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# Archival Authority: Can There be Neutrality in the Exhibit Creation Process?

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# Archival Authority: Can There be Neutrality in the Exhibit Creation Process?

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**Keywords** Archives; Labor history; University museums; Management; Exhibition development

**Abstract** As public institutions take an active role in movements for social justice, this paper questions the neutrality of archivists selecting materials for display in a university gallery. Contextualized within theories of archival activism demanding that archivists acknowledge their authoritative role in shaping public discourse, this paper explores the process for creating a labor history exhibit at the University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives. As an active member of the team that created the current exhibit, the author relies on participant-observation, oral interviews, and internal planning documents to determine how staff determined which items suited the exhibit's purpose. Here is a snapshot of the practitioners' processes for developing an annual exhibition for the public-facing university gallery and examines how theories of both social justice and archives informed their decision-making process.

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## Role of Archives and Archivists

"People who aren't engaged in unions don't know the historical role of the union in fighting for social justice, social and economic justice on a broad range of issues. The idea is to use this exhibit to highlight...some unknown, little-known, or less focused-on aspects of the labor movement...I think it would be a great story."<sup>1</sup> Ben Blake, the Labor Archivist at the University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) defined the scope of a current annual exhibit, *For Liberty, Justice, and Equality: Unions Making History in America*, as addressing both social justice and labor history. This is a snapshot of practitioners' processes in creating an annual exhibition for the public-facing university gallery.<sup>2</sup> As archivists, each of the four core staff members involved in the exhibition development process demonstrated keen awareness of their archival responsibilities in conveying social justice and labor history messages. In *Archives Power: Memory, Accountability, and Social Justice*, former Society of American Archivists President Randall C. Jimerson defines archivists as powerful "mediators

and gatekeepers—even when they have tried to hide behind the cloak of neutrality or invisibility.”<sup>3</sup> By this definition, archival responsibilities entail an element of bias. As mediators and gatekeepers of SCUA’s Labor History Collections, the staff members involved in the exhibit research process exercise considerable authority over both the message of the exhibit and access to its source archival collections.

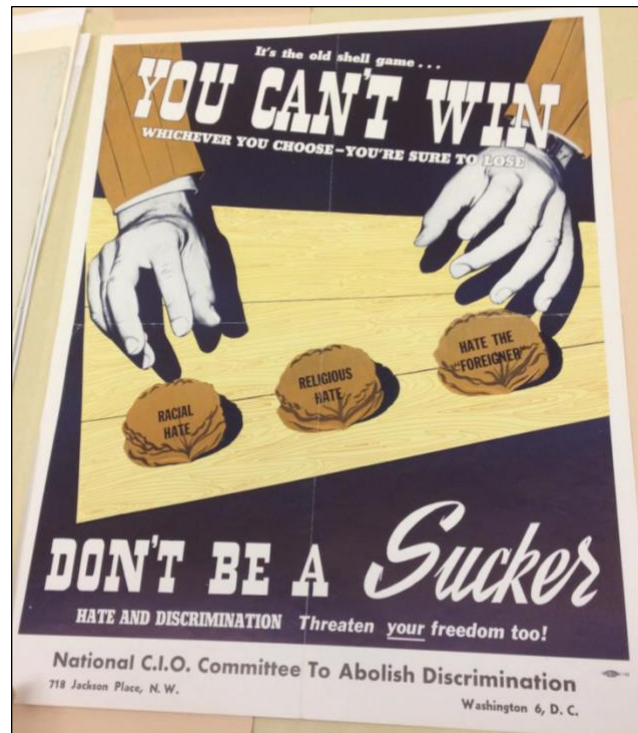


Figure 1: Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) poster.  
AFL-CIO artifacts collection, Special Collections and University  
Archives, University of Maryland. Photograph by author.

*For Liberty, Justice, and Equality* consists of eight sections highlighting the labor movement’s role in the social justice movement, primarily in the twentieth century. These sections include civil rights, a living wage, the eight-hour day, immigrants’ rights, religious freedom, LGBTQ equality, international solidarity, and environmental justice. Each section of the exhibit draws from the Labor Collections at SCUA, primarily from the American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Unions (AFL-CIO) and United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners America (UBCJA) collections. Each section documents different aspects of the labor movement’s role in the social justice movement, ranging from consistently progressive to a transition into its current progressive stance. The exhibition relies on a variety of media such as photographs, memos, correspondence, artifacts, posters, and video clips.

