources, including songs, jokes, black-face minstrel shows, and other popular performances. He argued that these cultural behaviors transformed the Irish workers’ obscure and immature race consciousness into a more tangible one. Specifically, even though the Irish worked under conditions that differed little from slavery, they identified themselves as “free” white workers, distinct from black “slaves.” As Roediger himself asserted, one of his motives for shedding light on the formation of race consciousness in Irish immigrant workers came from his historiographical interest in the weakness in the new labor history, which had “hesitated to explore working-class ‘whiteness’ and white supremacy as creations, in part, of the white working-class itself.”<sup>7</sup>

Roediger pointed out that according to both Marxist and new labor history analyses, working-class racism was an economic phenomenon created by trade unionists to beat black workers in labor markets. However, he argued, these models were not pivoting to an analysis of the process by which consciousness had developed within the cultural lives of the rank and file. While the new labor historians had vividly described ordinary people’s daily lives, they had not addressed how working-class racism had been shaped or explicated the extent to which it had affected the every-day relationships between workers and “others.” Looking into working-class racism was Roediger’s most significant scholarly contribution.<sup>8</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the most strident criticism of Roediger’s concept of whiteness came from the labor historians following the new labor history scholars, whose leading spokesperson was Eric Arnesen. In his essay “Whiteness and the Historians’ Imagination,” published in the journal *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (Fall 2001), Arnesen explained why he did not accept Roediger’s argument. First, he criticized what he called Roediger’s arbitrary and inconsistent definitions of whiteness

as a concept for historical analysis. Second, he claimed whiteness scholars, including Roediger, had a poor understanding of W. E. B. Du Bois' reflection on "psychological wages." Third, he pointed out a lack of primary source research based on archival documents or actual immigrant voices such as interview records. Finally, he argued that Roediger depended too much on psychological history.<sup>9</sup>

However, although he completely rejected whiteness studies, Arnesen agreed with Roediger that the new labor historians were negligent in not studying working-class racism. The primary difference between Arnesen and Roediger was their historical approaches to analyzing the creation of working-class race consciousness. Arnesen prioritized archival research, while Roediger favored utilizing secondary and cultural sources such as behaviors, popular performances, language, songs, poems, and so on.

Certainly, when Irish and other new immigrants came to America, they were not treated the same as "white native Americans"; in fact, they faced cruel discrimination from these "natives." Roediger, along with another leading whiteness studies scholar Noel Ignatiev, claimed that these immigrants originally were regarded as nonwhite. They could not move out from the "worker" category, but gradually, they were able to develop their own race consciousness in order to be included in the category of "white." Labor historians unconvinced by whiteness studies argued that Roediger and Ignatiev never presented any reliable evidence to document the supposed non-whiteness of Irish and other new immigrants.<sup>10</sup> Relying on a variety of cultural sources to describe the making of whiteness leads us to new ways of analyzing history, however, because behaviors that are held in common within a discrete group solidify its members' relationships and strengthen their sense of camaraderie. In this sense, Arnesen's thorough rejection of whiteness studies goes too far. Nevertheless, it is important for scholars to recognize that whiteness as a form of racial consciousness is still

a vague and elusive characteristic; it cannot be documented with precision.

Scholars who discussed the validity of whiteness as a category gave noteworthy suggestions for improving future approaches to labor history. Judith Stein, for example, charged that Joe W. Trotter and Robin G. Kelly had “[lost] sight of the relations of class power... workers.”<sup>11</sup> In turn, Roediger claimed that Stein “ignore[d] the considerable extent to which... class is a more timeless quality.”<sup>12</sup> And James R. Barrett exhorted his fellow whiteness studies critics to “[emphasize] occupational structures, labor markets, union policies, and management practices, as well as on language (actual word usage, not semiotics) and various popular cultural forms,” and “investigate the idea [of whiteness] in the everyday lives of working people.”<sup>13</sup>

These arguments remind us that working-class consciousness is created not only during the production of work, but also in the daily life experiences of family, gender, religion, etc. Insofar as the purpose of labor history, as a social history, is to describe a total history of ordinary people, we must cast our eyes on more than state power and class relations. We also must consider locality, the microhistory of examining the practices of ordinary people in their everyday lives: where and how they live and work, which church they attend, what leisure activities they enjoy, and what they march for on the street.

