

Walter P. Reuther Library  
Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs  
Wayne State University Archives

**Milton Tambor Papers**  
1.25 linear feet (1 SB, .5 MB)  
1961-2000

Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

Finding aid written by Johanna Russ on July 20, 2012.

**Accession Number:** LP002342

**Creator:** Milton Tambor

**Acquisition:** Milton Tambor deposited his Papers at the Reuther Library in June 2012.

**Language:** Material almost entirely in English. Some material in Spanish.

**Access:** Papers are open for research.

**Use:** Refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library *Rules for Use of Archival Materials*.

**Notes:** Citation style: "Milton Tambor Papers, Box [#], Folder [#], Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

**Related Material:** Reuther Library Collections: Detroit Coalition to End the War Now! Records; various AFSCME collections.

## **History**

Milton Tambor was born in New York City in 1938. He earned a Hebrew Teachers degree from Yeshiva University in 1957. He completed his bachelor's in Psychology at Wayne State University in 1959. Working for the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit, he went on to earn his Master of Social Work degree from Wayne State in 1963. His thesis focused on the history of the Detroit Jewish Community Center.

He worked as Center Director at the UAW Retired Workers Center in Detroit 1964-1969. He then became president of Detroit AFSCME Local 1640, Community and Social Agency Employees, a post he held until 1978. As Local 1640 president, he acted as chief union negotiator in bargaining with 30 community agency employers. During his tenure, union membership more than tripled from 300 to 1000 members. He and Local 1640 were honored by a Detroit City Resolution and Mayor's Proclamation in 1978. During this period, he also served as Executive Board Member of the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO and as Executive Vice President of Michigan AFSCME Council 77. From 1978 until 1981, he worked with Michigan AFSCME Council 25 as education coordinator. From 1981 to 1998, he served as Staff Representative in Council 25, and in 1998 and 1999 he assumed the positions of Council 25 Assistant Education Director and Senior Staff. Tambor served one term as president of the staff union, Professional Representatives Organization, and also chaired Council 25's strategic planning committee.

While working for AFSCME representing social workers, Tambor continued his scholarly efforts. During the 1970s, he taught at local universities. He served as a fieldwork instructor, supervising social work students from the University of Michigan and Wayne State University Schools of Social Work. Tambor also taught classes in sociology, collective bargaining, steward training, union administration, and contemporary labor problems at the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations at University of Michigan-Wayne State University and at the Weekend College at Wayne State's College of Lifelong Learning.

Tambor returned to Wayne State University as a student to pursue a PhD in Sociology, which he earned in 1991, writing his dissertation on bargaining with non-profit agencies. He stayed on at the Wayne State School of Social Work as an associate member of the graduate faculty 1992-1998. His scholarly work focused on labor, social work, and non-profit agencies.

Throughout his career, Tambor was also involved in other labor and leftist organizations in Detroit, most notably as Co-chair of the anti-Vietnam War group Detroit Coalition to End the War Now, Chair of the Michigan Labor Committee on Central America, and activist with the New American Movement which merged with the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee to form the Democratic Socialists of America.

In 2001, Tambor retired and moved to Atlanta. In 2005, he formed and chairs the Metropolitan Atlanta Democratic Socialists of America local. He has also been active as Co-chair of the Atlanta Fighting Foreclosure Coalition and as treasurer of the newly constituted Atlanta Jobs with Justice. At the US Social Forum in Atlanta in 2007 and in Detroit in 2010, he made presentations on working class/socialist perspectives and fighting foreclosures.

### **[17] Scope and Content**

The Milton Tambor Papers document Tambor's academic career, work for AFSCME, and participation in labor, leftist, and progressive organizations in Detroit. They include articles, newspaper clippings, publications, fliers, meeting minutes, reports, and training material.

#### **Important Subjects:**

AFSCME. Local 1640 (Detroit, Mich.)  
Nonprofit organizations--Employees--Salaries, etc.  
Social workers  
Vietnam War, 1961-1975

#### **Series I: Milton Tambor Writings, 1961-1995**

This series is composed of articles and scholarly works written by Milton Tambor. His Masters Paper and his PhD Dissertation are included. The works focus on social workers, unions, and organizing non-profit and agency employees.

