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Top left: Front cover of Helen Crawford's 1921 election  
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Top middle: Arthur MacManus, first president of the  
Communist Party of Great Britain (Gallacher Memorial Library)  
Top right: Front cover of Can Labour Govern? a 1924 Communist  
Party pamphlet by William Gallacher (Bisset Collection)  
Main photo: Women members of Methil Communist Party, with  
Helen Crawford (second left), c1925 (Gallacher Memorial Library)

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## All higher education is labor education

*Nick Juravich for the Labor and Working-Class History Association (LAWCHA) and its journal, Labor: Studies in Working-Class History*

'Eat the rich.' 'Join a union.' This is how two students in my US labor history course last spring responded to the question 'What important skills and concepts did you learn in this class?' on their course evaluations. Reading these comments at the end of a harrowing semester, I laughed aloud. Strictly speaking, these are not skills, nor can I claim to have taught them; my course does not instruct students in forming a union or introduce them to Rousseau's theories of inequality. This, of course, is not the point. These replies skewered the mechanistic way these evaluations reduce learning to the acquisition of skills. They also reflect an irrepressible truth about labor history: encounters with past working-class struggles help working people critically analyze power and inequality in the present. Whether I told students to join a union was immaterial; the course material demonstrated the power of collective action.

These evaluations stuck with me as I considered the questions posed by the editors of *Scottish Labour History*. How might we secure the salience of labor history for younger generation? My answer builds, more or less, on my reading of these student comments. If we research, write, and teach labor history in ways that empower students to recognize, analyze and challenge exploitation and inequality in their own lives, our work will remain salient. One of the best ways to do this is to provide students with teaching, scholarship, and organizing that meets them exactly where they are: in the increasingly neo-liberal university.

Labor historians have long contended that history can inform and inspire new struggles, while acknowledging that such scholarship threatens those in power and imperils our position in universities managed by capitalist elites. Rooting this work in universities may seem to run counter to labor history's autonomous traditions and skepticism of the academy, both of which the editors raised. However, I believe the evolution of universities – their internal dynamics, their place in systems of education and job placement, and their role as training grounds and employers in local and global economies – makes this approach both necessary and (potentially) powerful.

I am a relative newcomer to labor history, and so it is a privilege to have been asked to contribute this essay to the discussion on behalf of the

Labor and Working-Class History Association (LAWCHA), particularly when so many LAWCHA members have already produced powerful essays on this theme.<sup>1</sup> In the spirit of collaboration that labor history draws from the labor movement, I have approached this task by considering the development of labor history at my university and, more recently, in LAWCHA itself. This strategy allows me to draw on the insights of many more experienced scholars and teachers of labor and working-class history.

What follows proceeds in three parts. I asked nine past and present instructors at University of Massachusetts Boston (UMB) to reflect on labor history as studied, taught, and lived at our urban public university over the past four decades. These interviews, coupled with the writings of the late James Green, who founded our Labor Resource Center and labor studies program, are explored in the first part of this essay. In the second portion, I chart some recent developments in labor history through my own experience, particularly my participation in LAWCHA. In the final section, I discuss the ways labor historians – through research, teaching, and direct action – are positioned to serve students, our fellow academic workers, and the labor movement writ large amid overlapping national and global crises.

Across these three sections, I rely on a pair of premises that will not, I suspect, surprise most labor historians. First, our research agendas are inextricable from our teaching, public, activist, and organizing agendas.<sup>2</sup> Second, labor history is inherently political and ideological. Ours has never been a field of curious aristocrats or disinterested critics. Securing labor history's salience demands putting history to work to 'reveal the contingency of the settled order,' as Walter Johnson wrote of Herbert Gutman. We must produce sober analyses of past campaigns and the social and political forces that shaped them, but we should also imagine worlds beyond capitalist exploitation in our classrooms and on our campuses.<sup>3</sup>

UMB was created in 1964 by the Massachusetts legislature, which was 'reacting to social upheaval, urban unrest, and a rapidly increasing demand for higher education,' according to the university website.<sup>4</sup> This is the context in which the 'new labor history' – what we now call 'labor and working-class history' – emerged across the United States. Public higher education expanded rapidly in the 1960s, bringing working-class students to college and graduate school in significant numbers for the first time, while the social movements of the era radicalized students on and off campuses.<sup>5</sup> Among UMB's academic divisions was a College of