SCUA comprises collections including the University Archives, State of Maryland, Literary Manuscripts, Mass Media and Culture, Gordon W. Prange, and Labor History collections. Each collecting area has the opportunity to highlight its unique materials. The Labor History collecting area produced an exhibit for the academic year 2017-18 in the exhibit gallery located next to the Maryland Room in Hornbake Library on the University of Maryland Campus. The library’s mission for its exhibit space is to create “thematic displays” highlighting the

variety of collections available to researchers. The SCUA website states that, “the exhibits focus on a wide range of subjects and are composed of books, manuscripts, ephemera, three-dimensional objects, and multi-media items.”<sup>4</sup> This broad definition makes the exhibition space a mouthpiece of SCUA, providing an authoritative voice on an historical subject based on archival evidence.

The main questions are: What is the process for creating a labor history exhibit about social justice at SCUA? How does the labor team determine what items suit the exhibit mission, what are the team’s priorities, and how does the labor team approach social justice in relation to labor history? Jimerson’s theory of the power of archivists provides a useful means of questioning the labor history staff members’ conceptions of their roles and responsibilities in the selection process.<sup>5</sup> Over the course of the creation of the exhibit, the labor team grappled with implicit biases, knowing the selected documents would serve as gateways to further research in the collections. Recognizing archivists’ lack of neutrality allowed the team to embrace their roles as mediators, selecting material most representative of the collection in order to inspire future research.

The exhibit exists at the crossroads of a variety of theories, including social justice, archival authority, and labor history. In addition, labor history and archival authority intersect with social justice. For the purpose of this research, theories linking social justice and pedagogy apply most directly to the educational mission of the exhibit. Social justice scholar Rodney D. Coates refers to social justice from a legal standpoint as a combination of fairness in judicial proceedings, interpersonal treatments, and social, political, and economic outcomes.<sup>6</sup> Coates further argues that a social justice curriculum insists on diversity while stressing the importance of critical thinking skills by bringing marginalized narratives to the foreground.<sup>7</sup> Social justice as a teaching mechanism in archives, therefore, entails bringing the stories of marginalized groups in the United States to the foreground. The exhibit intends to educate an audience of university students, faculty, and staff about marginalized narratives by selecting archival materials that highlight previously under-represented narratives.

Jimerson effectively defines the role of an archivist and places archival responsibilities within the framework of authority and control of records. According to Jimerson, an archivist’s responsibilities range from appraisal to preservation, organization, access, reference, public programs and outreach, and advocacy. Public programs specifically promote knowledge of archival functions and holdings, and exhibitions are one avenue of public programming.<sup>8</sup> Understanding the multiple responsibilities of archivists is crucial for thorough analysis of the development of an archival exhibit. After all, according to archivist Jennifer Eidson, a member of the team that produced the exhibit, one of the main benefits of the exhibit is an opportunity to promote the labor history archival holdings.<sup>9</sup> When SCUA became the official repository of the AFL-CIO in 2013, the institution acquired not only materials open to research but also 15,000 boxes of material closed to the public.<sup>10</sup> Eidson indicated that she hopes one of the outcomes of the exhibit is increased demand for use of the collections and the opening of the materials closed for research.<sup>11</sup>

Presenting archives as “important repositories of essential evidence,” Jimerson argues, enables archivists to justify the existence of archives and reach a greater breadth of users.<sup>12</sup> Archives use outreach programs to overcome such misunderstandings that archival research

is “too time-consuming, that archives are not open to them, or that the process is daunting.”<sup>13</sup> Jimerson claims that encouraging use of the collection is essential for users and for continued funding.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, although archivists identify and preserve documents valuable to society, the true benefit is the use of the documents for “evidence, accountability, or research.”<sup>15</sup> Public access to information and publicizing information, according to Jimerson, is now an ethical responsibility of archivists.