#### **Series II: AFSCME, 1969-2000**

This series contains information from Tambor's time working for AFSCME Local 1640 and AFSCME Council 25. It includes newspaper clippings, training material, publications, and communications material.

#### **Series III: General Labor, 1967-1997**

This series contains information about labor and organized social workers generally. Publications, pamphlets, seminar materials, clippings, and reports appear.

#### **Series IV: Central America, 1980-1991**

This series contains information on Tambor's time with the Michigan Labor Committee on Central America. It also contains information about the work of the AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) primarily in Central America. Articles, reports, and publications appear.

#### **Series V: Detroit Leftist Organizations, 1968-1981**

This series contains information about a variety of Detroit Leftist Organizations, especially the Detroit Coalition to End the War, the Motor City Labor League, and the New American Movement (NAM) in Detroit. Articles, reports, manifestoes, publications, and fliers appear.

## **Arrangement**

Arranged in five series - Series I (Box 1), Series II (Box 1), Series III (Box 1), Series IV (Box 1), and Series V (Boxes 1-2). Folders are arranged roughly chronologically within each series.

### **Series I**

#### **Box 1**

1. History of Detroit Jewish Community Center – master essay and article, 1961
2. “Unions and Voluntary Agencies,” *Social Work*, 1973
3. “The Social Worker as Worker: A Union Perspective,” *Administration in Social Work*, 1979
4. “Independent Unionism and the Politics of Self-Defeat,” *Catalyst*, 1981
5. “Declassification and Divisiveness in Human Services,” *Administration in Social Work*, 1983
6. “Collective Bargaining in the Social Services,” *New Management in Human Services*, 1988
7. “The Social Service Union in the Workplace,” *Social Workers and Labor Unions*, 1988
8. Policy Bargaining: Promoting Decisional Participation in Nonprofit Agencies – Summary of dissertation results, 1991
9. *The Scope of Bargaining in Labor Agreements Within Non-Profit Agencies* – PhD dissertation, 1991
10. “Containment, Accommodation, and Participative Management in Agency Union Relations,” *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 1994
11. “Unions,” *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, 1995
12. “Employment-at-Will or Just Cause: The Right Choice,” *Administration in Social Work*, 1995

### **Series II**

#### **Box 1**

13. AFSCME Local 1640 Strike at 14 Torch Drive Agencies, 1969
14. AFSCME Local 1640 Organizing and Communications Material, 1968-1980
15. AFSCME Council 25 Education materials, steward training, collective bargaining, local union administration, economics, 1995-2000
16. AFSCME Council 25 Strategic Planning Process, 1996
17. AFSCME Social Services; AFSCME Council 37; AFSCME Council 1707, 1990s
18. AFSCME pamphlet, 1996

### **Series III**

#### **Box 1**

19. National Federation of Social Service Employees and Welfare Employees Union, 1967-1969
20. Social Welfare Workers Movement, 1969
21. National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Seminar for Labor Leaders, 1977
22. Labor History – varied source material, 1970s
23. Various AFL-CIO Publications, 1980s-1990s
24. Various labor publications, 1990s

25. *Corporate Power and the American Dream*, OCAW Local 8-149, 1997

**Series IV**

**Box 1**

26. Michigan Labor Committee on Central America, 1985-1991
27. AIFLD and Central American background material, 1980s (1 of 2)
28. AIFLD and Central American background material, 1980s (2 of 2)

**Series V**

**Box 1**

29. Red Squad Files, 1968-1974 (1 of 2)
30. Red Squad Files, 1968-1974 (2 of 2)

**Series V**

**Box 2**

1. Motor City Labor League/Black Workers Congress Manifesto, 1974
2. Labor and Vietnam, 1970-1971; Detroit Coalition to End the War; National Peace Action Coalition; Labor for Peace
3. Vietnam/Labor/New Left – personal account, 1968-1972
4. Women and Men for a New Society, 1970
5. New American Movement (NAM) in Detroit; Saul Wellman and Helen Samberg, 1975-1981