## The Problem of Synthesis

Reflections on labor history began in the 1980s. New labor historians were beginning to connect facts they previously had considered unrelated, putting them together into new narratives. Examining the lives and labor of ordinary people revealed that they had overlooked other important aspects of ordinary people’s relationships—most significantly, gender. To this end, scholars began building new approaches for a synthesis



of history, also called “total” and “integrated” history.

In 1984, Northern Illinois University held a conference entitled “The Future of American Labor History: Toward a Synthesis,” signaling the increasing importance of the question.<sup>14</sup> Two years later, Thomas Bender urged the OAH to discuss the “ominous... rise in recent years of a new kind of division within social history.” Bender pointed out that each new subfield, like “the history of women, blacks, labor, immigrants,” while “[spawning] a vast amount of sympathetic and remarkably inventive inquiry,” now constituted “special fields of study,” and “[e]ach [wa]s studied in its own terms, each with its own scholarly network and discourse.” The problem arose “because they represent[ed] real populations in the American past, [and thus were] easily assumed collectively—and in a simplistically cumulative manner—to constitute American history.”<sup>15</sup> According to Bender, this “development of groups of specialized practitioners in nearly closed discourses about ‘their’ group” had resulted in the fragmentation of the field; social historians had not produced enough analysis of the interrelations between different fields. Consequently, Bender claimed, “we have gained little in our understanding of the relations of place, race, ethnicity, gender, and class in the formation of American society or, for that matter, in the development of individual Americans.”<sup>16</sup>

In response, the OAH held a roundtable in 1987, exploring “Synthesis in American History.” Three years later, the American Historical Association (AHA) published *The New American History* (revised and expanded in 1997), a collection of historiographical essays. In one of the chapters, labor historian Alice Kessler-Harris traced the spread and the growth of social history, identified its problems, and suggested solutions in a section entitled “The Problem of Synthesis.”<sup>17</sup> Kessler-Harris stressed the importance of gender for an integrated social history, and even today, she continues to strive to synthesize labor history from the viewpoint of gender.<sup>18</sup>

## State of Social History in Japan: Between Nation-State and Daily Life

Influenced by these American historians, Japanese historians studying American history also started to reexamine their style of historical descriptions and approaches. Kotaro Nakano, in particular, had been expressing concern about the new labor history as early as 1996. In his review of Dubofsky's *The State and Labor in Modern America*, Nakano stated that labor histories published over the previous 20 years had paid insufficient attention to state power, workers' institutions such as unions, and the process of labor legislation. Furthermore, he contended that the everyday lives of workers cannot be separated from power relations, even though workers ostensibly live autonomous lives.<sup>19</sup>

In 2006, the 40th anniversary of the publishing of volume one (revised ed.), the Japanese Association for American Studies (JAAS) added three volumes to the series *Genten Amerikashi*. In *Syakaishi Shiryoushū* (there is no English title; it can be translated as *Documents of Social History*), three JAAS historians critiqued the discipline of American social history and reviewed the latest attempts to develop new methods in both the United States and Japan. In particular, they discussed the problems that arise when individual social groups are taken up as a single category. This can lead to a kind of essentialism, an inflexible view that fails to notice the connections between groups or the complicated relations that are latent in the group itself.<sup>20</sup>

That same year, *Rekishi no nakano "Amerika": Kokuminka wo Meguru Katari to Souzou* (*American Histories: Narrating the Routes of Nationhood*) was published. This collection of Japanese language essays demonstrated a keen awareness that social history, although it had produced fruitful work, was becoming stale. Sixteen historians wrote articles on everyday life, delineating the process of the creation of a sense of American nationhood. They portrayed how ordinary people had voluntarily helped build and

strengthen the nation-state as its constituents.