Jimerson acknowledges that archives are often bastions of establishment power and argues that archivists have a responsibility to serve all members of the public. He argues that while archives traditionally reinforced powerful members of society, increasing numbers of archivists now engage politically in order to correct past neglect from documentary heritage. Most importantly, Jimerson maintains that archives are not merely storehouses but “active agents” for open government, accountability, diversity, and social justice.<sup>16</sup> He calls for archival activism, meaning that archivists should become activists in order to correct past exclusions of marginalized groups from historical narratives. He also claims that archival records contribute to social justice by, “holding public leaders accountable to the people, by documenting the rights of citizens and the lives and voices of marginalized groups, by ensuring public access to essential records, and by providing a secure repository for reliable and authentic records...Archives for all become archives for justice.”<sup>17</sup> Jimerson makes a compelling case for archivists as activists in the cause of social justice, and provides a useful framework to assess archivists attempting to contribute to such discussions and actions.

Kimberly Belmonte and Susan Opatow’s article in *Qualitative Psychology* also assesses the role of archives within the structure of social justice. Belmonte and Opatow conclude, “archival materials...contribute perspective and specificity to our understanding of historical events and societal change, offering...an extraordinarily rich resource for researching social justice.”<sup>18</sup> They argue that archivists have the ability and a responsibility to facilitate social justice research. By creating an exhibit centered on social justice, the labor history staff draws not only on salient themes to attract a broad audience but also promotes social justice education through archival materials.

## Labor Unions and Social Justice

The exhibit’s theme is social justice and the materials themselves are primary source records of labor history in the United States. Organized unions sought to improve the lives of working Americans, including calls for a minimum wage, eight-hour workdays, workplace safety, elimination of child labor, and provision of health benefits. In 1966 the United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) Education Department produced a booklet entitled *Our Union Heritage: A Chronicle of Labor’s Struggle for Social Justice*. In the introduction, the UAW stated that the purpose of the booklet was to share the story of American labor unions’ fight for better housing, workers’ compensation for sickness and injury, reduce the number of hours worked per day, raise the standard of living, and improve educational opportunities in the United States.<sup>19</sup> In this informational booklet, the UAW characterized the history of unions in American history as a fight for democracy and freedom that began with colonial uprisings such as Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676.<sup>20</sup> The booklet concludes, “we must submerge ourselves within a great cause to fully realize ourselves. Unionism must be regarded as a noble-purposed cause dedicated to human dignity and

brotherhood.”<sup>21</sup> Although this booklet is not from the labor history archives, its sentiment carried forward through labor movement and is evident in the exhibit planning process.

Recent publications highlight the contributions of marginalized groups and propose paths forward for the continued success of unions. For instance, union activist Jo-Ann Mort edited *Not Your Father's Union Movement: Inside the AFL-CIO* (1998), a volume of essays that included documentation of the roles of women and immigrants in the labor movement. In one such essay, “Women in Labor: Always the Bridesmaid?” AFL-CIO member Karen Nussbaum contradicts that the history of the labor movement in the United States belongs solely to union men fighting titans of industry; she states that “these images are wrong...women have always been key to union organizing in this country.”<sup>22</sup> Nussbaum cites an example of women organizing and striking<sup>23</sup> for the past hundred years and demanding a voice within the labor movement, while as late as 1995 women headed only three out of twenty AFL-CIO departments.<sup>24</sup> Nussbaum’s assessment shines a crucial critical light on the history of the AFL-CIO and demonstrates the progress made. Between 1955 and 1998, the percentage of female department heads of the AFL-CIO increased from six percent to fifty percent.<sup>25</sup> In another essay in that volume, “Back to the Forefront: Union Organization of Immigrant Workers in the Nineties,” union activist Hector Figueroa<sup>26</sup> characterizes immigrants and immigrants’ rights as essential to the cause of the late twentieth-century labor movement. He focuses on the effort to organize diverse Latino, Latina, and Asian/Pacific immigrant workers as a challenge for the AFL-CIO and suggests that the labor movement needs them in order “to regain its power and mission in American society.”<sup>27</sup>

Beyond union publications, scholarly research chronicles the history of the labor movement in the United States. Philip Yale Nicholson’s *Labor’s Story in the United States* (2004) traces the roots of unions from their colonial foundations through the role of labor in the modern corporate state. Nicholson draws attention to the fact that this text is a work of “new labor history;” where traditional labor history detailed the history of labor organizations but new labor history is “a complex drama of resistance and struggle, of cultural integration and accommodation, of great victories and stunning defeats.”<sup>28</sup> He contextualizes the merger as controversial in allowing individual unions to exclude African Americans at their own discretion as a means of granting local unions a measure of autonomy.<sup>29</sup> Such critical scholarship serves as a reminder that while unions such as the AFL-CIO hold progressive stances, their troubled histories deserve further exploration.