Public and Community Service (CPCS). Founded in 1972, CPCS offered experiential and competency-based higher education 'to provide a new kind of access to the university for working-class adults in front-line human service and neighbourhood agencies.'<sup>6</sup>

James Green joined UMB as a CPCS faculty member in 1977 and founded the labor studies program in 1979. Using one scholar's trajectory to illuminate the larger evolution of labor history has its limits, but as Green noted in his collection of reflective essays, *Taking History to Heart: The Power of the Past in Building Social Movements*, his course was intertwined with the paths of fellow travelers, including those with whom he co-founded LAWCHA. As a professor in CPCS, Green joined new labor historians across the United States in 'reaching out to unionized workers' to revive worker education as 'a medium through which intellectuals could participate in movement building.'<sup>7</sup> They did so just as the New Deal order was crumbling, before the full onset of educational austerity and the steepest declines in union membership (and thus unions' ability to support labor education) in the 1980s. Their work thrived both on account of the expansion of public higher education in the preceding decades and because of the ability and willingness of the American labor movement to fund, support, and advocate for the expansion of labor education in these years.

Originally from small-town Illinois, Green earned his doctorate at Yale, where he read E.P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* on the advice of a classmate and wrote a dissertation on rural American socialism in the early twentieth century. While at Yale, Green protested the denial of tenure to Staughton Lynd and joined other radical historians who 'aggressively challenged the history profession's claims to neutrality and objectivity' and campaigned to have Lynd elected president of the American Historical Association in 1969.<sup>8</sup> Green's reputation as a radical followed him to his first job, at Brandeis University, where he was denied a contract renewal in 1972 (Brandeis allowed him to stay for three more years after students protested).<sup>9</sup>

Green, who had worried about swallowing what one of his intellectual heroes, Lynd, called 'the bait of tenure,' threw himself into what he later described as 'movement history.' He joined the editorial collective of New Left magazine, *Radical America*, editing essays and books on the Industrial Workers of the World, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the communist-led Alabama Sharecroppers Union, and contemporary mining strikes in Harlan County, West Virginia.<sup>10</sup> He spent a year in Britain immersing himself in the new social history and

Raphael Samuel's history workshop movement, and co-founded the Massachusetts History Workshop with a remarkable cadre of radical scholars upon his return.<sup>11</sup>

When he joined UMB, in 1977, it was in large part to 'teach movement history to workers,' as his other great influence, E.P. Thompson, had done while writing his early classics.<sup>12</sup> The bachelor's degree program in labor studies he created trained nearly one hundred trade unionists over the next twenty years, and its classes reached many more students. Green's writing, teaching and organizing in this program both tracked and shaped the development of labor history as a field of study and community of practice and organizing.

At UMB, James Green wrote popular works of labor history that came into wide circulation in Massachusetts libraries and public schools.<sup>13</sup> He created expansive courses on labor history and social movements that spanned the *longue durée* from European feudalism to present-day US history, and focused his pedagogy on interactions between labor history and students' own experiences as workers and trade unionists.<sup>14</sup> He organized celebrations of the radical past, including a centennial commemoration of Boston's May Day protests for the eight-hour day that infuriated the Massachusetts AFL-CIO president in 1986. He won that same union leader over a few years later by writing a statement of support for building trades workers as vice-president of the Faculty Staff Union at UMB, a local of the National Education Association (which is not a part of the AFL-CIO and often stood apart from its struggles in those years).