Yoshiyuki Kido argued that the analysis of social history grew out of an overly optimistic perspective that ignored structures of power. He claimed that it was crucial to clarify the relationship between ordinary people's willingness to embrace nationhood on the one hand, and skillful government policies meant to draw them inside a nation-state on the other. This relationship must be examined in order to move beyond the current state of social history.<sup>21</sup> While critically analyzing the development and problems of social history, Natsuki Aruga also suggested a new direction for the field, including labor history. Aruga, who paid attention to the struggle for a synthesis of American history, led by Thomas Bender, claimed that these attempts could develop the analysis for social history.<sup>22</sup>

At this point, it has become clear that examining the problems with social history has brought American and Japanese historians to a common understanding of the issues: social history has confined itself to an insular perspective while being estranged from politics; the field must examine the varied relationships between different social groups, as well as the conflicts and relationships existing within each group; and social history should synthesize separate fragments of facts and offer a total picture of the histories of ordinary people—which will show they feel like they are a part of the nation-state (sometimes voluntarily) while simultaneously being excluded by powerful authorities from political, economic, and social resources. What matters here is that historians must explicate ordinary people's complicated and ambivalent actions and link detailed micro-analysis to broad historical context.

## **The Rise of Sociological Works and Labor History at the Present**

Both the American and the international media have given much attention to white, male, blue-collar workers, identifying them as the

decisive levers delivering Trump's victory. In the midst of this increased attention, J.D. Vance published *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, an exploration of family, race, class, and gender identity in a chronicle of the author's childhood and early adult years. In addition to *Hillbilly Elegy*, *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*; *Those Who Work, Those Who Don't: Poverty, Morality, and Family in Rural America*; and *The New Minority: White Working Class Policies in an Age of Immigration and Inequalities*, also have drawn significant media and academic attention. These works, drawing on sociological practices of direct observation and interviewing developed over the last 15 years, focus on the everyday lives of white, working-class people living in a "place," whether it be an urban or rural area.<sup>23</sup> Adopting sociological approaches, the authors of those books observed people's daily lives for years and conducted interviews with many of them.

In her stimulating book *Working-Class Heroes: Protecting Home, Community, and Nation in a Chicago Neighborhood*, Maria J. Kefalas elaborated on how these sociological techniques shed light on workers' cultural behaviors, values, and norms; and showed how their strong "sense of place" enabled workers to connect with each other, and supported the everyday life they had painstakingly constructed. Kefalas used this concept to illuminate the complex and fragile state of white working-class people living in a neighborhood called the Beltway (pseudonym) on the southwest side of Chicago.

Kefalas was particularly interested in how "complex views of race define the residents' distinctive *sense of place*," or the meaning they attach to place. She argued that "the people of Beltway seem to share a collective understanding how their place ought to look, in a philosophical sense, how residents ought to be."<sup>24</sup> Her research showed that Beltway's white, working-class families were not old-fashioned conservatives, as many previous studies had generalized. Rather, they had confused, mixed

thoughts and sentiments on race and poverty. According to Kefalas, they were most concerned with protecting their values and way of life from perceived, lurking threats. In other words, as long as no other persons or outside forces threatened their community, Beltway residents cared little about race or other political or social issues.<sup>25</sup>

The Beltway *sense of place* was “inscribed in the perfectly cleaned houses, manicured grass, graffiti-free streets, and the bumper stickers that remember POWs and MIAs. Beltwayites believe[d] that...working-class values [we]re celebrated in the visual appearances of place. Consumption patterns and the care and the display of material possessions serve[d] as a bulwark to working-class residents’ claims to social status and stability.”<sup>26</sup> This sense of place was composed of a distinctive and unique “moral order,” values working-class people like Beltway residents embraced.

However, a sense of place cannot solely be an amorphous concept; rather, it is in existence in the real world and it involves substantial materials. Beltway’s stable community life was sustained by incomes derived from steady industrial jobs and political conditions. Thus, in order to understand the state of white, blue-collar workers, including not only their economic situations but also their psychological states, it is necessary to explore the details of community life: labor, leisure, family, and education. In addition, we must consider how everyday lives, values, and norms have been created and borne out, and place people’s lives in a broader historical and political context. For example, while workers believe that it is their hard work that guarantees their stability, their working conditions could not have been established without labor union struggles and negotiations with company managers and government authorities. Without a political, economic, social, cultural, and historical perspective, we cannot gain a vantage point for understanding the state of white, blue-collar workers.