Other recent scholarship provides a scholarly basis for characterizing the history of labor in the United States as an inclusive social movement in the United States as well as a movement in crisis. Scholars note a rapid decline in union membership in the last three decades and propose means of remedying that situation.<sup>30</sup> For instance, in 2008 Bill Fletcher, Jr. and Fernando Gapasin called for “social justice unionism,” in which unions restructure to acknowledge class struggles, race, and gender.<sup>31</sup> They question whether social equality is achievable under capitalism and charge that unions are responsible both for supporting “working-class leaders of color and women leaders” and for including women and people of color in positions of “real authority.”<sup>32</sup> Although the exhibit does not incorporate Fletcher and Gapasin’s arguments against capitalism, the notion of social justice as inclusive is a central theme.

In 2014, labor scholar Kent Wong stated, “much of our work has been focused on reaching out to low-wage workers, to workers of color, and to immigrant workers, and finding creative ways to forge new alliances, new coalitions, and new opportunities for a new labor movement for the new working class.”<sup>33</sup> In the same year, Keith Mann contended that the labor movement is a neglected social movement in historical scholarship. He cites examples of unions such as the Service Employees International Union, the Restaurant Employees International Union, and the UNITE textile union launching successful campaigns, significant because these forces consisted of immigrants, women, and people of color who the “bureaucratic unions had long considered unorganizable [sic].”<sup>34</sup> Where the unions previously represented privilege, Mann indicates that the inclusivity of the new labor movement requires reconsidering unions as representative of underserved minorities. Informed by this range of ongoing scholarship, the labor history archivists sought out material that documented the dramatic shift in labor unions from conservative to progressive.

### **The Team Approach: The “Captain,” the “First Mate,” and the “Sailors”**

“It is much easier to produce exhibits without the team process. The product, however, is much better with the team process,” claims the director of the Museum of Florida history in Candace Tangorra Matelic’s case study (1992) of the museum’s team approach to exhibition development.<sup>35</sup> In Matelic’s case study, staff responded “enthusiastically” to the team approach, commenting on benefits such as a “system of checks and balances” and “greater knowledge of the total exhibit process.”<sup>36</sup> The team that created the SCUA exhibit consisted of Labor Archivist Ben Blake, Assistant Labor Archivist Jennifer Eidson,<sup>37</sup> and two Graduate Assistants including Kate Simpson and Jennifer Wachtel. The labor exhibit team conducted a series of surveys of existing collection inventories to identify items for both digitization and display between September and December of 2016.<sup>38</sup> They collaboratively selected artifacts, posters, textual documents, and audiovisual materials and contributed to the organizational scheme of the exhibit. Ben Blake provided the guiding research strategy and vision of the exhibit development process. Jennifer Eidson served as the team’s main source of knowledge about the arrangement of the Labor History archival collections.

In September 2016, as the team was working together, Blake announced revision from a chronological approach to a thematic approach. He asked the team to select their top three choices to research out of twelve themes. As they refined the themes of the exhibit based on the content of our collections and space constraints in the gallery, they eliminated Healthcare, Public Education, and Democracy in the Workplace and the Union. Blake ultimately focused on the Introduction, Conclusion, and Environmental Justice while providing guidance on all other thematic modules.

By the end of the fall semester, the team narrowed its research process in a manner accurately reflecting the strengths of the collection and the themes of social justice. Although the team had varying levels of familiarity with labor history and the Labor History Collections, all members possessed prior experience creating exhibits. Kate Simpson described each of the roles using the metaphor of captain, first mate, and sailors. Ben Blake emerged as the “captain” of the labor exhibit team. His area of expertise is labor history and he provided historical context throughout the research process. Beyond ultimate authority over the design of the exhibit, Blake has “overall responsibility for managing and describing over 20,000 feet