As director of the labor studies program and then the Labor Resource Center (LRC), Green hired and promoted working-class and union-based educators without regard for traditional academic credentials. These scholar-organizers taught courses that expanded the frame and shifted the focus of labor history. Bill Fletcher Jr. taught courses on Black workers' histories and workplace discrimination that reached a growing number of Black students as well as members of Boston building trades locals, which were just beginning to desegregate after years of furious resistance. Pat Reeve, a veteran of Boston's 9 to 5 movement of women office workers, taught UMB's first courses on women's labor history as CPCS evolved to serve a student population that was sixty percent female.<sup>15</sup> One of Green's former students, Jeff Crosby, began teaching labor history in 2012, after 33 years working and organizing in a General Electric factory. He recalls a 'magical day' in Green's backyard where

Green drew up a three-page guide to the historiography of the field and sent him forth.<sup>16</sup>

The UMB LRC continues to benefit from the trail Green and his colleagues blazed and the community they built. The LRC has continued to teach ‘movement history,’ which professor Alejandro Reuss describes as ‘future oriented’: history that aims to help students analyze and act in present-day struggles.<sup>17</sup> Wally Soper, the LRC academic coordinator and a former student of Green’s, puts it simply: ‘We’re trying to change the world, and labor history changes how you see the world.’<sup>18</sup> So does Labor Extension Director, Annetta Argyres, who explains: ‘Our education is about making people think differently about the world.’ This includes teaching what Reuss calls ‘Jim Green topics’: the role of ‘dangerous radicals’ in US labor movements, the ways class conflict has driven US history, and the ‘creativity and imaginative life’ of working people.<sup>19</sup>

For many instructors, teaching has meant moving beyond the ways they learned labor history. Pat Reeve, who followed Green as director of the LRC in 1997, ‘made it my mission’ in classes ‘to teach a labor history that was neither reflexively celebratory nor a tribunal on labor war crimes. Instead, I focused on the social and historical factors that explained the expansion and contraction of the labor movement.’ Susan Moir, a Boston bus driver and union organizer who directed the LRC after Reeve describes her trajectory as a teacher as one from ‘straight union history to labor history to worker history.’ She shifted her focus in response to students who had been taught that ‘everything was a victory,’ including the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act.<sup>20</sup> The interplay of race, gender, and labor continue to feature prominently in our teaching, alongside Green’s own writings on solidarity in Greater Boston.

James Green would recognize the history we teach at UMB today, but the context in which we do so has changed dramatically. The CPCS suffered a steep drop in attendance as public funding for working families dried up in Massachusetts, and labor studies enrolments faded accordingly. In 2016, at the urging of outgoing director, Susan Moir, and incoming director, Steve Striffler, the LRC moved into the College of Liberal Arts, and CPCS was restructured out of existence shortly thereafter. Labor studies courses that were once taught primarily at night to union members and community organizers (often in their thirties or older) now compete by day for more traditional undergraduate students in their early twenties. Thanks to adroit manoeuvring by LRC staff under difficult circumstances, the program

has thrived; our 'Labor and Working-Class History in the United States' course now cross-lists with history and anthropology and fulfils every conceivable undergraduate requirement it could, enrolling over 100 students every semester.

Does filling our lectures mean labor history's future at UMB is secure? The reality is complicated. While packed labor history courses are good, the closure of CPCS has deprived working-class adult learners in Greater Boston of a college attuned to their needs. Union members who took night classes now struggle to finish their degrees. Our connections with the Greater Boston labor movement remain strong, but our program does not primarily serve unionized workers. The atrophy of the American labor movement under sustained attacks from the political right also mean unions have far fewer resources to devote to labor education than they once did. The students in labor history courses are still overwhelmingly from working-class families (this is the case across the university), but very few of them have any personal connection to the labor movement. As Reuss notes, their lack of familiarity with organized labor is itself a reminder that we do not teach labor history outside of labor history. With union density at less than ten percent nationwide, and six percent in the private sector, it is no surprise our students have limited knowledge of labor, even in a relatively unionized city.