Kefalas’ research showed that reducing white, working-class people to a single categorized group perpetuates the simplistic idea that they

are merely old-fashioned conservatives. These ethnographical methods lack the broad historical view necessary to grasp white working-class people as a whole. A number of Kefalas' interviews contain eloquent descriptions of workers' everyday lives and enable readers to vividly imagine who they were. However, these interviews do not show how the Beltwayites sense of place had been historically constructed. Whether they were conscious of it or not, this sense of place was not ahistorical or timeless; it had been shaped and changed by domestic and global power relations.

Historian Leon Fink, who studied with E.P. Thompson at his Centre for the Study of Social History, has led the effort to examine the validity of labor history and find new methods for performing it. He reflected on Thompson's methods of inquiry in his 2013 article "Ten Theses on *The Making*," pointing out that Thompson's focus on the "political stakes that connected his subjects to their own world and ours" remains relevant today, when, "thanks to the alarming state of national, international, and global affairs, we are witnessing a renewed emphasis on political economy."<sup>27</sup>

Acknowledging the importance of political economy and the structures of state power does not mean that we should go back to dogmatic Marxist theory, or that we should abandon Marxism altogether. Instead, we must uncover the connection between community life and political economy, especially in an era of growing economic and social disparity.

Echoing Fink's Thompsonian call for situating the white working-class in a broad historical context, Gary Gerstle emphasized the powerful impact of the American state on workers' lives and labor. He acknowledged the contributions of social and labor history techniques, which "demanded intensive exploration of local sources," as well as Marxist and Annales school techniques, which "sought to grasp society in its totality." He then pointed out that this "quest for totality led us to locality, to microhistory... where we could study workers not only where they worked but where they lived, where they prayed, where they spent leisure hours, where they assembled

for political action.” However, Gerstle argued, this turn to microhistory did not actually allow scholars to “grasp... historical experience in its entirety.”<sup>28</sup>

Fink and Gerstle point out the necessity of linking events at the local level with those at the state, federal, and global levels. Analyzing these organic relations will help us head toward a synthesis of history. This, in turn, will allow us to understand the background of worker support for Trump in historical and comprehensive terms, not as an ephemeral phenomenon.

## Conclusion

State power and employer pressure deeply impacts workers’ lives—and vice versa. Focusing on individual voices and lives reveals the complete permeation of state power in local communities. Conflicts between working people and the federal or state government often emerge and unfold at the community level. What is more, tensions within the working-class, whether related to race, cultural behaviors, or gender, appear in these same places and often run parallel to larger scale conflicts. Presuming that the fundamental concern of social history is uncovering ordinary people’s lives in their entirety, we historians should elucidate the meanings of their lives by setting them within broader historical contexts. In other words, when focusing on local events and examining their historical meaning, we must always be aware of connecting these fragmentary local events to institutional power, and placing discrete facts into their broad political contexts.

When analyzing the relations between the whole and its parts, we must not confine our interests to extremely specialized fields. Instead, we must pay attention to tension, friction, and conflict, or reciprocal permeation, cooperation, and integration, between a local community and the state or federal government, between white working-class individuals, and between white, blue-collar workers and other groups. Power relations exist in our daily lives and they are twisted horizontally and vertically. Untangling these

complicated threads allows us to improve the discipline of social history. Only through continuing in these attempts and updating our approaches can we find the clues to build an historical synthesis. Furthermore, this is the direction toward which labor history should head, enabling us to go beyond the standstill new labor history presently is experiencing.

Social history delineates a total history of ordinary people's daily lives. Most people must work to live; as long as labor occupies the main parts of our lives, labor history will always occupy a central position in the development of social history. White, blue-collar workers who voted for Trump must make a living regardless of what else happens to them, and each aspect of their circumstances undeniably is getting worse. Therefore, labor historians should not simply regard support for Trump as evidence that white workers have been absorbed by racism or conservatism. Rather, historians should carefully examine the reality inhabited by the white working-class, and elucidate their complicated and capricious anger and uneasiness.

