The Problem of Philanthropy
In An Age of Rising Inequality

a discussion with

David C. Hammack
Hiram C. Haydn Professor of History Emeritus

January 25, 2019 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
Dampeer Room, Second Floor of Kelvin Smith Library, 11201 Euclid Ave

In the first American "Gilded Age," Andrew Carnegie in *The Gospel of Wealth* argued that massive inequality was the price of progress but the rich could use their wealth to "aid those who desire to rise" by investing in institutions like universities and libraries chosen in accord with the donors' "superior wisdom, experience and ability to administer." University Circle is in large measure a fruit of the wave of philanthropy that he did not start but epitomized, and that continued through the twentieth century. But Carnegie generated his wealth in part by destroying competitors and driving down wages, most notoriously in the bloody Homestead lockout.

And now, if history does not repeat itself, it surely offers striking similarities. Since 1980 more and more of the national wealth has gone to "the one percent," with a new set of names – Walton and Buffett, Bezos and Gates. With this wealth has come highly-publicized philanthropy – and criticism that would look familiar to Andrew Carnegie. New fortunes, like the old, may be built on captive customers, destroyed competitors and poorly paid workers, and the "public-spirited" uses of the money are chosen by the owners.

Old issues of power, purpose and control are made even more familiar as government's ability to lift up less fortunate citizens is weakened by conservative politics.

What is new, what is old, what is to be done? Join us as Professor Hammack, one of the nation's leading historians of the nonprofit sector, shares his questions and perspectives.

The Friday Public Affairs Discussion Lunch is an opportunity for students, faculty, staff, emeriti and other members of our communities to learn and question each other about public policy issues at the international, national, and local levels. Faculty and other speakers share their research and experience to get beyond the headlines and repetition in the mass media, and the wild rumors of the internet. Lunch is brown bag, but cookies and some beverages are provided by the Center for Policy Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences.

http://fridaylunch.case.edu/