UMB reflects many national and international trends in university education: an increased focus on exclusivity and the recruitment of students who will pay 'full freight'; rising tuition costs and fees; and administrative bloat and the attendant imposition of Taylorized approaches to teaching, learning, and evaluation.<sup>21</sup> If our students' lack of labor knowledge is a reminder of our position in history, the passing of competency-based public higher education reminds us that Green and his generation operated within a historical moment as well, one in which public universities expanded their mission – in response to activism and pressure, undoubtedly – to reach a wide range of working-class students in new and creative ways.<sup>22</sup> From this vantage, labor history looks far less secure; as Moir notes, the labor centers at the four UMass campuses have passed crises around 'like a hand grenade' over the last decade.<sup>23</sup>

James Green and his generation of labor historians worried about being lulled by the comforts of the academy and strove to maintain links with workers and movements beyond it. Moir, however, saw the shift to traditional undergraduate education as an opportunity to teach and

organize working-class and social-justice-minded students at a young age. Our students may not know much about unions, but they come to class well prepared to discuss the myriad inequalities that shape their lives, including those on campus. A student who types 'eat the rich' into the University's evaluation server is having fun, but they are also aware of the way power, access, and opportunity are structured by wealth and class, on campus and beyond.

Today the academy is a markedly less lulling place for students and faculty alike. Public higher education was once free or inexpensive; students now take on debt to graduate and struggle to make ends meet as they take courses. Administrators resist everything that might destabilize hierarchies or challenge elite definitions of education, exhorting students to 'build their brand' and prepare endlessly to climb corporate ladders. Universities have simultaneously ballooned as sites of employment; post-industrial urban redevelopment has made public universities and their hospitals some of the largest workplaces in many cities, including Boston. While our labor extension program continues to provide worker education to unionized workers, as James Green did, our 'traditional' courses are also educating working people, many whom labor on campuses (our own and others).

What, then, might labor history offer to students and workers in the neo-liberal university? Even as they engaged beyond the academy, Green and those of his generation took key initial steps. Most labor historians have proven reliable and important allies to the efforts of clerical workers and graduate students to organize on campuses since the 1980s. In the instances where local labor laws allow, they have also become leaders in faculty unions, including at UMB. At the same time, unionized primary and secondary educators have been under even more sustained attack, and theirs has evolved into the most dynamic sector of the US labor movement since 2010. It is no surprise that labor historians have sought to study and learn from these struggles over the past decade.

The attention of labor historians to education, universities, and organizing is evident in the programs of recent LAWCHA conferences. This follows a moment of crisis for the field; when I started graduate school a decade ago, labor history was regarded by many as a fading subdiscipline. The replacement of 'labor history' with 'the history of capitalism' in *American History Now*, the American Historical Association's third-generation collection of state-of-the-discipline essays, was cited by many labor historians as something of a death



knell.<sup>24</sup> At the academy' gates and in the streets, however, the labor question remained essential.

At my first LAWCHA conference, in New York in 2013, graduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee gave stirring testimony and sober analysis of Tea Party governor Scott Walker's assault on the public sector and its unions (including their own) in Wisconsin, as well as the uprising in the state capital that followed.<sup>25</sup> The conversation was raw and electric. We discussed how experiences in these struggles, as well as the Occupy movement that began in New York City in 2011, helped spark a new wave of graduate student unionization (whose organizers are now among the rising generation of labor historians).<sup>26</sup> One panellist said, with evident frustration, that it was great to hear a bunch of labor historians saying nice things, but they had still ultimately lost. In the audience, someone rose to reply that he had every right to be angry, but that the uprising in Madison, in which chants of 'thank you, teachers' thundered through the streets, had helped fire the resolve of Chicago teachers to strike the following year.

Two years later, in Washington, D.C., the Chicago Teachers Union's Jackson Potter held the plenary stage and told a packed house just how intensive and organized the CTU's brand of social movement unionism was in practice. His example was a Black Lives Matter resolution that the union had just passed. The CTU had won their ground breaking 2012 strike by working hand-in-hand with students, parents, and community members in Chicago. These same people, overwhelming Black and Latinx, wanted to know whether the union would stand behind their movement. Convincing teachers and their delegates – a primarily white, middle-class workforce – in a democratically-run union to support this resolution required extensive organizing work, of the kind typically reserved for contracts and strikes. However, as Potter and CTU leadership explained to their members, 'you can't keep two sets of books.' Social movement unionism cannot be practiced solely in contract years; it requires constant organizing and struggle.