of material, including the historical international records of the AFL-CIO, the Carpenters and Bakers unions...[and] for acquiring new collections and providing records management consultation services.”<sup>39</sup> Although defined as the “captain,” Blake emphasized his intention to treat all members of the labor team as “pretty much equals” and integrate both graduate assistants into the exhibit process.<sup>40</sup> Despite Blake’s intentions, by definition the members of the team were not equals. Throughout the process, however, Blake continually sought and received input from the whole team. He ultimately provided direction in defining a research strategy and priorities for including items in the exhibit. Blake reflected that although he used no formal best practices for designing the exhibit, based on the rapidly approaching deadline he decided to use a “hidden treasures” approach.<sup>41</sup> His hidden treasures approach proved crucial to the selection process throughout the semester and the team understood this method as a demonstration of each individual’s authority over the scope of the exhibit.

Jennifer Eidson, the “first mate” in Simpson’s metaphor, was most familiar with the Labor History Collections. Her overall responsibilities in the Labor History Collections unit included managing archival collections and providing reference assistants to researchers.<sup>42</sup> Eidson defined herself as an assistant or co-curator for the exhibit research process, but emphasized that, “we’re all working together.”<sup>43</sup> Eidson relied on her own experience with the collections.<sup>44</sup> Since Eidson knows the “process by which they [the labor archives] are compiled and preserved,” she exercised considerable authority over the study of labor history at the University of Maryland.

The two graduate assistants that Simpson characterized as “sailors” in relation to the “captain” and the “first mate” each looked to Blake and Eidson as ultimate authorities during the decision-making process. Simpson was a first-year Master of Library and Information Science student with limited prior knowledge of labor history. Wachtel completing both a Master of Library and Information Science and a Master of Arts in History, but possessed limited prior knowledge of labor history. Both relied upon the “captain” and the “first mate” for guidance. Since both Blake and Eidson exercised considerable authority throughout the research process, they also exercised indirect archival authority over the graduate assistants’ selection of items for display. In our team approach, one means of counteracting individual archivists’ biases was the team structure itself; by calling upon each team member’s areas of expertise, each contributed to the overall exhibit narrative. As the process changed, team members referred to this fundamental dynamic in the team’s power structure.

## **The Crystallizing Process**

At no point could the archivists involved in creating the exhibit remain neutral or unbiased. As Jimerson argued in 2009, archivists actively shape “social memory” and “need to recognize and acknowledge that they are not neutral.”<sup>45</sup> Bias on the part of each team member played a role in shaping the outcome the exhibit. In August 2016, Blake developed the team’s first work plan that evolved as a working document. In these early stages, several elements of the document changed significantly, such as the title of the exhibit, the intended audience, and the thematic modular components of the exhibit itself. At a later stage in the process Blake released a labor exhibit modules outline with a new working title, “For Liberty, Justice, and Equality: How Unions Have Transformed America” and a revised module search focus. Blake distributed a document outlining a research strategy directing the team members to review

spreadsheet inventories using keyword searches. The document also stipulated that the team would read and discuss relevant labor history texts.<sup>46</sup> While both graduate assistants intended to rely upon Blake as a resource labor history, eventually they relied upon their own skills as researchers to understand the Labor History Collections.<sup>47</sup>