Right now is the moment for labor historians to undertake this work. Since attention increasingly is being paid to white, blue-collar workers, especially males, we labor historians must take notice of all aspects of workers' everyday lives and at the same time, not lose sight of our historical perspective. Fortunately, there are many curated collections of interviews of workers who frankly and vividly tell their personal histories. Labor historians, myself included, should assume the task of connecting fragmented stories one by one and place them in the wide-ranging context of history. Specifically, it is necessary for us to examine the historical background for the white, working-class support for Trump, and not regard their choice as a sudden and temporary phenomenon. We must look for historical evidence to explain the origins of this dissatisfaction and why it came to the surface in 2016, and identify those who really support Trump as well as those who did not vote for him. The more we repeat these inquiries and the more we reexamine our methods and theoretical approaches, the



more clearly we will be able to see the complex, fragile, and changeable characteristics of the white, especially male, blue-collar workers.

This article is partly based on the paper I read at the 51st International Conference organized by The American Studies Association of Korea (Sept. 30, 2016). It was also supported by Hirosaki University Grant for Exploratory Research by Young Scientists and Newly-appointed Scientists.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Edelman [2016]. This article reports that Trump said there, "I love blue-collar workers. And I consider myself in a certain way to be a blue-collar worker. I treat them with dignity...there are great people."
- <sup>2</sup> Taking some articles, see, Greenhouse [2016]; Summers and Simon [2016]; Kilibarda and Roithmayr [2016]
- <sup>3</sup> Dubofsky [1981: 244-251]
- <sup>4</sup> Dubofsky [1977: 249-254]
- <sup>5</sup> Dubofsky [1977: 253-254]
- <sup>6</sup> Dubofsky also developed his understanding of American labor history through a critical thinking on the new labor history. See, Dubofsky [1992], especially "Introduction."
- <sup>7</sup> Roediger [1991: 9-10]. While showing the weakness of the new labor history, he acknowledged Gutman's considerable heritage. See Roediger [1989]
- <sup>8</sup> Although David Brody referred to some problems, he lauded *The Wages of Whiteness* in his review and article. See, Brody [1993b]; Brody [1993a]
- <sup>9</sup> Arnesen [2001]
- <sup>10</sup> Along with Arnesen, Peter Kolchin also evinced his dissatisfaction at this point, saying as "They present little evidence, however, that most Americans viewed the Irish as *nonwhite*." See, Kolchin [2002: especially, 164-165]. His view on whiteness studies as a whole, however, is not as relentless as Arnesen's one.
- <sup>11</sup> Stein [1991]
- <sup>12</sup> Roediger [1993: 134-135]
- <sup>13</sup> Barrett [2001: 36-37]

14. For the discussions at the conference, see, Moody and Kessler-Harris [1984] . Along with two editors, the authors who wrote essays are Leon Fink, Michael Reich, Mari Jo Buhle, Sean Wilentz, Alan Dawley, and David Brody. To say nothing of the authors of this book, many labor historians stimulated by the conference arguments came to rethink their approaches. For example, Ava Baron scrutinized the situation of the new labor history. See, Baron [1991]
15. Bender [1986: 128-129] . In addition to this, Bender continuously posed his argument on the synthesis of history. See, Bender [1984] ; Bender [1987] ; Bender [2002]
16. Bender [1986: 129]
17. Kessler-Harris [1997: 248-250]
18. For her achievement, see, Kessler-Harris [2007]
19. Nakano [1996: 23]
20. Matsumoto et al. [2006: 4-16]
21. Kido and Tobe [2006: 374-378] . Prior to this book, Kido had already expressed his opinions on the state of American social history in his article in 2000. See Kido [2000: 153-157] .
22. Aruga [2009] . Following her, in this book, Kido also summarized his argument.
23. Lamont [2002] ; Sherman [2009] ; Gest [2016] . In these works, Rieder [1985] were often referred as one of the most important works. Recently, the works focusing on the state of white working-class have increased. See, Levison [2013] ; Abrajano and Hajnal [2015] ; Hochschild [2016] ; Cramer [2016]
24. Kefalas [2003: 4-5]
25. Kefalas [2003: 153-160]
26. Kefalas [2003: 154]
27. Fink [2013] . Fink is the founder of this journal as well as an editor. It was founded in 2004. For Fink's examination of the new labor history, see his collection of essays, Fink [1994] .
28. Gerstle [2002: xi-xii] . In his new book published in 2015, he laid emphasis on the significance of turning attention to state power and examining how it played in our daily lives. See, Gerstle [2015]

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