By 2017, LAWCHA's plenaries had come to focus on right-wing assaults on universities and the organizing needed to combat them. In Seattle, Nancy MacLean outlined the Koch-funded assault on democratic institutions, including higher education, while Annelise Orleck connected the struggles of adjunct and contingent faculty to global labor movements.<sup>27</sup> In Durham in 2019, K-12 (early years) teachers from our host state of North Carolina held forth on their participation in the national teacher uprising of 2018, while contingent faculty led another

plenary, exhorting LAWCHA's members to fight for our values in our departments and on our campuses. On social media afterward, several junior members of the organization noted how refreshing it was to move from the old question of how best to support labor movements outside the academy to questions of how best to organize ourselves as workers to fight for ourselves and one another.

It should perhaps come as no surprise that these same years, and same LAWCHA meetings, witnessed an outpouring of scholarship on educator organizing, much of it authored by historians with ample organizing experience of their own. Clarence Taylor's *Reds at the Blackboard* recovered the social movement unionism of the communist-led New York City Teachers' Union for a new generation of rank and file organizers as well as historians.<sup>28</sup> Jonna Perrillo's fresh look at the long-studied 1968 New York City teachers strikes offered new perspectives on the rise of mass teacher unionism under the banner of 'teacher rights' in 2012.<sup>29</sup> Jon Shelton's *Teacher Strike!* won LAWCHA's dissertation prize in 2014 and was published in 2017, showing how teacher unions found themselves on the leading edge of right-wing assaults on the labor-liberal coalition of the postwar era.<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Todd Breland's *A Political Education* excavated the long history of Black educators' organizing with, within, and even against their union in Chicago, in the five decades before a Black woman, Karen Lewis led the CTU out on strike.<sup>31</sup> Articles from Tom Alter, Diana D'Amico, and many others in our *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History*, have explored the meaning of social movement unionism and the ways in which radical organizers moved, and were marginalized, within in teacher unions.<sup>32</sup>

Labor historians have turned their attention to higher education as well. Steve Brier's *Austerity Blues*, with Michael Fabricant, is a tight, comprehensive account of the neo-liberal assault on public higher education over the past four decades.<sup>33</sup> Tina Groeger's forthcoming, *The Education Trap*, shows how education became both 'a central means of social mobility' and 'a new infrastructure for reproducing social inequality' at the turn of the last century.<sup>34</sup> Such texts are especially powerful in collegiate labor history classes. Reading about early systems of alumni placement at elite universities or learning that public higher education was free, or nearly so, only a generation ago provokes powerful responses from working-class students in the classroom (one UMB professor likes to note that it cost him less to get his BA at UMB in the 1980s than it costs a current student to park on campus as a full-time student for four years).

Reading and teaching about K-12 teachers' strikes is similarly powerful, as students have come through primary and secondary schools themselves and can reflect on whether and how they might join with striking teachers. In my first semester of teaching at UMB, teachers in Dedham (just outside of Boston) staged a one-day strike, the first in Massachusetts in twelve years. It is unlawful for teachers to strike in Massachusetts, as in many states across the nation, but this has not stopped teachers from doing so as of late. Students devoured articles on the strike and many wrote final papers about it. One student was particularly surprised to learn that teachers in the suburb of Newton earned less than those in many other cities despite the town's ample wealth. It quickly became apparent that organizing and collective bargaining, not the largesse of school committees, determined salaries.

In talking to my colleagues at UMB about how we teach labor history, one theme stood out: pedagogically, the goal must always be to connect the history we teach with students' own experiences of work, class, community, and struggle. Those who taught or were students in CPCS noted that this was a prerequisite for winning the attention of adult workers who came to the table with ample organizing or union leadership experience. Our current undergraduates may not come with quite the confidence as organizers, but they are not naïve about working-class struggles or exploitation. In my own brief experience, sharing materials and asking questions about the place of education in their experiences of class, inequality, and opportunity therein helps generate critical reflections that can then be applied broadly to the labor history we cover in class.

The university has always been a workplace and site of worker organizing, but it is increasingly impossible to maintain even the popular fiction that universities are places apart from the 'real world.' As a bare fact, students are also campus workers, and are increasingly organizing as such. So are we: at UMB, our faculty and staff are organized in three locals of the Massachusetts Teachers' Association (MTA-NEA), two of which are headed by core members of the LRC's faculty-staff team. One of them visits 'Labor and Working-Class History in the US' every semester to discuss the labor movement on campus, and what these faculty and staff unions are doing, can do, and should do in solidarity with students.