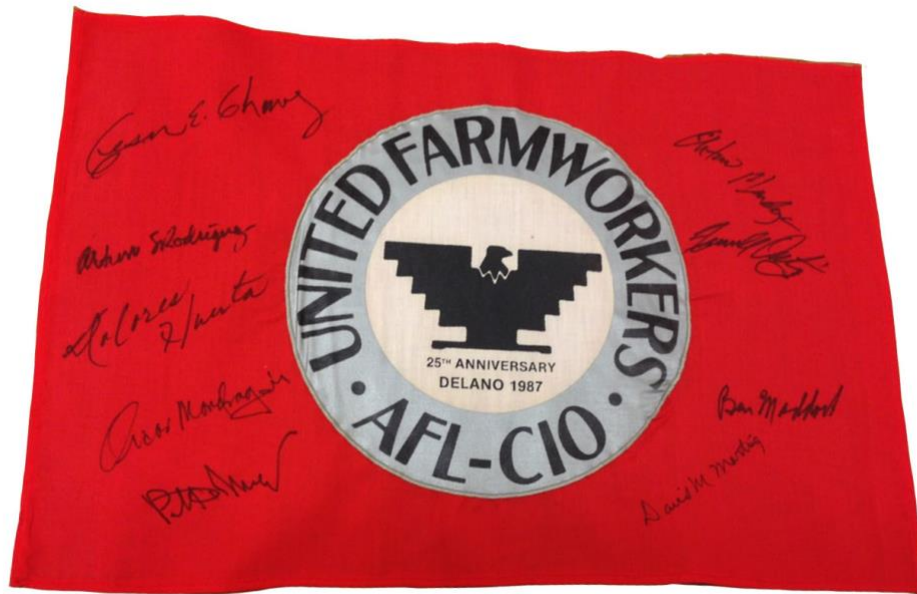


Figure 2: United Farmworkers Banner, 1987. AFL-CIO artifacts collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland. Photograph by author.

Understanding the power dynamic in museums is a useful means of exploring the archivists' authority over the narrative of the exhibit. Blake serves as curator for the exhibit and bears ultimate responsibility. Sue M. Davies et al. in *Museum Management and Curatorship* suggested a framework for analyzing museum organizational culture that incorporates value judgements. Davies et al. propose four modes of museums with overlapping values: the club, temple, visitor attraction, or forum.<sup>48</sup> The forum mode is concerned with an external audience, and it encourages debate, actively contributes to civic society, and invites visitors to "to get involved in creating meaning from the collections."<sup>49</sup> Davies, et al. point out that museums in the forum mode often seek qualitative outcomes and the educational mission of the exhibit creation process certainly falls within this description. Blake had guided the team in such a way that treated the exhibit as an opportunity to both pool the labor team members' abilities and knowledge and to encourage visitors to engage in research with the Labor History Collections. Blake and Eidson both stressed inclusivity in terms of the intended audience. A key purpose of the exhibit was to attract more patrons to the collection. As the exhibit creation process unfolded, a focus on the importance of social justice and labor organizing crystallized.

One discussion about a potential artifact for display in the immigrants' rights module exemplifies the decision-making process at this stage. It is a red fabric banner with a United Farmworkers union symbol in the center marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Delano grape strike. Nine people including Cesar Chavez signed the flag (Figure 2). The flag was found by searching an internal artifacts inventory spreadsheet for the terms "United Farmworker"

and “UFW,” because that particular union made pivotal gains in the twentieth century for the rights of immigrant laborers.<sup>50</sup> Eidson thought the artifact would highlight materials from the collections that revealed the historical prominence of the nation’s largest labor union and Blake pointed out the value of this artifact as a touchstone for members of the public generally familiar with the name Cesar Chavez.<sup>51</sup> Simpson reported that the collection held additional related artifacts, namely buttons from the historic Delano protest referenced in the center of the flag (Figures 3 and 4). The team decided to prioritize the above artifact due to the fact that it would connect to other materials, promote the AFL-CIO’s role in historic movements, and illustrate the exhibit’s educational mission of bringing to the fore the role that unions played in social justice movements.



Figures 3 and 4: Protest buttons from the Delano grape strike, AFL-CIO artifacts collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland. Photographs by author.

Additional contributors from SCUA staff at a December 15, 2016 team meeting raised the issue of timing. They stressed that it was the time to refine the list of items for display, because the next months would entail writing exhibit text and meeting with a graphic designer.<sup>52</sup> Scholars suggest that time is not only a factor in planning archival exhibitions but also in the related profession of museums. In this case, scholarly writing about museum studies rather than Jimerson’s theory of archival outreach proves most useful. Laurajane Smith and Kalliopi Fouseki find that consulting communities, a step never seriously considered in the labor exhibit development process, is necessary for addressing issues of social justice and that time plays a key factor.<sup>53</sup> In fact, in a September meeting, the labor team expressed concerns that inviting outside voices of union members would detract from the purpose of highlighting the Labor History Collections and would take too much time. Smith and Fouseki write that time is a common issue, especially “short lead up time between museums obtaining funding and the opening of the exhibit.”<sup>54</sup> A related point is that three out of the four members of the labor team joined in 2016 and immediately received the task of producing an exhibit for fall 2017. The additional SCUA staff suggested that the labor team now focus less on research and more on translating our ideas into objects for display. Fouseki concludes that, while a curatorial focus on objects is common in museums, a narrative-driven exhibition “in which the narrative defined the selection of the objects and images...provided a more democratic consultation process.”<sup>55</sup> The process of selecting items for display in the labor history exhibit was primarily object-driven, with the objective of displaying the strengths of the labor history collection. Therefore, the process could not democratically include outside voices without taking into

account the time required for identifying a community and conducting community consultations, as well as reconsidering the purpose of the exhibit. Instead, the archivists, while acknowledging the potential for bias created by a lack of outside input, endeavored to use the time allotted to highlight the strengths of the collection.