More broadly, higher education has played a growing role in sorting out the 'new economy.' As Trevor Griffey noted in replying to Julie Greene's LAWCHA presidential address in July 2020, higher education has been

embraced by politicians as an engine of equality even as it has become increasingly stratified itself. Citing the work of David Stein, Griffey noted that the Democratic party - once at least partially the party of labor - used a commitment to 'retraining' and building up higher education to justify its turn away from full employment legislation and the labor movement in the 1980s.<sup>35</sup> As Jeff Crosby describes it, such policies abandoned manufacturing workers, turning the people he worked with at GE into 'roadkill on the highway to the new economy' in the past several decades.

The promise of higher education was once entry into the professional classes of the new economy. Early on, James Green encountered worries among union leaders that funding scholarships for their members would mean educating talented organizers right out of the labor movement. Today, however, professions that require bachelor's and even master's degrees are unionized or unionizing. Nurses unions rival educators' unions as the most organized and active in the country, while college-educated journalists, museum workers, and coders are all actively organizing on the job. I use an article from the *Boston Globe* in my class titled 'Boston's *middle* class is getting crushed - does anyone care?' [my emphasis] The piece highlights the economic struggles of, among others, public defenders and mental health therapists. These professions requiring advanced degrees, and the author - no radical - concludes that these workers still desperately need the benefits of unionization.<sup>36</sup>

To return to the opening arguments of this essay, students today are still told that higher education will give them skills to sell in an open, meritocratic labor market. Offering a critical perspective on that promise and excavating labor histories of the university are powerful ways to generate analytic reflection and to plant seeds of solidarity for the future. This is particularly true as we return to school amidst a global pandemic. Learning, whether online or in person, now requires access to personal protective equipment, broadband internet, childcare, and much else. Universities that seek to proceed as usual will only exacerbate inequalities. As labor historians, we can take the opportunity to shine lights that cast their broader role in doing so in stark relief. Labor historians may have once feared isolation in the academy, but working-class students and struggles have found us here. How we respond will determine labor history's salience going forward.

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<https://www.lawcha.org/>

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<sup>1</sup> Among many others, see essays in Barrett, J.R (2017) *History from the Bottom Up and the Inside Out: Ethnicity, Race, and Identity in Working-Class History*; Deslippe, D., Eric Fure-Slocum and John W. McKerley (eds.) (2016) *Civic Labors: Scholar Activism and Working-Class Studies*; Dubofsky, M. (2000), *Hard Work: The Making of Labor History*, and Kessler-Harris, A. (2007) *Gendering Labor History*.

<sup>2</sup> In emphasizing the connections between research and teaching in advancing labor history, I am indebted to James Barrett's essay 'The Great Unspoken: Teaching and Learning Working-Class History from the Seminar Room to the Union Hall' in Deslippe *et al.*, *Civic Labors*.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, W. (2011) 'Agency: A Ghost Story' *Slavery's Ghost: The Problem of Freedom in the Age of Emancipation*. My personal model for this unapologetic approach to teaching labor history is Eric Foner, who merrily informed students in his course on 'The American Radical Tradition' that they would be encountering left-wing radicalism; if they wished to encounter right-wing radicalism, they could simply enroll at the business school. See Foner, E. (2016) 'American Radicals and the Change We Could Believe In' *The Nation*. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/teaching-the-history-of-radicalism-in-the-age-of-obama/>

<sup>4</sup> 'History of UMass Boston' [https://www.umb.edu/the\\_university/history](https://www.umb.edu/the_university/history)

<sup>5</sup> Barrett, *History from the Bottom Up*; Dubofsky, *Hard Work*.

<sup>6</sup> Green, J. (2000) *Taking History to Heart: The Power of the Past in Building Social Movements*, 78. Green notes that CPCS was a challenge to traditional administrative and political visions of UMB as a 'poor man's Harvard' for traditional college-age, full-time students.

<sup>7</sup> Green, *Taking History to Heart*, 81. Green cites contemporaries including Herbert Gutman, Steve Brier, Susan Porter Benson, Alice Kessler-Harris (at the Labor College of District 65), Mike Merrill (at New York's Labor Institute), Dorothy Sue Cobble, and David Bensman among those who moved into worker education.

<sup>8</sup> Green, *Taking History to Heart*, 28. Lynd's run ensured the AHA's first-ever contested presidential election, and Green remembers a packed business meeting in 1969 at which 'a few professorial punches were thrown.'

<sup>9</sup> Green, *Taking History to Heart*, Chapter 1.

<sup>10</sup> See Green, *Taking History to Heart*, Chapter 1. Green became an influential historian of mineworkers' organizing, advising the United Mine Workers on their one hundredth anniversary documentary and publishing widely on miners' struggles, including his acclaimed final book, *The Devil Is Here in These Hills: West Virginia's Coal Miners and Their Battle for Freedom* (2015).

<sup>11</sup> Among those present for the inaugural Massachusetts History Workshop event in 1979 were Alan Dawley, Martha Coons, Mary Blewett, Susan

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Reverby, Libby Zimmerman, Paul Faler, John Cumbler, Jeremy Brecher, and Martin Blatt. Green, *Taking History to Heart*, p56.

<sup>12</sup> Green devoted his third chapter of *Taking History to Heart* to his work at UMB, titling it 'Learning to Teach Movement History to Workers.' Green joined many contemporaries in holding up Staughton Lynd and E.P. Thompson as twin pillars of engaged, radical scholarship. Thompson was inspired to write *The Making of the English Working-Class* while teaching night classes for workers through the University of Leeds.

<sup>13</sup> See, among others Green, J. and Hugh Carter Donahue (1977), *Boston's Workers: A Labor History*, based on lectures given at Boston Public Libraries on the occasion of the US bicentennial, and Juravich, T., William Hartford, and James Green (1996) *Commonwealth of Toil: Chapters in the History of Massachusetts Workers and their Unions*. The Massachusetts AFL-CIO raised funds to place a copy of this latter book in every public school library in the state.

<sup>14</sup> Green devotes a page (80) in *Taking History to Heart* to describing how 'a seminar of extraordinary students met this extraordinary literature and created a peak experience for me as a seminar leader,' two of whom, Jeff Crosby and Wally Soper, later became staff members and mentors to students at the UMB Labor Resource Center.

<sup>15</sup> These activities are primarily described in Chapter 3 of Green, *Taking History to Heart*, with the exception of the 1986 'Freedom and Solidarity' event and its aftermath, which is discussed in Chapter 4. Pat Reeve described her teaching and experience in response to questions sent by email on August 3, 2020. On 9to5, see Windham, L. (2017) *Knocking on Labor's Door: Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide*, Chapter 7.

<sup>16</sup> Jeffrey Crosby, conversation with the author, 14 August 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Alejandro Reuss, conversation with the author, 6 August 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Wally Soper, conversation with the author, 3 August 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Reuss conversation; Steve Striffer, answers to questions by email, 17 July 2020; Mitch Manning, conversation with the author, 4 August 2020. Manning's point reflects a continued push on the part of labor historians to seek out the interior lives of workers, something James Barrett has written on in numerous contexts.

<sup>20</sup> Susan Moir, conversation with the author, August 5, 2020. The 1947 Taft-Hartley Act was introduced after extensive strikes in 1945 and 1946, and was passed by a Republican Congress over President Harry Truman's veto. It imposed loyalty oaths on unions, leading to a purge of radical organizers and unions from the labor movement, and outlawed secondary boycotts and several other forms of labor activity. The act also allowed states to pass laws forbidding union shops (known now as 'right to work' laws) as is understood today as a disaster for labor.

<sup>21</sup> On these trends in higher education, see Fabricant, M. and Stephen Brier, (2016) *Austerity Blues: Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education*.