## **Archivists are Not Neutral**

The members of the labor exhibit research team each brought professional knowledge of archival theory to the table. All members of the team either have a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) or are in the process of attaining an MLIS. The selection process, which consisted of identifying artifacts, posters, audiovisual materials, text, and photographs to support the themes of the exhibit, required the team to consider their respective roles in defining the outcome of the exhibit. The team interpreted the exhibition as an archival responsibility to promote use of the collections for research. Each member of the team expressed a desire to educate the public about the role of labor unions in social justice, but they also expressed excitement for future researchers to gain access to materials found in the immense repository. The members of the team exercised significant “archives power,” in Jimerson’s words, over the interpretation of the collections on display.

The item selection process consisted of trial and error in its initial stages. Team members selected items that they personally thought suited the exhibit mission, although input from colleagues mitigated personal bias. Each archivist on the planning team exercised an authoritative narrative voice over the exhibit. In terms of the team members’ priorities, the team’s statements in interviews and during planning meetings indicate both ethical concerns and an awareness of the archival function of outreach. Team members demonstrated their ethical social justice responsibility to highlight an untold history of the labor movement advocating for marginalized groups in the United States. Each member also demonstrated a commitment to utilizing the exhibit as an opportunity to encourage further research using the Labor History Collections. The archivists’ approaches to social justice were so far limited to addressing the exhibit’s sub-themes, and primarily treated social justice as a means for attracting an undergraduate audience.

The exhibit holds considerable promise as a means of contrasting the narrative of the current presidential administration. The university setting is the ideal setting for exploring themes of social justice and provides a sense of focus, purpose, and authority for the labor team. The exhibit creation process continued beyond this snapshot including the creation of a website (<https://www.lib.umd.edu/unions/>).

## **List of Figures**

Figure 2: Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) poster. AFL-CIO artifacts collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland. Photograph by author.

Figure 2: United Farmworkers Banner, 1987. AFL-CIO artifacts collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland. Photograph by author.

Figure 3: Protest button from the Delano grape strike, AFL-CIO artifacts collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland. Photograph by author.

Figure 4: Protest button from the Delano grape strike, AFL-CIO artifacts collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland. Photograph by author.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ben Blake, interview by author, College Park, MD, November 15, 2016; Jennifer Eidson, Interview by author, College Park, MD, November 14, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> The exhibit, which opened in fall 2017 and runs for an academic year, was in development at the time of writing.

<sup>3</sup> Randall C. Jimerson, *Archives Power: Memory, Accountability, and Social Justice* (Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2009), 128.

<sup>4</sup> Special Collections and University Archives, "About Us," University Libraries, University of Maryland, <http://www.lib.umd.edu/special/about/home> (accessed October 19, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> The author submitted an earlier version of this paper to fulfill the requirements of a museum research seminar at the University of Maryland's Museum Scholarship and Material Culture graduate certificate program in fall 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Rodney D. Coates, "Social Justice and Pedagogy," *American Behavioral Scientist* 51.4 (December 2007): 581.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 588.

<sup>8</sup> Jimerson, xiv.

<sup>9</sup> Jen Eidson, Interview by author, College Park, MD, November 14, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Jen Eidson, Draft Guide to Labor History Collections, in the author's possession.

<sup>11</sup> Eidson, interview.

<sup>12</sup> Jimerson, 117.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 314.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 236.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 267.