<sup>22</sup> For a reflection on how the particular era in which the new labor history arose shaped the scholarship of that era, and a consideration of how labor history research has evolved to meet our current historical moment, see

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Winant, G. (2020) 'Hurrah for the Time Man!' *Dissent*

<https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/hurrah-for-the-time-man>

<sup>23</sup> Moir conversation. Crises at UMass campuses have included funding cuts and reorganizations. The University of Iowa's closure of its longstanding Labor Center in 2018 is a more devastating example of the attack on labor studies. See Shelton Stromquist, 'The University of Iowa Labor Center and Attacks on Labor' *LaborOnline*, July 30, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Foner, E. and Lisa McGirr (2011), *American History Now*. Previous editions, titled *The New American History*, were released in 1990 and 1997 and contained an essay on 'American Labor History' by Leon Fink.

<sup>25</sup> For an expanded discussion on these themes by those who appeared on the panel, see Beth Robinson, Joseph Walzer, Jacob Glicklitch, John R. Terry, and Dawson Barret, 'Opportunities for Defiance: Embracing Guerilla History and Moving Beyond Scott Walker's Wisconsin' *LaborOnline*, August 16, 2013. <http://www.lawcha.org/2013/08/16/opportunities-for-defiance-embracing-guerilla-history-and-moving-beyond-scott-walkers-wisconsin/>

<sup>26</sup> Winant, G. (2020) 'Hurrah for the Time Man' *Dissent*, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/hurrah-for-the-time-man>; Dayton, L. & Rudi Batzell (2017), 'Uniting Academic Workers: Graduate Workers Organize with the United Auto Workers' *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 91:164-173.

<sup>27</sup> MacLean, N. (2018) *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America*; Orleck, A. (2018) *We Are All Fast-Food Workers Now: The Global Uprising Against Poverty Wages*. As Orleck told the LAWCHA crowd, her title was drawn from a statement by an adjunct lecturer in Florida.

<sup>28</sup> Taylor, C. (2011) *Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union*. Taylor was himself a longtime member of the Teacher Action Caucus in New York City public schools, which included members of the Teachers Union and whose members today are active in the Movement of Rank and File Educators (MORE) Caucus of the United Federation of Teachers.

<sup>29</sup> Perrillo, J. (2012) *Uncivil Rights: Teachers, Unions, and Race in the Battle for School Equity*. Perrillo's framing of teacher rights will be expanded by work from Eleni Schirmer on Milwaukee and Elizabeth Faue on the problem of violence in schools and teacher union responses to it. See Faue, E. (2020) 'Battle for or in the Classroom: Teachers' Strikes in the Context of the 'Epidemic' of School Violence and the Working Environment' *Strike for the Common Good*.

<sup>30</sup> Shelton, J. (2017) *Teacher Strike! Public Education and the Making of a New American Political Order*. Shelton teaches at UW-Green Bay and is an organizer with AFT-Wisconsin.

<sup>31</sup> Todd-Breland, E. (2018) *A Political Education: Black Politics and Educational Reform in Chicago since the 1960s*. Todd-Breland serves on the Chicago Board of Education.

<sup>32</sup> Alter, T. (2013) 'It felt like community': Social Movement Unionism and the Chicago Teachers Strike of 2012' *Labor*, 10/3:11-25; D'Amico, D. (2017) 'An Uneasy Union: Women Teachers, Organized Labor, and the Contested Ideology of Profession during the Progressive Era' *Labor*, 14/3:35-54.

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<sup>33</sup> Fabricant and Brier, *Austerity Blues*.

<sup>34</sup> Groeger, C. (forthcoming 2021) *The Education Trap: Schools and the Remaking of Inequality in Boston* Quotations from  
<https://tinagroeger.com/educationtrap>

<sup>35</sup> Trevor Griffey, Response to Julie Greene, LAWCHA Presidential Address, April 2020, available at

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q46qA\\_B3BWru55n-16zQkGXhPOdnrFLQ/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q46qA_B3BWru55n-16zQkGXhPOdnrFLQ/view)

<sup>36</sup> Scharfenberg, D. (2019) 'Boston's middle class is getting crushed – does anyone care?' *Boston Globe*.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2019/08/30/boston-middle-class-getting-crushed-does-anyone-care/CVg5jYHotfuIpM21m6G3KP/story.html>