<sup>18</sup> Kimberly Belmonte and Susan Opatow, "Archivists on Archives and Social Justice, Qualitative Psychology" (November 17, 2016), advance online publication, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/qup0000055> (accessed December 7, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, *Our Union Heritage: A Chronicle of Labor's Struggle for Social Justice* (Detroit: UAW Education Department, 1966), 1.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 2-3. The UAW described Bacon's Rebellion as a popular uprising against the British colonial government in Virginia. Recent scholarship has countered that the rebellion was also a personal power struggle between Governor Sir William Berkeley and Nathaniel Bacon, Jr.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>22</sup> Karen Nussbaum, "Women in Labor: Always the Bridesmaid?" in *Not Your Father's Labor Movement: Inside the AFL-CIO*, ed. Jo-Ann Mort (New York: Verso, 1998), 57.

<sup>23</sup> A strike is a refusal to work organized by a body of employees as a form of protest, typically in an attempt to gain a concession or concessions from their employer.

<sup>24</sup> Nussbaum, 59.

<sup>25</sup> Nussbaum, 65.

<sup>26</sup> Hector Figueroa later became a leader of the Service Employees International Union in New York.

<sup>27</sup> Hector Figueroa, "Back to the Forefront: Union Organization of Immigrant Workers in the Nineties," in *Not Your Father's Labor Movement: Inside the AFL-CIO* (New York: Verso, 1998), 98.

<sup>28</sup> Nicholson, Philip Yale, *Labor's Story in the United States* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), ix; xiii.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 262.

<sup>30</sup> Raymond Holger, et al., "Killing Unions with Culture: Institutions, Inequality, and the Effects of Labor's Decline in the United States," *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal* 27.1 (March 2015): 66

<sup>31</sup> Bill Fletcher, Jr. and Fernando Gapasin, *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path Towards Social Justice* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2008): 166-167.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 184, 213.

<sup>33</sup> Kent Wong, "A New Labor Movement for the New Working Class: Unions, Worker Centers, and Immigrants," *Berkeley Journal of Employment & Labor Law* 36.1 (January 1, 2015): 208.

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- <sup>34</sup>Keith Mann, "Social Movement Literature and U.S. Labour: A Reassessment," *Studies in Social Science* 8.2 (2014): 172.
- <sup>35</sup> Candace Tangorra Matelic, "Forging a Balance: A Team Approach to Exhibit Development at the Museum of Florida History," in *Ideas and Images: Developing Interpretive History Exhibits*, edited by Kenneth L. Ames, et al (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History):190.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid, 190.
- <sup>37</sup> Eidson is now Processing Archivist for the Labor History collections.
- <sup>38</sup>In the following sections, the name "Kate Simpson" is a pseudonym for one of my colleagues on the Labor Exhibit Research Team who asked me not to use her name in this paper. An Institutional Review Board (IRB project number 983167-1) at the University of Maryland approved my research participant-observation and interview methods.
- <sup>39</sup>Special Collections and University Archives, "Benjamin Blake," University Libraries, University of Maryland, 2016 <http://www.lib.umd.edu/directory/staff/bblake12> (accessed December 8, 2016).
- <sup>40</sup>Blake, interview.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup>Special Collections and University Archives. "Jennifer Eidson," University Libraries, University of Maryland, 2016, <http://www.lib.umd.edu/directory/staff/jeidson> (accessed December 8, 2016).
- <sup>43</sup> Eidson, interview.
- <sup>44</sup>Jimerson, 129.
- <sup>45</sup> Jimerson, 219.
- <sup>46</sup> Blake, Ben. Labor Exhibit Research Strategy Outline, 9/2/2016, Labor Exhibit Work Plans and Research Strategies, in the author's possession.
- <sup>47</sup> Simpson, interview by author.
- <sup>48</sup> Sue M. Davies, et al., "The museum values framework: a framework for understanding organisational culture in museums," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 28.4 (2013): 351.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid, 353.
- <sup>50</sup> Wong, 213.
- <sup>51</sup> Personal observation, October 27, 2016.
- <sup>52</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>53</sup> Laurajane Smith and Kalliopi Fouseki, "The Role of Museums as 'Places of Social Justice: Community Consultation and the 1807 Bicentenary,'" in *Representing Enslavement and Abolition in Museums: Ambiguous Engagements*, ed. L. Smith, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2011): 97; 99.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid, 103.
- <sup>55</sup> Kalliopi Fouseki, "Community Voices, Curatorial Choices: Community Consultation for the 1807 exhibitions," *Museums and Society* 8.3 (2010): 186.

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